



oystercatcher

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Ron Hall

Welcome everyone to another year on the many lovely trails that we are fortunate to have available to us on Salt Spring and in nearby areas. I offer a special welcome to our more than fifty new members! We look forward to seeing you on the trails and at our various social events.

Your executive has been meeting regularly to plan future events and to discuss issues that affect our parks, paths, and membership. There are some changes planned by the provincial government which may concern many of us. In an attempt to raise interest in, and to attract tourists (and thus revenues) to our parks, additions to existing lodges are in the works, and perhaps more fixed-roof accommodations within certain parks may appear soon. I urge everyone to stay abreast of developments, as the FBCN and other groups fight to keep parks as unaltered as is reasonably possible. [*more on this in the FBCN report on page 4*]

Closer to home, issues such as possible land donations for public use including new trails, are somewhat contentious, as trustees, realtors, developers, and neighbourhoods all try to thrash out the pros and cons of density transfers and potential impacts. Other matters are less contentious, such as improving pathways close to towns for safer pedestrian use.

Recently a committee worked on putting guidelines on paper for organizing off-island overnight trips. The result is a comprehensive and clearly written package that will greatly assist all those who volunteer to plan future fall and spring outings. [*see related article on page 4*]

I ask you to attend as many social evenings as you can. There will be a wide range of topics and speakers to engage us. Between our first Thursday night in late October, and our final one in April, there will be six occasions for our club members to be entertained and enlightened by specialists on matters of mutual interest and concern.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

It's that time of year again! We have enclosed a membership renewal form as a reminder that your membership fees are due now. **THE DEADLINE IS SEPTEMBER 30.** The fee is still kept at a low \$17.00 per person annually. Please, drop off your dues in the cobbler's box this month, or remit your cheque to our Membership Secretary:

Barry Spence, SS Trail & Nature Club
PO Box 203, Ganges PO,
Salt Spring Island, BC, V8K 2V9



Coral root Photo Nieke Visser

CALENDAR

-
- September 11-14
Fall trip to Anglemont Lodge, Shuswap.
-
- September 19
Blackberry festival at Ruckle Park,
Starting at noon. Parking permits will be issued.
-
- September 30
Membership dues deadline.
-
- October 17
Nature outing with Victoria and Alex Olchowecki to the Cowichan Valley on a mushroom identification expedition.
-
- October 26
Social Evening at the United Church, 7:30 pm.
John Neville on Travelling the Dempster Highway
-
- November 21
Nature outing with Marc Johns on a mosses and ferns walk; location to be announced later.
-
- November 23
Social evening at the United Church, 7:30 pm Topic: Camino de Santiago, presented by several Club members

NEW MEMBERS 2006

Yvonne Adalian
 Larry Appleby
 Hugh Barry Cotton
 Judith M. Da Silva
 Carol Edwards
 Gordon Ellis
 Sheila Ellis
 Nixe Gerbitz
 Neils Gerbitz
 Bob Greggs
 Marilyn Hood
 Barbara A. Harvey
 John Heddle
 Judy Heddle
 Jill Heffner
 Rod Shouldice
 Rosalind Hope
 Margaret Cram Howie
 Larry Howie
 Ketty Hughes
 Rosemary Joy
 John Borst
 Robert Laroche
 John L. Lowther
 John Mccaw
 Jean Mccaw
 Lynda Mckieve
 Deborah Miller
 Murray Nurse
 Judy Nurse
 Louise Nye
 Marion Pape
 Val Perkins
 Frauke Prystawik
 Ruth Riddell
 Heather Robertson
 Arleen Sadler
 Samantha Sanderson
 Linda Scarlett-Hauck
 Gilbert Schultz
 Frances Schultz
 Richard Shead
 James Silver
 Enid Squire
 Susan Stoffelsma
 Lynn Thorwaldson
 Patricia Vanderkraan
 Paul Weston
 Beth Weston
 Kai Yasue
 Robert Borbas
 Jean McCaw
 John B. Sprague

**A warm welcome
to all!**

A NEW LOOK FOR THE OYSTERCATCHER

Nieke Visser

You may wonder what has happened to our newsletter this year. The past few years the Oystercatcher was put together by Simon Rook. As you all know, Simon resigned from the executive committee last January, and with him gone the Oystercatcher disappeared too. As no-one else stepped forward to take on the task of editor, I decided to give it a try. It turns out it was fun to work on something new; I now also know what it takes. So I wish to take the opportunity to thank my predecessor for all his efforts: Simon, you did a fantastic job!

