



The Honker

Newsletter of the South Okanagan Naturalists' Club

July 2017

Happy 55th Birthday SONE!

In This Issue

President's Report

Coming Events

2017 Field Trips

Conservation Report

The Heavens

World Wildlife Day

Laurie Rockwell memorial

Great Horned Owls

Nature Trust Project

Vaseux Lake Bird Blind

South Okanagan Naturalists' Club
PO Box 23050, Penticton BC V2A 8L7
Website: <http://southokanagannature.com>



Mission Statement:

To provide a dynamic local focus for experiencing the natural world of BC and for promoting its conservation.

Membership: Individual: \$30; Family: \$40 (membership year is Sept 1 to Aug 31)

Monthly meetings are held on the 4th Thursday of each month from September through May (except December) at 7PM in the basement hall of the Penticton United Church, 696 Main St. (corner of Main and Eckhardt). Please bring your own coffee mug. New members always welcome.

Board meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of the month. Please contact any Executive or director if you wish to add an item to the agenda.

Our birding, wildflower, geology, social group meets every Thursday in the north parking lot of Cherry Lane mall (northeast corner of Warren & Atkinson) at 9AM (except in the summer at 8AM). Be prepared to car pool. Trips range from 'car birding' to easy strolls to occasional more moderate hikes. Bring a lunch and dress for the weather. Everyone welcome. For more info contact Charmaine Foster or check out the birding page on the website.

Field Trips are generally held in the spring and fall and may be all day or occasionally overnight. Check the website for details. Please notify of the trip leader if you intend to participate. Dress for the prevailing weather conditions, wear appropriate footwear, bring a lunch and drinking water. Pets are not appropriate for field trips or Thursday outings.

SONC is a federated club of BC Nature and is affiliated with Nature Canada and the Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Alliance.

Executive Officers:

President: Bob Handfield, 250 497 8702; soncbob@shaw.ca

Vice-president: Lisa Scott, 250 404 0115; ecomatters@shaw.ca

Past president:

Treasurer: Colleen Emshay 250 490 0952; emshayco@outlook.com

Secretary: Marlene Hikichi 250 494 8731 mhikichi@shaw.ca

Directors:

Christine Andersen (*ex officio*) chrisko8517@gmail.com

Myrna Bosomworth; myrnabosomworth@yahoo.ca

Gerry Buzzell 250 328 8143; grbuzzell@gmail.com

Wendy Stewart 250 487 1442 wendyastewart@shaw.ca

Jim Turnbull 250 496 4195; jkpturnbull@gmail.com

Newsletter Submission Dates:

Please submit material for publication by the 15th of January, March, June, September and November. Any item relevant to the Club is welcome as are photos taken by club members.

Coordinators/Representatives:

Archivist: Jim Ginns 250 492 9610; ginnsj@shaw.ca

Conservation Committee:

Jim Bryan 492 0312 jebryan@shaw.ca

Gerry Gilligan gerrygilligan@yahoo.com

Brian Horejsi b2horejsi@shaw.ca

Jim Turnbull (for contacts see Directors)

BC Nature Rep: Alex Bodden; a.bodden@shaw.ca

Field Trips:

Charmaine Foster 250 493 1772; gramfos@shaw.ca

Wendy Stewart wendyastewart@shaw.ca

Alex Bodden a.bodden@shaw.ca

Honker Editor: Bob Handfield; (for contacts see Executive)

Honker mail-out: Evalyn Wood; 250 487 7577; eleven21@shaw.ca

Meeting programs: Anthea Bryan; 250 492 0312; adbryan@shaw.ca

Membership Secretary: Christine Andersen, chrisko8517@gmail.com

Publicity: Mits Hikichi; mhikichi@shaw.ca

Refreshments: Jean Brosseok; 250 492 4588; jeanbrosseok@shaw.ca
Jim Shaver Jim_Shaver@shaw.ca

S Okanagan Habitat Garden: Marlene Hikichi temporarily

Thursday Birding: Charmaine Foster (see above)

Remember that September is membership renewal time.

