



sault
naturalists

Someone to Know

Spring- 2012 Newsletter Sault Naturalists of Ontario and Michigan



Introduction

Hello fellow Naturalists. This issue is one that will be quite a bit different from your usual birds, outings and pictures of marvellous mushrooms. I was invited to be the editor of this month's newsletter and in true Ron Prickett fashion have gone astray. I have invited Val Walker along just to share the blame. This issue will focus on fellow long time Naturalists who have made the Club what it is today. So in a way it is the story of a special subspecies of Homo sapiens, we will call Homo sapiens sapiens. This issue will share some insight into what is behind these faces of fellow Naturalists that you recognize at our programs and on our outings. Keep in mind there is not room in this newsletter for the 100 plus members' stories. It was a pleasure to do this. The birds, the bats and the boletes will be back in the next issue, although you may recognize some extraordinary fauna in this issue.



Gladys was interested in birds as a child growing up on St. Joe's Island. She met Gary Rahn, an acquaintance of Cliff's, who presented a slide show and convinced them to join. They joined in 1965, eleven years after the Club had formed. They were introduced to a group they did not know existed but matched their interests to a tee. They looked forward to Wednesday nights and Saturday outings; those days were kept sacred. Gladys would like to see shorter walks for seniors or others on Wednesday evenings. She would like the Club to have a more

environmental concern focus. She loves the shores of Lake Superior, and likes Pancake Provincial Park with its boardwalk, orchids and birds. Gladys loves Canada from sea to sea. She has enjoyed Egypt, Trinidad and Tobago for the birding and England because of her ancestry. Her favourite bird is the one she is watching at her feeder or on an outing. She likes the polished rocks on the shores of Lake Superior. Evergreens in winter, maples in summer

and flowering shrubs she enjoys. Whitefish on Fridays are the best and she is fascinated by bees and prefers her mushrooms either raw or cooked. She has enjoyed working with the Club, building trails and platforms. While staying at Pukaskwa their cat, which was not allowed loose in the park, became lost to them. They searched the camp embarrassingly asking everyone if they had seen a white cat. After searching in vain the cat was found under the sink in their trailer.



Dieter and Erika came from Timmins and found the Soo Nats in 1967 where people were very interested in plants and used their correct names. Gary Rahn, Bessy Stough, Gladys Wallwork, Eve Kersey and others made them welcome. They brought their two children along and the members took a genuine interest in them. They liked the companionship of people who are genuinely interested in nature. The Club has got much better after going through some rough times with some pettiness at meetings. Dieter and Erika would like to see more of the younger members participating in more physical outings with less hovering over an unidentified mushroom. They love the Hub Trail and Red Rock in winter with the red sandstone, ever changing shoreline and always something new to discover. Tofino and the South Shore of Nova Scotia have a fond place in their hearts with the variety of birds, endless beaches and especially the mixed flocks

of the September migration. The Greek islands, Crete in the spring, are a magnet to the hearts of Dieter and Erika. The Greek people don't harass the tourist, are honest and treat you with respect and dignity. Dieter likes the sound the upland plover makes and Erika enjoys the eastern bluebird. They love the call and the survival instinct of the coyote despite man's hatred. Puddingstone, the burr oak and the alternate leaved dogwood are fancied by them. Dieter loves to catch a pike; Erika the whitefish to eat. The Ichneumon wasp, the dragonfly and the chanterelle mushroom are some other favourites. One of Dieter's best memories was a trip to Drummond Island led by Bessy Strough on the Lake Huron shoreline and an inland lake finding the white *Habanera uniliscense*. Erika's memories are of Gary Rahn's trips to Maki Road and finding skunk cabbage and *Hepatica* at Gros Cap. A funny memory is while searching for the *Amerorchis rotundifolia* orchid in Michigan, Gladys instructed Cliff to get her, her rubbers. Erika recalls staying at a motel near Whitefish Point on a bird outing with Stella Houghton. Dieter said to Stella "if you could make a whisky bottle appear by magic" which to the surprise of everyone Stella did by pulling out a bottle from under her pillow. Dieter likes to see the meetings going the way they are; keeping them interesting but not formal. To everyone, accept yourself the way you are. Don't worry about what others think of you. Enjoy each day. Retire early and don't worry. Money is secondary to living.



