

Niagara Escarpment **ViEWS**

WINTER 2023-24 (DECEMBER, JANUARY, FEBRUARY)



**50 YEARS OF HALTON
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LEARNING CULTURE at Cape Croker

Tara Shannon's Success

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(December, January, February)

ON THE COVER: LENORE KEESHIG AT CAPE CROKER PARK
Photo by Sandra J. Howe

FEATURES



**12 Active and Energized:
Halton Outdoor Club at 50**
By Halton Outdoor Club



**20 Traditional Teachings
at Cape Croker Park**
By Sandra J. Howe



**30 Tara Shannon:
Sorrow to Success**
Written by Gloria Hildebrandt



**38 Hottest, Coldest Festival
of the Year:
Fire & Ice at Alton Mill**
Photographed by Mike Davis
Words by Gloria Hildebrandt

DEPARTMENTS

- 5 View from the Editor's Desk:
**Change in the Print
Landscape**
By Gloria Hildebrandt
- 6 The Art of Russell Tonks
Readers & Viewers
- 8 Events

- 28 Featured View:
**Lion's Head
in winter**
Photo by Mike Davis



- 52 Subscription Form
- 54 Where to Get Copies of
Niagara Escarpment Views
- 56 Map of Communities Near
the Niagara Escarpment

GUEST COLUMNS

- 46 **Open Letter
from Cataract Village**
By David Kendall
- 53 Rick Grant Photographs

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PUBLISHERS

Mike Davis and Gloria Hildebrandt

EDITOR

Gloria Hildebrandt, editor@NEViews.ca

ADVERTISING/ACCOUNTS MANAGER

Mike Davis, ads@NEViews.ca
905.866.7888

SALES REPRESENTATIVE

Chris Miller, 905.460.6606

GRAPHIC DESIGN & LAYOUT

Nicholl Spence, nsGraphic Design
nsgdfreelance@gmail.com

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Niagara Escarpment Views

50 Ann St. Halton Hills, (Georgetown) ON L7G 2V2

editor@NEViews.ca | www.NEViews.ca

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Views & Vistas, Favourite Photographs from the Entire Niagara Escarpment in Canada, Published 2021



Conservation

Halton Award, 2014

to Mike Davis in Media/Blogger Category

SINCE 2008

Change in the Print Landscape



wrote letters, made calls and generally kicked up a fuss about the Greenbelt. To his credit, the Premier listened and took the right action. Giving voice to issues involving the Niagara Escarpment is an important part of our

magazine's mission.

In This Issue

We're also growing. We were pleased to be approached by the celebrated political cartoonist Russell Tonks about publishing his work. His first piece of art for us appears on the very next page of this issue. Turn the page to see it, and do let us know what you think of it!

Also in this issue, are the following fine features. Our cover story is about some of the traditional teachings offered at Cape Croker Park in Neyaashiinigmiing on the Bruce Peninsula. All people are welcome to learn about Anishinaabe culture. Writer and photographer Sandra J. Howe spent a winter's day there last year to celebrate some of the activities.

Alton Mill in Caledon has another way of laughing at the cold, by enjoying their Fire & Ice Festival in January. Mike Davis photographed snow, ice, flames and the early dark

last year, to give a taste of the excitement that's on offer.

Tara Shannon is an artist and writer with a powerful story of tragedy and triumph. From her home on the Bruce Peninsula, she reaches people around the world with her drawings and thoughtful words. Available in book form, they are being shared by Shannon in our pages.

For those who love to be active, 50 is a good number, especially at it's the age of Halton Outdoor Club. Members are marking half a century of getting outside all year long, to kayak, canoe, ski, snowshoe, hike, explore and socialize with new friends. They reveal some of the history of their society, along with photographs from over the years, and welcome more people to join in.

Call for Centre Photographs

After 15 years of supplying most of the photographs featured in our issues as centre spreads, we're opening up this featured view to other photographers. You don't have to be a professional photographer to have your photos considered, but we will pay you if we publish them. We want your views! We want special photos that show the season, with the subject matter that is a view of the Niagara Escarpment at a distance, or the view from the Escarpment, or a view taken

on the Escarpment itself. We don't want close-up shots of rocks, plants or animals, as amazing as they might be. For the "view" part of each issue, we want a big picture landscape that shares a part of the mighty mountain ridge. Be sure to identify the location of your photo, as we like to indicate exactly what we're displaying. I'm looking for a great spring landscape for our next issue, but I will need all the seasons for the future! You can begin by sending a few thumbnail images to me at editor@NEViews.ca. After this, I may ask to see a bigger version of your work.


We're Still Here

As the print landscape changes, we're grateful that we're still here, discovering the people, places and priorities of communities close to the Escarpment. Many of you will not be surprised that print can remain powerful. We appreciate all your support and interest as we remain dedicated to increasing appreciation of the wonderful part of the world that is our home.


Gloria Hildebrandt

P.S. Wild animals need wild spaces.

Let us know what you think!

Write us at editor@NEViews.ca or
 *Niagara Escarpment Views*,
 50 Ann St.,
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More Online!

 Keep in touch with Escarpment news between issues at our website. We have unique content not seen in the magazine, and you can leave comments in response. See www.NEViews.ca.



Niagara Escarpment Views is on Facebook as:
www.facebook.com/N.E.Views



READERS & VIEWERS



Thank you & Mike for this wonderful magazine! A lovely person & great artist "Ann More" is featured – so happy to see her so will reconnect... thank you as have thought of her...

Pam Johansson, Mississauga



I'm a writer for the Toronto Bruce Trail Club's newsletter and website (and love your magazine). Mark Rowe's excellent First Nations/Scotsdale article could be of significant interest to our readers. Is there a best way of sharing this information. I don't believe there is an on-line version.

David Rowney, email

Editor's note: Past issues of the magazine are available for free online at NEViews.ca/back-issues.

Love your magazine & beautiful photos on the cards.

Roxann Brown, Bowmanville

It's a nice effort to promote a fantastic part of Ontario. Good luck on it.

Paul Flanagan, Gore Bay

I used to get the mag at Home Hardware. There is no place in town to get your mag. The target audience ur trying to reach is u & Penner served this purpose. Poor marketing. George D'angelantonio, Virgil



Please let me have a copy of Ashley Brown's article "Trout Hollow Nature Reserve". As a boy, I played in Trout Hollow. As a man, I often relaxed there when faced with a difficult decision. I was instrumental in my family reaching agreement to transfer Trout Hollow to the Conservancy. I am very interested in seeing what has been written.

David L. Knight, Alliston

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EVENTS



◀ On Aug. 17 a terrible, fatal assault was made on Sharif Rahman, owner of The Curry House in Owen Sound. Community members piled floral tributes of sympathy at the door.



▲ Tunde Otto headed up the 25th anniversary celebration of Willow Park Ecology Centre in Norval on Sept. 24.



▲ PineRidge Log & Timber Frame was one of the exhibitors at the Sept. 19 International Plowing Match near Laurel.



▲ On September 26, Credit Valley Conservation officially unveiled its new head office entrance sign at 1255 Old Derry Road, Mississauga, prominently featuring a moccasin identifier as part of the Moccasin Identifier Project. This Moccasin Identifier Project was developed to raise awareness of the historical and enduring presence of First Nations, Metis and Indigenous communities. PHOTO SUBMITTED.



▲ On Sept. 21, Mohawk Raceway in Campbellville near Milton right on the Escarpment was treated to the amazing RCMP musical ride. There was a huge crowd to watch the 20 horses and riders perform fascinating patterns of skillful control. This year is the 150th anniversary of the world-famous ride. PHOTO BY CHRIS MILLER.



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EVENTS



▲ The 16th annual Halton Children's Water Festival, cohosted by Conservation Halton and Halton Region, was held at Kelso Conservation Area for elementary school students from Sept. 26 to 29. PHOTO BY CONSERVATION HALTON.



