

**The Last Stand:
A Journey Through the
Ancient Cliff-Face Forest of the
Niagara Escarpment**

By Peter E. Kelly and
Douglas W. Larson

The authors estimate that **seven million people live within 100 km of the Niagara Escarpment**. No one would expect there to be an old-growth forest here that survived humans' activities of land clearing and lumber harvesting.

Peter Kelly and Doug Larson have discovered that an **ancient forest** still exists today along the whole length of the Escarpment. The trees are hundreds of years old, yet are tiny and live along the cliff face, their roots reaching far into cracks in the rock for nourishment. Their small size is the reason they have been ignored as lumber, and the difficulty in reaching them has ensured their survival until recently. The oldest, found in Lion's Head Provincial Nature Reserve and named The Ancient One, goes back to 688 A.D. and is thus **1,320 years old**.

The ancient forest is made up of **eastern white cedars** that have evolved astonishing survival techniques. They can grow upside down, and even when they look dead, they can have a narrow strip of bark that continues to feed water and nutrients from the roots to the tip.

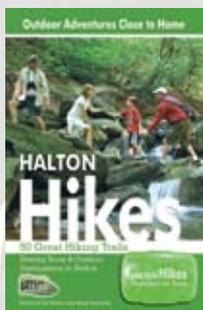
"They can be summed up by the following adjectives," write the authors, "**deformed**, stunted, gnarled, weathered, twisted, grotesque and **beautiful**."

The main danger this forest faces from humans is from rock climbers who carelessly scale the rugged cliffs where the trees cling. The authors have seen ancient trees that have been sawn off for convenience, and they call for the climbing community to become more educated about the Escarpment.

They pose the question "If we can't recognize the importance of one thousand-year-old trees in the heart of an increasingly urbanized southern Ontario, **what hope have we got** for protecting anything else?"

This is a fascinating book about the discovery of old-growth trees where they were least expected.

Natural Heritage Books, 2007,
\$39.95



Halton Hikes

By Gary Hutton

This little spiral-bound book is big on information for enjoying outdoor life in Halton. Developed and published by Conservation Halton, it's a detailed **guide to 50 hiking trails**, a log to record your hiking activity and includes a pull-out map to farms that are open to the public.

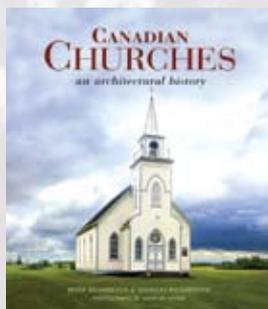
Individual trails are described and mapped, but in addition, tips to enjoy your hike are given, and the most famous people known to have used the trail are noted. In addition, identifying sounds are described for wild animals to listen for along each particular trail.

The guide comes with a pedometer to let you participate in the **Footsteps for Trees** program. By recording the number of steps you take on the trails, you can help

plant trees. After taking 10,000 steps, or hiking about three hours, you can submit your information online at www.haltonhikes.ca, and **Conservation Halton will plant a tree**.

In the interest of full disclosure, I must reveal that **I helped work on this project** by copy editing the guide. I have no financial interest in the success of this book, but I'm happy to hear that sales have been going well.

Conservation Halton, 2007, \$19.95.



**Canadian Churches:
an architectural history**

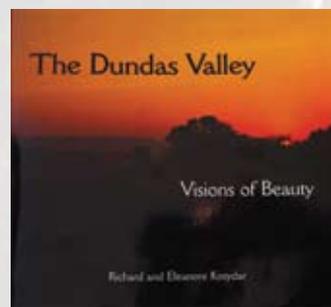
By Peter Richardson &
Douglas Richardson

Well-known photographer John de Visser has collaborated on another impressive work, documenting a selection of **250 extraordinary churches** in Canada. From east to west, old to new, famous to overlooked, the churches reflect the development of Canada by people of different denominations. There are also a few buildings shown that are non-denominational.

The featured churches that are located in or close to **Escarpment country**, include Niagara-on-the-Lake's St. Andrew's, Hamilton's St. Paul's, Guelph's Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, St. Catharines' Saints Cyril and Methodius, Brampton's St. Elias and Manitoulin's Immaculate Conception.

Oversized, in full colour, this book is an **important reference** for Canadian Christian architecture.

Firefly Books, 2007, \$85.00



**The Dundas Valley:
Visions of Beauty**

By Richard and Eleanore Kosydar

Local photographers and writers, Richard and Eleanore Kosydar share their treasured views of the Dundas Valley's protected lands close to downtown Hamilton in this well produced hardcover.

In an interview with **Escarpment Views**, they explain "We love the Dundas Valley's rich blend of **rugged and gentle landscapes**. The unusually wide range encompasses rugged Escarpment rock face and numerous waterfalls, rolling hills and steep ravines, small ponds, dense woodlands and wildflower-dotted meadows."

Beautiful full-colour photographs fill each page; the minimal text invites meditation. Words are hardly necessary when the pictures say as much as these do.

"Our hope is that **people will feel uplifted** by images of natural landscapes portrayed in different moods and forms," **the Kosydars told Escarpment Views**, "and be drawn to include more of the peacefulness of natural beauty in their own lives."

For a sample photograph from this book, see page 14. For more information about the Kosydars' work, see www.tiercerondesign.com.

Tierceron Press, 2007, \$35.