

# Refuge Reporter

Volume 8, Issue 2

Spring 2005

## New Refuge Manager Steve Kahl Reports for Duty

By Steve Kahl, Refuge Manager



Greetings Friends and Volunteers of Shiawassee NWR! I officially started at my new

position as refuge manager on February 6. My previous positions include refuge manager at Wallkill River NWR in Sussex, New Jersey, deputy refuge manager at Wallkill River NWR, and supervisory refuge operations specialist (assistant manager) at Iroquois NWR in western New York. I have been a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employee for 6 years. I also donated more than 2,000 hours as a

volunteer and undergraduate intern at Montezuma NWR in central New York.

My academic background includes Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the State University of New York - College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse. My major area of study for both degrees was Fish and Wildlife Biology and Management. My graduate professor was Guy Baldassarre who wrote the book *Waterfowl Ecology and Management* and was executive editor of the *Journal of Wildlife Management*. To earn my Master's degree I worked for the Central & Western NY chapter of The Nature Conservancy at a preserve on the eastern shore of Lake Ontario. Here I completed an inventory of the preserve's vascular plants, fish,

*(Continued on page 3)*

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### Special Points:

- *Shorebird Workshop offered on April 16. See inside for more information.*
- *International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) will be celebrated on Saturday, May 14. Come see the Refuge from your own vehicle from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., weather permitting.*
- *Looking for volunteers to help with upcoming events like IMBD, Kids' Fishing Day and children's summer camps.*

## Workshop Aimed at Budding Artists

Join Eugene Beckham, a nature artist and illustrator from Midland, on Saturday, June 4, for a “**Drawing in Nature**” workshop, a crash course in learning to draw images of nature. The session runs from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Green Point Environmental Learning Center, 3010 Maple in Saginaw, and includes both classroom and outdoor work.

The workshop is open to ages 12 and up. Participants should bring a sketch pad, No. 2 H or HB pencils, and a sack lunch. The fee is \$2 per person and free to Friends members. Register by May 31 by calling (989) 759-1669. Class size is limited to 15 people. This workshop is sponsored by the Friend of Shiawassee NWR.

# Welcome Our New Park Ranger Jonathan Priday

By Ed DeVries, Assistant Manager



We'd like to introduce you to the newest member of the Shiawassee NWR staff, Jonathan Priday. Jonathan started here on January 24, and has filled the

Park Ranger Law Enforcement position which was vacated by Kevin Shinn in 2003. Kevin hasn't left; he just took a new position as a Zone Law Enforcement Officer with responsibilities for refuges in Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio. Jonathan transferred here from the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Ecological Services Field Office in Fairbanks, Alaska. Jonathan worked with two endangered duck species there, the Stellar's Eider and spectacled eider. Prior to his 2 ½ years in Alaska, Jonathan worked for the State of Maryland as a natural resource planner in the Maryland Department of Environment's planning and monitoring division.

Originally from Greencastle, Pennsylvania, Jonathan graduated from James Madison University (Harrisonburg, VA) in 1996, and received his Master's degree from Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore, MD) in 2001. Jonathan is married to Gail, who is a native of Morristown, New Jersey, and is an art teacher. Jonathan and Gail enjoy hiking, fishing, and camping, and moved to the "Outside" to see a different part of the country, and to work in the national wildlife refuge system. They are also expecting their first child in April, so being close to their families in Maryland and New Jersey was an important factor in their decision to come here.

Most of you will have to wait to meet the Pridays, as Jonathan and Gail must now make a temporary move to Brunswick, Georgia. In order to be a refuge officer, Jonathan has to complete four months of mandatory law enforcement training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center. After graduating on June 16, he will have 10 weeks of field officer training at two ref-

uges in the Midwest, and then two more weeks of refuge officer basic training at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. So we won't see Jonathan working on the refuge until sometime in September. But he'll be well trained and a welcome addition to our staff. Make sure you give him and Gail a welcome when you finally see them out here.

