

City of Newburgh

Press Release

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for immediate release
November 13, 2008

Birds, Big Cats, and Fast Cars in Downing Park Visitors Center

Throughout November, the Downing Park Planning Committee is hosting an exhibit at the Visitors Center that will be of interest to naturalists and NASCAR buffs, as well as to the art community. Versatile Newburgh artist Dan Tooker will display some paintings and photographs of his favorite subjects: native birds, jungle cats, and racing cars.



Tooker has been photographing and painting racing cars since 1975 when he first met Mario Andretti and watched him race. The artist says, “I began covering the racing circuit for the Newburgh Evening News which later became the Hudson Valley News. I did photographs and stories on local and

top drivers. After the paper folded, I did the photography for Lime Rock Park in CT. I also worked with Keeping Track of Corvette Magazine doing art work, photography and articles, and did racing programs for Lime Rock, Watkins Glen and Pocono Race Tracks.” He has photographed Paul Newman, Tom Cruise and many other less well-known race drivers.

Born and raised in Goshen, Tooker left the area to attend York College in York, Pennsylvania where he earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. Photography courses deepened an interest that was born when an uncle gave him a 35mm camera and lenses years before. He says, “I now had the skills to photograph, paint and illustrate with accurate detail.”



In 2006, Tooker retired from the racing circuit and began photographing local fauna. He was fascinated with the variety of birds in this area and, “was hooked when we went up to Mongaup Blind and saw over 30 American Bald Eagles.” Tooker’s wife Faith, who is also a nature lover, suggested photo trips to zoos in the Northeast, giving Tooker another favorite subject. “I have a great fondness for shooting the big cats,” he

says. “Especially White Tigers. I also enjoy photographing Snow Leopards and Cheetahs.”

”One day I was going past Downing Park in the city of Newburgh and caught a glimpse

of a Great Blue Heron. I immediately stopped to take a picture of it. I hadn't realized how much wildlife there is in this park. My exhibit has many photographs taken right here in Downing Park."

This exhibit will be on view through November 30 at the Visitors Center Gallery, located in the Shelter House in Downing Park, at Carpenter Avenue and Third Street, Newburgh. Gallery hours are 11 AM to 5 PM, Tuesday through Sunday. For information call 845-565-5559.