



The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

Annie Bélair, Member of the Year 2006

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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 Bélair 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 Gardens.

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 dentin 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 Bélair is clearly well qualified to be our Member of the Year for 2006.

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