▲ Mayor of Halton Hills, Ann Lawlor, cut the ribbon at the Sept. 27 grand opening of Georgetown Pharmacy's new location on Main Street.

▼ "Dahlias," created by Candice Totem of Mono, is one of four new works of that have been added to Orangeville's Utility Box Art Display Program. This piece is located at 326 Broadway. PHOTO SUBMITTED.



▲ Health care workers Robin Berger and Nina Little were each awarded a certificate of recognition on Oct. 16, for their career-long dedication to the Orangeville community. Centre, Mayor Lisa Post. PHOTO SUBMITTED.





▲ Fine Arts Society of Milton held an artists studio tour on the weekend of Sept 29 to Oct. 1.



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BEFORE



AFTER




A photograph of three people in yellow kayaks on a calm lake. The person on the left is waving. The background features a dense forest of green trees and a white limestone cliff face under a clear blue sky.

Active and Energized: Halton Outdoor Club at 50

BY LORAIN WALTER AND OTHER MEMBERS OF HALTON OUTDOOR CLUB
PHOTOGRAPHS PROVIDED

Members of Halton Outdoor Club
in Cape Croker Bay on the Bruce
Peninsula, September 2010.

A group of four people are kayaking on a calm body of water. They are wearing life jackets and hats. The kayakers are in the foreground, with a dense forest of green trees and a rocky escarpment in the background. The water is blue and reflects the surrounding greenery.

2023 marks the 50th anniversary of the Halton Outdoor Club, which began as the Halton Cross Country Ski Club in 1973, when two local couples had the idea of creating an organization that would allow others like themselves with a passion for outdoor sport to enjoy cross-country skiing together. The Club would also raise awareness of this relatively new sport and support those with an interest in learning more.

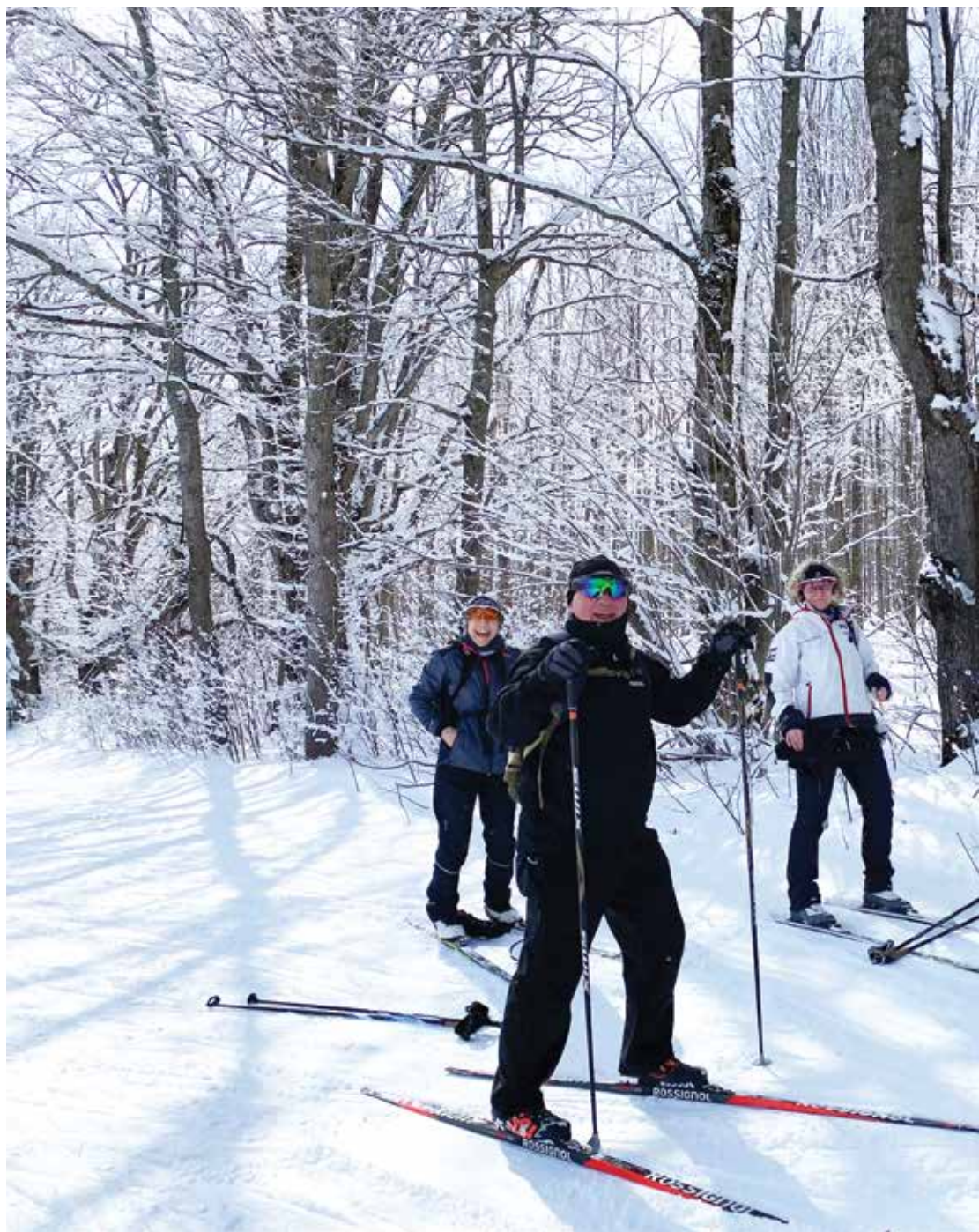
Since its beginnings, the Club has benefited from its proximity to the Niagara Escarpment and continues to do so today. We enjoy winter sports at Highlands Nordic, Scenic Caves and, more locally, Hilton Falls. Many of our hikes use the Bruce Trail or its side trails, and we are often cycling or paddling in the shadow of the Escarpment and the waterways that descend from its slopes.

Early Days

It's 1972, and two events fortuitously collide: first, some young couples keep encountering each other while cross-country skiing in local forests and begin talking about skiing together more "officially"; independently, a local newspaper advertises a meeting for people interested in cross-country skiing. And voilà, in 1973 the Halton Cross Country Ski Club is born. To attract members, a "dry-ski school" was held prior to the first ski season. More than 200 people attended, the majority joining the new club.

Initially, members skied locally, with free lessons in Lowville Park. They developed a trail system and shelter at the Hyde Tract, a nearby parcel of Natural Resources land. Over time, bus daytrips were added, heading north to "ski country" on weekend days. Offerings were further expanded to cover entire weekends and longer, including more distant destinations. In the non-ski season, hikes, bicycle tours and the occasional canoe trip were added.

Many early members had young families, and children's ski development programs were offered. The membership grew to a high of 1800.



▲ Celebrating 50 years of club skiing, with Winterlude at Highlands Nordic, 2023.

50 Years Later

In 2023, 50 years after its formation, the Club continues to thrive. Although it has had to evolve with the times, its core values remain the same.

An obvious indication of its evolution is the adoption of a new name to reflect a wider range of outdoor sport activities, becoming the Halton Outdoor Club in 2001. Now, numerous

organized activities are offered across all four seasons: cross-country skiing and snowshoeing; hiking and Nordic walking; recreational and sea kayaking; and cycling.

The demographics of membership have also evolved, from mainly families to adults only. Many of the 600+ current members are older adults, consistent with the trend for healthy active living later in

life. Members come largely from the Golden Horseshoe area between Mississauga and Niagara, but some, attracted by the Club's values and offerings, live farther afield – in Orangeville, London, Guelph, Toronto for example.

