



# ***oystercatcher***

## **CLUB CHAT:**

### **The Shuswap, nasty weather, Christmas lunch and more...**

A number of events stood out over the past months. In September, 45 dub members set out to Anglemont Lodge to indulge themselves in good food, good hiking/walking/rambling, good company, and a welcoming host, all set in the beautiful scenery of the Shuswap area (see story on page 7)

In November and December, a number of Tuesday outings were cancelled because of the weather, and when we could resume our weekly trots in the woods, we found our trails blocked by fallen branches and trees. Trail coordinator Owen Benwell and his crew (too many to mention) have worked very hard clearing those trails that were scheduled to be used, but numerous others still have to be checked and debris from the wind storms removed (see page 5 for more).

December saw us gathered around the table for Christmas lunch. The catering gave Zeke Blazecka (our man in charge) a headache when the Legion's Ladies Auxiliary, who had always taken care of our lunch, let him know that they could not prepare a meal for us any longer. Fortunately, Christine was found and was free on the very same day to cook us a wonderful lunch. Indeed, it was so good that she was invited again to cater for our AGM lunch. And Arlene Sadler treated us on a wonderful slide show of our activities over the past year.

At the AGM, 68 members met for a business meeting that was done and over with in record time. The membership voted to keep the fees for 2007-2008 at the \$17 level with an increase of \$3 if fees are paid after January 1. Fred Powell remembered those who had passed away since last year: Kitty Cotton, Gus Wittewaall, Jack Sharp, Norma Eves, and Marc Holmes. As usual the dub has

donated \$50 towards the Trans Canada Trail in their memory (related article on page 3).

With the new bylaws in force, the majority of the Directors started their second year in office. Nancy Braithwaite was the only one to whom we said goodbye as our BC Nature (FBCN) Director. When asked she could not remember how long she had held office in this capacity, but she figured it must have been since 1999. We were fortunate that Brian Radford stepped in. Brian is well known to most of you as a steady and reliable contributor to the dub in a variety of ways.

Looking forward, we have an exciting season ahead: a trip, open to all levels, to Prevost Island is in the making; the traditional Spring Trip, this time to Lund on the Sunshine Coast (see page 3); Zeke has lined up some interesting speakers for our monthly social evenings, and in September, Ron Hawkins would like to take people to Manning Park for a real hike! Watch the Driftwood and your email or the club's website for more news on these events.

*Nieke Visser.*



Clearing trails on the East side of Mount Maxwell: Simon Rook and Kees Visser, December 2006. Photo: Lynn Thompson

## **CALENDAR**

March 20

Nature outing with Bill Earl to Channel Ridge.

March 22

Social Evening at the United Church, 7:30 pm

- A) Gypsy Moths on Salt Spring by Leslie Wallace  
B) Beginnings of Trail and Nature Club by Loes Holland

April 17

Nature outing  
To be announced

April 26

Social Evening at the United Church, 7:30 pm

May 1

Trip to Prevost Island

May 3-6

BC Nature AGM at Vernon  
Registration forms in the BC Naturalist

May 15

Nature outing  
To be announced

May 17

Social Evening at the United Church, 7:30 pm

May 23-26

Spring trip to Lund

June 19

Strawberry festival in Ruckle Park, starting at noon; parking permits will be issued

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**FROM THE EDITORIAL DESK**

This is the first digital edition of the Oystercatcher. The last one was published using the same tools, but was still mailed to you in black and white format. Now that the group mailing system is in place, this issue comes to you via the email in full colour, photos and all! Not only does it look nicer, it saves a substantial amount of money on postage and copying costs. Of course, those without email are still receiving their black and white copy via regular mail.

With improved means of communication in place, we like to hear from you as well. What do you think of the new format? Perhaps you would like to comment on one of the articles you find in this issue. Or, if you have a travel or nature story you want to share with your fellow members, please send it in and we'll publish it. The subject, of course, should be in line with our club's mandate: to stimulate interest in hiking and related outdoor activities and natural history, and study flora and fauna in their natural habitat.

