

## The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club Awards for 2004

IRWIN M. BRODO, CHRISTINE HANRAHAN, BEVERLY MCBRIDE, AND ELEANOR ZURBRIGG

At the Club's Annual Soirée, held on 30 April 2005, at St. Basil's Church in Ottawa, awards were once again given to members, and one non-member, who distinguished themselves by accomplishments in the field of natural history and conservation, or by extraordinary activity within the Club. There isn't always a winner for every potential award, and this year, once again,

the Anne Hanes Natural History Award was not given. On the other hand, a new award was approved by Council and awarded for the first time this year: The Mary Stuart Education Award. More is said about the award in the citation below. The following citations for those who received an award were read to the members and guests assembled for the event.

### Charles D. Bird – Honorary Member

Honorary membership in the Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club is given to members or non-members in recognition of their many years of service to the Club or for their contributions to Canadian natural history. Our newest honorary member, Dr. Charles D. Bird, is a retired cattle farmer from Erskine, Alberta, but qualifies for the honour on both counts. On the face of it, that might seem a little strange, but, as you will see, this is no ordinary cattle farmer.

Although his family roots were in the central Canadian prairies, Charley Bird was born in Oklahoma. He developed a love of the natural world at an early age, no doubt due at least in part to his father, Ralph Durham Bird, an entomologist/naturalist who was teaching at the University of Oklahoma at the time, and his mother, Lois, who was a botanist. From the age of 10 through his college years, Charley followed his father's interests in insects. He later worked with the Northern Insect Survey and then in the field of forest entomology. At the University of Manitoba, he became fascinated with plant ecology and turned to the study of plants. Charley developed a strong interest in mosses at Oklahoma State University where he was doing graduate studies, taking courses from the bryologist, Dr. G. K. Ikenberry, eventually earning a master's degree and Ph.D. He returned to Canada in 1960 for a post-doctoral position at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, mainly studying mosses. Two years later, he accepted a position in the Biology Department at the University of Calgary, turning his attention to the bryophytes, lichens and vascular plants of Alberta and, indeed, all the prairie provinces. At the university, Charley taught courses on all these subjects as well as biogeography, and he curated the growing herbarium as well. His research interests were principally in lichen and bryophyte ecology and taxonomy, and Charley published dozens of papers on mosses, lichens and flowering plants in scholarly journals such as *The Bryologist* and *Canadian Journal of Botany*, and our own *Canadian Field-Naturalist*. He

also became involved in Alberta conservation issues and joined local natural history clubs such as the Calgary Field Naturalist's Society and Federation of Alberta Naturalists. In 1978, he received the Lauran Goulden Award for being the outstanding naturalist in Alberta that year. With a strong interest in the local flora and fauna, Charley published articles on a variety of subjects in the *Blue Jay*, the *Calgary Field Naturalist* and the *Alberta Naturalist*. He has, in fact, published close to 300 scholarly articles in all.

Although Charley decided to take early retirement in 1979, trading in his academic tweeds for Alberta denim to become a cattle farmer, he never set aside his love of the natural world, his commitment to conservation, or his interest in high quality scientific publication. He therefore has maintained a close association with his local Buffalo Lake Naturalists Society, and he stayed on as an Associate Editor of *The Canadian Field-Naturalist*, a job he began in 1974 and continues to this day, contributing over 30 years of service to the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club. In the post-University years, Charley's interests returned to insects, especially butterflies and moths, and he became a major contributor to the beautiful and encyclopedic book, *Alberta Butterflies*, published in 1995. At the present time, Charley is working on a catalogue of the micro-moths of southern Alberta.

For his achievements in teaching and research, the Alberta Society of Professional Biologists presented him with the J. Dewey Soper Award in 2000, also making him an Honorary Life Member of that society.

Whether he is cataloguing mosses, studying the taxonomy of a lichen genus, working on the phenology of flowers, collecting, mounting and identifying hundreds of species of tiny moths, tracing his family's genealogy, or, indeed, keeping records of cattle breeding, Charley is always meticulous, thorough, imaginative and perceptive... a naturalist's naturalist. We are therefore proud to add Charley Bird to our roster of distinguished Honorary Members.