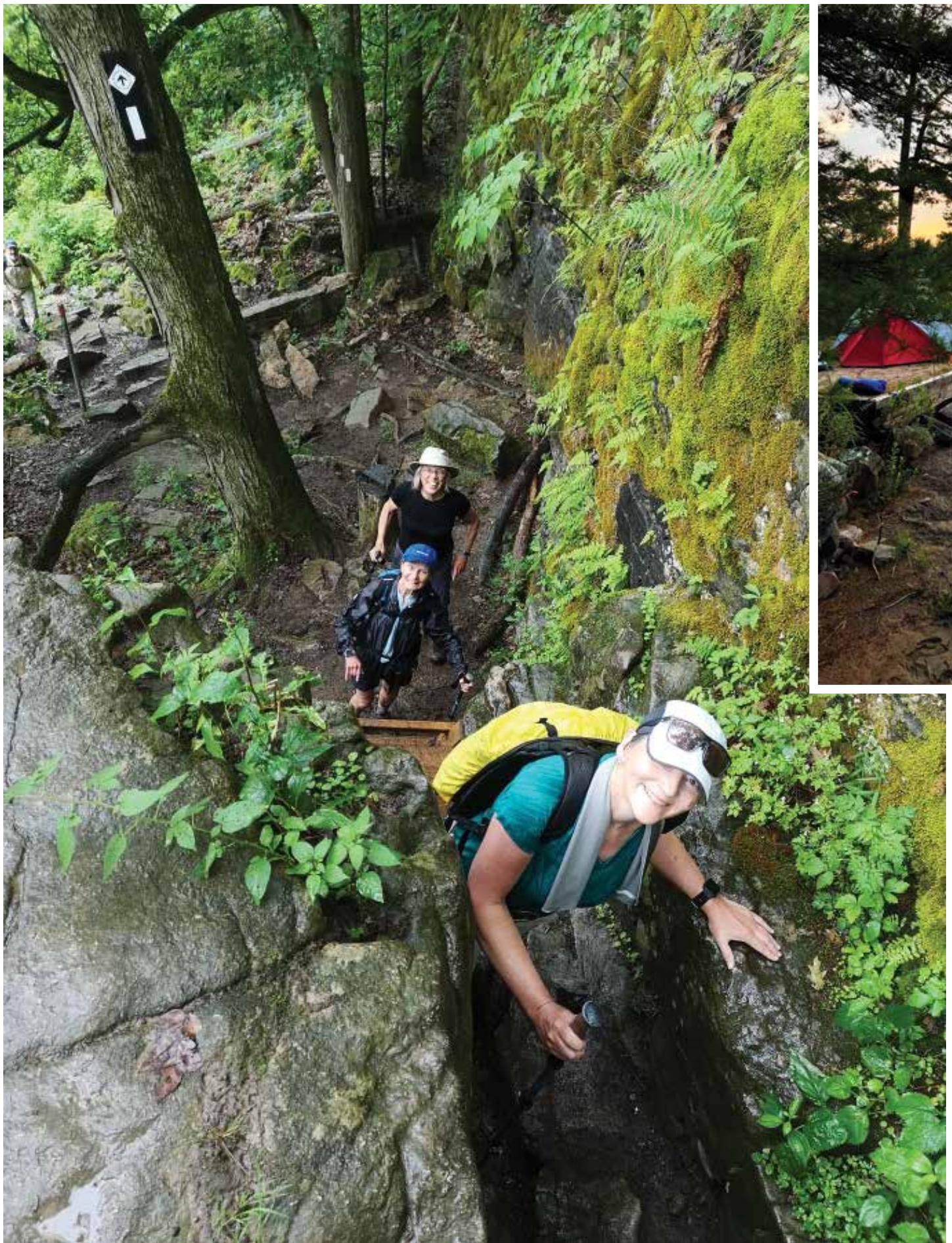
From the start, the Club has been providing opportunities to learn new sport-related skills, to acquire leadership and



▲ Hikers resting during a hike in Beaver Valley, 1983.



▲ Tuesday morning hikes on the Niagara section of the Bruce Trail.



▲ Climbing up the side of Mount Nemo, the first of two 25-km hikes celebrating the 50th anniversary.



▲ End of day paddling in Massasauga Provincial Park, Georgian Bay.

mentoring experience, and to enjoy day and extended outdoor sport trips within Ontario, across Canada and overseas in a healthy, inclusive and safe social environment. This is captured by our tagline “Active and energized together outdoors”. Outdoor activities are offered at a variety of levels to accommodate a broad range of abilities and fitness.

For many, the social value of the Club is huge. In a recent survey, 77 per cent of members indicated that the things they liked best about the Club were “socializing with active individuals.” They also enjoyed “the opportunity to meet new people”. Other common responses were “variety of activities”; “year-round activities”; “great trips”; and “value for money”. Firm friendships and supportive networks are formed, and informal learning experiences are the norm.

Volunteers founded the Club and have run it for five decades. They serve on the Board; plan and implement sport



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▲ Cycling Amherst Island on the Kingston Multisport Trip, 2023.

► 50th anniversary.



programs; plan and lead specific trips, both at home and further afield; and help with everything from planning social events or providing refreshment; to being bus captains on coach trips; creating and leading development activities, such as "Winter Fit," which is training to prepare for winter sports; and kayak safety training.

From Members

"The Halton Outdoor Club runs well because of an active membership and willing leaders. I have never seen a club where the participants are always so happy." **Mollie Holloway, Grimsby**

"The great thing about the Halton Outdoor Club is that members welcome you at

whatever skill level you have. They knew we were beginner kayakers and new members. They gave us suggestions if we wanted and we always felt like they had our backs."

Suzan Butyn, Hillsburgh

"I love that HOC offers so many event options, that everything is super well-organized and that there are so many interesting people who are enthusiastic to be outside and to share their talents. Love it!" **Jane Walker, Hamilton**

"It didn't matter that I didn't know many people on this trip as I met friendly people every time I sat down next to a group that I didn't know. I was always welcomed and quickly included." **Ru Wang, Oakville**

From Founding Members

"I am pleased to hear that the club continues to thrive and has been able to find a new appropriate identity. Congratulations to the present and past strong leaders and the many dedicated members for keeping the club alive for so many years and providing this outstanding service to the community."

Harry Godau, Burlington

"It has been most gratifying to see the large number of outings being offered and supported by the membership in so many sports. The travel offerings with reasonable fees and itineraries are hard to beat...So many friendships have developed within the Club, and there have been several marriages – just to keep things interesting!

Congratulations on doing such a wonderful job from the small beginnings 50 years ago." **Lyn and Doug Scott, Burlington**

50th Anniversary Celebrations

The 50th anniversary has been celebrated throughout 2023 with a range of sport and social activities, culminating in a gala dinner event held in Burlington in mid-November. Like everything else in the Club, the planning of these was done by enthusiastic, committed and creative volunteers.

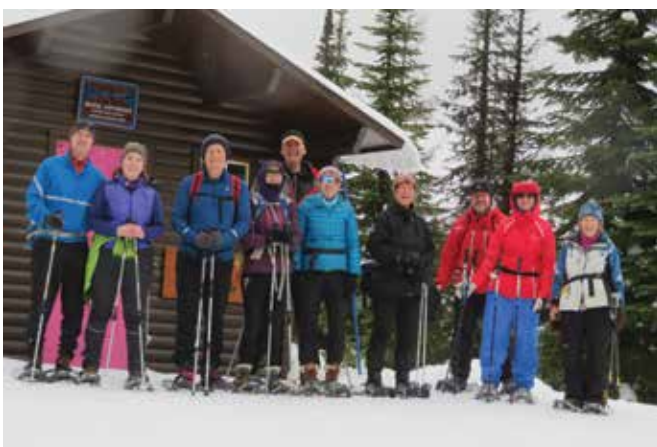
For more information and to join Halton Outdoor Club, see haltonoutdoorclub.ca, or email info@outdoorclub.ca or call 905.634.2012. The fee is \$75 a year. **NEW**



▲ Club members prepare for the winter sport season with “Winterfit” classes, La Salle Park, Burlington, 2022.



