



# Oystercatcher

Salt Spring Trail and Nature Club  
Newsletter  
Autumn 2017



*Lorrie and I stopped in Manning Park en route from Alberta and drove up to the Cascade Lookout. Lovely drive but the smoke in the Similkameen Valley converted the viewpoint into a locus for us to interact with chipmunks and this Clarke's nutcracker. We continued up to the end of the road climb to find a short, wonderful trail intended to see Alpine wildflowers. Unfortunately, it was a little late in the season.*

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## President's Point of View

**Sue Lehmann**

Welcome to the start of a new hiking season. I hope you were able to enjoy being outside over the summer, even with the danger of forest fires over much of the province.

For many people, the start of September is considered the beginning of a new year. It's a good time to think about safety on our Tuesday outings and when we're out and about on our busy lives.

A topic that often comes up at our Executive Meetings is participants leaving early without completing the hike. This could be because you have an afternoon appointment and need to get back early or because the activity is more difficult than expected. This is especially concerning if you leave the group and return alone. Your fellow walkers don't know if you have reached your car safely. Often, one of the other participants will go back with you just to make sure you don't get lost or have a medical emergency.

When choosing your activity, please consider if you have the time to finish. Sometimes, one of the other groups may be doing a shorter outing that may be more appropriate for your busy day. You can contact the leader or activity coordinator if you are wondering about the difficulty or length. Sometimes a "strenuous" walk may be more difficult than an "easy" hike. All three Tuesday outings are open to all members so feel comfortable about choosing whichever one best suits your time and activity level on any particular day.

This newsletter is published by the Salt Spring Trail and Nature Club, PO Box 203, Ganges PO,  
Salt Spring Island, BC, V8K 2V9. Editor: Gary Adams ([gafrad@shaw.ca](mailto:gafrad@shaw.ca))  
For information on the Board of Directors and weekly outings, please see our website: [www.saltspringtnc.ca](http://www.saltspringtnc.ca)

## Calendar of Events

**Tuesday, September 12, 2017**

### Blackberry Festival

The hiking season begins with the Blackberry Festival at Ruckle Park. Meet at noon in the Group Campground. Bring your lunch and a favourite blackberry goodie to share. Don't forget a bowl and a spoon. Short walks will be scheduled before lunch. Thursday, April 20, 2017

**Friday, September 29, 2017**

### Salt Spring Forum

The Salt Spring Forum presents In Defence of Science with Nancy Baron at Artspring from 7:30 to 9:30. Price is \$20 (\$15 for Forum members). Nancy Baron is one of the most influential defenders of science in the United States. She joins the Forum for an inspiring conversation about science, communications, and changing the world!

### 2017/2018 Seminar Series

The seminar series for this coming Trail and Nature Club year is shaping up. Dates are tentative, still to be confirmed, so look for future announcements. If anyone has some more suggestions for speakers please contact Sharon Sullivan- 653-0086.

September: not confirmed yet

October: Daniel Donneke - very experienced birder, our Audubon contact in Saanich for the Christmas Bird Count, and Chemistry Faculty Member at Camosun College in Victoria.

November: SSI Special Guest who has extensive hiking experience.

February: Anne Nightingale- may be coming back to talk about Birds in the Aleutian Islands specifically, "Attu Island"

March: Liz Bicknell - current President of the Outdoor Club of Victoria- "OCV Hiking Trip to Ireland in 2017"

April: Mary Hoff from Cowichan, "Hiking in Guatemala" with a little bit of Cuba thrown in.

All members are responsible for carrying their own emergency information when participating in activities. It is recommended that emergency information be placed in an easily accessed pocket of your daypack or you can purchase a bracelet or disc tag that is worn. These are always with you, even if you aren't carrying your daypack. Check out <https://www.roadid.com/> for some ideas. You might just need a ride home from a friend or it may be more serious and require a trip to Lady Minto, so both on-island and family contacts are recommended.

It's best to "Be Prepared"! Have a safe and enjoyable hiking year.

## Maude Island Trail (On Quadra Island)

*Charles Kahn*

Trail length: 10 kilometres return. Much longer if combined with Morte Lake.

Time required: 4 hours

Description: varied hike with some steep bits and good views over Seymour Narrows

Level: moderate. Strenuous if you take the bluffs route.

