

The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club Awards for 2006

IRWIN M. BRODO, CHRISTINE HANRAHAN, DIANE LEPAGE, and ELEANOR ZURBRIGG

On April 28, 2007, members and friends of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club gathered at the Club's Annual Soirée at St. Basil's Church in Ottawa, and once again, awards were 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. Careful observation of plants and animals, political savvy, selfless service, and teaching skills are all in evidence among this year's winners. The following citations for those who received an award were read to the members and guests assembled for the event.

Annie Bélaire – Member of the Year

The OFNC's Member of the Year award recognizes the club member judged to have contributed the most to the club during the previous year. Annie Bélaire is this year's Member of the Year for her dedicated, creative and innovative involvement with the Macoun Club, as well as her work as a volunteer at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden.

Annie started working with the Macoun Field Club four years ago, in the fall of 2003. Annie attends every meeting and field trip as a knowledgeable leader, always ready to answer children's questions and enrich their experience with her special knowledge. For example, when the group found the fresh remains of a big coyote-killed deer in Stony Swamp, she eagerly seized the skull and pointed out to all who were gathered around, "You can tell this was still a young deer, because the teeth are still sharp and the dentine and enamel are of equal thickness!" Understanding that part of Stony Swamp is the Club's Study Area, she undertook a resurvey of Eastern Hemlock trees and found that their population has declined severely over the past

15 years, owing to a special fondness of porcupines and deer for their foliage. She then shared her findings with the children at a Macoun Club meeting, and wrote up her report for the Club's *Little Bear* magazine.

In the face of declining membership in the Macoun Field Club in recent years, it became clear that one of the major problems is "getting the word out," i.e., publicity. To help the Macoun Club reach families with young children, Annie designed a vibrantly coloured new brochure and a poster, which have become significant parts of its publicity efforts.

Aside from her energetic efforts with the Macoun Club, Annie participates as a willing volunteer at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden as part of the Friday morning crew working in the Backyard Garden and Butterfly Garden, and also serving on the FWG committee. In addition, Annie has done translations for our brochures and other bilingual Club documents, and she has put a lot of time into organizing and data-basing the library.

Annie Bélaire is clearly well qualified to be our Member of the Year for 2006.

Christina Lewis – 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.

Since joining the OFNC in 1995, Chris Lewis has been an exceptionally busy and productive member of the club. A long-time member of the Birds Committee, Chris has served as recording secretary since 2001, a position she continues to fill. Many club members will recognize Chris as one of the stalwarts of the Seedathon team who not only organizes, but participates in this important event to raise money for the purchase of seeds for all the OFNC bird feeders in the region.

Chris is the recorder and reporter for the OFNC's Bird Status line, a position she has held since 2001. She is responsible for making sure the data are logged, recorded, and ultimately submitted to ONTBIRDS, the provincial listserv for bird observations. This is no small task and is vitally important if we are to have reliable data on bird occurrences in this region.

In 2003, Chris joined the OFNC's Bird Records Subcommittee, which is responsible for reviewing all rare bird reports from the region. A very keen and knowledgeable birder, Chris has also written numerous rare bird reports since 1995. In addition, she contributes significantly to the Bird Records Subcommittee database.

Chris is also responsible for many of the regular quarterly bird summaries in *Trail & Landscape*. She has also authored or co-authored many other articles for *T&L*, most recently an excellent report on the first confirmed nesting of the Double-crested Cormorant in Ottawa. Chris authored the significant species summaries for the Ottawa area for the *Birder's Journal* (2001-2004), and for the American Birding Association's *North American Birds* (2001 to the present).

With Bob Bracken, she has co-authored several articles promoting Ottawa area bird-watching for "OFO News", the newsletter of the Ontario Field Ornithologists.

When the Ontario Field Ornithologists held their annual convention in Ottawa in September 2006, Chris very capably assisted not only with promotion of field trips for this event, but helped to lead several very successful trips.

While many people may connect Chris with birds, there are many more who know her as an expert on odonates – dragonflies and damselflies, and on Lepidoptera. Over the last decade she has led or co-led numerous walks for the OFNC on birds, butterflies, dragonflies (the Morris Island dragon walks are very popular), fish and general natural history.

Madeline Kallio – 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.

For nine years, Madeline Kallio has been the driving force behind the National Capital Region Wildlife Festival. Through its Wildlife Awareness event, library programs, public forums, guided nature walks and more, the festival has, for many years, introduced the general public to natural history and the concept of conservation.

While the festival appears to run effortlessly, in fact, a tremendous amount of organization and year-round planning is required. Madeline Kallio chairs the festival committee which meets approximately 11 times a year, produces the minutes, and attends to the thousand and one details that arise. She is the liaison with the Billings Bridge Shopping Centre (where the wildlife awareness event takes place), drawing up detailed floor plans, and ensuring that everything needed to make this particular event run smoothly is taken care of. She is also the link with all the exhibitors, contacting them each year, determining their requirements, making sure they have the right location for their exhibit, etc. She staffs the Wildlife Festival booth for the entire three days and is always available should other exhibitors need assistance. Coordinating an event of this magnitude and ensuring that it runs smoothly requires skill, good organizational abilities and huge time commitments.

