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THE ISABEL PRIESTLY LEGACY: SASKATCHEWAN NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY, 1949-1990

MARGARET BELCHER. 1996. Nature Saskatchewan, Regina. 286 pp., hard cover, \$25.

Members of Nature Saskatchewan (formerly the Saskatchewan Natural History Society) deserve a history of their organization. Since the Society has done so much on so little, even posterity deserves such a history. Now that history has been ably supplied by Margaret Belcher.

The Society and its hundreds of volunteers over the years, has not been noted for keeping all the information and records necessary to formulate its history accurately; that was far from the minds of those many people who were simply doing their best for the organization and its mission and the cause of conservation.

So the first task of anyone writing a Society history was to find the information necessary to accurately record that history. And Margaret Belcher has done just that. She has had to dig, review, dig more, and look for explanations before writing the story. She has dug up facts which even many Board members would have long forgotten, or not even known about.

This book is set up in an easy to follow fashion. Even the index, with over 650 entries, makes any item easy to find. After an outline of the predecessors to the Society (has anyone ever heard of "The Sylvan Bird Club" or "The Pasqua Avian Club"?), the book reviews the formation of the Society itself, leading to

the formal organizational decision on 24 January 1949, "a frigid winter evening."

Thereafter, our history is recorded on a year by year basis, with every year represented to 1989-1990. Each year's headings include such as Summer Meet, Publications, Awards, Annual Meetings, Resolutions, Finances, and Election of Officers. These main yearly happenings are amply supplemented by many interesting highlights of the particular year or period, such as Interpretation, Heritage Marsh, Grasslands, Briefs, and Presentations, and Gains and Losses in the Conservation Battle. She has "dug up" fascinating information. Even in the field of finances, where an annual statement reflects both the year's results in numbers, and public relations aims of the organization, she has managed to maintain consistency in comparing results.

It seems customary for book reviewers to offer some criticism of major or minor aspects of, or facts in, the book being reviewed. Too often this implies that the reviewer might have done better. This reviewer will offer no criticism, and none is deserved, even though each reader might have approached the subject in a slightly different way.

Margaret Belcher has completed the task. The history is now ours. This reviewer's analysis would suggest that all past and present members of the Society would be proud to have this publication presently on their bookshelves. And should!

Reviewed by *Jim Slimmon*, 2526 Hanover Avenue, Saskatoon, SK. S7J 1G1