

RAPHIA

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Raphia is the official newsletter of
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Conservation (COTERC)

Season's Greetings

What happened to the time? It seemed like only yesterday that the leaves were turning, and now suddenly Christmas is upon us.

As I write this, it is raining outside— not very appropriate for Christmas Eve day when most people are hoping for snow. But I have no doubt that the snow will come soon enough! Meanwhile, I would like to bring you up to date on a few things.

In October we held our annual fundraiser, Tropical Treat, and more will be said about that later in this issue. But I would like to commend Fran Mason & Blue Enright for all their hard work in organizing this event.

Paul Grant, our Station Manager, reports that Caño Palma Biological station is suffering its annual immersion under water (more on page 4). He certainly seems to be adapting to the sometimes difficult conditions at the station, and even has a sense of humour about it. Hopefully he will retain this sense of humour when the research groups descend

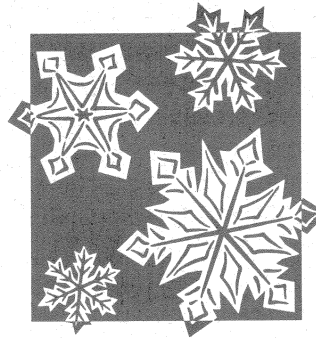
upon the station in January and March, 2002. At the moment we anticipate hosting a group of German students, a bat group from the Lube Foundation, a fish interest group and a reptile/amphibian group.

Paul has a lengthy Wish List and we will publish this in a future edition. In the meantime, he would enjoy hearing from you. You can contact him at canopalm@racsa.co.cr

In the village of Tortuguero, I am very pleased to report that the local women have now taken over the operation of La Crisalida. The butterfly farm was started by COTERC several years ago, with the intention that eventually it would be handed over to the Tortugueros to run as a sustainable development project. So it is very gratifying to see this happening.

Plans are currently underway for one or more fundraising events to take place in the new year, and we hope you will find these of interest and participate, if you are able.

by Marilyn Cole



When I read about the continuing rainforest destruction and decimation of wildlife in the world, it is easy to become discouraged; however each of us can make a difference and we mustn't lose sight of that fact.

At this time I want to extend greetings of the season to all of you, and hope that 2002 will prove to be a peaceful and happy year for you and your family.

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Another Euchre Night Planned

When we held a euchre night last summer, we weren't quite sure what kind of turn-out we would get. However, it proved to be so popular that people have been asking when we would hold another one. SO...

**COTERC EUCHRE
NIGHT**

**Thursday, Jan. 24
6:30 p.m.**

**Papp's Restaurant
Pickering Parkway &
Brock Road at 401
Pickering Ontario
\$20.00 per person
Includes late buffet**

**So Bring your
euchre partner(s) or
come by yourself**

- Beginners welcome
- Late Buffet
- 50/50 Draw
- For more information contact (905) 831-8809

TROPICAL TREAT REPORT

Once again the Toronto zoo's Atrium was the location for COTERC's fifth annual fundraising event known as Tropical Treat.

Early on the morning of October 20, our gang of volunteers gathered to transform the Atrium into a

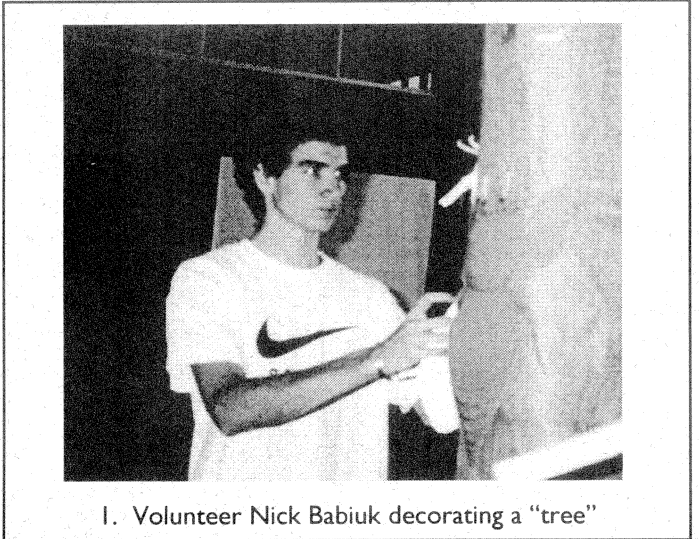
tropical rainforest, wrapping the metal poles with burlap and painted paper "leaves" from which various plastic and paper animals hung.