With the introduction of a group-email, the executive committee played with the idea of an electronic newsletter, thus saving postage and paper and printing costs. We experimented with a group-email address over the summer, and we think this will work (see related story by Barry Spence on this page). As an introduction to future electronic issues of the Oystercatcher, you received a paper copy of that concept today, albeit in black-and-white. We are aiming at emailing you the winter issue and that one will be in colour! Of course, those of you who do not have email or prefer to receive the newsletter as a paper copy, continue to receive the black and white version.

We like to know what you think of this change. Please send your comments either by email to cnvisser@uniserve.com, by surface mail: Oystercatcher, PO Box 203, Ganges PO, Salt Spring Island, BC, V8K 2V9, or simply drop them off in the cobbler's box.

Bunchberry Photo *Nieke Visser*

**INTRODUCTION OF GROUP EMAIL**

Barry Spence

The SSTNC executive has been experimenting with using a Google Group email address for email communication, and have found it works quite well. Future plans are to add the rest of the members with email addresses to this group some time in September, and to use the group address to distribute notices to the SSTNC membership. Currently, sending SSTNC notices to the members requires that I create and send five separate emails (because of the ISP's limit on the number of addresses to which an individual message may be sent). Using a Google Group will make that an easier process, as only a single message will have to be created and sent to reach all of the members of the group. One of the expected results of this easier email distribution could be the addition of one or more electronic editions (with a limited number of paper copies) of the Oystercatcher through the year. I can also see the possibility of smaller ad hoc groups being created for communication among those going on the Fall or Spring trips, or similar extended excursions. I will create the group email starting September 1, and will include all members who have provided the Club with their email address. If you do not wish to be included, or if you have any questions, please contact me by email at sspence@telus.net or by phone: 537-2332.

CHANGE OF THE (PHOTO) GUARD

Chris Pattinson has managed the Club's photo album diligently for many years. But last January at the AGM Chris thought that it would be a good idea to hand it over to someone a tad younger. Arleen Sadler stepped forward and announced a wonderful idea: she intends to make a digital photo file and encourages everyone to take pictures on the outings (digital or film) and send them to her either via the cobbler's box or email: arleensadler@telus.net. With sufficient pictures, she may be able to present them as a "slideshow" on one of our social evenings.



Photo Lynn Thompson

Did you know that.....

- Bill Harrington was the one who suggested this idea of honouring members in this fashion?
- Bill initiated the idea of having a Blackberry Festival in September?
- Bill was a former member of the famous Bruce Trail Club in Ontario?
- Bill moved to Salt Spring in 1991 and joined the club soon after?
- Bill was Hike Coordinator for two years?
- Bill wrote and read the most unusual coordinator report at an annual meeting?
- Bill was President of our club for one year?
- Bill was President of the Paddlers Club at the same time?
- Bill organized off-island trips to Quadra and Bowen Islands?
- Bill's last led hike was to Story Hill to see the flowers and the view and to lose his way in the process?
- Bill became our 'licensed' bartender for our Christmas Lunch and Annual Meeting?
- Bill and his partner, Patricia Lockie, keep horses for recreation?
- Bill acquired Mandy the mule to carry his pack?
- Bill will continue his service as long as his knees permit.... like so many of us!

Fred Powell

ISLAND TRAILS KEPT IN SHAPE

Owen Benwell

The trails group has not been very active in recent weeks, partly because I somehow managed to injure my knee and it's only now beginning to heal. No cards necessary, thank you! However, in the spring we had a group out to pull broom in Ruckle and did some work on the Jack Foster trail. In June we had a work party on the Fern Creek Trail and also cleared some trees on the Peter Arnell Trail. That's it! Oh, to answer that eagerly posed question: yes I'll soon be requesting your help to again work on our island trails. Thanks to all who do great work and are fun to be around.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Salt Spring Trail & Nature Club features Tuesday outings September through June at three levels of ability. The monthly schedule of outings and events is published in the Driftwood on the last Wednesday of the month. Or visit our website for the schedule: <http://saltspring.gulfislands.com/lthompson/>

On the fourth Thursday in October, November and February through May, the Club meets at 7:30 pm at the lower hall of the United Church. The Club is affiliated with the FBCN.



