

# Rockingham Bird Club Meeting Minutes

Meeting date: 6/12/2025

RBC President Mike Donaldson skipped the official call to order and gavel in as the in-person June meeting of RBC was the Club's yearly potluck. In celebration of the Club's 50th year anniversary, the night was referred to as the Goldfinch Jubilee. Club members were invited to join a potluck meal with activities and other merriment at the Park View Mennonite Church Fellowship Hall at 6:00pm.

Mike announced the news that Cindy Smoker volunteered to direct the Club's Bird Seed Sale the upcoming Club year. He expressed gratitude at being able to continue the longstanding tradition and reliable source of fundraising. He gave a big thanks to Cindy.

Mike then moved on to thanking everyone for being there in celebration of the Club's 50th anniversary. He thanked everyone for a great Club year and appreciated the support and value of everyone's participation. He gave a special thanks to the Executive Committee for their dedication, time, effort, and thoughtful teamwork and mutual support. He then gave a special thanks to the Goldfinch Jubilee Committee for their hard work in coordinating the celebration of the Club's anniversary.

Kathy Byers then made some Programs and Field Trip related announcements.

- Tom Mizell will continue the Hillandale walks on the 2nd Tuesday of July and August at 8:30am at Shelter 12.
- There will be two trips to Raptor Hill Falconry. One in July that Kathy Byers will lead and one in September that Matt Gingerich will lead. Space is limited so people will sign up by reaching out to Kathy and it will be first come first serve.
- She then passed the microphone to Matt Gingerich for one last field trip announcement. Matt said there is a Purple Martin colony that will fledgling soon. There will be an email sent out with details for people to look out for.

Mike Donaldson wrapped up the loosely formal part of the meeting to allow time for the festivities: "Hearing no objection, this meeting is now adjourned."

Table by table, members were invited to grab food. A presentation put together by Diane Lepkowski played throughout the evening. A trivia questionnaire was on each table, tucked next to the geranium centerpieces, for the table group to collaborate on. Random names were drawn throughout the evening for their choice of a prize from a small table of goodies.

At one point, Mike took a moment to acknowledge some of the RBC Super Heroes over the years:

- **Clair Mellinger:** Charter Member, 1st VP during the second year of the Club; was 2nd VP for 1 year; Newsletter editor for 7 years; Member-at-Large for 2 years; President for 3 years; was President of VSO for 2 years; was the editor of the first edition of the *Birds of Rockingham County* book and coeditor of the second edition; and he was one of the principal leaders of the Northern Saw-whet Owl Banding Project.
- **Debbie Harrison:** Longest serving president for 8 years
- **Denise Hoodock:** 1st VP for 2 years and Newsletter Editor for 10 years
- **Elizabeth Ihle:** 1st VP for 6 years and President for 7 years

- **Steve White:** Treasurer for 13 years and enthusiastic Bird Seed buyer
- **Phyllis Showalter:** Secretary for 18 years
- **Bill Benish:** Member-at-Large for 6 years and Christmas Bird Count Coordinator for 15 years
- And last but certainly not least **Diane Lepkowski** who served as 2nd VP for field trips for 15 years in which she arranged and led many wonderful outings. She is currently finishing her second year as President of VSO. She also has coordinated the Club's annual Waterfowl/Raptor count for something like 10 years. Mike acknowledged that there were many more things that could be said on her behalf but wrapped up saying, "because of her many years of dedicated service, it is my distinct pleasure and honor to, on behalf of the Rockingham Bird Club, confer lifetime membership upon Diane Lepkowski."
- Mike concluded that portion of the evening with one more round of applause for the Super Heroes.

Kathy Byers led the Club through an activity to determine length of participation in RBC. She gave ranges of time, starting with 1-5 years, and continued to go up in time. Members were asked to sit or indicate that they were out some other way until there was only one person standing. Clair Mellinger was the last one standing at 50 years. Barbara Colson was a close second at 46 years of membership. Clair took a few minutes to share about some of the other notable figures in the Club's past.

There was a raffle for a Bald Eagle print that was gifted by a donor who wishes to remain anonymous. Denise Hoodock drew Richard Smith as the lucky winner. His mother, Mary Smith, and father, Dick Smith were charter members of the Club.

Total Participants: 64

Minutes recorder: Allie Sawyer

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