Helen grew up on Spruce Street where she would play in the vacant lots filled with native chokecherries and serviceberries. Helen's sister Pat encouraged her to join the Club to meet Gary Rahn who was amazing with his knowledge of plants. Helen was impressed that nobody smoked. She joined the Club in 1975. The visiting rep from Michigan Audubon told the Club that they were the youngest looking group in the whole state. What would he say today? She likes the opportunity to go to different places, see different things, and like-minded people. She too would like to see more young people in the Club. She suggests that members bring a friend to an outing or a meeting.

She feels the Club is better than ever. She enjoys Upper Island Lake (her cottage). She likes being wherever she is. She likes the black-throated blue warbler because of its song "I am lazy". She likes the mountain holly, the taste of whitefish, the beauty of the luna moth and taste of the chanterelle mushroom. Among her favourites: the calypso orchid, the wood turtle, and the Ripple Rock at Desbarats. Helen's most frequently asked question is "Do you still go out with "Those People"? (The legends and mythology that surrounds this mysterious group that are the Sault Naturalists persists, subspecies *treehuggers* or *addlepat*. The debate rages on). Helen's favourite trip was to Pukaskwa Park to check out the Franklin orchid. Helen believes in Karma and wishes all good luck. The best things in life are free.



Cynthia always liked the outdoors, seeing new places and exploring, which is not always easy by yourself. Erika introduced her to the Club and she joined in the late 60's. She loves the opportunity to join others to explore new places. She would like to see some outings during the week but thinks the variety of the outings is great. Her favourite places around the Sault are Gros Cap, Lake Superior Park, Orphan Lake Trail, King Mountain and Robertson Cliffs in the fall for the scenery and the view. She likes Gros Morin Newfoundland, BC and the Rockies. Her favourite trip was the Pearl of the Orient Tour to Bali, Bangkok, Singapore and Hong Kong with Bali being the most beautiful. She likes the scarlet tanager, Bo Jay the cat, Mica Bay rocks, serviceberry (blooms early and nice fruit),

eating salmon, all butterflies, and the portobello mushroom which tastes much like the mushroom she ate as a girl. She's enjoyed skiing along Lake George this year and her fond memories are the happy birthday balloons at the Annual General Meeting and bushwhack skiing with Tom, Betty and Chuck off Red Rock Road. Her funniest outing was when some Naturalists from Southern Ontario joined them for a FON conference. As part of the excursion was a hike to Aubrey Falls, Cynthia and the Northern crew were armed only with bug spray whereas the Southern contingent came clothed from head to toe in regalia sufficient to withstand an attack of a swarm of African killer bees. To the Club, keep on going and keep up the good work. Make the best of your situation and always look at the bright side of things.



Tony Walker had been a member of the Duncaster District Ornithological society, the Royal Society for Protection of Birds, When he came to Canada he joined the Sault Naturalists. This was a step down from the Royal Society since there are only a few of us with royal blood. However, we are still a group with whom he shares his passions. He looked for the spirit of people getting together with a common following of all things nature and learning about the local birds. Tony noted that because of our migratory bird population in North America, we have the advantage of more colourful birds than in Britain. I guess the birds come back tanned or the diet of margaritas affects feather

colour. Just another reason to like where we live. Tony would like to see our Club get the younger generation involved to have the hands on experiences we enjoy each weekend. He loves the Gros Cap area and wishes we somehow could get the area back to a conservation area. He likes camping in Forilian National Park in Quebec and Holy Island in Northumberland in Britain for bird watching and beer drinking. His favourites are the Pallas's leaf warbler from Turkey, the harbour seal, the gorgeous agates of Lake Superior, the major oak in Sherwood Forest which harboured the merry band of Robin Hood, the salmon, the scarab beetle, the teddybear cactus which is far from cuddly and the *Amanita muscaria* ("the one with the red cap"). He enjoys going to Point Pelee and meeting fellow Club members where he shared a good laugh when Don Hall fell through the chair on one such trip. Tony would like to see more people involved in the Club and would like all members to spread the good word about the Club to others. Tony's philosophy of life is to avoid all excesses; to live your life in moderation.