President's Message

By now most of you know that Club member and Secretary Margot Henny passed away in April. She will be missed by us all but most of all by the orphans around the world who benefited from Margot and Olaf's incredible generosity. A memorial appears elsewhere in this issue.

We do need a new Club secretary to fill in for Margot. Marlene Hikichi has been filling in on a temporary basis. Since Marlene was our secretary for many years she knows what it is all about so if you think you might like to help out in this position you can get more information from Marlene. Please give consideration to helping out as the Club cannot function without volunteers stepping forward. We have 115 members—surely there is one amongst us who can devote a few hours each month to helping the Club.

As previously announced, the BC Nature membership voted at the AGM in Lillooet in May to approve the first fee increase in many years.. This means that the amount the Club remits to BC Nature will be increasing by \$2 per member. Since we are currently operating just about on a break-even basis (not counting special fund-raisers and special donations) the Board approved an increase in our membership dues. The general membership unanimously approved the increase at our May meeting. This is the first increase in SONC dues since 2011 and as you all know, nearly everything has gone up in price in that time including the hall rental, postage, printing costs for the Honker, etc. So beginning with membership renewal in September single members will pay \$32 (a \$2 increase) and families will pay \$43 (a \$3 increase).

For 55 years SONC has played an important role in many conservation activities in the south Okanagan and has provided leadership in many instances. Many volunteer organizations do not last even close to half a century (let alone more) so past members can be justifiably proud of the Club's accomplishments. It is up to us, the current membership, to continue this proud heritage and ensure that the Club is better off when we leave than it was when we first joined.

The committee looking at hosting a nature photo contest in celebration of our 55th birthday decided it was not practical to try to hold it this year. Instead the nature photo contest will be held in the spring of next year. The contest will be open to all residents of the RDOS; and photos submitted must have been taken within the geographic limits of the RDOS. There will multiple categories and we already have more than \$2,000 in prizes as well as significant recognition for the winners. We expect ultimately to have closer to \$3,000 in prizes so you want to be taking lots of photos over the next nine months. The Penticton Museum has agreed to host a three month exhibition of all the winning and honourable mention entries beginning in September of 2018.

Finally, congratulations to Club member Alex Bodden who became President of the Penticton-Okanagan Chapter of Rotary on July 1st.

Bob Handfield

Coming Events

September 28—SONC monthly meeting. Speaker to be announced. Please bring cash or your cheque book to renew your membership for the 2017-2018 year.

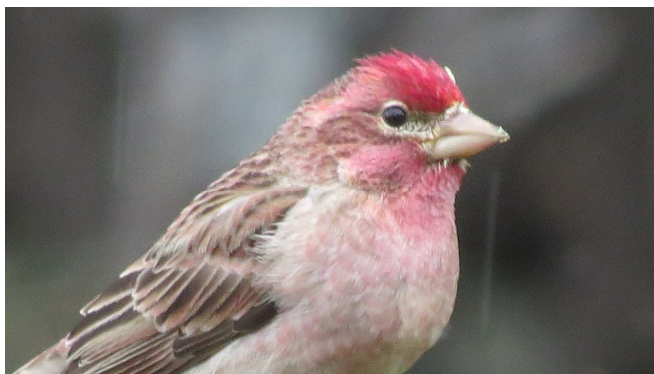
October 26—SONC Annual General Meeting. Speaker to be announced.

November 23—SONC monthly meeting. Gerry Buzzell will give us an illustrated tour of Iceland based on their recent trip in September of this year.

Spring of 2018—SONC Nature photography contest.



Vice-president Lisa Scott presents Orville Dyer with the BC Nature Recognition Award for his outstanding contribution to our understanding of wildlife of all types in the south Okanagan. To read about all that Orville has done in his career as a wildlife biologist check out the nomination letter on our website.



Cassin's finch. The male is easily distinguished from the male house finch by the lack of stripes on the breast and the almost crest-like red on the top of his head. My backyard had an extraordinary number of these finches this spring and early summer and almost zero house finches—a complete reversal of most years.