Ramblers enjoy walking without pressure with frequent "time-outs" to take pictures, to examine plants, flowers, stones, fossils, and from time to time sample local restaurants. Members of any level of fitness are welcome. Ramblers start at 10:00 am and usually end by 1:30 pm.



Walkers move at a relaxed pace taking time to smell the roses. They usually try to avoid long steep climbs and will stop to catch their breath along the way. Outings generally cover 8 km or less and end by 2:00pm.



Hikers like long, adventurous and occasionally quite strenuous hikes, and like to gain a bit of altitude. They need strong boots and a good but not excessive level of fitness. Hikes usually start at about 10:00 am and end between 2:30 to 3:30 pm.

Membership Annual dues are \$17 per person. New members must sign a waiver. Send completed membership and waiver forms to the Membership Secretary, PO Box 203, Salt Spring Island, BC, V8K 2V9.



Taxi fare: Members are encouraged to carpool during outings and reimburse the driver as follows:

North of Duke Road: \$2 pp; South of Duke Road: \$3 pp; Ruckle Park and non-paved roads: \$4 pp.

Off Island trips: \$0.40 per km per vehicle plus ferry costs.

Moving? Change of email address? Please let your Membership Director know a.s.a.p.:

Email: sspence@telus.net

2006 Executive

President

Ron Hall 538-0046
woodlandchalet@saltspring.com

Vice-President

Zeke Blazicka 653-4782
zekegiz@ssisland.com

Treasurer

Judy Nurse 537-3177
murrayjudynurse@hotmail.com

Secretary

Nieke Visser 537-5443
cnvisser@uniserve.com

Past President

Fred Powell 537-4739
fnpowell@uniserve.com

Ramblers Coordinators

Eleanor Lloyd 537-5481
Norah Lloyd 537-5263
norah@ssisland.com

Walkers Coordinator

Paul Way 653-9985
wapaul@saltspring.com

Hikers Coordinator

Kees Visser 537-5443
cnvisser@uniserve.com

Trails Coordinator

Owen Benwell 537-9107
obenwell@saltspring.com

Nature Coordinator

John Flannagan 653-2344
jpflannagan@saltspring.com

FBCN Director

Nancy Braithwaite 537-9335

Membership Secretary

Barry Spence 537-2332
sspence@telus.net

Archivist

Joanne Cartwright 537-2439
jcartwright@saltspring.com

Photo Journal

Arleen Sader 653-9235
arleensader@telus.net

Honorary members

Bob Ball Jean King
Loes Holland Joan Lott
Eleanor Lloyd Jean Hdmes
Marc Holmes Tony Pederson

Past Trail Blazers

Lynn Thompson
Paul and Beth Ranney
Owen Benwell, George Hggnell
John Myers, Ian Fraser
Bob and Betty Ball
Dick and Chris Patinson
Betty Kirk, Brian Radford

\$1000 DONATION TOWARDS THE PURCHASE OF THE HATFIELD PROPERTY

In May, it was brought to the Club's attention that The Land Conservancy was raising funds for its contribution towards the acquisition of the Hatfield property adjacent to Ruckle Park. The property consists of 98 acres of pastoral farmland, rocky shoreline with sheltered coves, and mixed Douglas fir forested uplands that would be very suitable for park acquisition. The Land Conservancy was looking for a donation from several Salt Spring organizations including the Trail and Nature Club. The Strawberry festival, held on June 13, provided an opportunity to consult members on this issue, and a resolution was brought forward requesting the approval of the membership or a \$1000 donation. The resolution was accepted unanimously. It may still be a while, but the Club is looking forward to explore these new lands as soon as they become available to the public.

FNBC REPORT

Nancy Braithwaite

Nieke Visser and I both attended the FBCN Regional Meeting in Nanaimo on March 4 this year and I also went to the June meeting. I hope to join forces with the representative from the Cowichan Valley next time rather than add to the pollution by travelling alone. These meetings offer an opportunity to meet directors from other Vancouver Island areas and learn what their problems are.

The AGM in Courtenay in May organized by the Comox Valley Naturalists was a great success with 170 registrants including a record 13 from Salt Spring. The federation is greatly concerned about the Species at Risk Bill: the Federal Government does not even include the environment in its list of priorities. The Minister has said that it is not worth protecting certain species if there is insufficient habitat for them; she fails to realize that it is up to us humans to provide and protect habitats.