Madeline also writes all the grant proposals and constantly seeks new ways to fund this event. In addition, she writes, produces and prints the festival's events brochure. A few years ago, she came up with the brilliant idea of developing a map of greenspaces in eastern Ontario where people can explore nature. Called "On the Trail of Mother Nature" this large, full-colour map, prepared, researched, and primarily designed by Madeline, has been a huge success with several updates and thousands of copies distributed.

Madeline is full of ideas for making the festival ever more interesting. One example is the library program series, which is so popular that presenters from previous years contact Madeline to make sure they are in-

cluded in the current line-up, while libraries begin asking for information well in advance of the festival itself. She encouraged the idea of a public forum (now in its fifth year), has been instrumental in organizing the festival's Environmental Awards ceremony, and probably has a hundred other ideas just waiting to burst forth! Endlessly resourceful, energetic, and tireless, Madeline is always willing to step in and pick up where needed. On top of all this, she is always a calming, cheerful presence, seemingly unflappable, and without a doubt is the glue that holds the festival together!

Long before she was the festival's Coordinator, Madeline was a member of the festival committee, joining in 1990. When a coordinator was needed, Madeline stepped in and has not looked back.

You might think that the festival was enough to keep Madeline occupied full-time. This would be true for most people, but Madeline is involved in a number of other activities, including volunteering for the Kanata Canada Day program. She is also an accomplished writer who has written and published many articles and brochures. Chances are, you have seen her writing. If you have picked up brochures on Lanark County Maple Byway Tours, or browsed the 'Coffee Companion' newsletter in a Kanata coffee house, read magazines such as *Fifty-Five Plus* or *Due West*, you've seen her work.

Back in 1985, Madeline set up Ottawa Valley Field Trips, to introduce young and old to the joys of the natural world. She developed hands-on environmental programs for schools, organized workshops on natural history themes for the school boards, and worked extensively on nature interpretation programs with the National Capital Commission, Scouts Canada, Girl Guides, the Home School Association and other learning and public groups. The company also developed "backroads tours", which explored interesting villages and natural areas on the backroads of Eastern Ontario, as well as longer trips in Ontario, Quebec and the U.S.

The OFNC is proud to recognize Madeline Kallio for her outstanding efforts on behalf of nature and conservation in the Ottawa region, and in particular for her work with the National Capital Region Wildlife Festival.

Frank Pope – Conservation Award (Member)

The Conservation Award for Members is presented in recognition of an outstanding contribution by a member of the OFNC in the cause of natural history conservation in the Ottawa Valley, with particular emphasis on activities within the Ottawa District. Frank Pope is chosen as the recipient for the 2006 award in recognition his skillful leadership of the Alfred Bog Committee for over 20 years, which in 2006 achieved its goal of protection for the Alfred Bog for generations to come. Alfred Bog, lying 75 kilometres east of Ottawa, is one of the great conservation success stories of the past two decades. It took long years of hard work by local groups and all levels of government to finally save this vulnerable wetland from peat extraction, logging and drainage.

Frank Pope's involvement in the Alfred Bog conservation effort began in earnest in the early 1980s. A large part of the bog had been re-zoned to Agriculture, and an appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board seeking to keep the zoning as Conservation had failed. Not willing to accept defeat, Frank Pope, with Charles Sauriol of the OFNC, created the Alfred Bog Committee in 1985 to bring together interested folks and strengthen the bog protection effort. (At the time, Frank could not have known that it would take over 20 years to achieve success!) Frank chaired the Alfred Bog Committee in its ongoing save-the-bog campaign for the ensuing 20+ years, a long, drawn-out struggle that, against the odds, achieved its goal.

In this exhausting battle, Frank's commitment never wavered in the face of setbacks. His efforts spanned a range of activities — making credible presentations at Ontario Municipal Board hearings, tribunals, advocating legislative change at the provincial level (for example, to enable municipalities to control peat extraction activities), commenting on official plans and by-

laws, working with major NGOs (NCC) in land acquisition efforts, fund-raising, and negotiating with diverse groups to name but a few.

Under Frank's leadership, the Alfred Bog Committee watched for acquisition opportunities within the bog, and initiated such activities as the preparation of a management plan, a major report on the plants, animals and hydrology of the bog, contacts with other land holders in the bog, the preparation of educational brochures and articles and field trips into the bog. Funding was obtained and a 1000 ft. boardwalk was constructed in the bog, because the impressive natural features of the bog made it a popular destination for naturalists and outdoor lovers, whereas walking in the bog is destructive to bog flora and hazardous to walkers.