Access: take Walcan Road (5.4 kilometres north of the junction of Hyacinthe Bay Road and Cramer Road) for 3.7 kilometres until you reach a gravel pit. Follow the road opposite the gravel pit for about half a kilometre until you see a sign for road Q80. Turn right and keep on this gravel road for another 1.7 kilometres. Don't turn into any subsidiary roads (e.g., Q80A, B, or C). Turn left at the sign for the Maude Island trail and continue for another 0.7 kilometres. Park in the area at the main trail sign. Note that this trail connects with Morte Lake.







Cautions: the logging road to the trail access is rough in places but driveable, the trail can be slippery in wet conditions.

Start by walking the short trail from the access to meet up with the trail from Morte Lake (on your right). Turn left and follow the trail west (away from Morte Lake) to an intersection with an old logging road overgrown with alder and turn left again. Follow this old road south to a Forest Service Recreation Trail sign where you turn right. (Don't take the trail to the left, which enters private property and goes nowhere.) You will have walked 2.3 kilometres in about 35-40 minutes by this time.

In another 30 minutes, you'll reach another junction. I recommend the trail on the left which is easier and

continues straight on to Maude Island. The trail on the right climbs up the east slope of Mount Lolo and is steep, challenging, and sometimes difficult to follow. It crosses open bluffs and a couple of viewpoints. Look for flagging to direct you to a steep descent to the forest below where you reconnect with the lower trail. Both trails end up in the same place and you can do one going and the other returning as I did, but I'm not sure it's worth it as there are lots of good viewpoints beyond the junction of these two trails,

From the second junction of these two trails, you are only 1.6 kilometres (25 minutes) from the viewpoint on Maude Island. The trail is carved into a narrow rocky slope before ending up on an old hydro road which takes you to the causeway at Maude Island. Once on the island, follow another old road uphill to your right. Below the power lines look for a marked path to the viewpoint.

The trail follows an old logging road previously used to bring in the equipment to blast away Ripple Rock, a deadly hazard to shipping in Seymour Narrows in Discovery Passage until it was largely destroyed in 1958. If you time your arrival at Maude Island to coincide with a strong current, you will experience the boiling water created by the current around the remainder of Ripple Rock far below the surface of the water. The current here can run at up to 16 knots.



## **Totality – Simply, an Extraordinary Experience**

*Kathleen Maser*

Quite honestly, I would go anywhere in the world tomorrow to see again, the eclipse I've just witnessed.

We were seven in our party heading for the 'Path of Totality' in Oregon. We had prepared for the worst and had no illusions about how awful this could all be with unprecedented numbers of people travelling the same direction.

At the Peace Arch Border Crossing, the guard studied our passports for what seemed like a torturous amount of time before grunting, okay. We held our breath, driving away until out of ear shot where the whoops and cheers exploded. Then we braved the 8 hour journey through America along I5 Highway to Willamette Mission State Park and our spot in an overflow campsite.

Hello Ramblers, Walkers and Hikers!



Fall is in the air, the hiking, walking and rambling season is about to begin, and it's **time to renew your membership** in the Salt Spring Trail and Nature Club.

Please complete and sign the 2017-2018 **Membership Registration** form AND

2017-2018 **Assumption of Risk** form and return **BOTH** with your membership fee to the Membership Secretary before the **due date, September 30**.

**Membership fees are \$25.00 per person**, and cover the period September 1, 2017 to August 31, 2018.

For members **renewing** a current (2016-2017) membership **on or before the Due date, SEPTEMBER 30, 2016**, fees are discounted to \$20.00.

Cheques are preferred. Your fees, accompanied by **both** completed forms, may be placed in the Membership envelope in the club box at the Visitor Information Centre in Ganges, or mailed to the Membership Secretary at the address printed on the Membership registration form.

Printed forms may be picked up from the blue envelope in the Club Box at the Visitor Information Centre, or you may download and print forms from the Club website, <http://www.saltspringtnc.ca>

Remember to complete and sign **BOTH** forms.

Happy Trails!

Barry Spence  
Membership Secretary  
Salt Spring Trail and Nature Club



Then  
eclipse day arrived  
- a breathtakingly  
beautiful day with  
the clearest of skies,  
brighter than all three previous days.

7:00 am Eleven year old Kate shouts out, I'm so excited!

9:00 am Our chairs are set up in a nearby clearing and we trim down to shorts and light tops, apply sunscreen and carefully screen our various solar glasses for scratches, even pinholes.

9:05 It's beginning! The sun appears to be nibbled at, as though it was nothing significant, only a great round ball of cheese. Nibble, nibble, nibble.