Photo by Bob Handfield

SONC 2017 Remaining Trip Schedule

Date TBA	Mt. Kobau, Oliver	Wendy
Aug 10	Manning Park	Alex
Sept 10	Hedley, Mascot Mine	Charmaine
Oct 17	Golden Mile, Oliver	Charmaine
Alex Bodden	a.bodden@shaw.ca	
Wendy Stewart	--- wendyastewart@shaw.ca	
Charmaine Foster	--- gramfos@shaw.ca	

Further details on each trip will be emailed to members a few weeks prior to the date.

Conservation Committee Report –June 2017

As many readers may remember from the March Honker we committed to write a letter to MLA Dan Ashton indicating some of our issues about the SOS National Park proposal of Environment Minister Polak and ask him what he would do to promote the Park if re-elected. Doreen Olson and I met with Dan and delivered our letter to him in his office. Doreen and I explained to him the importance of including Area 2 as part of the National Park proposal and of joining Areas 2 and 3 to make the whole Park contiguous. Dan seemed to listen to our concerns and said that he still supports the creation of a National Park as he did when Mayor and Chair of RDOS. In response to our questions about the conflict between his personal position on the Park and the position of the Liberal Party, he said that within caucus he is free to express his personal views and does so whenever appropriate. We plan to write our new premier about the Park issues and urge him to instruct the new minister to re-engage with Parks Canada in discussions about creation of a National Park here in the South Okanagan Similkameen.

The RDOS is planning a new compost facility and is considering two possible sites. One site would be in the Marron Valley on land of a Locatee of the Penticton Indian Band and the other would be adjacent the existing landfill site for Summerland. RDOS explains that new compost facility would be state of the art to prevent surface or groundwater contamination. However, at either site there would be additional large truck traffic bringing compostable material to the site as well as smaller trucks coming for the finished compost. There would be noise and occasional unpleasant odours at either of the sites. We sent a letter to RDOS expressing the opinion that the facility would have greater impact on Marron Valley than the Summerland landfill site.

I was asked to join BC Nature's conservation committee so hear about many issues relevant to the natural history of our whole province. One of these is the proposal to privatize wildlife management in BC. The details of the proposal are being worked out but the basic idea would be to give all the fees generated from hunting licenses to a private organization at arms length from government and allow that organization to manage wildlife in BC. BC Nature executive as well as those from many other organizations advocating for non-

consumptive wildlife issues are concerned that the private organization will serve hunters but not the majority of British Columbians who do not hunt. So BC Nature and 17 other organizations signed a letter expressing these concerns to BC's former Liberal government and will send a similar letter to the NDP government as well.

Some good news for BC's environment is contained in the agreement signed by the BC NDP and Green caucuses. Amongst other things, they agreed to: “

- Stop the Kinder Morgan pipeline and tankers project.
- Refer the Site C dam to the BC Utilities Commission for review.
- Increase the carbon tax by \$5 per year starting next year, and expand it to cover so-called fugitive emissions (e.g., methane from fracking operations) and slash-pile burning.
- Ensure the carbon tax does not hurt those who can least afford to pay.
- Put in place a strategy for B.C. to meet our emissions targets.

Revitalize the environmental assessment process.” (This process had been made a sham by the BC Liberals when they weakened all of BC's environmental protection laws, policies & practices along with staff and budget cuts).

If you have a conservation issue in need of investigation or action, please contact one of us (Gerry Gilligan, Brian Horejsi, Jim Turnbull, or me) about the issue. We wish you all many pleasant hours enjoying summer in our wonderful province.

Jim Bryan, Conservation Committee Chair



Photographer Paul Graham describes this as a Canadian hummingbird refuelling in southern California on its way north.

The Heavens

The big event for the coming season, sky-wise, is a total eclipse of the Sun on August 21. For us in the Okanagan it will be partial, but deep partial. On that Monday morning we'll have the opportunity to watch the dark night-time side of the Moon slide across the face of the Sun. As we are north of the path of totality, the Moon will cover the bottom part of the Sun (roughly — it will actually slide across and down at an angle). But **DO NOT** stare at the Sun with your bare eyes, not even when it's mostly eclipsed. You can do permanent damage to your eyes.