Viv was 15 years old when she attended a FON (Federation of Ontario Naturalist) camp at Blueberry Hill. Andreas Caellgren, her minister, was President of the Club and attended the camp with his daughter Marie. Don and Vivian joined the Club in 1969. Erika and Dieter where there with their two small children (Ian and Tina) and everyone was excepting of the children and this impressed them. The openness of the Club to share their knowledge and support was also extended to Marjorie their daughter. This was very much appreciated by Vivian and Don. This openness is currently being offered to their grandson Christopher. They appreciate the opportunity to be outdoors with like-minded people

especially the birdwatchers in the group. They would like to see more activities directed to involve younger people. They love Center Island off the shore at Pumpkin Point for it is an amazing place for a large variety of shore birds. They like the beautiful Mijinemungshing Lake with its loons and eagles. Queen Charlotte Islands with their Haida history, solitude and old growth forest is appealing to them. The Alps with its clean air and temperature change with altitude and the Netherlands with its amazing biking, carry fond memories. Don likes the

American avocet and Viv the black and white warbler. The bobcat for Vivian and the river otter for Don are fun to watch and track. Puddingstone is their favourite rock. eastern hemlock for Don and the white cedar and beech around their home on Pumpkin Point road are enjoyed by Viv. The sudden appearance of the common carp in the spring intrigues Viv while the smallmouth bass has fond memories for Don who used to fish for this species as a kid. The dragonfly has a spiritual connection for Viv and the Ichneumon wasp is of interest to Don. Viv loves eating the common field mushroom, *Agaricus campestris* and Don likes the artist conk. Don has fond memories of the July 1 trip to Pukaskwa when Gladys had her birthday party. One of their fun times was when Gary Rahn brought the National Enquirer which had on its cover the story of a 10 year girl giving birth to a 25 pound gorilla. Viv also enjoyed the time when Dave went skinny dipping and asked Don to join him. She loved the expressions on all the folk's faces. Thanks Dave. Sitting around the fire and socializing at Pelee and our many outings also are forever memorable. Seeing the solar eclipse through Gary Rahns binoculars at Pelee was a great shared experience. Viv thinks life is a gift to be celebrated and shared. Don't miss a minute of living your life each day.



Ev traces her love of the natural world to her mother who brought her along on walks in the woods in search of edible plants for their family. Her mother collected berries canned them, gathered hazel nuts and chokecherries to supplement rationing during the Second World War. Ev remembers her mother gathering chicory to make coffee. She joined the naturalists in 1985 and her first outing was with Chuck Bosley leading and the future was sealed. Ev loves the camaraderie and the learning which each outing brings. Ev would like to see younger people coming into the Club to help carry the torch. She favourite spots are Albany Creek and Gros Cap in the area, the Queen Charlotte Islands and the backpacking and hiking in Borneo. She favourite bird is the chuckalucka, a bird resident on the border of Arizona and Mexico and the wily roadrunner that inhabits Baja California. The twiga (Swahili for giraffe) is her favourite mammal. Puddingstone rocks, the ponchiana (tropical tulip tree in Africa), the bumble bee and delicious Maitake mushroom in the Upper Peninsula are amongst her favourites in the natural world. She has fond memories of finding Franklin's orchid in Pukaskwa Provincial Park. She always laughs when she recalls the mythical Two Hearted River trip with the multiple capsizings of a particular canoeing duo. She would like members to be involved and volunteer in order to keep the Club alive. She would like all of us to enjoy all that nature offers as long as you can. Get out and enjoy.