## Guided Birding Tours Scheduled

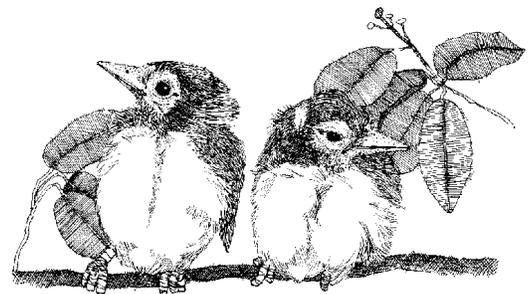
By Janet Martineau, Friends Activities Chair

Members of the Saginaw Valley Audubon Society will lead two migration birding events on the southern portion of the Refuge (off of Curtis Road). Both events are free!

**Saturday, April 9**, is a drive-through, starting at 10:00 a.m. and lasting 2 to 3 hours, depending on the weather and birds. Participants are asked to meet at the Refuge headquarters parking lot for carpooling. Registration is required no later than two days before the event since participation is limited to 10 people. Call Green Point at (989) 759-1669.

**Saturday, May 28**, is a 5-mile walking/hiking tour at the height of the warbler season. The grass will be wet so proper foot gear is essential as are binoculars. Meet at the Refuge headquarters parking lot at 7:00 a.m. Registration is required no later than two days before the event. Call Green Point at (989) 759-1669. Please note that weather conditions could cause this hike to be cancelled.

Robins



# Shorebird Workshop Offered at Green Point and Refuge on April 16

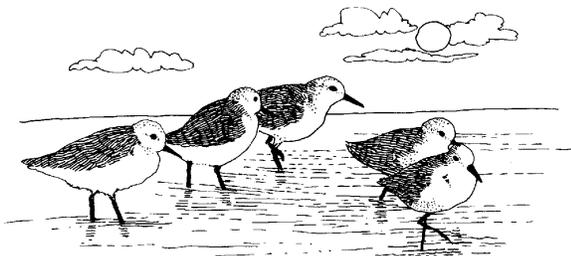
By Becky Goche, Park Ranger

Attention educators, youth groups, volunteer birders, biologists and conservation organizations...Come migrate with us! Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, the Friends of Shiawassee NWR and the Refuge are sponsoring a **Shorebird Sister Schools Program** workshop on Saturday, April 16 at Green Point. The workshop will run from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and include a field trip to the Refuge. Cost for the workshop is \$20 and includes lunch, curriculum guides and many other resources. Rebecca Hinkle of Ottawa NWR will lead this workshop.

The **Shorebird Sister Schools Program** is an Internet based environmental education program that connects students, educators, biologists, and birding enthusiasts along migratory flyways. The program includes curriculum for grades 2—12, e-mail network, and web site. Partnerships with numerous organizations, schools, volunteer birders, and youth groups make this program possible. For more information about this program visit <http://sssp.fws.gov>.

This workshop will include an overview of the **Shorebird Sister Schools Program** including web components, introduction to shorebird identification, biology and conservation issues, overview of the Arctic-Nesting Shorebird curriculum, pen pal components, and a field trip to the Refuge to learn more identification skills, use of journals and habitat needs. We will also review the Shorebird Trunk which is available on loan from Green Point to assist in your shorebird curriculum.

You must register for this workshop by Wednesday, April 13. Call Green Point at (989) 759-1669 to register or for more information.



## New Refuge Manager Continued...

(Continued from page 1)

reptiles, amphibians, and breeding birds. I also promoted the Conservancy's efforts to preserve the region's dune and wetland complex.

I am very enthused to be at Shiawassee NWR because of its blend of programs, habitats, and challenges. I have a professional affinity for refuges with a strong wildlife management program. Seeing that the refuge has several impoundments including deep water, hemimarsch, and moist soil units is especially attractive to me as a bona fide "duck farmer." I am also impressed with the refuge's deer hunting program and growing grassland management potential. As a life-long birder, and more recently herpetologist and botanist, the diversity of habitats makes the refuge a place where I can have a lot of fun. I also strongly believe that an important component of making the refuge a valued part of the community is a strong environmental education and interpretive program. So I am very enthused about the programs delivered out of the Green Point ELC. I am also pleased to work at a refuge with important challenges, such as mosquito spraying, contaminants, managing islands, and land acquisition because I wish to contribute toward resolving these types of issues.