In keeping with the tropical theme, the menu included items such as tropical fruit salad, jerk pork, apricot-glazed chicken, rice

and black beans, roasted squash circles with salsa chutney and margarita mixed vegetables — not your average rubber chicken dinner! This was topped off with an assortment of heavenly desserts and good Colombian coffee, to make the meal complete.

Fran Mason and her volunteers had managed to gather together a great assortment of items for the live and

silent auctions, including items such as a kayaking trip on Georgian Bay; a painting by Group of Seven artist A.J. Casson; a gift basket from Royal Canadian Air Farce; computer CD of The Digi-



1. Volunteer Nick Babiuk decorating a "tree"



2. Membership Secretary Hilary Lee assisting with Silent Auction

tal Frog; Maple Leafs hockey tickets; the chance to be a zoo keeper for a day; a weekend at a bed and breakfast; an autographed photo and CD from the popular Canadian band

Barenaked Ladies; a beautiful hand-made one of a kind lap quilt; several pieces of art; a catered BBQ dinner; a week's stay at Caño Palma Biological Station, and many many more items.

Marilyn Cole organized the live auction, and honorary director Dr. Peter Silverman acted as auctioneer to stir up the crowd's enthusiasm. Debbie Mason acted as "Vanna" to display the items.

Not to be outdone by his sister, Daniel Ma-

son organized a draw whereby participants chose to place a pin on a map of Costa Rica. The three persons who came the closest to a pre-arranged location were declared the winners.

The event raised a net amount of \$8,000 which will be used to renovate Caño Palma Biological Station.

We would like to thank all our volun-

teers who helped make this event a success, as well as those who made a donation to the live auction :

Southern Ontario Chapter of American Association of Zoo Keepers

Barenaked Ladies

Arlene Brazeau

Cacts Hotel

Caldwell Securities

Louise Gervais

Indigo

In Kind Canada

King's Court Catering

Reptilia

Toronto Zoo

Turner House Bed & Breakfast

Via Rail

The Zap! Group

Robert Bateman

A special thank you to Mr. Cal White, director of Toronto Zoo. And lastly we would like to thank all of you who supported Tropical Treat by coming out to the event.

Silent Auction Donors:

- Artcology
- CN Tower
- Marilyn Cole
- Cullen Gardens
- De Boer's
- Digital Frog International
- Malcolm & June Enright
- Paul Harpley'
- International Management
- Tom & Fran Mason
- Cityscapes
- Ontario Power Generation
- Tennis Canada
- Jim & Carol Taylor
- Myrna Picotte
- Leather Elves
- John Mitchell
- Ken Haddle
- Salvatore Abate
- White Squall
- Genisoft
- Toronto Zoo
- Reptilia
- Creemore Coffee
- CABA
- AT&T
- Rainforest Publications
- June Barringham
- NHLPA
- Bert Oldershaw
- Oshawa Generals Hockey
- Rainforest Café
- Fiona Reid
- Royal Canadian Air Farce
- Dawn Todd
- Toronto Blue Jays
- Toronto Zoological Foundation
- Warner Brothers Home Video
- ISEC
- Jenny Daniels
- Prof. Frances Burton
- FON
- Cynthia Cupples
- Wizard of Vase
- Orono Cat World
- Wolf Run Golf Club
- Phantoms Arena Football
- Sir Charles MacKerras
- Pot Head Ceramics
- Resonance Bed & Breakfast
- Nubar Dakessian
- Petro Canada
- Readers World
- Hunter Farms
- Bowmanville Zoo
- THF
- Dollies Unlimited

RAFFLE WINNERS

First Prize—Robert Bateman framed print—Dawn Gomersall, Pickering, Ontario

Second Prize—J.F. Lansdowne Framed Print—Sarah Ferris, Pickering, Ontario



4. Debbie Mason (Vanna), Daniel Mason, Peter Silverman, (Auctioneer)

THANK YOU ALL!