Carl joined because he likes to get out and wanted to go on the many field trips accompanied by the experts in different disciplines of knowledge of the local natural world. Likes rambling on the Niagara escarpment at Maple Hill (called the 'Atrium' by the Sault Naturalists); Mica Bay on Lake Superior and Pendills Lake in Michigan. The exotic sights, smells and the wildlife of the Amazon rain forest, especially the song of the oropendula bird are some of Carl's favourites. He likes *Specular hematite*, the fabled South American candiru fish, the Ichneumon wasp and the *Morchella esculenta* (yummy yellow morel). The grand American chestnut (*Castanea dentate*), the lynx, Franklin's lady slipper orchid (*Cypripedium passerinum*) are amongst Carl's favourites. His favourite birds are the 115 or so species of New World warblers. Carl would like the meetings to start earlier for the early morning risers, and would like to see more new members. Sue Meades' botany outings, Gerry Bennet's geology outings, Pukaskwa National Park., Orphan Lake Trail hikes, late season skis at Red Rock Beach and many more are imprinted in his memory. The most humorous was the ill-fated attempt to drive to Pendill's lake via the "back way" in Chuck Bosley's unstoppable Ford, four wheeling, Explorer. Circumstances resulted in Carl having to walk out to fetch a come-along and some spades to extricate the aforesaid unstoppable vehicle. Carl likes to paraphrase the saying of Mark Twain, "To receive the full value of joy you must have someone to share it with". As a club we share our delight in the natural world with each other and receive full value.



John has always had an interest in outdoor activities since his days at grad school in Colorado. He was influenced by the writings of Alex Smith's "Field Guide to edible mushrooms" and Yule Gibbons' "Stalking the wild Asparagus". These books ignited the internal fires for John to go out and stock the woods hunting for his own edible plants. One of his many experiments found that Japanese knotweed makes a good substitute for rhubarb pie. He joined the Soo Nats because they had similar interests and he was able to extend his range of knowledge. Maureen got involved with the Club through Betty Nassoiy and met John. The rest is history. John sees the group as a super annulated group which needs to recruit a younger cohort. His interests in mushrooms means he never tires of those outings so centered. The interesting mushrooms, flowering and edible plants make the Dunbar Forest one of John's favourite haunts. Mission Loop (by the Big Bear), Tahquamenon, Monocle Lake, Naomikong are other places where you can find the edible fiddle heads in May and the Marsh marigolds in abundance. He loves roving in the mountains of Colorado, the Big Sur coast of California, North of San Francisco where Sir Frances Drake landed, Olympia Park and the Dalai in Alaska. The cultural experience in Rome

Italy has fond memories for John and Maureen. The great grey owl, ermine, moose, limestone because of the caves and sink holes created, the majestic white pine and sequoia, salmon for eating, brook trout for fishing are some of his favourites. The chemistry of the bioluminescence of the firefly intrigues John. The chanterelle, the king bolette and porcini are his favourite mushrooms. . One of his favourite funny memories is a Dieter Ropke write up of an overnight trip to Wilderness Park and the accusation of excessive snoring by an individual. Dieter pointed out in the *Wake Robin* that the accused's snoring was rather good because of its even, predictable rhythm; however, the complainant had a disturbed snore rising in staccato. No names were mentioned in the article. Another fond memory of the group is the boat trip to Michipicoten Island; camping out and searching for agates and other natural wonders. The work that the Sault Naturalists do is very important since it is connected with the "real" world outdoors. It is imperative that all members participate. Volunteering is important: to lead outings, write outing reports, to hold office, be Observation secretary or Environmental Action person. Think about making contributions to the Wiki, or the Newsletter. Bring friends along to meetings or outings. As in "Under the Tuscan Sky" the comment by a student after viewing a spectacular view of Lake Trasimene, the "It's , uh, like nature", John is sobered by the fact that so many people are so far removed from the beauty of nature and they are ill equipped to appreciate the beauty. Modern life and its trappings create a barrier between us and the natural world. We lose a feeling of place. We lose sufficient attachment to the earth and respect for our environment such that we do nothing to preserve it. So called "development" or "improvement" projects are usually nothing of the kind. John believes that we inhabit a beautiful and bountiful planet and that we have a moral responsibility to do what we can do to help keep it that way.