The presence of a strong Friends group at Shiawassee NWR is also very important to me. Friends can provide immeasurable benefits to a refuge. I am proud that while I was at Iroquois NWR, I helped to establish its Friends Group. We worked together to raise over \$500K in private and federal funds to rehabilitate the Swallow Hollow Nature Trail, which includes a half-mile of boardwalk. In fact, during Congressional visits we touted the establishment of the Friends Group as one of our most important highlights.

So, I am very eager to meet everyone and I greatly look forward to working together to do good things for Shiawassee NWR!

Sanderlings

## Want More Wildlife on Your Land?

*By Michelle Vander Haar, Private Lands Biologist*

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife (Partners) Program works with private landowners and partners in a voluntary pro-active manner to restore and enhance habitat for a variety of wildlife species on private lands. Together we share resources of time, energy, and funds to help ensure that wildlife, fish, and a healthy ecosystem will be here for future generations.

The Partners Program focuses on improving habitat for migratory birds, federally-listed endangered or threatened species, and interjurisdictional fish. In Michigan, wetland restoration remains the primary focus, but restoration of grasslands, streams, and specific habitats used by federally-listed endangered or threatened species are also done. Since it began in Michigan in 1988, more than 2,500 projects have been completed. Some of the partners include Ducks Unlimited, Timberland and Saginaw Bay RC&D, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Conservation Districts, Michigan DNR and Pheasants Forever.

**Qualifying projects include:** Wetland restorations in which the project provides an opportunity to put the "wet" back into altered wetlands. Projects often involve breaking or plugging a portion of a tile line, blocking a ditch, or building a low dike or embankment. Restorations are designed to re-establish shallow-water wetlands containing a mixture of open water and vegetated areas. The program does not create farm ponds or "push outs," and does not alter existing natural, undisturbed wetlands.

Grassland restoration or establishment which provides a buffer around wetland areas to provide nesting cover for teal, mallards and other waterfowl are also a big part of the Partners program. Larger establishments, 20 or more acres in size, are also considered for cost-share assistance and can provide habitat for a number of declining grassland birds, pheasants, and other wildlife.

Efforts are underway to stabilize stream banks and improve road-stream crossings in northern Michigan watersheds that support fish. Stream improvement projects in southern Michigan will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Partners' efforts are expanding to remove invasive species in sensitive habitats and restore specialized habitats supporting endangered or threatened species. These projects are also considered on a case-by-case basis.

For more information about restoring habitat through Partners for Fish and Wildlife, please contact me at (989) 777-5930 x 12 or e-mail [Michelle\\_Vanderhaar@fws.gov](mailto:Michelle_Vanderhaar@fws.gov).

## Can't Wait 'til Spring!

*By Ed DeVries, Assistant Manager*

It's been a long, cold winter, but the staff is looking forward to what we hope to accomplish in the year ahead. One of the biggest projects we hope to complete this year is the renovation of the old DNR boat launch site on the Cass River, at the M-13 Bridge. The Cass River boat launch site was acquired from the DNR in a land exchange several years ago, and it will see some drastic improvements this year. A 220 foot section of the north bank along the Cass River will be stabilized and protected with large riprap, and a 15 foot wide flexible concrete mat will be placed to serve as a boat launching ramp. An 80 inch wide, 30 foot long floating dock will be anchored adjacent to the ramp, to serve as a boat launch and fishing pier. Finally, the parking area will be graded and topped with gravel. An earthen island in the middle of the lot will aid traffic flow. This project will greatly improve the look of this area, and will be an excellent access point for boating or canoeing into the refuge.

Last fall, a five acre shallow wetland impoundment was created on a tract of land just west of M-13 on the south side of the Cass River. This area commonly floods in the spring and attracts ducks, geese, swans, and shorebirds which can be easily viewed by passing motorists. Our hope is that by making this wetland a bit more permanent, it will hold more water for an extended amount of time in the spring and fall. This wetland restoration was accomplished using funds provided by the refuge as well as Ducks Unlimited funding, along with a grant through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act.

