

Galiano Naturalists

Meeting Minutes August 9, 2004

Present were: Jerry Azevedo (with apologies for arriving late), Mike Hoebel, Louise Decario, Linda Millard, Susan Stone, Brian Mitchell, and Richard Nathans (welcome).

1. Report from the “species of the month” project committee: The August story on butterflies made the front cover, thanks to Mia’s lovely drawing. The September story on yellow jackets, submitted this week, doesn’t have a ghost of a chance of matching that success and will be lucky to be buried deep in the bowels of the ‘Page’. Following up on a rumour that Odin had volunteered to write the October article, Jerry called Odin after the meeting and put the question to him directly. He claimed that Pam had coerced him, trapping him at a blazing hot landing and not relenting until he agreed, but when I pointed out that everyone knows how sweet and docile Pam is, he admitted that he might have been mistaken about the “coercion” part. By the time of our next meeting, he’ll have an article on the great blue heron that flies by his house each evening at sunset.
2. Report on the “Shorekeepers” program: Louise reported that the monitoring project at Cable Bay could use a few more quadrates. Volunteers are needed, especially those with skills in identifying the creatures found under the rocks. Call Carolyn Canfield if you can be of use. The date for sampling hasn’t been determined, but a long discussion of tides and the pull of the moon, which Mike demonstrated by holding aloft a handy apple while he circled the room three times, suggested that the lowest tides (+1.7) will be late in the month, on the 28th and 29th. As we might want to take the samples sooner, Sharon will trudge out to the Bay on the 15th and see what a 2.7 tide will do for us.
3. Report from the “Passport” project committee: Unusually taciturn, Mike had nothing to report on the project. Those of you who at the last meeting volunteered to help Mike on this project are respectfully encouraged to give him a call.
4. “Nature walks” project: It was at this point that Brian, in his quiet way and clutching a copy of ‘Sky and Telescope’ for strength, offered to lead a group in stargazing. He painted a sweet picture: the three planets of Mercury, Venus, and Saturn together in the eastern sky, one of them cupped gently in the horns of the new moon, Andromeda in there somewhere perhaps. And when would this be? Enthusiasm was building in the room. In the morning of the 12th, a Sunday. At what time? An hour before sunrise. Is that reasonable? Brian asked. Reasonable?! Mike walked out in disgust. Then Louise mentioned pancakes, and she just might have saved her husband’s life. Everyone calmed down and started talking about pancakes. We could avoid the early rising by simply coming the night before and spending the night on the deck. We could have real maple syrup. We could barbecue sausages. Yes, this was the sort of “nature walk” everyone was dreaming of. And so it was decided, not by vote but by unanimous acclaim, that we’d have a stargazing event that included a slumber party and a potluck breakfast. The group would be limited to 15. Jerry would get a notice in the ‘Page’ and maintain a sign-up sheet. We’ll all bring our jammies. Brian can talk about the stars all night while the rest of us snore and dream of pancakes. (By the way, “an hour before sunrise” on the 12th is 5:45 AM.)

5. “Course for field artists” project: Though neither Sheila nor Libby McClelland could attend this meeting to verify his information, Jerry reported that Libby was keen to facilitate a field workshop on nature drawing. After the meeting, Jerry talked with Libby, and she is hoping to do something this month. She’ll check her schedule and propose a time. Meanwhile, those of you who want to participate in such a workshop, please send me an email so that we have a better idea of the interest out there.
6. Other business: We’d all wondered what was in the bag, of course, though we on Galiano aren’t the type to pry. The paper bag had been sitting in front of Richard all through the meeting. Nobody said a word. But we were thinking: Too big for a lunch, too small for a dead deer, no sign of movement that would indicate a small raccoon. We hung around after the main business was finished, while Mike pulled out the old hummingbird sheets again to kill time, all of us waiting expectantly. It was infuriating, really. Then Richard reached into the bag. We all flinched. He pulled out an old wasp nest, which he’d found on the path to the outhouse. (He said he’d also found some fragments of layered wasp paper, and we assumed he’d used those.) We all looked at the galleries of cells and pulled out a hand lens to try to identify the type of wasp and told more stories about getting stung. And then Richard put the nest back in the bag, saving it to torment other people. And with that, we left the room.
7. Next meeting time and place: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 13th at 1 PM at the Activity Center (if available, or at another venue to be announced).

Corrections and comments to:

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