

Meeting Minutes
March 16, 2009



Present were: Jerry Azevedo, Michael Durkos, Pam Freir, Mike Hoebel, Sabina Iseli-Otto, Libby McClelland, Brian Mitchell, Lisa Pettit, Roger Pettit, Gloria Schmidt, Paul Winkler.

At 1 PM only a couple of the Naturalists had shown up, and they sat morosely around the table staring off into a halcyon past, but then another Naturalist arrived, and then a couple more were spotted in the parking lot making their way jauntily towards the room, and soon the lot was full of cars and the sounds of doors slamming and minor scrapes, and the room was full of boisterous Naturalists elbowing each other and arguing about how to band stork babies without falling down the chimney and calling for more lager from the back, and then Sabina tossed a bag of cookies to the middle of the table, and it was like old times, the clawing and the squirrel-stuffed cheeks, and then it all got quiet, but for the munching, and with sentimental tears in their eyes the Naturalists got straight to business...

1. 'Active Page' article: After pocketing a few cookies, some Naturalists tried to sneak out, but the door was locked, and they quietly returned to the table, where a roll call was in progress, clockwise, as is the tradition, for each Naturalist to commit to writing (or coercing someone else to write) one of the Naturalists' articles through the rest of the year. Each person had a chance to plead an exemption, with the rest of the group rating the excuses on a 9-point scale. There was squirming and sweating and small tantrums, but none of the excuses held sway, and the secretary recorded these commitments in the ledger: Brian – October, Roger – July, Gloria – November, Pam – September (ghost written by Paul LeBlond), PaulW – December, Libby – August, Mike – June, Sabina – May (not even the bribe of cookies saved her).
2. Hummingbird banding: With the dark cloud of winter still hovering over Galiano, the hummingbirds have holed up somewhere down the coast of Washington, huddled around a small campfire, toasting tiny marshmallows and swapping stories about late snows and the 'hand of god'. But by next Monday, they may have made it this far, the foolhardy ones at least, and Mike has arranged the first banding session to start then at Betty's at 7:30 AM.
3. Bird walks: Mike had planned the first bird walk of the year for April 11, but he got impatient – life is short! – so it's been moved up to April 4, Montague Harbour, 8:30 AM. The walks will continue for the subsequent seven Saturdays.
4. Speaker series: Reasoning that most Naturalists are analphabetic, the group proposed to have people come and share natural history information through an oral tradition or hand signs. The first of these speakers or signers will be scheduled for a Sunday in May, and the topic will have something to do with wildflowers. Mike will make the arrangements, and the island will be invited, with no proof of literacy required at the door.
5. Spring Wingding: On April 12th the Naturalists will rise from the dead of winter and celebrate spring with their signature annual event: the Wingding. Around the meeting table, the discussion heated up as the Naturalists tossed out ever-more-fanciful ideas for displays and demonstrations. In a lull, Mike pulled out a prototype of a what he claimed to be a birdbath, though as many

pointed out, there was no water and he proposed drilling holes in the thing, which would seem to drain out any water that did get in there. So “bath” might have been a euphemism. He reasoned that the idea is to keep kids and their families busy at the Wingding, so it only had to look as if it might work. Everyone agreed, and Roger said he would make up some 15 kits, labeled ‘Birdbath’ so people will know. The other display that invoked a lively discussion was “Poo Corner”, as everyone had their favourite poo story to tell. One litigation-minded Naturalist, likely originally from the States, cautioned that the display be kept well away from the kitchen, where Huguette and her crew will be preparing the savory lunch. And some argued that the idea to have chocolate-covered raisins on the welcome table might be considered entrapment for children who would later visit “Poo Corner”, while others noted that every childhood involves the accidental or intentional ingestion of candy-like poo, seldom to any permanent ill effect, and besides where are the parents in all this. It was decided to let kids be kids. And observe the effects with interest.

6. Shorekeepers project: With the longer days and low tides of spring not too far away, the Naturalists are thinking about the Shorekeepers work on Galiano. As last year, the idea is to return to the study sites at Montague Harbour and Cable Bay. Someone suggested this work is best done at low tide. Jerry reported that the lowest tides are just after noon on May 25th and again on June 23rd, and since those dates were sufficiently far off that no one had to commit to them, it was agreed that the Naturalists theoretically do the Shorekeepers monitoring on those two days. Everyone pretended to mark their calendars.
7. Next meeting time and place: Monday, April 20th at 1 PM, Activity Centre.

With the room starting to overheat from the press of so many bodies, the Naturalists adjourned, and after a short scuffle over the last few cookies they filed out, off in search of poo or to measure the size of the remaining snow patches or to write Italian love sonnets or whatever Naturalists do when they’ve had too much sugar.

Corrections and comments to:

Jerry Azevedo
galianonaturalists@gulfislands.com