9:49 It's less intense! The light's dimming. It's weird. It's cooling. This sets off a discussion and much speculation about how early man would have experienced this. Imagine not knowing this was going to happen. Imagine being far away from your family, alone, tending sheep perhaps. Weird and creepy as slowly the light grows dimmer.

9:51 We remember what the presenter had talked about at last night's astronomy talk. We race around, searching for shadows, and

That was when the fun surprises began.

Firstly, we were allowed to choose our campsite, and bedded down in a hundred year old walnut orchard, reminiscent of the Dordogne Valley in France! Secondly, most people did not choose the cool, stately orchard leaving us with wonderful space to play frisbee, read peacefully, pick blackberries, bird watch etc. Thirdly, we were able to swim in the cool, inviting Willamette River. Fourthly, we fell asleep every night to the vibrant sound of crickets, which began at dusk, not unlike the chorus frog serenade of home during our spring. Fifthly, we enjoyed a day on Oregon's extraordinary coast, amongst the sand dunes and haystack rocks where puffins and common murres are known to nest.



*Haystack Rock and Cape Kiwanda from the Big Sand Dune in Pacific City, Oregon. Photo by Pacific Crest Stock Photography.*



there they are everywhere, little eclipses! Even on the tent. Our neighbours see us. We point out this cool effect, then smile as one of them says, Oooh, ahh, let's just follow the Canadians around.

10:00 Duller and duller creeps the light, but the shadows are not changing. This is so bizarre. They are the same intensity, same length, solid shadows, it's all wrong.

10:07 Those shadows are really bugging me. Why don't they lose their dark colour?

10:11 We hear a cricket. Maybe the crickets will start up!! We look at each other in wonder.

10:14 It's really cooling. We're scrambling to put on clothing. The shadows are still oddly solid and strong. How bewildering. The ground is cooler.

10:16 I feel nervous. Yeah so do I. Me too.

10:17 The last minute. A dark energy seems to swoop down upon us with a palpable force like the cloak of a terrifying lord. Utterly overwhelming. Suddenly the sunset appears, 360°, all around us! A colour of blue, so pretty it hurts. The corona! We leap up clapping! Great bursts of spontaneous exclamations, shouting, whoops, jumping about. Wow, oh my God! Endless exclamations, some, just whispered. We look around, self-consciously, are we the only ones making such a noise? Oh no, all our neighbours are too, it's universal, utterly spontaneous and unstoppable. Gone the solar glasses. Are you sure it's safe to use the binoculars? We do so, cautiously, passing them around. It's so beautiful, especially the leaf like projections of light far beyond the corona, wispy, achingly lovely. Now Venus has popped out and there's Mercury! Binocs quick! And, then the diamond! Suddenly it's there – intensely dazzling, a white light, seemingly foreign to the sun. More whoops and shouts. It grows and grows, brighter than any thing imaginable. And then, we can no longer look. Come back I want to yell! I want to see it again. Silence descends. Incredible. Disbelief settles upon us.

10:44 People are drifting away.

10:54 Only a few holdouts left. The magnitude of the event overwhelms us. No words can describe its effect. Someone eventually speaks, this would have been utterly terrifying for early man.

11:35 We're still sitting. Watching, afraid to let it go. It's still there!

11:36 It's still there! Now all seven of us are saying, it's still there! 11:37 The moon pulls away. Please don't go.

## Tale of the Sea Spirit

*Bill Gardam*

Last Spring I lead a workshop walk on observation, on using the camera as a way of becoming more aware of our surroundings. I also told a story about the indigenous people's way of relating to the world which was more integrated than own dominant cultural way of splitting things up. Here is a more detailed version of that way of being in nature that I think we could learn from, could use as we wander through our world.

### Sea Spirit

The extra low tide today has exposed parts of this shore I have never seen. Pools of water, streamers of seaweed, and under all that, who knows what is waiting for the sea to return. I walk carefully down the



*Eclipse from Boulder, Colorado. Photo by Steve Albers.*

### **BC's Trans Canada Trail**

For people interested in discovering some new trails or keeping abreast of trail developments, the Trans Canada Trail has broken its site up by province. Page <http://trailsbc.ca/tct/trans-canada-trail> will provide general information on BC and a list of provincial regions. Click on the region of choice to see a list of specific trails. This can be a really useful pre-hike check as it also gives information on trail closures and hazards. At the time of writing a few trails in BC are closed due to fire danger.