### Barbara Barr – Conservation Award (Non-Member)

The OFNC Conservation Award – Non-Member is given in recognition of an outstanding contribution by a non-member in the cause of natural history conservation in the Ottawa Valley, with particular emphasis on activities within the Ottawa District.

Barbara Barr is a very worthy recipient of this award in recognition of her outstanding efforts in speaking on behalf of natural area protection in the Ottawa area through the Regional and municipal planning processes. Barbara is an active, dedicated and highly credible representative for the Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital as well as for the South Keys/Greenboro Community Association.

The thorough, intelligent work that Barbara does reflects her excellent grasp of environmental issues in the Ottawa area as well as her grasp of the way the City works. She is able to be highly effective, for example at meetings of the City of Ottawa's Planning and Environment Committee, by accessing information, preparing and presenting thorough briefs, following-through on outcomes of presentations, and providing a reliable and reputable source of sage advice to policy makers on natural area conservation issues. In this way, she is a highly effective participant during the public consultation phases of land development proposals, a voice that the conservation community can be proud to have speaking on its behalf. Public officials appreciate the value that she adds to the public consultation process and have invited her to participate on various Public Advisory Committees.

Barbara's frequent interventions at planning meetings have served to:

- sustain the importance of natural area conservation

in the minds of elected officials, by keeping it a visible issue;

- raise the consciousness of Councilors on specific issues, such as how destructive country lot subdivisions are to Rural Natural Features;
- re-enforce with City staff and Councilors alike the importance of a good Planning Process, and of honoring the commitments, intent and spirit of the Official Plan with respect to Environmental Features and Environmental Impact Statements;
- demonstrate the value-added of public consultation and participation in the planning process (seek win-win solutions); and
- influence decisions being made on various land use proposals.

Barbara's interventions have covered a suite of topics, ranging from specific conservation issues such as protection of the Montfort Woods and Leirrim wetland parcels and the Alta Vista Transportation Corridor, to more general topics including proposed rural developments for country lot subdivisions, suggestions to improve the City's planning process and documents and the Urban Natural Areas Environmental Evaluation Study.

One of Barbara's important characteristics is her optimism and determination to stay with the process. With economic and land development activities booming in the Ottawa area, it takes solid, reasonable, informed contributions to influence the process and to advocate for Smart Growth.

Through this award, OFNC members recognize the outstanding efforts of Barbara to influence Regional and City planning decisions to include natural area conservation.

### Ghislaine Rozon – Conservation Award (Members)

The OFNC Conservation Award is given in recognition of a club member who has made an outstanding contribution toward protecting our natural environment. Ghislaine Rozon is a remarkable woman who more than fits this criterion. She is a dynamic, articulate, passionate defender of our local greenspace, particularly the Larose Forest. She has worked non-stop trying to preserve this area as a conservation zone, free of development.

Her battle for the forest began in the summer of 2002 when, newly retired from a long teaching career, she discovered that a development proposal for Larose Forest was being given serious consideration by the United Counties of Prescott-Russell (UCPR). Aghast at what this would do to the natural environment of the forest, she threw herself into the fight. She contacted the OFNC Conservation Committee for advice, but quickly perceived that she would need a thorough understanding of municipal, provincial and federal politics, including a good knowledge of the Planning Act, if she was to argue with elected officials on the

necessity of conservation. Then she realized she would need to educate herself in the areas of forestry, hydrology and ecology. All of this she did with tremendous competence and customary thoroughness. As Ghislaine immersed herself in learning everything there was to know about the political process, including the Provincial Policy Statement, Environmental Assessments and related acts, the boxes of files, papers, articles, reports and letters grew. Her home became "Command Central" for those who were adamant that the forest must be preserved. Through detailed reading of numerous documents, she exposed inconsistencies and inaccuracies in the material produced to support development in the forest.

She also knew that gaining public support was extremely important and rallied both residents and various conservation groups to the cause. "The Friends of Larose Forest" which existed prior to the controversy, was revived and with Ghislaine, presented a united front for a development-free Larose. She also contacted politicians at all levels, as well as the various

media, offering guided tours of the proposed development site so that they could see it for themselves and make up their minds based on facts, not hearsay.