You can email your comments or stories to [cnvisser@shaw.ca](mailto:cnvisser@shaw.ca) or drop them off in the cobbler's box, and they will appear in the next (spring) issue of the Oystercatcher.

*Nieke Visser.*

**Networking with Nature  
(Canada)**

Inspired, interested and focused. These words describe what I originally thought was going to be a questionable use of time. I thought wrong. So I am writing to make amends for my frozen evaluation.

Sarah Kipp facilitated the workshop on behalf of Nature Canada (our national federation), but a small group of Club members (13 in all) did all of the work (discussing, writing and presenting ideas) for 2 ½ hours Monday 19 February.

The aim of the workshop had something to do with the Nature Network, a federally sponsored idea, but in reality we discussed what our Trail and Nature Club was doing on Salt Spring and what we would like it to be doing. What we wanted it to do boiled down to three main activities (in no order of priority);

Communications,  
Maintenance and development of trails,  
Shoreline access and development.

Communications can always be improved. We thought there could be more two-way communications with other Clubs, that we could be more involved in other Club's activities and they with ours, and that our website could be enhanced to show more information - all achievable ideas needing only more volunteer effort, some technical knowledge and some money.

Trail maintenance and development the Club is already doing, but they could be improved ... by more members leading the maintenance work, by discovering the public lands that as yet do not have trails, by strengthening our links with other Salt Spring like-minded groups, and by getting an opinion about the legal liability of walking on private property. Little on this topic had not been thought of before, but now there was a renewed enthusiasm to execute the work.

Finally some thoughts on Shoreline Access and Development.... Do we need increased access, should there be more public ownership, are there particular improvements to be made to Ganges Harbour, Fulford Harbour, Walker's Hook and the Jack Foster Trail? We answered yes to all of the above, and we had ideas about how to achieve some results.

We left the workshop feeling we had spent time usefully addressing issues that relate directly to the Trail and Nature Club. Sarah will send us her full report in due time, but you may find your Executive trying to implement some of the ideas long before that.

You say you can hardly wait to be involved? That is just what we were hoping you would say. Call your Executive if you find any of these thoughts stimulating. Or, call your Executive if you find none of these thoughts to be stimulating, and let them know.

*Zeke Blazecka*

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**The Sunshine Coast will be  
our next spring trip  
destination.**

There will be a spring trip this year on 23rd-26th of May to Lund, 40 minutes drive north of Powell River. The cost has not been finalised yet, but will be about \$210 per person. We shall be reserving a minimum of 20 rooms, which will accommodate 40 people.

The hotel has very comfortable accommodations and a fine restaurant, and there is good walking and hiking close by. We shall also be offering a boat trip to Desolation Sound on one of the days.

Following the practice of recent outings, members will book the accommodation themselves. Reservations cannot be made yet, but please watch the Driftwood and our website

(<http://saltspring.gulfislands.com/lthompson/>) for further details on travel, accommodation and costs.

*Simon Rook*

**Shoreline trail in Ruckle park** *Photo Niek e Visser*



**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

On behalf of our club, I want to wish Nancy Braithwaite a very big thank you and a fond farewell as our club's BC Nature representative. Nancy has laboured many years at the helm of this job, and has traveled widely and often to meetings, general assemblies, social evenings, and annual events, all to keep us informed about a wide variety of subjects. She also led the annual bird count and several island walks over the years. Ever-reliable and diligent, Nancy has earned our sincere appreciation and respect for her many contributions. As she turns things over to Brian Radford, our new FBCN representative, we say welcome to Brian, and "well done" to Nancy! We hope to see you off duty at many more club activities in the future.

I wrote two letters to our local MLA, Murray Coell. One was to urge him to avoid development of fixed-roof accommodations inside BC Parks. His prompt reply said our letter was being passed on to Assistant Deputy Minister, Nancy Wilkin, who would respond in detail

shortly. I did receive her reply in mid-February. Her letter offered assurances that considerations for three new possible developments and for two existing facilities would "maintain the ecological and conservation role and integrity of our Parks." The letter went on at length to give other assurances, which I will gladly share for anyone who wishes to see her correspondence.

