

Galiano Naturalists

Meeting Minutes October 4, 2004

Present were: Jerry Azevedo, Mike Hoebel, Louise Decario, Brian Mitchell, Kate Emmings, Laurene Stefanyk, Cathy Holahan, Libby McClelland, Odin Scholz (in disguise).

The meeting got out of hand early on. Cathy pulled a skull out of a box and started waving it around. Jerry said she was out of order, that there was no mention of skulls on the agenda. "Well, add it now," she told him. And then Brian and Louise arrived with a box of mushrooms, and things got silly.

1. Report from the "species of the month" project committee: Cathy put her skull away and reported soberly that she'd finished her article on bats for the November issue. She's working on a drawing. For December, Mike suggested an article on holly. One has to admire the guy's *chutzpah*, offering to write about an invasive, black-listed weed in a meeting of naturalists (some of us hissed; Odin told Mike to meet him out behind the school), but Mike assured the group he would make sure everyone understands the evils of this pretty plant with the sweet red berries that winter birds love to eat (and then spread into our forests, where some of us spend an afternoon in mortal combat with the bush). Looking up from his astronomy magazine long enough to catch the last half of this conversation about holly, Brian offered to loan Mike his personal copy of the video for "research".
2. Report from the "Passport" project committee: Surprising the group with his restraint, Mike passed around a mock-up of a "Guide to Galiano's Natural Areas", on a single sheet. It looked so good that we were all ready to forgive him for the holly business. We discussed the next steps. Kate would talk to Keith about working up a map. Mike will send around the text for review. Kate will look into printing costs and the possibility of getting a grant from Parks and Rec. We'll need to find someone with graphics design experience to give some advice on the layout and design. The project seems on track for a spring release. Odin asked about the purpose of the guide, and Jerry paraphrased our discussion from the June meeting, which is quoted here from the original: "The group agreed that our purpose is to instill an appreciation for Galiano's rich and rare natural ecosystems by opening a window into those natural areas, with hope that appreciation will lead to a sense of connection, stewardship, and protection (or something along those lines). We will keep this overarching purpose in mind as we write."
3. "Nature walks" project: The appearance just this day of revolutionary leaflets about the mushroom festival threw our discussion about the Thanksgiving GN events into temporary disarray, but when we settled down, we figured out that we could participate in most of the weekend's activities, which seem to be more or less as follows:
 - Saturday, 8:30 – Dick Chase's geology walk at Montague
 - Saturday, 11:00 to 3:00 – Blackberry Tea at the South Hall
 - Saturday, 2:00 – Mushroom walk (unconfirmed location: Montague)
 - Sunday, 10:00 – Mike's bird walk at the turnaround near the cemetery
 - Sunday, 11:00 to 3:00 – Mushroom Festival at the South Hall(Note that this week's Sunday nature drawing class is deferred to next week.)

Brian reminded us about the eclipse event on October 27 and suggested we settle on a

time. The closest we could come up with was “dark”, or maybe “sunset”. And, as usual, the conversation turned to food. We’re already committed to bringing “moon-themed desserts”, but someone suggested finger food as well. We were all hoping no one would bring up the cliché of pizza, but the usually diplomatic Mike chortled, “Moon. Pizza. What could be more natural?” Only a severe look from Louise stopped him from breaking into “That’s Amore”.

When the possibility of November walks was raised, the room was uncannily silent until Mike suggested he could do another bird walk. Thank goodness for birds, and Mike. Let’s think about other possibilities too.

4. “Course for field artists” project: Libby reported that the drawing class for our group is getting three to five participants each Sunday. Some wag suggested we should have an exhibition of these drawings, but we’d need a psychologist to explain what each of the drawings is supposed to represent. Libby’s next course, open to all islanders, starts October 24.

5. Other business:

Somebody said something about Peter Ronald. That’s all the notes say, just the name “Peter Ronald” scrawled in the margin. If it were important, wouldn’t we all remember what this was all about?

Brian or someone else that looked like Brian suggested we sponsor a photography exhibition on the theme of Galiano’s natural environment. We could include a photo contest for kids too. We all thought that a grand idea. After the first of the year, Brian will set it up. We’ll add this to the agenda for future meetings.

And was it something about the rainy fall weather that brought out the ghoulishness in us? Did one of us really suggest putting a request in the Active Page that islanders bring us their roadkill so that we could make skeletons? And who’s idea was it to have a Bone Festival, where people could exhibit their collection of bones and bring in bones for identification and buy copies of *The Galiano Naturalists Cook Recently Dead Wildlife?*

Laurene confessed to pulling the legs off a praying mantis. (She wasn’t very old at the time. The praying mantis didn’t get any older.) And as if we’d all been waiting these long years for catharsis, each of us rose in turn and told tearful stories of frog’s eggs tossed at passersby, of insects trapped and suffocated in glass jars, of baby ducks tossed in the air like shuttlecocks to “teach them how to fly”, and other crimes against nature. Afterwards, feeling embarrassed and not knowing what else to do, we each drifted off in search of a priest or therapist.

6. Next meeting time and place: MONDAY, November 8th at 1 PM at the Activity Center. (We’ll try alternating the 1 PM and 5 PM times to give everyone a chance to attend at least some of the time.)

Corrections and comments to:

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Addendum from Cathy: “Peter Ronald is with the Georgia Strait Alliance and may be in touch with the Galiano Naturalists as part of his job to keep up with island activities. I met him on the

CPAWA trip and he had 2 recent copies of the Active Page. I pointed out your article on yellow jackets and told him briefly about our organization.”