In the years leading up to 2004, the combined conservation work of non-governmental groups and the several levels of government intensified. The Nature Conservancy of Canada purchased a total of 2800 hectares of the bog, and Ontario Parks now holds title to this property, to be managed as a provincial nature reserve. Peat harvesting within the bog was banned when the Prescott-Russell County Council passed the Alfred Bog Protection By-Law. In addition, peat-mining operations that border the bog and still pose a threat to its integrity are now required to operate according to rules designed to minimize this threat. All appeals of the county official plan pertaining to the Bog are withdrawn and the years-long mediation of the Ontario Municipal Board terminated. The Bog now has an official boundary and wetland designation. Quite a success story!

With this conservation award, the OFNC is recognizing Frank Pope's unflagging commitment, leadership and final success in the effort to gain environmental protection for Alfred Bog. Congratulations, Frank!

Linda Jeays – Anne Hanes Natural History Award

This award is given in recognition of a member who, through independent study or investigation, has made a worthwhile contribution to our knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the natural history of the Ottawa Valley.

Linda Jeays, an enthusiastic birder and longtime member of OFNC, began to study butterflies as a Millennium project. Her first identification was a Black Swallowtail flushed while watching waterfowl at Richmond lagoons. She jotted down a description, later referred to a field guide, and suddenly had a new natural history interest.

Linda is a former English teacher with an inclination towards note-taking. In her first summer studying Lepidoptera she began to make detailed documentation on every butterfly she encountered except where numbers made this impractical. She also keeps data on topics such as flight season, habitat, nectaring plants, road-kill and garden species.

At the end of the 2001 season, Linda learned that her sightings of Eastern Tailed Blue and Common Buckeye were very rare in the Ottawa area. Encouraged by Ross Layberry to write up her observations for *Trail & Landscape* and to check the locations again the following year, her detailed notes soon became valuable. In 2002, Linda again saw Buckeye briefly, but her real work began when she netted Eastern Tailed Blue within 10 feet of a previous year's site. In the very few records available, no one else had reported the butterfly in a repeat location.

What if Eastern Tailed Blue had overwintered? Linda began spending many hours each week netting, measuring and individually marking the Blues. Each year she recorded her findings in T&L, accumulating proof of overwintering. She has now established the presence of this species at one site near Richmond for six consecutive years. The culmination of Linda's work came in the summer of 2006 when she spent over 250 hours

in the field documenting the population explosion and widespread dispersal of Eastern Tailed Blue. She herself tallied 30 locations and 160 individuals. Another 25 sites and 170 Blues were reported by independent contributors to the Annual Eastern Tailed Blue Round-up that Linda conducts.

Linda Jeays has written feature articles, essays, humour, book reviews and autobiographical material for newspapers such as the *Ottawa Citizen* and the *National Post*. She has many magazine credits and has worked on assignment for the Canada Safety Council. Linda wrote her first short item for *T&L* in 1975. In 1977 she called then-editor Anne Hanes about submitting a piece of free verse. Anne said that unfortunately *T&L*

did not use poetry, but she would still like to read the poem. "Metamorphosis" was printed in January 1978, the first of Linda's 35 poems in the club magazine.

Anne Hanes would surely have been pleased that her early encouragement of the creative expression of Linda's nature observations has developed into meticulous factual documentation of Eastern Tailed Blue and a worthwhile contribution to the knowledge and understanding of this butterfly in the Ottawa Valley.

For her outstanding contribution to our further knowledge of the Eastern Tailed Blue in the Ottawa Region, we are very pleased to present Linda Jeays with the Anne Hanes Natural History Award for 2006.

Isabelle Nichol – Mary Stuart Education Award

The Mary Stuart Education Award was established to recognize members, non-members or organizations, for their outstanding achievements in the field of natural history education in the Ottawa Region. The OFNC is pleased to give the award for 2006 to Isabelle Nicol.

Isabelle has a great affinity for teaching natural history. She is both knowledgeable and enthusiastic and conveys this interest to the many lucky people who have been in her classroom or participated in her many field trips. Isabelle was a former employee of the NCC but, before she left that job, she was actively working on this, her second career that she has pursued so successfully for over 15 years.

Isabelle is a freelance teacher of natural history who is invited back year after year in several local schools because of her natural ability to teach and because of

her careful planning of various natural history modules that complement the subjects covered in the grade school curriculum. These include modules on habitats, plants, hibernation in winter, migration, spring ephemerals and active winter wildlife. She works closely with the teachers to tailor her teaching to fit the interests and abilities of the students at hand.

Recently Isabelle has branched out and now also teaches natural history to various senior citizen groups and garden clubs. Over these many years Isabelle has also been a much sought after field trip leader for our Club, where participants have come to appreciate her quiet style and originality. We have a first rate natural history teacher in our midst and it is time that she be appropriately honoured.