I also wrote MLA Murray Coell regarding possible changes to BC Ferry subsidies, in as much as they would impact our monthly trips off-island, possibly discouraging members from participating in the long-standing practice. Again, Mr. Coell wrote back to assure us that he would bear in mind both our concerns and those expressed in the Islands Trust Position Paper on affordability and availability of our ferry system.

Additionally, Jean Gelwicks wrote to me on behalf of Island Pathways to say thanks for our involvement to get a Demonstration Trail along side of Lower Ganges Road from Brinkworthy to the RCMP station across from the Village Mall for safer pedestrian passage. Regrettably, Salt Spring Foundation did not see fit to financially support this important first step to improved pedestrian safety at this time. Jean and Marion Pape intend to try again to gain grant money to proceed with this project.

Finally, the executive Committee passed a motion to nominate Harry Burton for the FBCN Stewardship award last fall for his notable efforts to promote organic farming, agricultural land preservation, and public awareness of and involvement in sound stewarding of our island in a variety of ways. I am happy to report that the nomination met with approval and Harry will be given this provincial award for 2006. Congratulations Harry!

*Ron Hall*

## Trans Canada Trail Donations



**Trans Canada Trail Pavilion in Victoria**

As you may know, a donation of \$50 to the Trans Canada Trail is put towards the development of new sections of the trail and maintenance of existing parts. Our Club has a policy to make a memorial donation when an active member has passed away. Last year we made five such donations as you may recall.

Have you ever wondered what happens following these donations? Recently, Kees and I set out to investigate when we had other business to do in Victoria. At the south end of the Selkirk trestle over the Gorge inlet on the Galloping Goose Trail we found a "pavilion" (see picture above). When they have sufficient numbers of donations, the donors' names are engraved on a plaque which is then mounted on the panels of the pavilion. The names of those in whose memory donation have been made, are marked with a star.

*Kees and Neke Visser*

## Who is interested in hiking Bonnevier Trail in Manning Park?

I would like to hear from people who may be interested in a long day hike in Manning Park in September. Starting from Blackwell Peak parking lot (top of the mountain immediately north of Manning Park Lodge), the hike follows the Heather trail through sub-alpine meadows, then forks right on the Bonnevier Trail just south of Big Buck Mountain.

The trail is listed as difficult with the following description "25 km one way, 8-10 hours hiking time, 950 m elevation" and ends at the East Park Gate. This would mean pre-arranged carpooling back to Manning Park Lodge, and two nights accommodation (night before & after). Accommodation cost per person is approximately \$30 per night based on group of 6 (standard cabin), or 8 (deluxe cabin), food is extra.

Three years ago I met two volunteer trail wardens ages 72 and 69 just completing the hike by mid afternoon. They had started at the East Gate and gone the other way which I assume has more uphill elevation change. They were in good shape and good spirit, and spoke of a picturesque canyon along the way. I suggest a midweek time in September 2007, when colours are at their peak.

RSVP if interested: 537-5052.

*Ron Hawkins*

**Manning Park: view of the Cascades from Heather trail near the Bonnevier trail turn-off.** *Photo: Nieke Visser*



## Trails Report



The weather has been a very noticeable influence on most of our lives these past months and seems to be promising to continue to show its nasty side. Because of bad weather we have had to cancel a number of work parties planned to clean up the mess left by bad weather. However, over the year our volunteers have accumulated at least 186 person hours on various park trails, working in Ruckle Park, Mt. Maxwell, Jack Foster Trail, Fern Creek, and Dunbabin Park Trail, most locations on more than one occasion.

We are fortunate in having a fine group of eager volunteers who are much appreciated. If any others would consider lending their support to this worthy task, please contact Owen. There are many areas on our beautiful island which show the effects of the rain, snow, and wind and they need our help.

*Owen Benwell*

## BC Nature (FBCN) Report

I would like to thank Gil Schultz for his exceptional persuasive powers in extracting the results of the Christmas Bird Count on the 17th December by the 20th in time to pass on the necessary info, to Bird Studies Canada; something that always took me 3 weeks if not 3 months! 11,516 birds of 94 species were counted by 84 people.

