

# ARROWSMITH NATURALISTS NEWSLETTER

TO KNOW, ENJOY AND PRESERVE NATURE

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT - JANUARY 2016

LYNNE BROOKES



First of all I would like to thank the great folks that are “taking a break” after years of dedicated service to our club and welcome those who are taking up the important positions of Newsletter Editor (Margaret Hill--> Kat Derksen); Executive Secretary (Sue McLean--> Kat Derksen); Speakers (Alison Bakker-->Ronda Murdock); and Archivist, Margaret Hill. KUDOS to the outgoing and WELCOME to the incoming who will be helping us to “grow” along our way as a club.

This year marks forty-five years since the founding of the PQB naturalists group that would eventually become the Arrowsmith Naturalists (ANats). That's wonderful! Why? Because we're not only still here but we are strong, enjoying and learning about nature, and providing education about our area's habitats and creatures. Margaret Hill, Maggie Little and Pat Bourgeois, with assistance from Martin Hill, are locating and collating decades of archival material to provide us with a look at our club's roots and subsequent branching. It will be exciting to learn more about how we have been active caretakers of local habitats such as the important Englishman River Estuary and involved in citizen science such as the annual Christmas Bird Count for decades. Individual club members have spent thousands of volunteer hours over time on projects and providing information about our area's nature at events, at farmer's markets, on tours, as speakers and by writing articles. One member, Maggie Little, was even on the founding board of the North Island Wildlife Recovery Centre and another, Sandra Gray, identified native trees there for signage years back. We've been involved in so many things over the years that have played an important—if quiet— role in our community. Thanks to the considerable efforts of this *ad hoc* committee we will soon have a deeper appreciation of our past and even more to be proud about.

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*President's Report cont'd*

While on the subject of “historical roots,” do you know the origin of term “tree hugger?” At a recent meeting I heard this term used in the common off hand sometimes derogatory way. When asked, no one really knew what it meant. I thought you might find this interesting:

The first tree huggers were 294 men and 69 women belonging to the Bishnois branch of Hinduism in India, who, in 1730, died while trying to protect the trees in and around their village from being turned into the raw material for building a palace. They literally clung to the trees while being slaughtered by the foresters. But when the King of Jodhpur learned of their desperate action he subsequently made a royal decree prohibiting the cutting of trees in any Bishnoi village. And now those villages are virtual wooded oases amidst an otherwise desert landscape. Not only that, the Bishnois inspired the Chipko movement (which means “to cling”) that started in the 1970s, when a group of peasant women in Northeast India threw their arms around trees designated to be cut down. They had witnessed what happened to other villages which had lost their surrounding trees: dramatic irreversible soil erosion—hence loss of their agricultural livelihood along with the loss of local firewood, foliage for forage, medicinal and food sources, wildlife, and protection from sun and wind. The loss of the trees would result in economic disaster. Within a few years, this tactic, also known as tree satyagraha, had spread across India, ultimately forcing reforms in forestry and a moratorium on tree felling in Himalayan regions. (see: <http://womensearthalliance.blogspot.ca/2013/04/the-original-tree-huggers-lets-not.html> )

I believe that it is important to understand how things came about and to be reminded that what we do may have consequences that will reach far into the future. What the ANats have accomplished in the past reaches forward to this day and what we do now will also reach forward—perhaps in exciting tangible ways.

Well, here we are in 2016! After the whirl of fall and winter meetings, speakers, field trips, the CBC and annual follow-on pot luck dinner the stage is now set for our springtime ventures. In these pages you'll learn of enjoyable activities planned for you: field trips, great programs for upcoming monthly general meetings and lots of opportunities to jump in and help with educational events with which the ANats have been historically involved. First up is the Brant Wildlife Festival (BWF) from March 19 thru April 17 and our Brant in the Bay event ably overseen by Sandra Gray. The Nature Trust of BC has also asked us again to perform the formal spring census of the Brant in the PQB Wildlife Management Area. This activity contributes towards Brant conservation and also raises funds for ANats projects. Volunteers for both events have already stepped forward but more are always welcome. Please contact Sandra if you'd like to join in. New members are very welcome! Our long-term work towards restoration of the Englishman Estuary, currently headed by Dave Hutchings, also welcomes all who can participate in this rewarding conservation effort—followed up with some Serious Coffee! On April 17<sup>th</sup> is the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Hamilton Marsh Tour, the final event of the BWF. This is a big, fun and important educational event jointly organized by a subset of Friends of French Creek and ANats. Last year there were 29 ANats helping with this public event and all interested are invited to join in. This anniversary year's event will be larger with lots of publicity and most likely a food vendor on site!