▲ Skiers on a bus trip in 1996.



▲ Snowshoe hikers at Mountain View Cabin, Silver Star, B.C.



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A person wearing a bright blue jacket, grey pants, a black beanie, and a large grey backpack with red accents stands on a snowy ledge. They are looking out over a vast, hazy landscape of rolling hills and a distant body of water. The scene is captured in a soft, overcast light, typical of a winter day.

Traditional Teachings at **Cape Croker Park**

WRITTEN & PHOTOGRAPHED
BY SANDRA J. HOWE

Cape Croker Park covers 520 acres of Niagara Escarpment on the Bruce Peninsula. Caley Patrick Nadjiwon Doran, an interpretive guide, stands at Jones Bluff, which is named for the last hereditary chief, Charles Kecedonce Jones. This photograph was taken on a separate hike from the cultural experiences described in this article.



Neyaashiinigmiiing translates as “that beautiful point of land that almost looks like an island but is only partially surrounded by water.” The poetry of Anishinaabemowin, the Anishinaabe or Ojibway language, is powerful and descriptive. Located northeast of Wiarton along the Niagara Escarpment and the Saugeen Bruce Peninsula, *Neyaashiinigmiiing* has been home to Anishinaabe people for millennia. Cape Croker Park is part of this traditional territory, and offers all peoples opportunities to learn through its Anishinaabe cultural experiences.



▲ The group at the front of the Park visitors' centre made introductions and held a tobacco ceremony.

Cape Croker Park has welcomed visitors to camp, hike, explore, and enjoy the lands, waters, and cultural activities since 1967. The Park consists of 520 acres of campground and wilderness bounded by high limestone cliffs, beaver meadows, and the clear waters of Sydney Bay, *Wiikwedoonse*. The Bruce Trail and the Niagara Escarpment meander through the Park. While the campground is open May to Thanksgiving, the Park itself is open year-round. In 2022, the Park introduced Anishinaabe Cultural Experiences to offer deeper cultural learning for guests and the *Neyaashiinigmiing* community.

Lenore Keeshig and Caley Patrick Nadjiwon Doran are

experienced naturalists, guides, and community members who bring great heart, caring, knowledge, and skills to their interpretive work. The Grey-Bruce Baha'i community and friends gathered in front of the Park visitors' centre on a sunny, January morning ready for a walk with nature and an Anishinaabe arts activity. The day began with introductions, including meeting this sacred land. Lenore gave each person a little tobacco, *asemaa*, to pray with and to offer to the land in gratitude. Tobacco is one of the four sacred medicines. Hold it in the left hand, closest to your heart.

Ancestral Trails

Caley and Lenore guided the group through maple forest,

over wetland boardwalks, up and down rocky slopes, following trails used by their ancestors. They stopped often to share land-based knowledge and stories. Participants learned about the medicinal uses of Balsam Fir, and smelled its wonderful citrus fragrance. They saw beaver lodges and a food cache, and heard stories of traditional uses of beaver meat and fur. They observed animal and bird tracks in the snow, and discussed wildlife behaviours. Caley spoke of his own experiences in walking on and learning from the land and the Elders, both powerful teachers. Lenore, as an Elder herself, brought wisdom and a gentleness to her guidance. Springdawn, Luke, age

► At the border. Caley, left, stands in Canada, while Lenore stands in *Neyaashiinigmiing*. The post between them is a historical boundary marker for treaty lines. The letters "IR" on the stake stand for "Indian Reserve."



▲ Lenore Keeshig explains that trees like this are culturally modified to give important directions on trails. They may indicate directions to trails, boundaries, even water springs.





▲ On the boardwalk. The group pauses near a beaver dam to search for signs of beavers.

14, and Charlie, age 8, all *Neyaashiinigmiing* community members and Caley's cousins, also joined the hike. Charlie carried an animal tracks book, and looked up coyote tracks when he spotted them in the snow. Luke acted as hike sweep, carried a radio for safety, and helped to keep the group together. When asked if he hoped to do guiding work in future, he said, "I already guide, fish, hunt, and trap with my Dad. I can catch fish, kill game, skin, and cook traditional foods. I really like being out in the bush!" Springdawn, a mother and mental health worker, brings her sons and her clients to

the forest as often as possible. She says, "Being out in nature is so important for health!"

Caley too, recognizes the value of land-based learning and connecting with nature. He explains, "After 25 years working in the hospitality and restaurant industry, I felt a pull on my heart to do something different with my career and life path. I had always sought the outdoors when I had time away from work. I casually started leading groups of friends and family on the trail. I started my own small business leading hikes in 2021. That led me to guiding Anishinaabe cultural experiences at Cape

Crocker Park. Being outside in nature is naturally calming. It changes how your brain is working, and helps you to relax and find clarity. I find that being outdoors enhances my mental health and positivity. I love sharing the history of the land, the ecology, land-based learning, and how our ancestors were connected to the earth. My trail family grows with every group experience on the trail!"

Traditional Tales

Lenore is a captivating storyteller. She shared traditional tales of heroic figures like Nanabush. Her telling of "Nanabush and the

Giant Beaver" is available on YouTube but it is especially wonderful to hear it told in a maple forest below the Escarpment with a freshwater spring bubbling nearby. Lenore is a plant knowledge-keeper, and taught the uses of trees and plants for food and medicine along the path. She is also an artist and craftsperson, keeping traditional skills such as quill work, weaving, and foraging alive. Anishinaabe Cultural Experiences provide a place where she can pass these gifts along to visitors and community members.

Participants in these experiences learn a lot and are



▲ The beaver pond, lodge and breathing hole seen from the boardwalk. This area has been flooded by the beaver dam and the standing dead trees have been killed by high water levels.



▲ The group was shown the traditional craft of making toy horses from hand-split Red Osier Dogwood.



▲ Lenore, in the blue jacket, shows the group the seed heads of wild leeks or ramps. She demonstrated how to follow the flower stalk down to the bulb in the earth. Ramps are an important early spring food and tonic.

▼ The rare Walking Fern growing plentifully here on Niagara Escarpment dolostone. Walking Fern gets its name from the way it spreads by touching its leaf tips to the ground and taking root.

very appreciative. Niv Saberi of Port Elgin said, “As a Baha’i, I really value unity in diversity. It was great to get out on the land with our Anishinaabe guides, learn about people, place, and wildlife, and connect hearts together. I loved this adventure, and learned so much.”

Joan Godden of Port Elgin commented, “The interpretive hike at Cape Croker Park was a relaxed and friendly outing. Our knowledgeable guides reminded us of the need to offer our thanks for the blessings of Father Sky and Mother Earth. I particularly enjoyed the company, the sun, and the teachings by Lenore and Caley.”

Neyaashiinigmiing, including Cape Croker Park, is a beautiful and ancient land, peopled by the Anishinaabe. Caley elaborated, “Our Anishinaabe cultural experiences carry forward the Truth and Reconciliation conversation. We make a

difference by connecting visitors to the land and our culture. The process of Truth and Reconciliation is deeply important for the well-being of Indigenous peoples and all citizens of Canada. We must move forward together. The Anishinaabe are the traditional stewards of this land. Our program holds everyone accountable to diversity, equity and inclusion, and to Truth and Reconciliation commitments. Our program is elevating the voices of our diverse community. We want people to understand our collective connection to the land. We must care for Mother Earth to ensure the survival and enjoyment of future generations.” This is the Anishinaabe way. **NEV**

The last feature created by Sandra J. Howe for this magazine is “A Place For All: Sharing the Kimberley Forest,” Autumn 2023.





▲ Just another lovely Escarpment view, from Cape Croker Park across Sydney Bay to Jones Bluff.



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Lion's Head in winter.
PHOTO BY MIKE DAVIS.