Farther west on the Cass River, we look forward to the results of a fishery study to be initiated this spring. Improvements made in 2003 on the Cass River dike, allowed deeper water to be retained in the Eagle Marsh unit in 2004. This work is expected to have great benefits for spawning fish such as northern pike, crappie, walleye, perch and bass. Our thinking is that early spawners such as pike, crappie, and walleye will swim into the unit during spring floods and then will be able to exit via a spillway in the north dike. We actually received late spring/early summer floods last year, so it may be that some bass and perch were able to spawn during that time period. Our hope is that there has been sufficient water over the last year or so to benefit the young fish that were produced from the 2004 spawning year. The Alpena Fisheries Resource Office plans to set some nets in Eagle and North Marshes this spring to see if we were successful. Hopefully we'll find lots of fingerlings in the nets.

The spring migrant birds will soon be in the trees and on the wetlands. The refuge table is set for their use and for our enjoyment, and hopefully the plans we've made will enhance the refuge for people and critters alike. See you on the refuge!

# Friends Committee Updates

By Janet Martineau, Membership Committee Chair

## Report from the Book Store Committee

**2004 report summary:** (1) In the summer, committee chair Janet Martineau attended a two-day book store workshop sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. (2) Shiawassee Refuge donated the use of a trailer it no longer uses and needs. Friends want to convert it into a bookstore/concession stand on wheels: to drive to events at main refuge, Green Point and Cass River Unit as well as other events in county. (3) Friends board agreed to set up a separate checking account for book store/concessions sales.

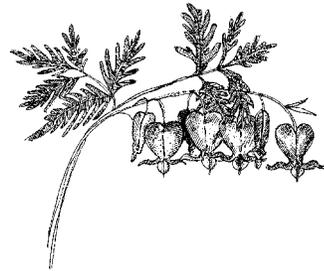
**2005 objectives:** (1) A trailer company owner (and avid hunter on refuge) has agreed to convert donated trailer into bookstore/concessions for free, using leftover material from his stop. Will need help in spring from Friends members to help him one weekend. (2) Seek \$5,000 to \$10,000 grant to stock book store. (3) Seek board approval of logo(s) for Shiawassee NWR, for use on souvenirs we sell and on letterheads. Volunteer Janie Peters is creating artwork. (4) Formation of a larger committee to help select books and other materials to sell, and to work on sales and record-keeping (contingent on membership committee's skills at growing membership).

## Report from the Activities Committee

**2004 report summary:** (1) Began the "Nurturing Nature" lecture series at Green Point in December 2004 and running through December 2005 as well as two Friends members potluck dinners. The first lecture brought 24 people through the door, five new members and \$30.50 in income from admissions/concessions. The Christmas potluck dinner included a silent auction of items donated by board members. It raised \$100. (2) Booked two in-the-field workshops at Green Point, both set for June, 2005. One is on monarch butterflies, the second on drawing on nature. (3) Cleaned up the main flower bed at Refuge headquarters. (4) Helped coordinate a farewell evening for departing Refuge manager. (5) Sponsored a spring pancake breakfast/flower sale to open the Cass River Unit. Poorly attended due to bad weather, but formed a partnership with the Cracker Barrel.

**2005 objectives:** (1) Nail down a nature photography workshop at the Refuge. (2) Start a late fall Wild Goose Chase run/walk at the Refuge that is a part of a network of runs in Saginaw County. (3) Solidify bird mi-

gration drive-throughs/hikes led by members of Friends/local Audubon Chapter. (4) Evaluate "Nurturing Nature" series and decide whether to continue it. If so, start booking people. (5) Secure grants to pay for "Nurturing Nature" series and workshops and pursue other grant possibilities. (6) Work with Saginaw Valley Master Gardener's Association on re-planting the flower bed at the Refuge headquarters building. (7) Work with Becky on possibility of increasing education programs in schools via grants. (8) Pursue more silent auction possibilities.



*Bleeding Heart*

### REFUGE REPORTER

Published quarterly by Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge with funding from the Friends of Shiawassee NWR.

