

BRODIE CLUB MINUTES

FOR

FEB. 20, 1990

The 856th meeting of the Brodie Club was held in the Faunal Laboratory, Borden Building (Toronto City Dairy), University of Toronto, on February 20, 1990, commencing at 8.00 p.m. Bill Carrick acted as chairman, and Norm Martin as secretary.

ROLL CALL - Present were 10 members and 10 guests: Maudie Reynolds guest of Reynolds; Martin McNicholl guest of Bodsworth; Margaret Bodsworth guest of Bodsworth; Oliver Bertin, Nancy Saxberg, Peter Dawson, John Choi, Gail Worth and Anne Davis guests of Savage; and Kevin Scanlon guest of Carrick. Regrets were received from Ann and Bruce Falls, and Jim Bendell.

MINUTES - In the absence of Bruce Falls, secretary for the previous meeting, the minutes of it were read by the chairman.

ANNOUNCEMENTS - Carrick made available copies of a videotape describing Bill Lishman's training of Canada Geese to follow an ultralight aeroplane.

Norm Martin announced various items from the Federation of Ontario Naturalists. He also recalled an earlier request from Forests For Tomorrow for financial support from the Brodie Club. After discussion, Speakman moved that the club grant \$25.00 to FFT. Seconded by Reynolds. Carried.

Bodsworth announced the death of Leonard Bertin on January 26, 1990, at the age of 71. Bodsworth gave an obituary which is deposited with the club's records, and summarized here:

Leonard was born in London, England in 1918, the son of an English vicar who worked among the poor in London's

east end during the depression. He attended Cambridge University, and served as a Captain in the British Eighth Army, Royal Artillery, during World War II. He was captured by Rommel's forces, and in spite of two escapes, spent much of the war as a POW. Bad condition in the POW camps resulted in his contracting polio and hepatitis which affected his health for the remainder of his life.

Following the war he worked as a science writer for newspapers in Great Britain and Canada, where he came in 1957, covering in particular the subject of atomic energy. He was a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Medicine, and a member of the Royal Canadian Military Institute, the Toronto Press Club, the National Yacht Club, and the Brodie Club which he attended frequently.

The members stood for a minute's silence in remembrance of Leonard Bertin.

INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKER - Savage introduced Martin Wernaart, Superintendent of the Mountsberg Conservation Area in the Regional Municipality of Halton. Mr. Wernaart has held this position for several years, during which he has made his conservation area an active educational centre on wildlife for people of all ages.

SPEAKER - The Mountsberg Conservation Area operates under the Halton Region Conservation Authority. It is a 1200 acre area west of Milton comprised of sugar maple forest, old fields, and marsh. Educational activities are provided for visitors, with special emphasis on children's education. About 18,000 children annually participate in the programme.

These activities include the banding of several thousand birds each year by Mr. Wernaart, who involves the children as much as possible, and uses the programme as an instrument for teaching.

Injured birds of prey are nursed in cages, and released when they recover. There are usually more than 20 birds of prey on hand at any time. To feed these birds, Japanese Quail chicks (Coturnix coturnix) are raised in the amount of 5,000 per year. A bird of prey exhibition and demonstration of falconry is held each autumn. Veterinary services including bonesetting are provided by the Ontario

Veterinary College.

Maple trees are tapped in the spring and maple syrup is produced using both modern and old-fashioned methods. However there is considerable die-back of sugar maples taking place currently. There are nature trails through the forest, some of them rough, others trimmed, and even some permitting wheel-chair access.

A small herd of several bison is enclosed in a 60 acre field. These are allowed to breed, and calves are sold to produce revenue. The same is done with a small herd of elk procured from the federal government.

Pumpkins are grown in another area, and at Hallowe'en the children pick them and carve out faces.

Bats are trapped from a large colony in the roof-space of the superintendent's house, and these are used for teaching.

In addition the children learn to make bird feeders, skate on the pond in winter, sleigh-ride, have bonfires in the woods using discarded wooden crates donated by a local factory, go on nature tours on horse-drawn sleighs in winter and wagons in summer.

Indoors there are various displays; and the children learn to make puppet theatres using characters from nature.

The speaker showed excellent slides of these activities, and finally introduced to the club a live female Great Horned Owl which sat on the back of a chair hooting. The bird was imprinted on Mr. Wernaart.

QUESTIONS - Reynolds asked if there were interesting returns from the bird banding.

Answer: Snow Bunting returns from Greenland suggest this species migrates south-westerly from Greenland across eastern Canada and return, rather than directly south and north.

 asked if there was any Brucellosis in the bison.
Answer: There is none. And the herd kills any defective

animal, even if only tranquillized by a drugged dart. One animal was killed apparently as it fell down wounded by horn puncture from another animal.

YOUNG: Are the teaching programmes of the conservation areas producing any noticeable effect on children ?

Answer: Yes; 50% of dead or injured birds turned in used to be the victims of .22 rifles. Now the figure is about 5%. This kind of programme is especially useful for children up to Grade 4. After that they require a different approach. Budget cuts are now making it difficult to provide all these programmes.

THE SPEAKER WAS THANKED by Norm Martin.

MEMBERS' NOTES - Boissoneau reported an American Widgeon at the mouth of the Humber River recently.

Lermox reported various items of interest in birding around his new home in Cape Breton, including a bobcat feeding on a deer.

Tasker reported a Great Horned Owl chasing crows at Bloor and Yonge.

Oliver Bertin reported the geese have gone from the Eaton's Centre ceiling.

Savage displayed several frozen birds brought back by his students from Sanibel Island, Florida.

Carrick reported seeing a man selling captive North American birds at Guadalajara recently, including White-throated Sparrows.

The meeting adjourned to refreshments at 10.30 p.m.

Norm Martin.