Tara Shannon


...

Sorrow to Success

BY GLORIA HILDEBRANDT
IMAGES AND PHOTOS PROVIDED



▲ This is the drawing that was shared from Tara's Facebook page without her knowledge, permission or signature, 17,000 times overnight.



Tara Shannon, creator of Rabbit and Bear, became an overnight sensation in 2020 when “I’m afraid,” one of her drawings that she had posted on Facebook, “went viral,” being shared 17,000 times in one night. Now she has four books published and is working on more.

An artist living on the Bruce Peninsula, Tara Shannon has a life story that shows tragedy turning to triumph. Between 2009 and 2013 she suffered a miscarriage, the breakdown of her marriage, the deaths of both of her parents, a diagnosis of thyroid cancer, and the termination of her position at work. She also had to deal with childhood abuse, and a late-in-life diagnosis of ADHD and autism.

In the fall of 2010 things started to improve when she met her current husband, who is an ecologist for the Bruce Trail Conservancy, and his two daughters. Last year, she and her husband moved to a home on 25 acres of forest and alvar that she finds inspiring for her creative work. On her property, she points out that “not only Black Bears roam, but so do Snowshoe Hares.”

She explains “I created Rabbit, not yet Bear, in spring 2019 to bring hope and comfort to myself while I processed my own feelings of grief, loss, anxiety and depression. Drawing and writing Rabbit and Bear, writing poems and stories, help me to relax, find and keep my bearings, and process my thoughts and big feelings.” Tara says she looks at Rabbit as the younger, questioning version of a person, and Bear as the older, wiser version.

Dealing With Loss

“Not surprisingly, I see my parents and grandparents in Bear, with the things they would try to pass on to me,” she adds. “I also see the child I lost in Rabbit. They have become my way of having back something of what I lost: my parents and my child. The questions expressed and answers given are the things I wish I could pass on to my child and the things I still wish I could hear from my parents as I navigate the world without them. Being able to see my thoughts and feelings expressed through writing and drawing has always helped me understand them better.”

Tara shared her drawings on her Facebook page, and one day in March 2020 she saw that her “I’m afraid” drawing had been shared by a page she didn’t know. Her signature had been removed from her artwork. The next morning her drawing had been





▲ Tara's dogs head home through the snow of the Bruce Peninsula.

"It's time to go," said Bear.
 "But where are we going?" asked Rabbit.
 "Forward," said Bear,
 "we can't stay here anymore."
 "So much has happened here though I don't know
 that I can move on," said Rabbit.
 "You can stay if you want," said Bear,
 "but life won't wait with you."
 "It won't?" asked Rabbit.
 "No," said Bear, "besides, up ahead there might be
 something wonderful."
 "You think so?" asked Rabbit.
 "I think," said Bear,
 "if you stay here, you'll never know."



shared 17,000 times. People wanted to know who the artist was, and she became busy responding to questions and learning to protect her work.

"I even saw my image shared in an online newspaper article from Singapore," she says. A publisher called Wintertickle Press invited her to create a book of Rabbit and Bear drawings, and before Christmas 2020, *Rabbit & Bear Make a Wish* was published.

So far, almost 13,000 copies have been sold worldwide.

Her Facebook followers now number more than 292,622 people. Her reach is in the range of three to five million people a month. Her Instagram followers are around 10,000.

Tara continues to create drawings and in 2022 her second book, *Rabbit & Bear Return with the Light*, was published in softcover. This

book is described as a graphic novel that "delves deeper into the human existence as we quest to find meaning. Dealing with themes of purpose, loss, grief, depression, the book brings its reader along for the ride, letting them know that finding and sharing light is not only possible, but probable with the help of friends and insight."

A third book is a collection of poems and short stories

called *Gather the Stars and Hang the Moon*. Her fourth work is *Gather the Stars and Hang the Moon Journal*, a blank book of inspirational bits of Tara's poetry, intended to let users respond as they want to on the page.

Tara's books are available in Lion Head, at The Shops at 84 Main, which is one building containing three stores, The Dandy Lion, Aunt Donkey's and Murdle's Mercantile.



◀ Tara with her first two books.

I have felt no greater pain
than the moment when your
heart ❤️

Stopped beating.

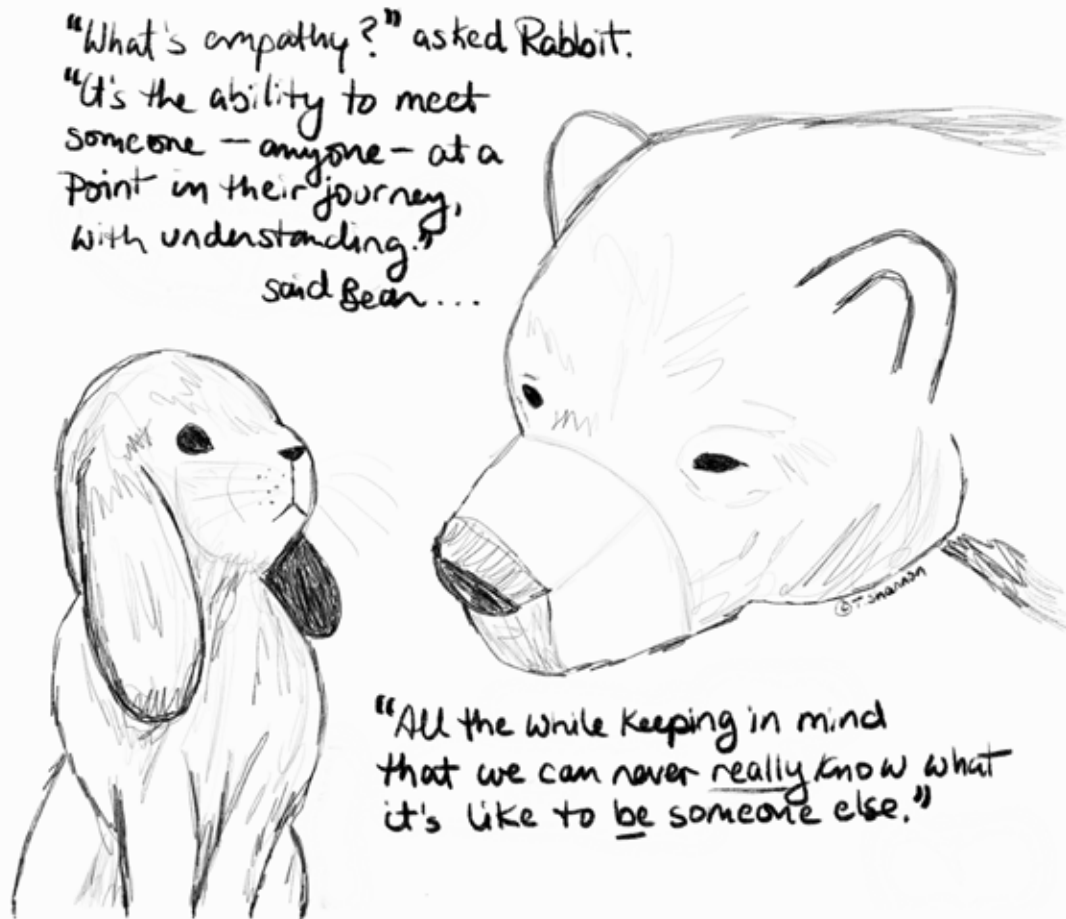
And mine
carried on...



Signed copies of her books are available exclusively at this location. Her books can also be ordered from Amazon, Indigo, Coles and Chapters.