Anyone who has dealt with Ghislaine over the last few years knows that it is not unusual to receive e-mails written and fired off at 2, 3 or 4 in the morning! It appeared that she never slept! These detailed messages... lucid, well-reasoned, intelligent and thought-provoking... were regularly mailed to a growing list of supporters. Suggestions on how people could help, lists of addresses for the relevant government officials, sample letters, as well as succinct synopses of many relevant reports, all were supplied by Ghislaine who became the acknowledged and reasoned voice for saving Larose Forest.

As a last resort, Ghislaine and several others appealed the issue to the OMB. This was not a step light-

ly undertaken. The cost for hiring a lawyer and expert witnesses was substantial and was absorbed by the appellants. In the end the decision was handed down in favour of the developers. Despite this crushing blow, Ghislaine has not given up her fight to save the forest. As she has done from day one, she continues to explore ways in which Larose Forest can be preserved as a conservation area, remaining vigilant and alert to all threats to this special place. Brimming with ideas, she has plans for a website, printed resource material and possibly an interpretive centre ... this lady is amazing! If ever there was an example of how to go about preparing to protect natural areas, one need look no further than Ghislaine for inspiration, which is why the Club awards her the 2004 Conservation Award for Members.

### **Martha Camfield – George McGee Service Award**

The OFNC George McGee Service Award is given in recognition of a member who has contributed significantly to the smooth running of the Club over several years. Martha Camfield is a very worthy recipient of this award in recognition of her extraordinary service over many, many years as a dedicated volunteer with the Macoun Field Club. Martha has also readily volunteered to assist with numerous plant surveys and inventories in the Ottawa area, and has served on Council.

For many years – as long as many of today's young Macouners remember and longer – Martha has been a dynamic force with Macoun Field Club and the committee that manages it. She has readily volunteered in many capacities with the young naturalists, frequently serving as a leader for meetings, workshops and field trips, and also working to find speakers and leaders for weekly meetings and field trips.

Martha's great "hands on" discovery workshops are a particular favourite of the Macouners. Each workshop is uniquely researched and supported by plentiful plant materials that Martha has collected for dissection or identification – whether it be a variety of roots, seeds, wild flowers, leaves, fruits, shrubs, sedges, exotic plants, and more.

Martha commands instant respect from the young people, who respond to her curiosity and whole-hearted enthusiasm to share and impart some of the truly amazing nature of her subject. Interesting materials coupled with good basic instruction on how to use a hand lens or microscope leads to ready involvement of the young people so that by the end of a workshop everyone has dirty fingernails and a much better idea of how leaves and seeds and roots function. At one session on horse-tails, she burned the ends of the plant stalks to show

how the silica inside would form "glass-like beads" on the ends. When studying seeds, the air became delightfully filled with cattail fluff! A testimony to Martha's impact is most appropriately captured in the words of one of her workshop participants, who said, "I think that the most important thing that Martha taught us was the wonder that can be in just one seed. Thank you Martha! We all had a fantastic time."

As a Macoun field trip leader, Martha had a genuine interest in what each young person was finding, hoping to further spur his or her curiosity and interests. One of Martha's gifts is to help wake people up to the world around them by making the outings and information imparted relevant to them.

Another facet of Martha's long-time volunteerism for The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club has been through her ready assistance on botanical surveys and inventories of natural areas around Ottawa, most notably with Albert Dugal. Martha's love of the outdoors, of nature and of plants in particular, and her remarkable energy, make her a natural at this. Martha has spent many days helping Albert Dugal – walking, collecting and listing plant species as part of inventories or surveys of a long list of natural areas, including the Leitrin wetlands, Spring Hill Bog, Poor Quarry Woods, Canadian Museum of Nature lands in Aylmer, Fern Bank Wetland and the woodlands east of the Ottawa Hospital complex at Smythe Road. Most recently, she has been working on an inventory of old growth species in Emerald Woods, and wetlands that are part of the historic Leitrin Complex.

This truly remarkable service over many years is most deserving of the George McGee Service Award. Thank you, Martha.