As the year unfolds there will be great walks, talks, projects, and events in which to join in—maybe some surprises too. Thanks to our excellent website, newsletter and word of mouth we hope all members will be aware of “what's up” and can avail themselves of what YOUR naturalist club has to offer. And remember—volunteer when you can. You'll be making history!

**Lynne Brookes**, President

(This newsletter is the first put together by Kat Derksen—THANK YOU Kat! We have enjoyed Margaret Hills' fine work over the years and deeply appreciate your taking up the torch. LB)

Arrowsmith Naturalists Newsletter - February 2016 Volume #21 Issue #1

**The Arrowsmith Naturalist Newsletter** is published three times a year in February, June and October. Articles on birding, travel, botany and environmental matters are welcomed by the end of the month prior to publication. The next deadline is **May 29th** for the **June 2016 edition**.

Hand-written or typed articles and photos are accepted. Some editing may be required for length or held off for another edition as per available space. Please e-mail articles to: [arrowsmithnats@gmail.com](mailto:arrowsmithnats@gmail.com)  
Alternatively, send by mail to: Kat Derksen – Newsletter Editor, Arrowsmith Naturalists, Box 1542, Parksville, B.C. V9P 2H4.

**General Information:** Club membership information is available at both Parksville and Qualicum Beach public libraries; on the web site <http://www.arrowsmithnats.org>, or by writing to Arrowsmith Naturalists, Box 1542, Parksville, B.C. V9P 2H4

**Membership includes:** Monthly meetings (talks and/or slide shows), regular outings (bird watching, botanical), BC Nature newsletter four times a year and the club newsletter in February, June and October. New memberships are always welcomed. **Membership Fees:** Family \$35.00, Single \$25.00. Annual membership dues are collected at the October & November club meeting.

#### MEETING TIME/LOCATION:

**Where:** Knox United Church, 345 Pym St, Parksville, BC **When:** 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, June, Sept, Oct, Nov. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. Meeting begins at 7:30.

**RESPECT FOR CLEAN AIR - NO SMOKING & SCENT FREE** - Smoking is not permitted in, on or around Knox United Church property. As well, please refrain from wearing perfume or scented products.

## ARROWSMITH NATURALISTS OFFICERS AND CONTACTS

**President:** Lynne Brookes - Executive Business

**Vice President:** Elaine Lefebvre - General Meeting & Club Activities

**Past President:** Dave Hutchings

**Executive Secretary:** Kat Derksen

**General Meeting Secretary:** Sue Wilson

**Treasurer:** Derrick Grimmer

**Membership:** Toni Wyckoff

#### Directors:

Dave Erickson

Derrick Grimmer

Terry Taylor

Rosemary Taylor

**BC Nature Rep:** Sandra Gray

**E-mail Correspondence:** Bill Campbell

**ConservationEnvironment:** Gary & Ronda Murdock

**Field Trips:** Ed Wilson

**Newsletter Editor:** Kat Derksen

**Promotion:** Sallie Dabb

**Refreshments:** Ron Wyckoff

and Dave Erickson

**Speaker Program:** Ronda Murdoch

**Stewardship:** Dave Hutchings

**Broom Bashing:** Dave Hutchings

**\*When:** 9:30am - 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month: **Where:** Bottom of Shelley Road, Parksville. Weather permitting, they will do a tour of the estuary and see what areas need attention.

**Young Naturalists:** Alison Bakker

**Archivist:** Margaret Hill

**Web Site:** David Helem

## ARROWSMITH NATURALISTS OUTINGS

### FEBRUARY – JUNE 2016

**\*February 27<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday) – Deep Bay:** An easy birding & beach walk on a falling tide. This is an area often yielding a good variety of seabirds. Maybe even some long-tail ducks! Slightly uneven terrain. Bring lunch. Meet: QBT 9:30am

**\*March 9<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday) – Qualicum Beach Museum:** Check out the new displays and fossils with Graham Beard – paleontologist. Meet: QB Museum, 587 Beach Rd, Qualicum Beach @ 1:00pm. Leader: David Helem

**March 20<sup>th</sup> (Sunday) – Brant in the Bay** 11am – 3pm - Brant in the Bay at Parksville Community Park. Hosted by Arrowsmith Naturalists