There are materials around through which you can look at the Sun safely. The standard recommendation is #14 welder's glass, but there are also 'eclipse glasses' or 'solar viewers' commercially available that use aluminized polyester or a black polymer. They need to be good enough to let through only 0.001% of the Sun's light.

The best way to watch a partial solar eclipse is to project an image of the Sun using one barrel of a pair of binoculars, or a spotting 'scope. **DO NOT** look at the Sun through the binoculars or 'scope. You can blind yourself, permanently, and I understand it's very painful. Instead, hold the binos or 'scope to one side and let the Sun shine through them, and use a piece of paper or cardboard some short distance away in the stream of emerging light to show an image of the Sun. You don't have to be fussy — there's not much detail to see (except perhaps the chance of some sunspots) but it helps to steady the oculars on something. A tripod would be best.

What you can expect to see on August 21 is the Moon start to encroach on the top right of the Sun at 9:13 am (PDT), then work it's way down and to the left, getting to maximum coverage (87%) at 10:25. At that point the Sun will appear as a thin crescent pointing upwards to the left. The show will be over at 11:42 when the Moon departs bottom left. If you are watching this with the aid of a projected image, remember that it will appear upside down and backwards.

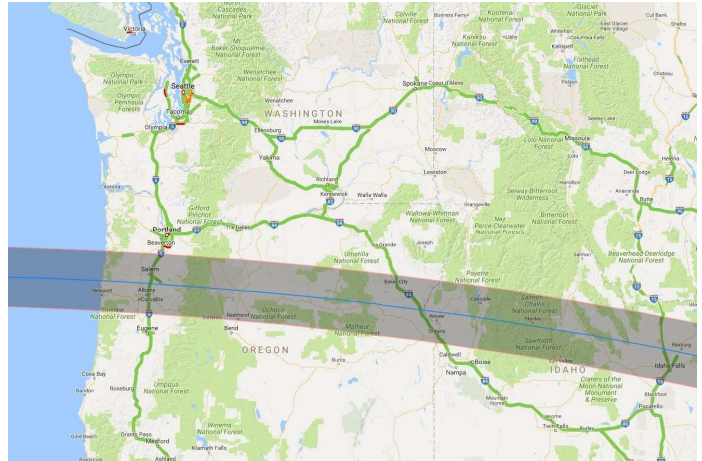
The path of totality goes through Oregon and Idaho, as shown on the map. If there is any way that you can get yourself into the path for the eclipse, don't let the opportunity go by. To actually experience a total eclipse of the Sun is the experience of a lifetime. Totality lasts only a couple of minutes, but the air chills and everything goes dark, dark enough for some stars to be visible and for birds to settle down, and the brilliant Sun is replaced by what looks like a black hole in the sky, surrounded by an extended glowing halo . . . the corona of the Sun. In contrast a partial eclipse, no matter how deep, does not offer any of those effects. In fact, unless you watch an image of a partially-eclipsed Sun you wouldn't even know it was happening.

It's a bit late to be arranging a trip into the eclipse path — hotels and campgrounds in the vicinity have been booked for a year — but if you are able to manage such an adventure, get on the web for the time of the eclipse at your chosen location, and to find out how best to handle it. Weather prospects are better in the interior, rather than at the coast.

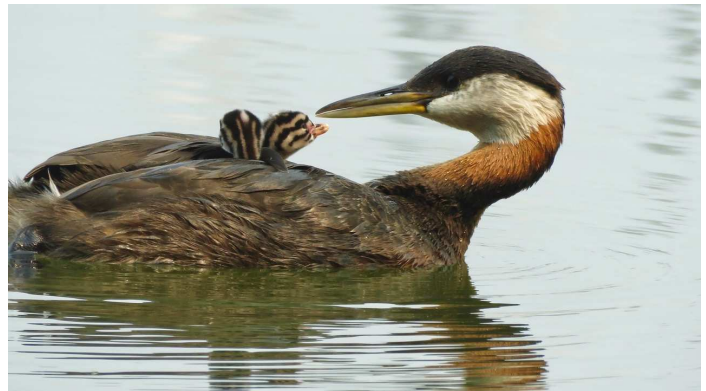
Planets visible this season: Venus very bright in the east before sunrise. Jupiter quite bright in the west after sunset, but fairly low and sinking - it will be gone by September. Saturn not as bright as those two but prominent low in the south during the evening, the constellation Scorpius