Volume 8, Issue 2

Editor: Becky Goche

#### Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge

Established in October, 1953 and administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Shiawassee NWR provides resting, nesting and feeding habitat for waterfowl and other birds. Its mission is to preserve or manage an undeveloped expanse of floodplain forest, marshes, rivers, and associated habitat within an agricultural and urban landscape through habitat management, encouraging public stewardship, educational programs, and private lands activities.

Refuge Manager—Steve Kahl

Assistant Refuge Manager—Ed DeVries

Biologist—Jim Dastlyck

Private Lands Biologist—Michelle Vander Haar

Biological Science Technician—Richard McAvinchey

Park Ranger/Volunteer Coordinator—Becky Goche

Administrative Technician—Mary Ann Gillette

Maintenance Staff—Marion "Butch" Nowosatko and David Peters

Law Enforcement Officer—Jonathan Priday and Kevin Shinn

#### Friends of Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge

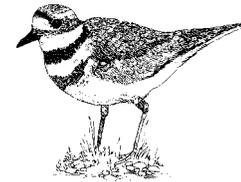
A nonprofit 501 (c)(3) organization established in 1999 to promote the preservation of the natural and historical resources of the Refuge, foster its use and enjoyment by the public consistent with the protection and preservation of its environment, and engage in such educational, scientific and civic activities as will assist the management of the Refuge in carrying out its mandates.

Refuge Website: <http://midwest.fws.gov/shiawassee>

Shiawassee NWR  
6975 Mower Rd.  
Saginaw, MI 48601  
Phone: 989-777-5930  
Fax: 989-777-9200  
Hours: M - F, 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

We're on the web!

[Http://midwest.fws.gov/shiawassee](http://midwest.fws.gov/shiawassee)



***Shorebird Workshop Offered on April 16. See inside for more details.***

## Teachers, Book Your Spring Field Trips Now!

*by Becky Goche, Park Ranger*

Even though there is still some snow on the ground, it's not too early to start thinking about field trips for your students this Spring. We have several programs for you to choose from for all ages of students. See our "Educator's Guide" on our website or call Green Point at (989) 759-1669 to receive a copy. All of the programs last 1 to 1 1/2 hours and include both inside and "field" instruction, including an outdoor hike. Students can explore field, pond, marsh, forest and river habitat at Green Point.

We also have several programs that we can bring into your classroom. Your students can explore endangered species, birds of prey and careers in the Fish and Wildlife Service. Each of these programs includes cool audio visuals and lots of neat things for your students to look

at or feel. We can do these programs at Green Point, too! See our "Educator's Guide" for more information.

Want to spice up your curriculum? Green Point has 7 trunks that you can borrow for two weeks to use in your classroom. Each trunk is based upon a theme (shorebirds, prairie, wetlands, wolves, songbirds and more) and includes videos, posters, activities and curriculum ideas that you can use with your students. Once again, see our "Educator's Guide" for more information.

All of these programs are free! Call me at Green Point at (989) 759-1669 for more information or to schedule a program or a trunk.

## Nurturing Nature First Wednesday Series

- All programs begin at 7:00 p.m. and last 60 – 90 minutes.
- Held at the Green Point Environmental Learning Center, 3010 Maple Street, Saginaw, unless otherwise noted.
- Admission: \$2 for individuals or \$5 for a family. FREE for members of the Friends of the Shiawassee NWR.

### Ornamental Grasses for the Garden

**March 2, 2005**

Susan Scott, an advanced master gardener, will discuss the basics of using ornamental grasses in the garden. These perennials provide three seasons of foliage, a variety of colors and textures, and are easy to grow.

### Landscaping for Wildlife

**April 6, 2005**

Janea Little, a senior naturalist for Chippewa Nature Center, will discuss how to landscape your back yard into an attractive haven for wildlife by using native plants and natural features.

### Rainforest Revue

**May 4, 2005**

Eugene Beckham, a wildlife artist and illustrator, will offer an overview of his research and trips to rainforests in Belize, Costa Rica, Peru, Bolivia and Columbia. He will explain why rainforests are so important.