I would also like to thank Nieke Visser for typing me copies of all the minutes of our meetings; now she can email them to Brian Radford.

Last year I attended the AGM of the FBCN in Courtenay together with 12 members of our Club. It would be nice if we could have a similar turnout for the next AGM to be in Vernon this spring (May 3-5). I also attended the Fall General Meeting in Coquitlam and Hu' King was at the Foundation Meeting the day before ours.

In addition, I went to three Vancouver Island Regional Meetings; Nieke went with me to one and Brian Radford to the last one. The next Vancouver Island Regional meeting is to be held on March 3rd at the Bowen Park Complex in Nanaimo from 11:30 to 15:00 hours. Future meetings will be on June 9th, and November 17th. Contact Brian Radford if you would like to go with him.

The AGM and Spring Conference will be in Vernon, on Kalamalka Lake from May 3rd to 6th, organized by the North Okanagan Naturalist Club.

I like to draw your attention to the following BC Nature camps and private organizations that are organizing work-

## Some notes on hiking

As hiking coordinator I like to define at what levels the hikers are enjoying their outings. Generally we are not afraid of ascents and descents. We usually follow trails, albeit sometimes vague, and occasionally we go off trail. Normally we meet at 9.45 at Art Spring and 15 minutes later we join the southerners at a convenient point from where we proceed to the trailhead. Depending on the length of the hike we finish between 1:30 and 3:00 pm. Of course, when we go off island we return usually a bit later. A packed lunch and drinks are a must.

Some hikers like to go steep and rough, while others prefer only trails. I try to accommodate both as much as possible. Each month we have two moderate hikes, which may be long but mainly over trails, and one strenuous one which may include steep ascends/descends, and/or partly going off-trail. The fourth is an off-island hike. Participation per event fluctuated between 10 and 30 last year. As coordinator I approach people to volunteer to lead hikes.

Recently a few new people have graciously volunteered to lead hikes, but more leaders are always appreciated. If you know a nice hike, or if your nick in the woods lends itself for some in-depth exploring, give me call at 537-5443, or send me an email: [cvisser@shaw.ca](mailto:cvisser@shaw.ca).

*Kees Visser*

shops or excursions:

- Okanagan Camp, May 6-11, has still space available.
- BC Nature Camp in Bamfield, Sept 7-12, still had space available as of Feb 21st.

Registration information for the above is listed in the last issue of the BC Naturalist.

*Continued on page 6.....*



**Burgoyne Bay from Mt Maxwell** Photo: Lynn Thompson

## Trailblazers: Charles Kahn



Born in Montreal some time ago in the last century, Charles gradually made his way westwards across Canada, arriving on Salt Spring Island in 1992. Once here, he dived head first into the island community, including the Trail and Nature Club. Here are some of his notable involvements and achievements:

- With Tom Wright he developed map brochures of the most popular hikes, which eventually were the precursor of his book *Hiking the Gulf Islands*. This guide first introduced me (and I am sure many others) to the wonders of the enchanted islands back in the early nineties while vacationing here.

- He was involved in three major land acquisitions: Manzanita Ridge and the trail connecting Toynbee Road to the Mt. Erskine trail system and ultimately to Collins Road, the Andreas Vogt Nature Reserve, and the new Mt. Erskine Provincial Park.

- With Phillip Grange, Ian Fraser, and a host of volunteers who built the signs, Charles installed almost 60 trail and beach-access signs all over the island and, when some mysteriously disappeared, re-installed them.

- He is a member of PARC's Trails Advisory Committee,

- He is the current board chairperson of Friends of Salt Spring Parks,

- Until this year, Charles was a warden at the Mill Farm Park Reserve for seven years for CRD Parks.

- Professionally, Charles has worked as an editor and writer of many educational materials for both the public and private sectors.

- Charles is a member of the Salt Spring Historical society and enjoys talking about the island's history.

- And finally, Charles leads a few hikes each year, both on- and off-island, dispensing bits of trivia to anyone who'll listen!

*Nieke Visser*

**Charles Kahn and Bill Harrington at Burgoyne Bay**  
*Photo: Lynn Thompson*



...from page 5...