The Future

Tara reports that as a survivor of thyroid cancer, her health is now okay, as she has annual tests and is being carefully monitored by her doctors. "Life is all new from what it had been

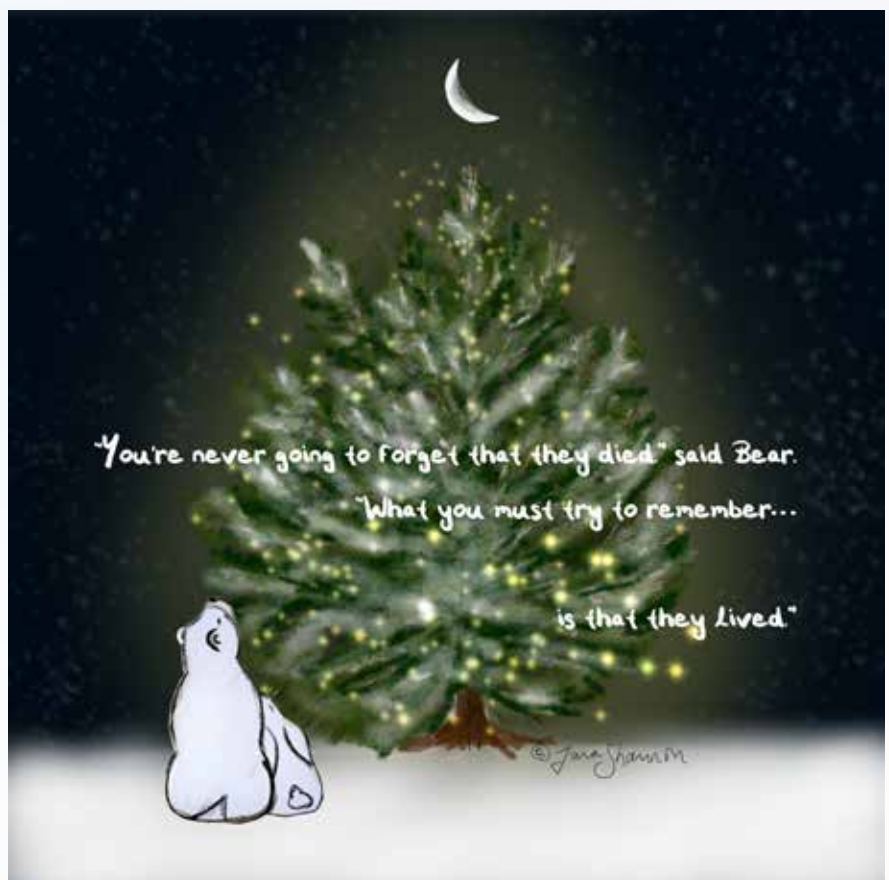


10 years ago," she adds. "I'm happy and grateful to be here. My healing, mentally and physically, will be ongoing. That's just the way it is. And, I'm happy to share that journey, ups and downs included, through Rabbit & Bear and my other writing."

Future projects include a new Rabbit & Bear book and two novel-sized pieces that she's working on, one of them likely a Young Adult novel that includes a dragon, which she began writing in 2019.

The online store at tarashannon.pixels.com offers an astonishing number and variety of products featuring Rabbit and Bear, including wall art, throw pillows, holiday ornaments, towels, coffee mugs, tote bags, jigsaw puzzles, notebooks, clothing and even more.

For more information on Tara Shannon, see the website tarashannonwrites.com and Facebook, Instagram/Threads/TikTok as @tarashannonwrites. **NEV**





▲ Bear and Rabbit cozy up with all four of Tara's current books.



▲ The first Rabbit and Bear book. Autographed copies are available in Lion's Head.



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HOTTEST COLDEST FESTIVAL OF THE YEAR

Fire & Ice at Alton Mill

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MIKE DAVIS | WORDS BY GLORIA HILDEBRANDT

Alton Mill in Caledon hosted its 2023 Fire and Ice Festival on Saturday Jan. 28 and Sunday January 29, luring people to defy winter weather and enjoy the outdoor and indoor activities of pond hockey, ice skating, sledding, ice carving, a ticketed comedy show, a bluegrass performance, hot food and drink and celebrations of fire.



Alton Mill's 2023 Fire & Ice Festival drew people outdoors during the coldest month of the year to celebrate winter sports and art.

Kids' Superslide

► Safety first. Bales of hay define the track and provide cushioning for youngsters enjoying the slide.



Fire Performance

Stu Wilson spun fire among the spectators, mesmerizing them with rhythm, skills, tricks, moves and dance patterns. “I’ve been spinning

fire for about 22 years all over the world from South Africa to Taiwan,” he says. “People love seeing fire performers live and in person. It always adds incredible

energy to any event.”

“Safety is always the number one concern when deciding to spin fire,” Stu explains. “Knowing your limits and playing within

them is essential. Fuel safety is also paramount. For the most part, fire is only really dangerous when left to burn unattended.”

“Crowds typically tend to

Ice Carving



▲ Work of ice created by Cam Lindsey and some tools of the trade.



▲ Winston Uytenbogaart stands behind his art. As well as being an ice carver, Winston is a poet whose written work was featured in the Winter 2021-222 issue of this magazine.



keep a safe distance from a fire spinner, but performers do need to be aware of their surroundings and inspect the performance area for potential hazards



before the show," he adds.

Stu offers fire performances for events, weddings, corporate functions and parties. He also teaches lessons in fire

performance, through his company Fire Tribe, which is based in Georgetown. Information is available at firetribe.ca. Stu was even one of the musicians for the Spirit

Bundle Burn and fire from his performance was going to be used to start the burn.

continued page 42



Spirit Bundle Burn

A highly anticipated moment of the outdoor part of the festival was the burning of the sculpture designed and created by Paul Morin with the help of others. When asked questions about this, Paul suggested his video on his YouTube channel, which shows 20 minutes of initial sketches, materials gathered

and elements of the sculpture. This is the sixth burn that Paul has participated in, and the third one he has designed.

In the video Paul explains his creative process. "I wanted to incorporate as much sacred geometry as I could, so in using the Fibonacci curve there is an actual mathematical sequence to it so I thought if I don't show the physical snail

shell it might be kind of neat to utilize those numbers in some aspect and that's when I came up with a footprint of about a 60, 65 inches in diameter of a pentagon and basically building a strong double pentagon. That pentagon is found in cell structure, leaves and everywhere. Much like the Fibonacci

curve these are all sacred geometry, all mathematical numbers and formulas that are directly born from nature."

Spirit Bundle Burn

For the 2023 Fire and Ice Festival, artist Paul Morin has designed a fire sculpture incorporating sacred geometry, the blueprint of creation and the origin of form. This multi media installation will be a spectacular display of pyrotechnics as an art form. In addition there is a video and photography contest to capture the ultimate shot so submit your best capture. Use upload QR code

Created with the help of:
 David Goode - gathering and assembly, Doris Treleaven - welding,
 Brian Oates - wood milling, Craig Gutowski - flame colour
 and assembly, James Routledge - steel cutting
 Burn music by Paul Morin, Joe Steduto and Stu Wilson



▼ “There are 25 feet of cotton muslin wrapped all around the structure, giving five screens. What you’re going to see on that screen is flickering forms of all that construction giving you these really neat shapes. A hidden projector will be projecting to the front two surfaces.”



▼ “This construction is supporting upside down Cedar trees. The tops of the Cedar trees are all going to be drilled and I’m putting paraffin in there and some of these chemical colours. I’ll be inserting fire starter sticks in the holes I made. The wick goes all the way to the waxed top so the fire capsule is going to be eight feet high.”