(with the bright red star Antares) to its right and the constellation Sagittarius (with the Milky Way) to its left. And don't forget the Perseid meteor shower on August 12. . . a cooperative Moon this time, and the Observatory is holding its 'Perseid event' again this year.

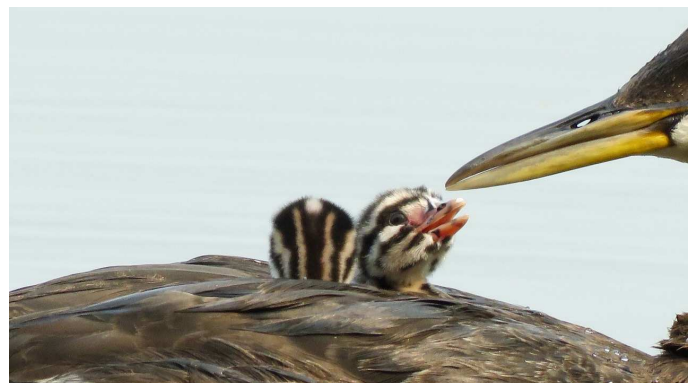
Chris Purton



Path of the total eclipse.



Red-necked grebe and chicks. Photos by Paul Graham



In Memoriam -Margot Henny

July, 1943 – April 2017.

Margot was indeed a wonderful woman. Her prime dedication in life was always to help others.

She started in the 1980s in Vancouver to support refugees showing them how to navigate their new country, helped them to bridge the cultural divide, and taught them English. She was still doing that here in Penticton.

In Penticton she spent one day each week working in a thrift store, where people donated clothing and other items. These items were sold at very low prices to help people, who had little income (and some, who were just bargain hunting) to buy sometimes excellent items for very little money. The proceeds went to the South Okanagan Similkameen Medical Foundation, the Penticton Hospital Auxiliary and the Penticton & District Hospice Society; win-win for all.

Competing grandmas gave their grandchildren often more clothes than the "little darlings" could wear and many of those ended up in that store, The Care Closet. These often brand new, high quality clothes with the labels still attached could not always be sold. Margot collected the surplus and on our travels we used it toward the limit of our combined luggage allowance of 200 lb, to take children's clothes directly to orphanages in Honduras, Guatemala, Ecuador, and Vietnam (4 times). In one of these times in Vietnam we traveled on motor bikes to the impoverished hill tribes and distributed the stuff directly, where it was most needed and appreciated.

While in these countries, we scoured the markets for items, mostly made by artisans, which we could bring back, again using our excess luggage allowance. These items were sold in markets and special events, with the proceeds going to support the Stephen Lewis Foundation's Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign, which supports African grandmothers, whose own children fell victim to the AIDS epidemic and who now had to raise their grandchildren.

Margot also used those travels to establish contacts with suppliers, who could ship us more merchandise, the net proceeds of which also went to the Stephen Lewis Foundation, amounting to roughly \$2,000 to \$3,000 annually.

Through all this Margot had the support of some good friends, including myself, but she was the driving force behind that effort.

She will not only be a loss to her friends and family, but

to the many people on three continents, into the life of whom her efforts have shed a little bit of light.

To Margot's very end she worried more about all of us, than about her own fate. As late as eight or ten days before she passed away, she still insisted on fixing my work pants for the yard, and did, for goodness sake!

Olaf Henny



Margot Henny



Immature Say's Phoebes. Photo by Wendy Stewart

The Naïve Naturalist and new learning

Sometimes I think of myself as a Naïve Naturalist. Even with a youth and middle life in some of BC's finest wild places I'm still developing a keener knowledge of nature's denizen's and designs.