The Provincial Government appears to consider heli-skiing in the backcountry more important than the dwindling herds of Mountain Caribou. It also prefers logging the habitat of the remaining 17 Spotted Owls rather than preserving it. The Federation has lobbied against the proposal to allow private developers to build so-called "roofed accommodation" in Provincial parks, including Cape Scott: the minister says the population is aging and people no longer want to sleep on the ground! Six members of this Club hiked in that park when we were more agile than we are now, and I think all of us would be appalled to consider roads being constructed there. It sets dangerous precedents: logging, heavy traffic, hunters in off road vehicles, etc. So if you feel as strongly as I about this matter, please write to the Minister of Environment to express your concern:

Barry Penner, Minister of Environment, PO Box 9047, Stn. Prov. Govt., Room 112, Parliament Building, Victoria, BC, V8W 9E2,

Or email: env.minister@gov.bc.ca.



Prevost Island Photo Nieke Visser

The Fall General Meeting will be hosted by the Burke Mountain Naturalists in Coquitlam at the end of September. There is a registration form in the back of the summer edition of the BC Naturalist. The greater the numbers of us who attend these meetings and vote on resolutions, the stronger the voice of the Federation in the province.

OFF ISLAND TRIPS

Nieke Visser

As Ron Hall mentioned in his President's Report, there is now a comprehensive document available that will guide you through the process of organizing a spring or fall trip, including suggested timelines and advise on the do's and don'ts during the planning process. It will assist all those who volunteer to plan future off-island overnight outings. The guide is available from your secretary. Call 537-5443, or email: cnvisser@uniserve.com, if you want to receive a copy.

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS !!!

The following position will become vacant in January.

- **FBCN Director**

Qualifications: enthusiasm

Experience: none

Remuneration: new experiences, new friends, new places to go, plenty of comic relief (very important!), and remember: *volunteers get more out of life!*

Job description on request from the Secretary: 537-5443 or cnvisser@uniserve.com, or contact Nancy Braithwaite at 537-9335.

War on Invasive Plant Species

Fred Powell

Cameron Sanjivi, warden for Canada Parks, invited us to join him for a day removing broom from Winter Cove on Saturna Island. Cameron picked up Kees, Lynn, Charles and Fred at Fulford dock near to 9 a.m. on Friday, July 28th. We traveled together on one of the inflatables owned by Parks Canada. After a 45 minute ride (more or less), we arrived at a private covered dock in Lyall Harbour where the boat is kept. We transferred our belongings, food and tools to Cameron's pickup and drove for about 5 minutes to the park area.

We soon saw what our mission was for the day. A large patch of broom covering about a quarter of an acre was situated not far from the beach next to a beautiful, grassy picnic site. Our work continued on this fine, sunny day until noon. We then strolled to the narrows called Boat Passage between Saturna and Samuel Island for our lunch break. Cameron brought along a nice tray of sandwiches and fruit for our lunch. As we ate, one of our views was to the east where a short distance off-shore was Anniversary Island. That was where some of us had been last summer removing blackberry bushes. The work this time was relatively simple and not as dirty a job as it was last year.

After lunch we returned to the 'scene of the crime' and resumed cutting and piling broom. Cameron said that they will burn these piles sometime during the winter months. We finished our work at about 3 p.m., loaded the truck and drove back to the dock. The boat trip back was a bit bumpy as the wind had been picking up during the day. However, we all arrived back at Fulford safe and sound!

Some of you might like to take part in removing these invasive species and I'm sure we'll be called on next summer to do that. I sent out a couple of e-mails this year asking for your participation and didn't get much response. I know that many of you have enough to do removing invasive plants on your own properties, but it is good to have a change of scene by going out to on one of the outer islands.

By the way, did you hear about the enterprising young chap in Nanaimo who has enlisted some pigs, yes PIGS, to clear out the roots of blackberry bushes for the city?

Hmmm..... I can see it now, each of us with a pig under one arm and clippers in the other!

OINK, OINK er.... Cheers from a part-time broom basher!

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE SALT SPRING TRAIL AND NATURE CLUB

by Marc Holmes

The following is an article that Fred Powell found in one of his archives. It depicts an interesting piece of Club history. Unfortunately it is not dated, but in all likelihood it was written in the late 1980's. With the large number of new members that joined this year, we thought it would be appropriate to publish it again.