Working here at the Station continues to amaze. Each day presents something new and unpredictable, especially the weather! Recently it has been pleasantly warm and sunny. However, November and December, being two of the wetter months, seemed to keep the sun perpetually veiled in cloud covered skies, allowing warm finger-like rays break through for only brief periods. Although November was the wettest month with a total rainfall of 2041.2 mm, December had higher flood levels, —natural for this aseasonal ecosystem. It was once again necessary to canoe or swim back and forth to the various buildings, a relaxing novelty in itself. The high floodwaters do eventually recede and the sun does free itself from its misty prison. As the waters retreat they leave pockets of fish trapped in temporary pools throughout the forest. This also results in the disappearance of my favourite fishing hole in the office, where I've caught a few fish over 13 inches!

Just after the last issue of *Raphia* came out, the station was given a very young Rufescent Tiger Heron that had fallen out of its nest into the canal and was apparently abandoned. This is a very rare species, uncommonly seen throughout the Caribbean slope. It can reach an adult size of 66 cm and can weigh 850g. Immature birds are buff in colour with black strips, and take about 2 years to acquire the reddish chestnut adult plumage. Although this juvenile was fairly lifeless at first, it seemed to recover after a few days after being force-fed small fish. After a few weeks it learned to take live fish from a bucket, which was the only incentive it needed to start fishing for itself in the station pond. Although it is still a regular visitor to the station property it now fends for itself quite successfully in the canal and flooded areas within the forest.

Other birds that have been recently sighted at the station and surrounding area are the Great Green and Scarlet Macaws. Although the Great Green Macaw can be sighted at various times during the year (thought to be due to the fruiting of *Diteryx*), the Scarlet Macaws, once common, are now extremely rare and are primarily found only on the Pacific slope. Therefore, encountering two pairs of Scarlet Macaws in this area is an exciting sight.

Another interesting story, which occurred only yesterday, involved an adult male Mantled Howler (*Alouatta palliata*). He climbed down from the trees surrounding the station, and in a rare display, decided to sun himself and nap on the open grass. Chico, the brave station guard dog, barked at the intruder, who responded with a loud barking call, hence the name. In response, Chico wisely decided to look for other less raucous intruders. Meanwhile the male Howler lazily made its way two meters up into a nearby tree to continue feeding on the young leaves that make up a substantial part of its diet.

There is still a lot of work being done around the station. After one strong windstorm the cell phone tower (a modified bamboo pole) could no longer take the stress and snapped. So another one was soon erected in its place. In the near future, fiberglass reinforcement to the bamboo tower should give it extra strength and durability. Additional rising water levels have demonstrated a need for raising the electric meter and possibly building a smaller raised shed to accommodate the generator, gas and other electrics.

Other station news: Cano Palma is currently designing a joint information poster with Campanario Biological Reserve, which is located on the Pacific Osa Peninsula. This poster has been designed to attract more researchers and students to both stations. The forests of Caño Palma Biological Station are one of the world's most endangered ecosystems. Further research of these manicaria and raphia palm ecosystems is vital. When completed, this poster will be sent to various countries around the world to be displayed in institutions and Universities. We would welcome any help in the distribution of them.

I would like to thank all of you once again for all your efforts and support. Caño Palma Biological Station is within an exceptionally rich primary forest. It is because of your efforts that it is able to function and enable COTERC to continue its conservation goals.