Dave joined the Club because of his desire to go on the field trips. Gail, as a member of the FON (Federation of Ontario Naturalists), led canoe trips when she was younger and living in Southern Ontario. Gail and Dave met on one of these trips and the rest is history. Both Dave and Gail were members of naturalist clubs before they came to the Sault. Dave is drawn by the diversity of people and Gail by getting out in nature. Dave would like to see more environmental action from the Club and Gail would like to see more nature in the outings. Dave would like to see all members take an active role in the Club. Their favourite spot in the Sault area is their bush because it is an 'asshole free zone' and we all know how difficult these zones are to find. In

their bush, Dave sees the earth working as it should and he is witness to the workings. The Arctic, Whitehorse, Khutzeymateen BC are their favourite Canadian spots because of the peace and the colour that is there. The Amazon River is favoured because of the power it holds. Kirtland's warbler and raven are Dave and Gail's favourite birds. Dave favours the caribou and the peacock bass. Gail favours the playful otter, and her fish fried. They both find ripple rock intriguing because it is forever emblazoned with a snapshot of time during the formation of the

rock. The oyster and death angel are their favourite mushrooms. Dave likes the praying mantis because the end of its life (for the male) is as spectacular as the beginning of its life. Like many of us, the male praying mantis often loses his head when in love. Dave remembers the ski trips to Tahquamenon and Gail the trip to Pictured Rocks with Greg Bruff. Dave remembers drinking wine at Red Rock with Chuck grinning like a Cheshire cat that had swallowed the canary. Betty's impromptu talk delivered on top of the commemorative rock describing the life of Chassis Oswald (former Michigan Governor) and Stella Nova on Sugar Island was fun. We need more people from each to do the small things to help move all great things along. Learn to love the question because the answers are few and far between (Rainer Maria Rilke).



I always get that look from the border guard when I say I am going on a Sault Naturalist outing. I can see the wheels turning and the momentary thought, "Did he say Naturists?" I then get that glance that seems to be looking at me in a different light. I smile and carry on as I am sure all Naturalists and Naturists would do. I thank the executive for the opportunity with Val Walker to do this newsletter. It was a very enjoyable experience talking with some of our seasoned ☺ members of our organization.

I wish to challenge the members of our group to be as active as you can. In your own way make sure the environment and all things in the biosphere have a voice to all the decision makers in the world. We all must become experts in understanding environmental vocabulary. What is risk tolerance, risk assessment, sustainable growth, toxic levels, global warming and population dynamics. We need to be the constant voice for the Kirtland's warbler, the polar bear, the monarch butterfly and the little brown bat. We need to learn as much as we can in order to raise the issues, ask the tough questions and above all vote for a government that has one foot on the economic wheel of our nation and one on the sustainability of our environment. Without fairness and equality we cannot hope to save the dwindling forests which are the winter residence supporting the fantastic migratory monarchs that we all enjoy leisurely fluttering about in our backyards. It is the monarch that has shown us that we can no longer just address the needs of our local environment but we must also be aware of ecosystems many thousands of kilometers from our shores. We must become more connected as environmentalists to make the concerted and monetary contributions that will be required to save the forests of the Amazon, the forests everywhere and to promote a sustainable environment not only locally but globally. While we move aggressively forward, let us still plant milkweed in our gardens, wear a sweater on cool nights, count birds at Christmas and hang our clothes outside to dry. Smile and take a hike ☺

Ron Prickett