- Nature Canada will hold its AGM in Wolfville, NS, from Aug 1 to 5. They are hoping to find a national coordinator for species at risk.
- BC Nature is looking for an Awards Chair and a Regional Director for Vancouver Island. Please check their website: [www.naturalists.bc.ca](http://www.naturalists.bc.ca) for more information.
- Whiskey Jack Nature Tours organizes excursions to the Yukon in June and July: see their website: [www.whiskeyjacknaturetours.com](http://www.whiskeyjacknaturetours.com).
- Cedar Beach Ocean Lodge on Thetis Island organizes workshops on marine natural history. For more information look up their website: [www.cedar-beach.com](http://www.cedar-beach.com)

And finally, a thank you to Brian for taking over BC Nature.

*Nancy Braithwaite*

### SALT SPRING GEOLOGY:



Above is a picture of a sandstone rock on Stewart Road in Peter Amell Park. This sandstone is from the Nanaimo group of the Upper Cretaceous (70 million years ago), and can be found all over the northern part of Salt Spring Island. It is a near-shore shallow marine deposit. The black lines in the sandstone are the filled-up burrowing traces of marine worms (or shrimps?).

### Past Trail Blazers

Lynn Thompson,  
Bill Harrington,  
Paul and Beth Ranney,  
Owen Benwell and George Hignell  
John Myers,  
Ian Fraser,  
Bob and Betty Ball,  
Dick and Chris Pattinson,  
Betty Kirk,  
Brian Radford.

### A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS:

Joan Calderhead  
Craig Chisholm  
Joanne Chisholm  
Nirmal Dryden  
Lee Evans  
Kirstin Flannagan  
Lise Fraser  
Alex Golder  
Michel Jutras  
Lorraine Lowry  
Virginia Midgett  
Alfred Morgan  
Gloria Murphy  
Scott Bradley  
Jane Petch  
Lyle Petch  
Mark Ritchie  
Paula Swan  
Diane Tremblay  
Jim Proctor  
Mary Waugh  
Sue Wood  
Nelly Weibel  
Meriel Lee  
Ron McBride  
Natalie Bonas

## 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: 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 BC Nature and Nature Canada.

**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](mailto:sspence@telus.net)

Tel: 537-2332

Salt Spring Trail and Nature Club  
PO Box 203, Ganges PO  
Salt Spring Island, BC, V8K 2V9  
<http://saltspring.gulfislands.com/lthompson/>

## Fall trip to the Shuswap

The Radfords discovered the Anglemont Lodge when visiting friends who live in the Shuswap area. In the fall of 2005, Brian and Marjie Radford, together with Ann and Hu' King, checked out some of the surroundings. They also talked to the owner of the lodge who gave them a good deal financially. Soon after they started planning this off-island trip.

This was not the first trip organized by the Radford/King company and, as in the past, this one too was superbly handled. In September 2006, they took 45 members on an unforgettable trip. The lodge was comfortable, dinner was taken care of by a caterer and served at the lodge. Breakfast was prepared by the Kings and the Radfords, and lunch was on the onus of the vacationers as was "happy hour".

The hikes, the walks, and the rambles were all top notch, though some were a bit far off (but no-one dared to complain on penalty of being the des-

ignated next trip organizer!) Even the weather held off until the last day, when everyone was on his way home, though the hikers had a short sleet/snow squall on Crowfoot Mountain!

Evening entertainment was taken care of as well: Lynn Thompson showed slides of the Berg Lake trail he had hiked the month before, and the other night Loretta Greenough gave an interesting presentation about the area's history.

In summary, this was a memorable experience. We learned a lot about the enormity of the areas available for hiking in our province while traveling logging roads of the area and viewing the vast expanses of wild terrain from mountain slopes. This trip can go into the Club's annals as a very successful one. A big thank you to Brian, Marjie, Ann and Hu'!

*Lynn Thompson*



Left to right: Brian, Sheila, Arlene, Ted, Barry, Ann, Yvonne, and Heather on Crowfoot Mountain during the Shuswap trip *photo Lynn Thompson*