

CELEBRATE KINGS: *Pride in our people, places and products*

Sharing in the discoveries of local nature!

With its abundance of natural wonders, the unique beauty and nature of the Annapolis Valley is renowned.

In Kings County, a love of local nature became the seed for the Blomidon Naturalists Society, an association formed about 35 years ago by people with a heartfelt interest in nature.

“For us, nature is anything natural on the earth, in the earth, in the sea, and in the sky,” says John Harwood, the society’s president. “We are all inclusive!”

The Blomidon Naturalists Society exists so nature lovers can come together to promote,

learn more about, and share their knowledge of nature.

“People enjoy the teaching as much as the listening,” says John. “It’s a wonderful organization to belong to. But the one thing we are not is an advocacy group. We want to stick to nature and not take sides on issues.”

The society’s core events are its meetings held each month, September through June, on the third Monday evening in the K.C. Irving Environmental Science Centre auditorium on the Acadia University campus. Participants enjoy a great variety of speakers, presentations, and discussions.

During all seasons, the group enjoys field trips to observe bird and plant life, and on occasion an outing with a telescope to observe the heavens. Canoe trips are a favorite for many as they explore interesting lakes throughout the county, as are seashore excursions.

“You can get as much out of the society as

you want to,” says John. “For someone like me who doesn’t know a lot about nature, there’s always someone who knows about whatever I like or has the contact information.”

Several publications by the Blomidon Naturalists Society depict the area’s nature and help others to appreciate its natural beauty. *Birds of Kings County*, *Nature Walks – Within the View of Blomidon*, and *A Natural History of Kings County* give readers insights into what they may discover, where to find it, and background on their discoveries. Also in print is the *2008 Natural History Calendar* and, published quarterly for members, is the society’s newsletter.

Dues for membership are only \$20 per year, and include the whole family. There are 176 members, from all areas of the Annapolis Valley, though the majority is local.

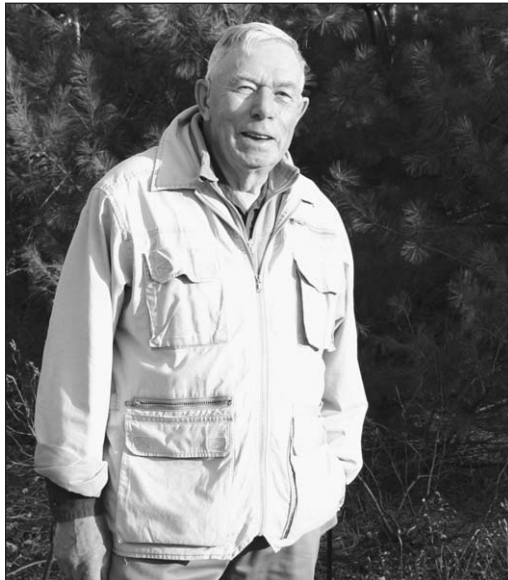
“We encourage membership, but it’s not necessary to take part,” says John. “Anyone can attend our meetings, hikes, or other events.”

Each summer, the society hosts a young naturalists program called the Green Dragon Program. Combining nature and art, it provides children a wonderful week of fun and education and is run in conjunction with many community summer programs. Also, for children from grades primary to five, the society has an art and nature competition in area schools judged by local artists.

For those who like to hike and learn more about local nature, they can join society members on Tuesday evenings from now until August 26. The group meets by the main entrance of the Harriet Irving Botanical Gardens at 6:30 pm, and spends a couple of hours enjoying the many trails and tracking the progress of nature. More information can be found at www.blomidonnaturalists.ca.

“There is no registration needed, just put on a pair of comfortable walking shoes and show up!” And share in the joy of nature with the Blomidon Naturalists Society.

Photo and story by Marlene Huntley



John Harwood starting on the trail at the Harriet Irving Botanical Gardens



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