Take Juncos for example. These smartly attired little birds have been hopping about in my life since I was a toddler. Juncos have always seemed plentiful. They are one of the most populous of the Passerines, the song-full sparrow family. In fact, I didn't know that Juncos *are* sparrows. They are so unlike their family members who dress in more regular sparrow attire of brownish streaks, beige under-alls and various topknots.

Meanwhile the male Junco has a smart dark head that looks like a sooty hood that ends at the shoulders, with a rotund body of grey or brown or a touch of blush...depending on whether they are the Dark-eyed, Oregon or one of four other varieties.

Bright white tail feathers flash a Junco salute

Animated, lively and notorious squabblers, I've watched flocks of Junco's leap about, challenging each other incessantly. Omnivores like their other sparrow cousins, they forage for choice nuts, seeds and insects.

Dark-eyed Juncos, the most common variety in the Okanagan, are ground nesters. They set up home under overhanging vegetation, dense brush, shallow indentations, tree roots or downed trees.

To date I've failed to discover a Junco nest. Though Junco nests have proven elusive, another bird species nested right in my carport!

Earlier in the spring, I'd draped embroidery thread over nearby branches and stumps for potential nesting material. Maybe the bright colours could lead me to a nest.

It seemed ages without a thread disturbed. Then a dangling piece of embroidery thread caught my eye, swaying in the breeze below a solar powered carport motion sensor LED light. Moments later, a Say's Phoebe Flycatcher, a sleek buff-coloured bird with a slight crest, fluttered in with a beak full of cattle hair and straw. A nest in progress!

I felt thrilled but also dismayed. I'd recently heard that thread or fabric remnants that don't break easily could entangle young birds. But there it was...a well-constructed nest using all the materials that I'd put out. I could see blue, gold, red and green bits of embroidery thread tucked in among the grass, dry chamomile and animal hair. On top, a cozy bed of feathers and fluff awaited the new family.

Then a new anxiety arose. The nest appeared to be slipping from the light fixture. Could I support it with a band of fabric around the lower part of the nest and affix it to the beam on either side?

Would interfering with a nest distress the birds? Thank goodness for the good counsel of experienced naturalist friends.

"It's okay," my friend reassured me, "Birds have a high level of fidelity, that is, loyalty to their nest. They will tolerate a certain amount of interference as long as the nest remains in, or is returned to the same spot."

With that, I went ahead with the fabric installation and I turned off the motion sensor light for good measure.

Happy ending...two Say's Phoebe Flycatchers hatched, fledged, and, with their parents, have been pooping all over my carport. They've also learned to make their tzzzeerrr whistle call; dart and dive for flying insects just like mom and dad.

The four of them roost each night on a cord between the light and the solar panel. They seem quite at home there. I'll expect them back next year. Meanwhile I'll keep looking for a Junco nest.

Dianne Bersea



Say's Phoebe nest and chicks. Photos by Dianne Bersea

A Flycatcher Saga

In June 2015, a Pacific-slope Flycatcher decided to build her nest above the lintel of our front door. Despite our going in and out of the door and screen door, she persisted, and two eggs were laid in the nest, incubated, and at the beginning of July they produced two downy chicks. (top photo: 2 chicks in nest on lintel.) The temperatures all that week and most of the next week were in the mid-30s, and although the front door faced north, the heat above it was so severe that the parent birds were not able to be on the nest, and remained on the front step, watching their chicks. Despite the heat, the chicks fledged successfully and left the nest.

In 2016, a Pacific-slope Flycatcher again appeared at the front of our house. This time, we discouraged her from building on the lintel, and she chose instead to build the nest on top of the electricity meter box, (middle photo: Adult flycatcher in nest on meter box), and successfully fledged two young.