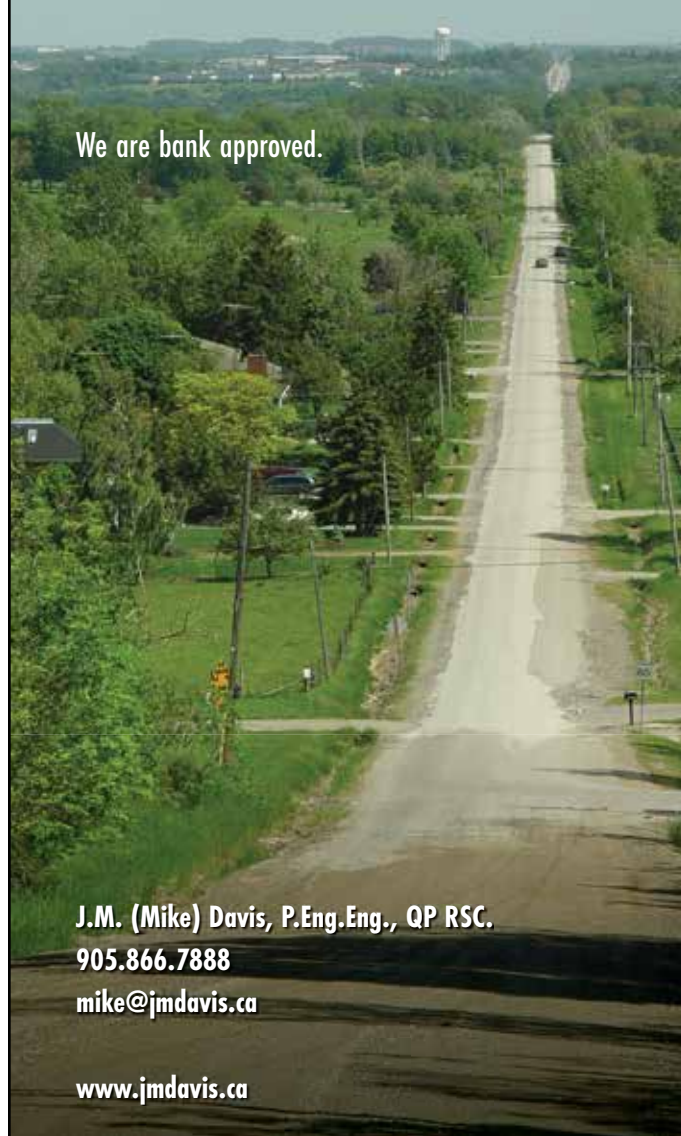
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“The smoke’s going to be moving and the light on is going to be moving so it could be really quite interesting. That’s my hope.”



“I’m making a basket four feet in diameter using Willow branches and Red Osier Dogwood. It’ll take hundreds and hundreds of saplings but essentially, it’ll be this columnal basket and the flame is inside.”

“The real art is what the people bring to it and take from it. All I’m doing is setting in motion the sequence of events that creates this moment of art. I want the fire to start from within, spread, then eventually go up.”






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The Next Festival

“January 27 and 28, 2024 will be our 14th year hosting The Fire & Ice Winter Festival at the Alton Mill Arts Centre,” says Martin Kouprie, general manager for the centre. “It has become one of Headwaters Region’s most anticipated and enjoyable winter events, with over 2,500 people expected to attend throughout the weekend.”

Planned activities seem to be the same as last year, ice carving, artist studio tour and exhibitions, super snow slide, hot food & drink, arts & crafts, pond skating and shinny, hot stove lounge, fire sculpture, live music, and bar comedy night.

To track festival plans, watch altonmill.ca or Alton Mill on Facebook, or @altonmill on Instagram. **NEV**



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Open Letter from Cataract Village

By David Kendall

Dear Greta Thunberg, You don't know me, but I'd truly love to sense your gentle tread upon my fertile southwestern Ontario soils, your stare upon my green terrain and rustic structures. I am a wee hamlet perched on a bluff overlooking the swift-flowing north branch of the Credit River and its 70-foot cascade. Hence my name: Cataract Village.

I'm 47 houses—each with its own fresh-water well. My two streets and my 200 human inhabitants live shaded by venerable maples, cedars and pines. The Forks of the Credit Provincial Park stretches against my southern flank. The heritage grey stonework and Georgian brick of the Cataract Inn extends its welcome as it has since 1875.

I'm writing to invite you to visit while I'm still alive and unscathed. But you'll have to hurry, 'cause I'm facing my doom.

I'm easy to reach, nestled in the heart of the Greenbelt and just outside the UNESCO Niagara Escarpment world heritage biosphere reserve in the Caledon hills an hour by car northwest of Toronto. (You could hike here—I'm the destination at one end of the 47-km Elora-Cataract Trailway, part of the 28,000-km Trans Canada Trail stretching from sea to sea to sea. And the 750-km Bruce Trail too, treks through the park.)

But I know your time is precious, so I suggest you just drive your battery-charged vehicle up Highway 410 and then north half an hour on Hurontario Street above Brampton. Veer left

onto highway 24 at the traffic light in Caledon Village and after a km or so you'll hit Cataract Road.

At that point, apply the brakes. There's one of those blinking roadside signs reminding you to slow to 40 kph. You're entering a "Community Safety Zone," it reads. A few metres further on my very own sign bids you: "Welcome to Cataract, settled circa 1858". Finally a third sign reading "Quiet Zone. Limit Vehicle Noise" features a drawing of a car and a motorcycle. That's the ironic one—the false promise of a "quiet zone".

- No sign depicting a cavalcade of dump trucks—one every two minutes all day long, six days a week, all year long.

- No image of dynamite explosions twice a week that will vibrate through my houses for the next 50 years.

- No picture of lethal fly-rock skimming up to a 1,000 metres.

- No sketch of toxic dust drifting into windows and lungs.

- Not even a notice warning folks to bring bottled water—my wells are about to go dry.

700-Acre Blasting Pit

Bang, boom, roar, oblivion. That's what's a-comin' to my "quiet zone". St Mary's CBM Aggregates, a wholly-owned Ontario division of Brazilian conglomerate Votorantim Cimentos, has applied to develop a 700-acre blasting pit flush up against my northern fringe. They aim to harvest bedrock limestone up to eight storeys deep for the next half century. It's a hard, carbonate deposit from the Silurian period of 420

million years ago that yields high-grade cement. Some 20,000 tons a year will be blown up and carted away where today trees rustle and fields yield their crops.

"PUBLIC NOTICE" shout signboards set inside the fields. "Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-Law Amendment." In smaller print it reads: "The Town of Caledon has received applications to develop this site for Aggregate Extraction (Class A Pit/Quarry below water table)."

My heritage core, where hundreds lived and mined rock in the 1880s, loading it onto trains to build the Queen's Park Legislative Building, Casa Loma, and Old City Hall, is about to be ravaged.

To operate, states the company's 6,000-page proposal, they'll need to "dewater" the site. So what will become of the pure, subterranean water that feeds my wells? Instead, a murky current will be excreted onto the trout of the Credit River.

The proposal includes the quarry company's recognition of its legal obligation to rectify citizens' water deficiencies throughout the

years of quarrying. But who knows what that means? A pipeline from a long-distance water source could cost up to \$20 million.

Torontonians experienced the worrisome wildfire smoke advisories of earlier this summer. Well, I'm about to inhale fumes for three seasons of the year for the next half century. Greenbelt goes grey.

And, not to be overly selfish, but my homes risk shedding up to a third of their value. Long speckled with 23 active aggregate pits including a trio of small quarries, Caledon last October imposed a one-year moratorium on all mineral aggregate resource applications. The Interim Control Bylaw (ICBL) aims to allow the town time to evolve a master plan for assessing ongoing and future proposals. In less than two months the thinking will be over, and the new criteria will be in place.

Under the current licensing system, aggregate operations pay Caledon 16 cents per ton of extracted aggregate—a total last year of \$362,000. Caledon Mayor Annette Groves told a public

Continued on page 48



▲ Entry to the village of Cataract.

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briefing on the ICBL on the evening of June 20 that road repairs inflicted by the heavy aggregate trucks far outpaced that puny revenue.

So how do my residents react to all this? The 200 members of the public in attendance that evening were loudly unanimous in condemning the “Caledon mega-quarry” proposal, prompting the meeting chair to warn “There are OPP officers present for the safety of everyone.”