### **Andrea Howard – Mary Stuart Education Award**

Andrea Howard, Education Coordinator of the Eastern Ontario Biodiversity Museum (EOBM), has been chosen to be the first recipient of the Mary Stuart Education Award for her outstanding, innovative approaches to teaching a variety of natural history topics. This new award has been established for members, non-members or organizations in recognition of outstanding achievements in the field of natural history education in the Ottawa Region. The new Education Award was appropriately named in honour of Mary Stuart, who was so passionately interested in establishing a new generation of young naturalists.

Andrea Howard is a very gifted, knowledgeable and effective teacher who has been the education coordinator at the EOBM in Kemptville ever since the museum came into being over five years ago. In that capacity she has developed innovative natural history programs presented at the museum and at various venues around the North Grenville community and in Ottawa. Andrea brings to her position of education coordinator a unique background in classroom teaching, science (B.S. from Queen's University), drama (B.A. from Queen's University, and active in a local theatre group) and environmental advocacy (worked for Pollution Probe).

Andrea has developed her own series of creative, exciting and accurate biodiversity modules, collectively called "Museum in a Suitcase" which she brings into various classrooms or classroom-like situations.

### **Marilyn Ward – Member of the Year**

The OFNC's Member of the Year award recognizes the member judged to have contributed the most to the club in the previous year. Marilyn Ward is the kind of member whose efforts keep things humming quietly but surely along. In 2004 Marilyn was particularly busy making significant contributions on at least three fronts.

Anyone who has called the club's phone number recently has spoken with Marilyn. The OFNC has a phone number, but it doesn't have an office. Incoming calls have to go somewhere! For the last four years, they've gone to Marilyn or to an answering machine in her front hallway. Whether she gets the message by machine or in person, she is a welcoming greeter who efficiently answers questions or connects callers — be they out-of-town visitors, members or prospective members — with the person who can answer their question. We know her hospitality extends beyond the phone too. She even arranges to meet new members at a monthly meeting in order to personally welcome them and to hand them their membership packages, which she also compiles. The club's e-mail address also leads to Marilyn.

Marilyn is a valuable member of the Excursions and Lectures committee. She is conscientious and reliable, and she cares about details. As any field trip leader

These programs include "Secret Life of the Forest" (the biodiversity of decomposition), "Climate Change" (biodiversity and global warming), "Life Cycles & Seasonal Adaptations" (biodiversity of survival), "Introduction to Taxonomy" (classification of biodiversity) and "Bug-watch/Insects" (biodiversity of insects). Andrea skillfully adapts each program to the particular teacher and classroom situation by consulting with the teacher in question. The literacy program that Andrea created and implemented for local high school students having reading difficulties is something that the EOBM is particularly proud of. The subject matter employed was, of course, natural history.

The need for training teachers has not escaped Andrea's attention either. She has developed and implemented professional development programs for teachers, helping them also to explore the possibilities of the immediate neighbourhood, especially the school grounds.

Andrea always seeks to learn more by asking appropriate professionals for help and advice and having them review her syllabus. She reads constantly to upgrade her knowledge and all of this is reflected in the timely and lively content and presentations in her classes. She has an excellent rapport with her students and their teachers. For all the above reasons and many more, we have chosen Andrea Howard for the Education Award.

will tell you, she is good at recruiting field trip leaders. She also phones leaders and speakers in advance of their commitments to make sure they haven't forgotten — a service much appreciated by club members. Not only that, she personally shows up at almost every field trip and monthly meeting where she helps out with logistical details.

The Fletcher Wildlife Garden gets a lot of traffic, with committee and council meetings, volunteers and visitors. Somehow, amazingly, it almost always looks neat and tidy. Of course all users are expected to clean up after themselves, but we all know this sort of thing works better in theory than in practice. Marilyn has been described as a fiend when it comes to keeping the Fletcher centre orderly! She's often there at least twice a week. She also provides suet cakes for the Fletcher bird feeding stations and makes regular walks around the whole site to see what birds are around.

Handling the club phone, helping to make sure events are successful, keeping the place spic and span: we can't underestimate the importance of these contributions as part of the public face of the club. Marilyn, the club is grateful for your many special contributions during 2004. Designating you as Member of the Year is our way of saying, "Thank you!"