This year, a flycatcher appeared again, and set about building her nest on the meter box. It was a very windy day, and the beginnings of the nest kept blowing off. Perhaps she was one of the offspring from the previous year, and was inexperienced in building a nest. This did appear to be the case, because she gave up on the meter box nest, and built a new nest in a most unsuitable place, on top of a low exposed wall on the corner of our house, less than a metre above ground, and right next to an array of irrigation taps that we were frequently using. (lower photo: Adult bird in nest on wall.)

We were concerned about this nest being predated, since it was so exposed and so low, and we did consider moving it, but eggs soon appeared in the nest, and we were afraid the parent birds would desert it. Unfortunately, a few days later, two of the eggs had disappeared, and the third was pierced and broken. The parent birds did not return to the predated nest, but they were still around, and so we moved the nest and placed it on top of the meter box, really feeling quite sure that the birds would not adopt it. But they did!

I had made a really poor job of trying to wedge the nest securely onto the meter box, but the next day the nest had been greatly augmented and made more secure by a much better nest-builder than me! The parent bird is currently sitting on the nest, and as The Honker is going to print, we do not know whether the outcome will be successful this time! Stay tuned for the next exciting episode!

Deirdre Turnbull

Editor's note: black and white reproduction of the wonderful photos taken by club members does not do them justice by any means. I highly recommend that you go to our website and view them in colour as they are meant to be. Just click on the section entitled Newsletter.



Editor's note: The following letter first appeared in the Penticton Western on June 7th and is reproduced here in case you missed it.

Mountain bikes not compatible

Government initially evolved to protect public assets, like parks and public lands, establish and enforce public decision-making processes, and work for the benefit of the general public good. People wanted the government to be accountable to them, and be responsive to their involvement and scrutiny. It is now obvious to many of Penticton's citizens that we haven't had, and don't have, either good or effective government. A big part of this failure is a city hall-council-mayor that feels entitled to hand things that belong to all of us over to special, select, minority interests, and then make sure they build a defensive wall around themselves and their chosen favourites so taxpayers and citizens are kept at bay.

We have too many examples already in this city; A corporate tourism association supported by taxpayers dollars, allowed to collect and spend their own tax. Imagine if that \$4-500,000 was available to the parks department to keep city beaches and parks clean, safe and well managed! Or the chunk it would take out of the much-advertised infrastructure deficit! Or how it would benefit public management of big-block city park lands like Campbell Mountain and Three Blind Mice as natural areas for our enjoyment and their intrinsic value, as wildlife (semi) refuges and for equal access by all citizens for careful and respectful use.

Then we have Skaha Park, where our city Hall allows corporate interests to pay a measly \$4 a square foot for waterfront privileges that cost 3 to 6 times that on private lands. That nothing short of criminal. Hundreds of thousands of dollars that should be paid to taxpayers will be lost. Quite a sweet deal, but not for citizens.

And what about the Three Blind Mice bike park now managed" by mountain bikers? Guess what they pay the city for an entire square kilometre of public land! You've got more jingle in your pocket right now. Hell of a deal! Who wouldn't love that! And they extracted a license from city hall to carve up the land with trails and childish little ramps and boardwalks, all while spreading noxious and invasive plants, running off people who walk, and displacing wildlife. Our public lands are fabulous places that don't need trinkets to entertain people.

Now that same bunch wants Campbell Mountain. There are a lot of negative aspects to mountain biker behaviour and thinking, but one that characterizes them is rapid boredom with a trail system - they quickly and inevitably want something new. Want evidence? Three Blind Mice isn't good enough anymore, so now they want to take over Campbell Mountain. This constant demand and expectation of more and more originates because most mountain biking activity is based on speed, thrills, competition, and challenge, all of which dissipate with repetition. Drastically different from those citizens who enjoy the natural world for its own value and the never ending satisfaction they get from it.

If society, through our government, ever decides there are legitimate reasons to privatize management of our land or water - and I see those options as exceptionally rare - then private management should pay a super premium for that control and privilege. Exploiting public resources should result in substantial economic and social return to taxpayers!