**March 30<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday) - Englishman River Regional Park:** Enter the park from the Middlegate end & walk along fish channels through mature mixed forest to the hatchery. Can also check out the clay bank which threatens Parksville's water supply. There may be some early flowers. Wear clothes and shoes suitable for mud. Will need to negotiate a slope to the river. Bring lunch. Meet: C&J 9:30. Leader: Toni & Ron Wyckoff

**\*April 9<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) - Tidal Pools Wall Beach & Beachcomber:** Explore the tidal pools for their myriad forms of life. Low tide that day is 2:00pm. Meet at C&J for a 1:00pm start. Leader: Gary Murdoch

**April 20<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday) - Comox Bluffs, Courtenay:** Discover the amazing variety of plants found on the dry hillside. Spectacular views. Rocky terrain, wear good treads. Bring lunch. Meet: QBT for 9:30am start. Leaders: Pam & David Helem.

**April 30<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) - Harewood Plains:** This is a blooming splendour well worth catching. Bring Lunch. Meet: C&J 9:30am. Leaders: Duncan Campbell and Lois King

**May 11<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday) - Filongley Park and Boyle Point:** We are hoping for lots of blooms on these Denman Island Parks and also to see some lingering scoters off Filongley Park. Bring Lunch. Meet: QBT 8:30am; Sunnybeach 8:45am for 10:00am ferry. Leader: Maggie Little

**May 21<sup>st</sup> (Saturday) – Yellowpoint Park:** This mature growth park should display many and varied spring flowers. But it can be boggy & wet so wear boots. Intermediate walk. Bring lunch. Meet: C&J 9:30am or N&P 10:00am. Leader: TBA

**June 1<sup>st</sup> (Wednesday) - Summit Lake and Cameron Canyon:** A new area for the Naturalists. There should be lots of biodiversity at the top of the hump on the way to Port Alberni. Bring Lunch. Meet: QBT for a 9:30am start. Leaders: Ron & Toni Wyckoff for Summit Lake and David Helem for Cameron Canyon

**\*June 11<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) - Springwood Park, Parksville:** Good birding area in this open forest. Bring Lunch. Meet: C&J for a 9:30am start. Leader: Jim Goodwin

**\*June 22<sup>nd</sup> (Wednesday) - Trent River, Courtenay:** Come and see the spring flowers and fossils. Bring Lunch. Meet QBT for a 9:30am start. Leader: Tom Constable

**Meeting Locations Key: C&J = Craig and Jensen; QBT = Qualicum Beach Tourist Centre on 19A; N&P = Northfield and Parkway rest stop parking lot; Sunnybeach = Hwy 19A north & Sunnybeach Rd.**



- \* = Easy Walk

**ARROWSMITH NATURALISTS SPEAKERS PROGRAM****MARCH-JUNE 2016**

**March 28, 2016 - Graham Beard** – Paleontologist. Graham will be speaking on the ancient history of Vancouver Island as can be determined through paleontological evidence.

**April 25, 2016 - Connor Stefanison** – Photographer. Connor is from Vancouver and is an award winning photographer (International Wildlife Photographer of the Year). Connor will be speaking about his experiences as a nature and wildlife photographer. You can also take in Connor's work (along with the work of 2 other eminent photographers) at the Royal BC Museum in Victoria from now until April 4, 2016.

**May 23, 2016 - Ken Wu & TJ Watt** – Ken Wu, Executive Director at Ancient Forest Alliance will be speaking on the fight for protecting Canada's remaining Pacific Old Growth Forests and specifically about the spectacular and diverse stands of ancient trees in Vancouver Island's Walbran Valley. TJ Watt is an award-winning nature & conservation photographer from Victoria who will be showing stunning photographs of endangered old-growth forests & landscapes that are too remote for the majority of people to ever see.

**June 27, 2016 – Ceri Peacey** - Board member with Friends of French Creek Conservation Society. Ceri is dedicated to the conservation and restoration of the French Creek watershed. She will giving a presentation about her work to protect the Hamilton Marsh wetland, home to an incredible diversity of life.

**BRANT WILDLIFE FESTIVAL 2016**

**March 19<sup>th</sup> (Saturday)** - Opening Night at the Beach Club Resort, 181 Beachside Dr, Parksville. Details TBA.

**March 20<sup>th</sup> (Sunday)** 11am – 3pm - Brant in the Bay at Parksville Community Park. Hosted by Arrowsmith Naturalists.

**March 20<sup>th</sup> (Sunday)** 11am – 3pm- Eagle Release at North Island Wildlife Recovery Association, 1240 Leffler Rd., Errington.

