



Mesa Verde, Colorado - One of Father Charles Brandt's photos taken on his odyssey through the southern United States.

Noted local naturalist and photographer gives presentation on travels

Well-known photographer and naturalist Father Charles Brandt, a member of the Comox Valley Naturalists Society, will present a video on his "Journey Through the Southwestern U.S." at the next meeting on Sunday, Oct. 20, 7:30 p.m. at the Filberg Centre seniors lounge.

Fr. Brandt will begin his video journey with wildflowers and birds, such as the Black-headed grosbeak and the Warbling vireo, at Wells-Grey Park in B.C. His travels led him through Wyoming, Idaho, and Utah, where he documented Monument Valley and the Anasazi petroglyphs. Then, travelling through New Mexico, he visited Acoma Pueblo, Santa Fe, and Ranchos des Taos. He filmed the

Tetons in Wyoming, and wildlife in Yellowstone, before returning to B.C. and the wetlands at Rock Creek, where he filmed the Black Tern. His photographic subjects include architecture and landscape, as well as natural history.

Fr. Brandt has worked to protect the natural world and to awaken understanding toward it for many years. He first came to Vancouver Island 35 years ago as a hermit priest, to live beside the Tsolum River. Previously, he had been a navigator in the U.S. Air Force, and received a Bachelor of Divinity degree and Bachelor of Science degree, studying ornithology at Cornell University. He has also received the A.R. Brand Scholarship in Bird Sound Recording.

Eventually he moved to the banks of the Oyster River near Black Creek. He travelled to the U.S. and Europe to further his knowledge of bookbinding, and to learn paper and art conservation, working in museums in Moncton, Ottawa and Winnipeg.

When Fr. Brandt returned to this area in 1984, and found that the Tsolum River had been poisoned by the abandoned Mount Washington copper mine, he became involved as chairman of the Tsolum River Enhancement Committee. In 1989 he received the Cal Woods Awards from the Steelhead Society of B.C. for his environmental work, and in 1991 he was also presented with the Roderick Haig-Brown Conservation Award. His efforts to convince the provincial government to clean up the old mine site continue today.

The Comox Valley Naturalists Society meetings are held on the third Sunday of each month at 7:30 p.m. in the Filberg seniors lounge in Courtenay. The guest speaker's presentation follows a short business meeting; bring your own coffee or tea. New members and guests are always welcome.