### Upcoming First Wednesday Programs:

Wildflower Folklore – June 1  
Cooking in the Great Outdoors – July 6  
Summertime at the Refuge Friends Picnic – August 3  
Just what is a Refuge and why is there one in Saginaw? – September 7  
Studying and Carving Birds – October 5  
Woodland Indian Life – November 2

### Upcoming Workshops:

Drawing in Nature – June 4  
Monarch Magic – June 25

## Looking Ahead in 2005

Kids' Free Fishing Day – June 11  
Summer Discovery Camp for Kids – June 25 & July 23  
Jr. Refuge Manager Academy – July 16, 20 & 30  
Full Moon Hike – August 19  
Refuge Open House Weekend – September 10 & 11

# Calendar of Events

## Earth Day Night Hike

**April 22, 2005, 7:00 p.m.**

**Begins at parking lot at west end of Curtis Road**

Two different hikes will be offered: a shorter one for children and a 5-mile one for avid hikers. In the event of severe weather or flooding, the hike will be canceled.

## International Migratory Bird Day Auto Tour

**May 14, 2005, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

**Begins at parking lot at west end of Curtis Road**

View Refuge birds and other wildlife from your vehicle as you take a self-guided auto tour. The tour will be canceled in the event of severe weather or muddy roads.

## Audubon Bird Tour and Hike

**Tour by Car – April 9.** Meet at Refuge headquarters at 10:00 a.m. to carpool together. Limited to 10 people.

**5-mile Hike – May 28.**

Meet at Refuge headquarters at 7:00 a.m.

Both programs are led by Saginaw Valley Audubon Society members and are FREE. Call Green Point to register.

## Shorebird Workshop April 16, 2005, 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**Green Point ELC**

For teachers and others interested in shorebirds. Call Green Point to register. Fee \$20 per person includes lunch and lots of resources.

For more information, contact Green Point ELC at (989) 759-1669.

# FRIENDS OF SHIAWASSEE NWR MEMBERSHIP PAGE

## Friends of Shiawassee NWR Membership

General Membership

\$10/year – Individual (1) vote.

\$25/year – Family (2) votes. (Member, spouse and children under age 18)

- Each membership receives quarterly newsletter - "Refuge Reporter."
- Each membership includes voting rights and opportunity to hold office.

Supporting Memberships: "Goose" \$50/year, "Blue Heron" \$75/year, "Owl" \$100/year, "Bald Eagle" \$125+/year

No membership at this time, but please accept my contribution.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to "Friends of Shiawassee NWR", PO Box 20129, Saginaw, MI, 48602.

Contributions to the Friends of Shiawassee NWR, a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization, are tax deductible according to IRS guidelines.

### Friends' Volunteer Opportunities

### Do you have any of these skills?

\_\_\_\_\_ Making phone calls

\_\_\_\_\_ Writing letters

\_\_\_\_\_ Stuffing envelopes

\_\_\_\_\_ Public speaking

\_\_\_\_\_ Staff store

\_\_\_\_\_ Work events

\_\_\_\_\_ Writing newsletter articles

\_\_\_\_\_ Concession stand

\_\_\_\_\_ Committee member

\_\_\_\_\_ Children's activities

\_\_\_\_\_ Organize events

\_\_\_\_\_ Computer skills

\_\_\_\_\_ Photography

\_\_\_\_\_ Carpentry skills

\_\_\_\_\_ Business organizational skills

\_\_\_\_\_ Research

\_\_\_\_\_ Artistic skills

\_\_\_\_\_ Fund raising

\_\_\_\_\_ Grant writing

\_\_\_\_\_ Researching/Ordering merchandise

\_\_\_\_\_ Other – please list:

Board meetings held on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Green Point Environmental Learning Center, 3010 Maple Street in Saginaw. General meetings with special programs are held at various times throughout the year. Friends Board of Directors Officers are:

President – Charles Hoover

Vice President 1 – Dick Von Berg

Vice President 2 – Steve MacAlpine

Treasurer – Richard Hodge

Secretary – Barb Werle