**April 9 & 10 (Saturday & Sunday)** - Pacific Brant Carving and Art Show at Parksville Community & Conference Centre, 132 Jensen Ave., Parksville,

**April 17 (Sunday)** 11am-3pm - Hamilton Marsh Tour

**"Wilderness is the preservation of the World" ~ Henry David Thoreau – 'Walking'**

**For more info on the Brant Wildlife Festival go to:** <http://brantfestival.bc.ca/>

**For more info on the Christmas Bird Count go to:** <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>. Here you can look up CBC results – current & historical – and learn about the many on-going projects.

**For more info on our local Christmas Bird Count go to:** <http://www.arrowsmithnats.org/>

**For more information on the Vancouver Mycological Society go to:** <http://www.vanmyco.com/>

**For more information on North Island Wildlife Recovery Association go to:** <http://www.niwra.org/>

## VANCOUVER ISLAND MARMOTS

By: *Toni Wyckoff*

The population crash was noticed in 1990, by 2003 there were 27 individuals in the wild. Vancouver Island Marmots found themselves the most endangered species in Canada. All of this is due to logging destroying habitat and creating clearcuts which the marmots mistook for meadows, happily moved in and starved to death.

To date there are 300 happy individuals living in the wild. Of those, 80% are wild born. This is all thanks to dedicated teams. They did learn by trial and error and most of you have heard the horror stories of predation and starvation. These teams have learned how to raise, release and monitor the colonies.

As they mature some of the VI marmots need to find a new colony. They go by sight and marmot sounds to find their way. Due to the scarcity of colonies they are captured and translocated. In 2012 a wild born male was found in a gravel pit near Nanaimo. In 2015 another wild born male was found on a West Coast beach. Neither could find a future home and were totally lost. They were both captured, given a medical, and translocated to a more productive life.



Last year 8 successful individuals found their own new home in Western Strathcona and Forbidden Plateau. 24 captive-bred marmots were released and 12 wild born were translocated. At least 35 new pups were counted in the Nanaimo Lakes region, 9 pups on Mt Washington/Forbidden Plateau, 4 pups in Western Strathcona and 4 pups at the test site in Clayoquot Provincial Park. That is 52 wild born pups this past year. 18 colonies have persisted for 3 or more years.

The BC Government, Island Timberlands, and Timberwest have created and support a Landowner Partners Fund which provides core funding. They also set aside habitat of 350 hectares at Green Mt and 926 Hectares at Haley Lake. BC Hydro is also a contributor. Captive breeding, transmitters, translocating, remote cameras, and the continual monitoring by field crews all costs a lot of moneys.

My husband Ron and I have supported the recovery fund for years and will continue to do so. We have seen marmots near Whistler, Manning Park and even Switzerland. Maybe someday we'll see them closer to home. If I was 30 years younger you would find me on a mountain - monitoring and protecting them from prey. After all, I did save Ron from a cougar once, but that's another story.

Public donations provide over half the recovery funding needed to carry out the ongoing work. This support keeps the landowners at the table.

*“Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature -- the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter.” ~ Rachel Carson, “Silent Spring”*



This year marks the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Arrowsmith Naturalists. Please join us at our regular General Meeting on February 22, 2016 to celebrate this milestone.

WHERE: Knox United Church, 345 Pym St, Parksville

## CAN/BOTTLE RETURNS



Can/Bottle Return Accounts have been set up at both the Parksville and Qualicum Beach recycling centres. When returning your cans/bottles please indicate that you wish to donate the proceeds off your returns to the **ARROWSMITH NATURALISTS** account.

\*\*\* Please remember to make the request to credit ANats **BEFORE** your cans/bottles are counted by a staff member at the centre. \*\*\*

\*\*\* Please mention this to friends & family \*\*\*

Parksville Bottling & Recycling Centre: 611 Alberni Hwy, Parksville  
Qualicum Bottling & Recycling Centre: 141 4 Ave E, Qualicum Beach

ARROWSMITH NATURALISTS thank you. And the environment thanks you!



