

President's Message

By Steve Puddicombe

Season of Hope

“Fall Time” is here and with it the usual activities of the season. Where I live the harvest of fruit and flesh, followed by the process of preservation and stockpiling in larders, and the frantic chopping and stacking of wood is common, but everywhere, in city and rural dell, prosaic duty is the order of the day as the light wanes and the air cools—leaves must be raked, summer furniture put away, bird feeders hung out. In all cases it is about preparation for winter, yet, along with that, squirreled away carefully with the seeds in marked white envelopes, is the certainty that spring will follow.

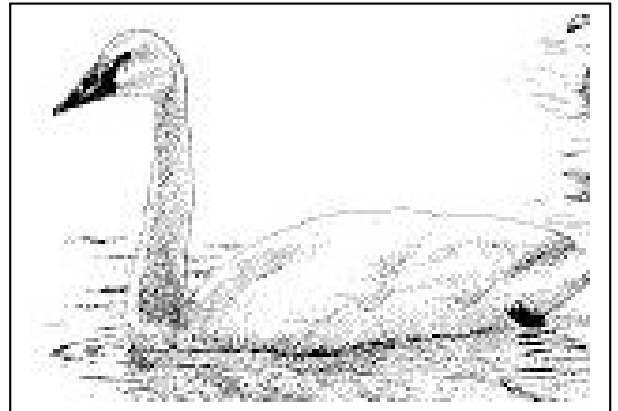
Fittingly or not, autumn is also the beginning of the political season. As the woolly bears search for a proper spot to bed down and seeming billions of flies and ladybugs enter the cracks of my clapboard house to hibernate, the November election looms. As chronicled in recent issues of the Whistler, there are numerous initiatives and campaigns that link to conservation issues; both locally and nationally the outcome of this election will most assuredly create conditions to either enhance or further diminish efforts to protect fish and wildlife and our natural environment.

Yet, even with so much at stake and in the face of such dispiriting events in our world, I cannot help but have hope. Not a naïve hope; not a simplistic hope brought about by blacking out everything unpleasant: but the hope native to all beings on this earth—the raw energy of existence implicit in nesting geese or mating elk, in planting a seed or, indeed, in the act of voting or standing for a cause.

For me hope is most cleanly manifested in the autumnal: it is my favorite season. Bittersweet and lovely, the stink of dead salmon and color of decaying leaves swirling about the harvest basket, still fresh-scented, there is both the sense of loss and impending want along with the reminder of luxuriance and plenty. It is the season when thanksgiving and expectation is most clearly matched.

This year I have a bumper crop of apples. There are so many I even welcome my yearly battle with the deer and flickers in my orchard as a chessman would a worthy adversary. Recently I ordered a hand made

cider press, to be delivered next summer, basking in thoughts of a long quaff and juice trickling down my chin. I find these thoughts to be reassuring, hopeful. Still, the greatest reassurance comes with the light of a new day, when just outside my window there is always the truth of hill and sky, of the trees and grass. Always the certain sure course of nature, come what may.



Highlights from the Sept. 23 Board Meeting

By Charlotte Persons

Most exciting was the possibility of WHAS taking on stewardship of Columbia Land Trust (CLT) acreage across the road from Julia Butler Hanson Refuge. CLT would get grants and do restoration work; WHAS could supply volunteers to do restoration work and to monitor the results. After the meeting, board members had a short tour of the acreage, which has possibilities of being restored to original stream configuration and native foliage. A representative of CLT will come to the next board meeting to make a presentation so that WHAS can decide whether to take on this role.

WHAS's annual goals are: to continue to expand membership; to be actively involved in local conservation issues; to continue to cooperate with other environmental groups with similar goals.

Darrel Whipple reported on several animals being mounted with last year's chapter grant funds from Audubon WA, including a marsh wren, sapsucker, grey fox, belted kingfishers, great horned owl, and brush rabbit (possibly for the owl's talons). Like the rest of our collection, these will be housed at Lower Columbia College's biology lab and used in educational displays.

Darrel will be Education Chair and Margaret Green interim Program Chair until another person can be found.