

INTERESTING FACTS OVER THE YEARS

Host Clubs: During our first 50 years, each of our Annual Meetings has been planned and hosted by one or more of our Member Clubs. Altogether, 37 different clubs have provided this service to the Federation, some of them many times. The individual record of six such experiences was first set in 1996 by Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club. This year's Golden Anniversary meeting also marks the sixth time that our Rochester clubs have gotten together to be our hosts. Genesee Ornithological Society started this string with our first Annual Meeting in 1948, and has repeated every tenth year thereafter. Burroughs Audubon Nature Club has been a co-host since 1958, and the Rochester Birding Association joined the other two starting in 1978.

See **TABLE 2** for a record of all Annual Meetings and Host Clubs

Banquet Speakers: Over the years our host clubs have been able to secure for us a broad selection of ornithologists, authors, and others with significant and pertinent messages. Following Dr. Arthur A. Allen, at the first meeting, came Richard H. Pough at the second, and then, over the years, people such as Roger Tory Peterson, Chandler Robbins, Wesley Lanyon, Joseph Taylor, Pete Dunne (twice), Stephen Kress (twice), Frank Gill, Kenneth Able, and this year, Kenn Kaufman.

Member Clubs: From the group of 18 Charter Member Clubs in 1948 and 1949, we had grown to 27 by 1954. Growth thereafter was slow but steady, reaching 35 by 1971 and 41 by 1976. For the last 22 years, while there have been many changes in the roster, the number has consistently stayed between 39 and 42.

Individual Membership: Individual memberships were accepted from the beginning, but with the launching of *The Kingbird* in late 1950, the need for a larger support base became critical and active recruitment of individual members, who would receive the journal, began in earnest. By April 1951, the number of individual members had reached 149, still short of what was needed to ensure the journal's future. By the 10th Anniversary issue in December 1960, the number of individual members had reached 413 and six others had become Life Members. By 1968 there were 471 annual members and the number of Life Members had grown to 26. Membership ranged around 500 throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Then, with the stimulus of the Breeding Bird Atlas project and the involvement of its many volunteer atlasers, annual membership reached 668 in 1986. With periodic promotions, it has stayed in the 650 range since then. Life memberships reached a peak of 86 in the 1980s, down now to 79.

Finances: Any discussion about finances can easily become tedious and technically confusing. Here we will try to keep the focus both brief and non-

technical, simply providing an historical perspective on the general nature of our finances. Treasurer's reports, in recent years accompanied by complete financial statements, have been provided at the Annual Meeting of the Council of Delegates. These are summarized in the minutes of these meetings, which are published annually in *The Kingbird*. The fiscal year is the calendar year. All annual Treasurer's reports have had the benefit of review by the Audit Committee.

The first financial report published in *The Kingbird* showed a balance on May 22, 1953 of \$843.33 in the general fund and \$410.45 in the special fund. The 1954 proposed budget was \$759, of which \$470 (or 62%) was for *The Kingbird*. This earliest available information highlights two key aspects of our finances that are still true. First, our publications represent by far the greatest portion of our annual operating budget; 1996 numbers showed that we still spend 62% of our operating funds on *The Kingbird*. In the 1998 budget this has grown to 67%. It wasn't until 1963 that the annual budget reached \$2,000 for the first time. By comparison, the operating budget for 1998 is \$18,585.

Membership dues have always been set as low as possible to generate the general operating funds needed to supply member services. The history of our individual member annual dues shows how well we have achieved that goal:

1950	\$2.00	1966	\$5.00	1980	\$12.00
1954	\$2.50	1972	\$6.00	1985	\$15.00
1962	\$3.00	1974	\$8.00	1993	\$18.00

This increase from \$2 to \$18 over the period represents slightly less than an average annual 5% increase in our basic membership dues.

The other key aspect of our finances is that from the beginning we have had "special funds" in addition to the general operating fund. The number of these funds and their balances have grown as activities that attracted substantial financial support increased.

One of those funds is used to account for Life Member dues. Others are identified with awards or other purposes, where the contributions may represent specific wishes of the donors. Another is a general memorial fund where all unrestricted memorial gifts and bequests are accounted for. From time to time our special book projects have also required unique separation and accounting of grants and other contributions related to that limited use. Because balances in these funds are meaningless without the accompanying explanatory notes from the financial statements, readers are referred to current reports for those details.