**SUNSHINE** ~ If you know of an Arrowsmith Naturalist who is ill, in hospital or recently bereaved, please contact: Pam Helem: [arrowsmithnats@gmail.com](mailto:arrowsmithnats@gmail.com)

*"Wherever you go, no matter what the weather, always bring your own sunshine." ~ Anthony J. D'Angelo*

## CLUB PUBLICATIONS

A reference copy of the current ANats newsletter is available at each of the libraries in Parksville and Qualicum Beach. Meetings & Outings sheets are available at Mulberry Bush Book Stores in Parksville and in Qualicum Beach.

by Vivian Miao

## New Mushroom Show on Vancouver Island

**The first ever Mid Island Mushroom Show (MIMS) on Sunday Oct 18, 2015 was tremendous.**

Approximately 750 visitors attended MIMS 2015 hosted by the Arrowsmith Naturalists and the North Island Wildlife Recovery (NIWRA, [www.niwra.org](http://www.niwra.org)) in Errington, Vancouver Island. The show's instigator was VMS founding member Terry Taylor who moved to the Island two years ago and saw an opportunity to share his enjoyment and knowledge of all things mycological. The initial proposal to present a wild mushroom show was accepted by the Arrowsmith Naturalists, and a core group, headed by Lynne Brookes, threw themselves into the effort. They generated a shower of publicity, found an excellent venue in the NIWRA Wildlife Learning Center and searched enthusiastically for mushrooms.

After a hectic Saturday of sorting, identification and set up, the show was open to the public the following day, from 11 am – 4 pm, with admission by donation to benefit NIWRA's wildlife rescue efforts. By 1 pm, greeters at the entrance had already counted 400 people. The most popular exhibits were

the edibles (are we surprised?), so fortunately a supply of local edibles, as well as spawn kits and logs were available from vendors who also fielded questions non-stop for several hours. Visitors brought in trays and bags and baskets with a variety of mushrooms to be identified. There were a surprising number of *Agaricus moelleri*, as well as *Agaricus hondensis* (not seen on the mainland). Among the most curious were a "blue" reishi, and two likely truffles – a *Rhizopogon* spp. and a possible (gasp!) *Chamonixia cespitosa* (unfortunately, this got lost in the shuffle, but it'll be something to watch for in future). The show helped emerging mycophiles learn about mushrooms and introduced many first time visitors to NIWRA.

"First we were afraid it was so dry there wouldn't be mushrooms, then we thought maybe nobody would come." Terry admitted, "But in the end, there were lots of mushrooms, and lots and lots of people came." When asked if the show would be back next year, "Probably..." Terry said, with a gleam in his eye. ☺

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### ANats/NIWRA MUSHROOM SHOW ARTICLE

This article appeared in the Vancouver Mycological Society (VMS) December 2015 newsletter. It is written by Vivian Miao who came over from the mainland to help with our first annual Mushroom Show.

It's wonderful to see ANats and NIWRA not only mentioned in other newsletters but given so much space! This can only help in furthering all the causes and activities of VMS, ANats, NIWRA and other clubs/organizations involved in the education and preservation of our precious natural world.



*Helvella lacunosa*

Photo Credit: Kat Derksen

## Parksville-Qualicum Beach Christmas Bird Count December 20, 2015

Submitted by: *Sandra Gray* (BCPQ - CBC Compiler)  
(Jim Goodwin: BCPQ - CBC Co-compiler)

The 2015 Christmas Bird Count (CBC) was the 116<sup>th</sup> count, the longest running citizen science event with volunteer participants from throughout the Americas. It was also the **25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** of the British Columbia Parksville Qualicum (BCPQ) Christmas Bird Count.

The weather was quite good this year. Thankfully, some overnight rain stopped in time for owls to make a decent showing. Inland waters, roads and windshields were iced over for some teams. Most of the day was sunny to partially cloudy with only one team reporting light rain at noon. Winds were calm over most of our Count Circle – a 24 km diameter centered near French Creek Marina.

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*PQB Christmas Bird Count cont'd*

We had 55 birders in the field (highest in 25 years) divided into 10 teams of 4 to 8 persons. Birders came mostly from the local area who were accompanied by 12 from Nanaimo, 1 from Port Alberni and a visitor from Ontario.

Two of the teams came pre-formed: one family group of 4 including a youth, and another team of 3 home schooled youth with one parent each.



It was a great day of birding for all those involved and it was capped off by Arrowsmith Naturalists Christmas Pot-Luck Dinner held at St Anne – St Edmund Anglican Church in Parksville, Approximately 50 people attended the dinner. It seems that food/eating was on the minds of many species that day!