“I’m not opposed to gravel mining and quarries in Ontario; of course, we all rely on those products for our infrastructure,” says David Sylvester, a Cataract resident and chair of the Forks of the Credit Preservation Group (FOTCPG). “But the fundamental issue we have is the corporation’s decision to apply for a mine right beside the Credit River, beside Forks of Credit Park, adjacent to a historic village and within the GTA. It is a very poor decision environmentally.”

Nix the Pit

“Caledon has one of the worst aggregate policies in Ontario,” environment lawyer David Donnelly told a batch of folks attending an FOTCPG fundraiser August 28 at the nearby Goodlot Farmstead Brewery. The village’s best hope is that the moratorium on aggregate applications gets extended another year, he said. By then, with a provincial election looming, the Ford government may be swayed to nix the pit.

The FOTCPG in early August wrote to federal Environment and Climate Minister Steven Guilbeault requesting an environmental assessment of the proposed project. “If approved, this blasting quarry would utterly destroy vast tracts of prime agricultural land, adjacent forests and natural habitat—

forever,” the letter warned.

Not to mention: destroy me. A meeting with an Environment Canada official has been promised.

Local councillors can murmur and say no. They can brandish their new master plan for pits ‘n quarries. At the very least, they can demand a 1,000-metre buffer zone between me and the explosions instead of the proposed 300 metres. But one Municipal Zoning Order from Queen’s Park and Caledon’s fledgling licensing rules will bite the dust. The Niagara Escarpment Commission can shake its conglomerate head. The Credit Valley Conservation folks can beg and squeal. But Ontario is open for business and “GROWTH” has become the mantra of a nation that aims for 100 million citizens by the end of the century. Growth that provides cheaper labour and bigger markets for the CEOs. And for the rest of us an eroded environment and exorbitant housing costs. Actually, our beleaguered Cataract houses will sell cheap.

Impact on House Prices

The quarry folks say the first bulldozer is likely five years away. But the “for sale” signs are already up. Former PC and Independent MP Garth Turner, always a real estate mogul, earlier this year bought a house in Cataract just before all those red STOP THE CALEDON MEGA-QUARRY signs began dotting local lawns. He sold the place July 14 “for unrelated reasons” after dropping the price by \$150,000. “There will be an impact on prices if the quarry goes ahead,” he warns.

“It will affect all of us,” says Oliver Allard, 47, a machine operator, father of three, who bought their one-acre property three years ago. “They say location, location, location. Now...” He has Cataract’s

deepest well at 130 feet and hopes his water flow will maintain. But he worries: “The earth is a filter.” Now that filter will be scraped away.

He has been rebuilding the family home for the last three years and has no intention of selling and fleeing. “I’m rationalizing. It’s all better than the noise and pollution of the suburbs,” he says. “I can’t move my house, so that’s why we fight—a David and Goliath struggle—but I have a feeling it won’t go David’s way.”

He’s right. The slingshots this time are called fly-rock. And it’s the Goliath who will fling the pebbles.

“I’ve heard they’ve been told if you don’t open the quarry, then the (proposed) highway 413 won’t be built,” he adds. “So it’s not about us.”

He’s right again: it’s not about Cataract. Folks residing nowhere near me will benefit from the project. Karen Bennett, partner with Glenn Schnarr & Associates, hired to do the land-use planning for the project, at a June 23 public meeting in Caledon East spoke of “a critical shortage of high-quality limestone in the next 10 years.” She added that the proposed quarry “is one of the few such resources in the GTA.”

Jobs and materials to build roads and homes will be produced for a burgeoning Canadian population. Plus, half a century from now, a tree-dotted park is promised for my northern fringe. “Long term, it’s a net environmental gain,” Ms. Bennett told the gathering.

More like arboreal flowers for a gravesite, the way I see it.

A recent Ontario Chamber of Commerce report titled “The Long Haul” and commissioned by the Ontario Stone and Gravel Association, points out that Ontario infrastructure projects consume 164 million tonnes of aggregate a year. Of that, 25 million tonnes originate

in the GTA and Hamilton area—which includes me. If, instead, those 25 million tonnes had to come from 75 km away, it would add \$169 million in cost and an extra 89,000 metric tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions.

“From highways and transit lines to hospitals, airports and manufacturing processes aggregate underpins infrastructure, economic activity and social well-being in communities across Ontario,” the study concludes.

Well, not so much in this community, let me murmur.

Of course, I must confess, my lament has come late. I’ve stayed silent while my sister village of Belfountain just a km away has long howled against infringements from three sides. A 50-year gravel pit has been licensed on their western fringe. Seventy-five huge houses—even the developer refers to them as “manors”—are planned for 175 acres of forest and farmland hugging the southern edge of the historic hamlet. And a massive sewage plant is being constructed outside the exponentially expanding town of nearby Erin to gush its “treated effluent” into the west branch of the Credit River that flows along Belfountain’s northern flank.

Not nice, none of it. But Belfountain’s woes seem minor compared to the desecration about to be inflicted on me.

So, Greta, you once famously told the world: “I want you to act as if our house is on fire. Because it is.” I pray you consider my invitation. I’m kinda desperate, a senior citizen appealing to a young’un for rescue. An aging village about to be swept over a cataract.

Yours quite sincerely.

David Kendall is a retired Toronto Sun newspaper reporter and the author of the novel Slag.



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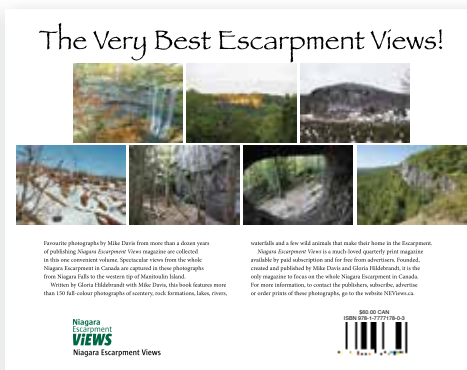
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Rick Grant regularly takes long walks in various parks, always with his camera. Grindstone March in Burlington and Christie Lake Conservation Area in Dundas are two of his favourite places.

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Hazelnut Thumbprint Cookies with Jam

Prep Time: 5 min. | Total Time: 1 h. | Makes: 48 Cookies

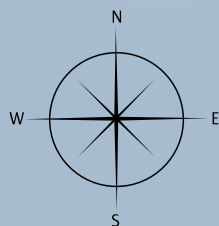
Ingredients

- 1 cup 2 sticks Churned Unsalted Butter Sticks, room temperature (250 mL)
- 1 cup Sugar (250 mL)
- 1 tbsp Vanilla Extract (15 mL)
- ¼ tsp Salt (1 mL)
- 1 Egg, room temperature
- 2 ½ cups All-Purpose Flour (625 mL)
- 1 tbsp Ground Cinnamon (15 mL)
- ½ cup Hazelnuts, peeled and finely chopped (125 mL)
- ½ cup Pure Strawberry Jam, Pure Apricot Jam, or Pure Raspberry Jam

Directions

1. Line baking sheet with parchment paper and set aside. Using an electric mixer (stand or handheld), cream together butter, sugar, vanilla and salt until smooth, about 3 min. Scrape down sides of bowl, add egg and mix well. Scrape down sides of bowl again, slowly add flour and cinnamon. Shape rounded tablespoon pieces of dough into balls, gently press one side of the balls into chopped nuts and place on prepared baking sheet, nut side up, spaced 1 in. (2.5 cm) apart. Using thumb, press an indentation in centre of each cookie. Refrigerate until chilled, about 30 min.
2. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Bake cookies on middle rack of oven until cookies are set and hazelnuts are lightly browned, about 18 min. Remove from oven and while cookies are warm, fill each centre with 1/2 tsp (2 mL) of jam. Transfer cookies to a cooling rack and let cool completely.

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