It was in Joanne and Arthur Millner's home on Old Scott Road that a good crowd of would-be hikers and nature enthusiasts turned out on Jan. 15, 1973, for the founding meeting of what was to become the Salt Spring Trail and Nature Club.

Mary Sylvander had hiked and climbed for many years in various parts of the world. Ruby Alton, born at the foot of Hope Hills, knew the south end of the island well. It was here that much of the undeveloped land was located: Cape Keppel, Mount Tuam, Hope Hills, Mount Bruce and the large Ruckle farm where visitors have always been welcomed.

The late Doris Anderson, a former British Army Nursing Sister, was an enthusiastic walker and Club promoter in the Beaver Point area. Lassie Dodds, a North Islander, was pleased to reveal many trails to Loes Holland, who was kept busy scouting them out.

At the inaugural meeting, the Club's name was chosen to reflect the interests of both hikers and of those interested in observing nature in its various forms. Ruby Alton was elected President; Mary Sylvander, Vice President; Gerry Holland, Secretary; Earl Dunlap, Treasurer; Loes Holland, Trails; Ton Marcus, Maps; Beth Hill, Archeology; Mick Jones, Birding; I.C. Shank, Botany; Mary Sylvander, major hikes; and Vera Perillo, minor hikes.

Active members that come to mind who can no longer turn out include Ted Brown (our annual reciter now replaced by Jack Airson), Jack and Vi Webb (who for many years entertained us in their home at the Christmas season), Anna-Marie Dahlke (who planned many natural history outings), the late Kay and Don Kirtland, Jack Ready, Doris Anderson and Alice Maybee. One kind property owner even "hid" hot mulled wine in a hollow tree on our hiking route during the Christmas

Continued on the next page

season. Jean Holmes and Mary Sylvander spent many hours identifying trails on maps and then locating the owners of the properties involved. This was followed by correspondence seeking necessary permission for the dub to hike over the chosen area.

The dub was destined to succeed from the first. Hard-working executives planned the many necessary actions carefully, and still do. Numerous volunteers arranged and led walks, improved trails, wrote briefs, drew up a constitution, registered the dub under the Societies Act with the Provincial Government, made complicated but necessary arrangements for trips, and helped in numerous other ways. Even good hiking land was deeded to the public by a member. To name a few persons would be unfair to the many who could not be mentioned.

Off-Island trips included Forbidden Plateau, Hurricane Ridge, Manning Park, East Sooke Park, Cowichan Valley, Seattle, Orcas Island, Mayne Island, Russel Island, Pender Island, Gabriola Island, Galiano Island, Hombly Island, Thetis Island, Quadra Island, Wallace Island, Prevost Island, Costa Rica, and various points of interest in Greater Victoria.

Experts, too numerous to remember, led expeditions or gave slide shows devoted to their favourite subject. Names which come to mind are: Tom Wright, Geology; Sabina Leader-Mense and Betty McKinnon, Marine Biology; Beth Hill, Archaeology; Mick Jones, Allan Best, Alien Brooks, Marg Pearce, Gertrude Smith - Ornithology; Wayne Campbell from the Provincial Museum - Ornithology; Tom Bergerud and Heather Butler - Caribou; Dr. Bristol Foster - Ecological Reserves and Ornithology; I.C. Shank and the late Dr. Ralph Bird - Botany.

Enthusiasm of members was always high and I don't remember that it was ever necessary to have membership drives. Annual meetings were always well-attended, and turned into happy social and dining occasions. Many close friendships have been formed over the years. All dub members love nature and the outdoors - this is the common bond.

Our association has been a loyal supporter of the Federation of British Columbia Naturalists, pays dues and sends delegates to its meetings. It recently hosted a regional conference on Salt Spring.

Annual Christmas bird counts have been another activity with help from the Provincial Museum, who now value our results. I believe around 100 species have been identified locally.

The Trail and Nature Club has been active in supporting the preservation of nature both on and off the island, and has been asked to supply briefs on various topics. Isaiah, Chapter 5, Verse 8, has been quoted: "Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there is no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth."

Past Club Presidents were, in order: Ruby Alton, Mary Sylvander, Jean Holmes, Tom Fraser, the late Jack Ready, Bob Robertson, Peggy Jacobs, and Eleanor Lloyd.

Our membership was 36 in 1973, and now it has reached 180. The present executive is: President, Jean King (who has served in just about every position); Vice-President, Val Keys; Secretary, Ailsa Pearce; Treasurer, Bob Collings.