Photo Credit – Stellar's Jay – Nancy Randall

Photo Credit – Pot Luck Dinner: Dan Gray

Here are a few statistics & highlights of what was, once again, a successful and enjoyable event:

**All groups including Feeder Count:** 115 total species

**All groups including Feeder Count:** 29,932 total individual birds

**6 Count Week species:** Northern Shoveler, Canvasback, Yellow-billed Loon, Northern Harrier, Glaucous Gull, Rhinoceros Auklet

**16 High Count Species:** Canada Goose (2053), American Widgeon (2831), Barrow's Goldeneye (144), Hooded Merganser (53), Horned Grebe (272), Red-necked Grebe (313), Great-blue Heron (56), Cooper's Hawk (18), American Kestrel (2), Merlin (9), Peregrine Falcon (3), Great-horned Owl (12), Anna's Hummingbird (115), Belted Kingfisher (20), Stellar's Jay (279), White-crowned Sparrow (115)

**Owling effort:** 5 teams by foot & car: 6.5 hours & 43 km

**55 birders in the field in 10-11 teams:** -By foot - 69.5 hours & 77.75 km. By car - 32.25 hours & 504.5 km.

We had 12 part-day participants.

**36 Feeder Count Checklists reflect 47 Feeder Counters:**

- 45 species
- 2,403 total individual birds
- 96 hours

**Teams:**

1-Parksville

2-SanPariel/Rath Trevor/Inland

3-Craig&NWBays/Inland

4A-Errington, central & east

4B-Errington, north

4C-Errington, west & south

5-Hamilton Marsh/Coombs/Hilliers

6-Westside

7-Qualicum Beach

8-ColumbiaBeach

**THANK-YOU** ~ Once again, a sincere **Thank-You** is extended to the all private land owners and organizations that allowed birders to access their lands! **Thank-You** is extended to Buckerfields for being a pick-up/drop off site for Feeder Count Checklists. A **BIG Thank-You** to all the counters – field and feeder. And, another **Thank You** to the volunteers who set up for and cleaned-up after the Potluck Dinner! There are simply too many people to thank individually but please know we are grateful for everyone's contribution toward yet another successful count!

**ALDER HAIR ICE****By: Terry Taylor**

One of the precursors of winter in our woodlands is the fluffy cotton candy like extrusions on old alder logs and branches. These look very much like a dense white mold growing on the logs. Many people assume they are an unusual transitory fungus, but close inspection reveals that is not the case. If you breathe on them they melt right away. They are neither unusual nor a fungus, but they are transitory. The reason they appear to be rare is due to the fact that they only develop under very specific weather conditions, and soon fade away when these conditions do.

They appear overnight on old red alder logs and branches from which the bark has split away, exposing the underlying wood. The night, and the previous day must, however, satisfy specific weather conditions. During the day it must be humid and cool so that the wood is saturated with water. The temperature overnight must drop below freezing. If the day is already freezing they will not form. If the ground temperature does not drop below freezing they will not form. No wonder this process seems so mysterious. You go for a walk one damp autumn day, and everything looks as it has every damp day previously. Then you go for a walk the next morning and there is all this funny looking white stuff. You come back from your hike at the end of the day and it has all disappeared.



Once the freeze-thaw relationship becomes apparent then the explanation seems quite apparent also. Recent research, though, has just re-introduced the mystery component. Hair ice occurs in both Europe and eastern North America. It is associated with the wood of deciduous trees, but it is not common. On our coast, in contrast, it is common, but only on red alder. I have seen it once

on birch, which is in the same family as alder, but have never found it on the higher elevation Sitka alder. Other than this one occurrence on birch, I have never seen it on any other kind of wood.

Recent research in Germany has indicated that hair ice is produced inside wood by the actions of the *Exidiopsis* jelly fungus. Checking the data base of the UBC herbarium showed a number of collections of *Exidiopsis*, but it did not indicate what type of wood they were collected from.

But the mystery remains. Is our hair ice due to the same fungus? Is it due to a fungus at all? Further research is called for. Einstein once said that the most beautiful and deepest experience we can have is the sense of mysterious, and our local nature offers a great deal of that. **Photo Credit: Ed Wilson**

**L**AST WORD – A most sincere Thank-You is extended to ANats members Sue McLean and Margaret Hill.

Sue has stepped down after spending the last year as the Executive Secretary. She has left her successor meticulously organized executive records, making the transition that much easier. Thanks Sue, for all your hours of work.

Marg has stepped down after many years as Newsletter Editor. Marg's shoes will be hard to fill as she has done a most excellent job in keeping members informed through the newsletter - even in the face of emerging & ever-changing technology. But we are happy to say that Marg will now be taking on the role of Archivist. ANats is so lucky to have her staying with us in yet another active role. Thanks Marg!