I recently discovered that The Trans Canada Trail site manages a Cycling BC's Trans Canada Trail website. It focuses on trails for bicyclists but contains some good basic information on trails and the communities that serve them. It is located at <http://bctrail.ca/>.

slippery shoreline to a hump of rock at the water's impermanent edge that is usually a reef, breaking storm and ferry waves at higher tides.

I peer down into a big crack in the sandstone rock. Somewhere deep down I can hear the rhythmic surge of the restless sea and see some rocks wedged in the crack. Interesting! Something seems familiar and I stare down waiting for the answer to come to me. Oh, oh, I know what this has reminded me of, it was the size that had put me off. Here was a large version of a vagina. It was only my 'proper' sensibility that had stopped me from recognizing it right away. Once I could accept it however my mind started wondering where the rest was? Did legs reach out into deep water, was the belly close by, and did this giant form lie parallel with the shore, stretching into the bay just down the coast?

Standing here today I am reminded that this same rocky shore was the home and food gathering place of peoples for thousands of years. Long before the last couple of hundred years of settlers, focused on cutting down trees, making farms and mining minerals who may have clammed or fished the ocean, but the rocky shores would never have entered their cultural mind-set. They would not have noticed this giant sea woman cuddled up against the land.

Today, sea spirits are far from our conscious thought. We use analytical tools of science to catalogue and describe this inter-tidal zone and its flora and fauna, and that leads to a certain way of seeing the environment. Even the word 'environment' suggests that we are separate ourselves from that which surrounds us. Indigenous peoples of this land, however, had no separating words, just the world as us. Us the people, - the people being equally the rocks, the sea creatures, land flora and fauna, and the sky and those that fly. The sun, moon, stars, the blackness of night, the heat of the day, all one indivisible whole, including the mythical beings like this sea maiden cozied up to the living shore.

This shore may have been known by this geological feature, this evocative crack in a mound of rock, by the story, and that would have overlapped with other stories elucidating the living landscape. Those stories would have tied humans securely to the details of the world and if they dealt frankly with sex, the essential reality on which science and stories agree is that reproduction is central to all life.

Imagine a canoe full of people paddling along the coast in earlier times, seeing an ever changing shoreline. Each piece of it being associated with a story that told of human links with the whole, and the ability of the spirit to transform back and forth from rocks to creatures, to the supernatural and back again. How secure, how together that must have felt. Look they would say, there is the place where the spirit of the sea lies with the land, and they would smile and exchange knowing looks.

### **Lunch on the Shoreline**



*David Denning has managed to capture a gull consuming a sea star for our enjoyment.*

## Oystercatcher Circumstances

I have written this notice a half dozen times but someone always saved me at the last possible moment. As you can see by the white space, this issue is short on content. Why? Below are listed are several contributing reasons and some possible solutions.

1. Your editor, who is not a writer, willing and able to fill in the blank spaces, has run out of drive, influence, and ideas.

2. The regular contributors, who make up 75% of each issue, get tired, bored, or simply run out of steam. That is natural but when that happens, someone else has to step forward for awhile.

3. The readership is not engaged. Your editor and others have made numerous attempts to attract attention with column ideas, challenges, or ideas for reader input. I do not remember a single response to any of these. The newsletter has no follow through. Whether or not people enjoy each article, there seems to be no push to take the content in any particular direction.

4. The newsletter is too introverted. It might be better received if we had more outside contributors but face it, no one outside the group reads it so where is the incentive to submit articles to the Oystercatcher?

5. In the age of instant everything, a newsletter is just out of date and out of touch.

The obvious solution is to find a new editor with fresh ideas, new contacts, and a desire to see the Oystercatcher survive.

Some of our members with specific interests need to step forward and offer to put forth a series of articles. They don't have to be in consecutive issues but we need content.

If the readers want the Oystercatcher to survive they need to get involved. I get regular generic congratulations and thanks, for which I am eternally grateful but where are the web page reviews, interesting photos, hidden treasure hikes, comments that a story works or doesn't and why? Any newsletter needs focus, enthusiasm, and a sense of worth to survive.

We need those members with professional contacts to act as agents. If your friend, neighbour, or colleague has something to say that is relevant to the Club, then approach them to make a contribution.

It may just be that the newsletter format is passe. We now mail out only 8 copies so most everyone is online and that means instant. No one wants to wait three months for news. We could provide equal or better content with email, Facebook, and/or an expanded web page.



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