Try sharing a trail with a 200-pound mountain biker, encased in a helmet and fixated on the trail, hurtling down the path directly at you at 30 or even 40 kph. The reality, and evidence, is that mountain biking/ bikers cause immediate displacement and harassment of other trail and land users, eventually,

often quickly driving them away; first, because they can't enjoy the place, and second, they fear for their safety. Try enjoying a walk on that trail if you have your kids, your family, your mother with you, if you're a group of seniors, or if you're a legitimate trail user just out

To listen to the birds or the whisper of the wind, watch wildlife or the clouds drift by, enjoy the fabulous view over the valley, just leisurely soak up the ambiance of the natural landscape, or are simply trying to escape the stress of every day and work related life. Can't be done! Incidentally, mountain bikers don't, and can't, do any of these things. They can't hear anything but their bike and its clatter, can barely look at anything except their handlebars or they'll crack their head or break a leg, and they seem to think they automatically have the right of way (after all, they know they're on a vehicle, even though they vehemently deny that). Only bikers and the biker industry call that sharing!

The biker industry and its advocates are loaded with "alternative facts" - we all know what those are worth! Claims that they want to make the trails safer, or protect Campbell mountain from the free for all, which exists only because mtn bikers make a habit of going wherever they feel like and rattling down slopes that no machine or vehicles should be on. It's bikers that create a free for all, trashing vegetation and soil, and running off hikers - they've done it to me and I've watched as they've done the same to mule deer! I know hikers that have quit using trails they've enjoyed for years because bikers have invaded that space.

Bikers and the industry are routinely enveloped in a fact free zone when it comes to environmental and social conflicts. They employ willful distortion of reality (more alternative facts!) to con the ideologically gullible - like our city council or staff. They claim they don't want to exclude others, but who else wants to and can safely use, let alone enjoy dangerous trails and threats from machines? At least drivers on Main street have the integrity to make it understood its not safe (or legal) to saunter on foot or dally or have lunch on the edge or in a blind zone on the driving lane on a road!

The never ending spiel by bikers about how they improve the land, secure access, do maintenance, keep trails safe, and the incessant bragging about volunteer work and hours is the equivalent of an oil company bragging about building a road through a roadless valley, or a timber company bragging about the clear-cut watershed that's now managed, improved and accessible - aren't we generous, look what we've done for you!. In mountain biker parlance, keeping the trails safe and passable means major engineering, digging up roots and vegetation, building 3 and 4 foot wide roads (curves are even wider), riprap, armoring, and then of course, building all the juvenile gimmicks that might be fine on private land or in a gravel pit, or on PIB lands (try that one!) but have no place in a Park or on public land.

Of course, they want control and things made simpler. This is another deviation from accountability, allowing them to take over the landscape, and camouflaging the extensive environmental damage they do by hiding behind hey, the City says its legal! That also fits in nicely with their monotonous denial of a long list of impacts they impose on a landscape. Access for all? I say by all means, they (bikers) can walk just like anyone else!

A weak city hall and council is vulnerable to special interest pressure and can strip the rights and property from citizens in devious ways, from granting leases to privatizing management.

If I were to advise the people of Penticton I would tell them we need to get a grip on city hall and council/mayor soon, before they sell us out completely.

Dr. Brian L. Horejsi, Penticton

www.southokanagan nature.com

If you haven't checked out our Club's website recently, you should do so. Glenda and Bob work hard to try and keep it up to date (we do fall behind some times) and keep you informed as to what is going on. This is the spot to go for the latest information on monthly meetings, etc. Glenda has been working on changing the photographs, both on the home page and in the photography section. She is always looking for new photos so why not send her a few of your Okanagan Valley nature photos and let other Club members have a look at your work.



Wendy says she took almost a kazillion photos to get this spectacular shot of an osprey as it hovered only 20 feet above her head.

Photo by Wendy Stewart

Membership Application / Renewal Form

Mail form to SONC, PO Box 23050, Penticton BC V2A 8L7

Individual.....\$32 per year

Family\$43 per year

Date:.....

Name(s): _____ Phone: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email address: _____

Do you wish to receive The Honker by email? _____

The membership year is Sept. to August; if joining after February 1st please contact the membership secretary first.