

Escarpment Views



SUMMER 2008

The Joys of Farmers' Markets

**Hiking the Biggest
Reroute of the Bruce Trail**

**Guide to Growing the
Most Lilac Blooms**

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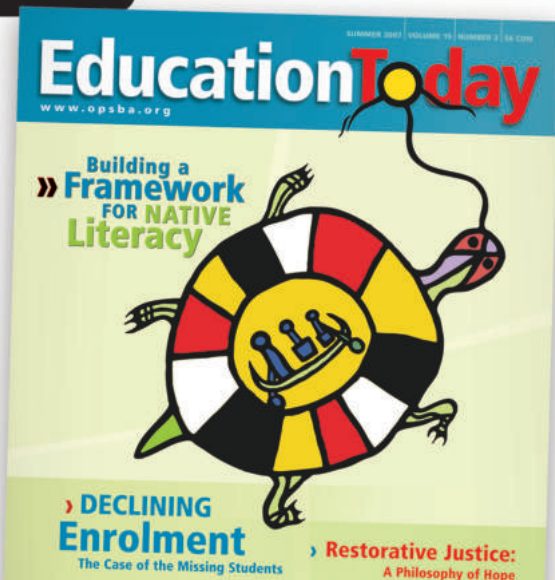
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View from the Editor's Desk: Community by Choice

The spring issue was only the second one we've published, but after it came out, someone told us "That magazine keeps getting better and better." We were delighted to hear it, although it sounds as if we've been publishing *Escarpment Views* for a long time.

Someone else said "It's a fantastic magazine. And long overdue. Where was it before?" We've even had a subscriber call and ask "Where's the next issue?"

This magazine seems to be meeting a need that people haven't identified before. Yet when they see it, they recognize that it reflects their values and interests. As a neighbour of mine told me recently, "It's a community that is self-selected, just by choosing to live here."

People who treasure the Niagara Escarpment have a lot in common regardless of where they live. We're starting to discover that everywhere along the length of the Escarpment, people have wonders to enjoy and share.

This summer issue looks north along the Escarpment, to places that many southerners have traditionally gone to for recreation and relief from the heat. Robert McCaw has a spectacular photograph of The Grotto on Georgian Bay, in Bruce Peninsula National Park. See it in our centre spread. We invite you to take an imaginary dive into the aquamarine water. Heaven!

This summer you might want to explore the Bruce Trail's biggest reroute in its history, the Bayview Extension east of Owen Sound. Ken Haigh shares his hike there through words and photographs. Anywhere along the Escarpment could be a good place to take a wildflower hike, suggests Nandy Heule, and her photographs show why. Alex Henderson of the Royal Botanical Gardens at the Hamilton/Burlington border, generously gives the secrets to cultivating brilliant lilacs. There's some care that should be given in summer. Deborah Palmer reveals her passion for farmers' markets in an article that may inspire you to load up with fresh produce. Chef Misty Ingraham explains what to do with the treasures once you get home, before you prepare a meal or dinner party.

We tried to list all the farmers' markets that might be close to our readers, but there are likely many we missed. We learned recently that Caledon's Inglewood General Store hosts a farmers' market every Wednesday from 4 to 7 p.m. through the summer. Campbellville seems to be experimenting with one in a barn behind the coffee shop at 11 Main St. North. So ask around your community and tell us of any farmers' markets close to the Escarpment that we should know of.

Please keep your subscriptions, letters, cards, emails and calls coming. We love hearing from you. You give us some of our best ideas for content. Let us know of special events this summer and fall, and perhaps we'll see you there. Look for me in The Grotto on a hot day, and in September, we hope to see you at the 20th annual Eden Mills Writers' Festival! Stop by our table to say hello.

Finally, subscriber Paul Subject insists that we publish his letter, which is a call to all you members of our community. We love his boldness, so his letter appears below.

Gloria

Gloria Hildebrandt
Editor



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I know you don't publish letters to the editor in the magazine, although you do on your Web site, but I really want you to make an exception for mine. First of all, I want to tell you how much our family enjoys reading your wonderful magazine. You are to be congratulated; the topics are appealing, the photos outstanding and the general impression of the magazine is one of quality and environmental awareness. I am sure it has not been an easy startup; however you and your team have made it look effortless. But the main reason for my letter is to encourage your readers to be sure to visit the magazines' advertisers and mention they saw their ad. Also, suggest the magazine to potential advertisers. Be proactive. This will ensure the ongoing success of a magazine we have all come to enjoy and appreciate.

Paul Subject, Burlington, Ont.



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PHOTO BY MIKE DAVIS

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Events Along the Rock

Selected snapshots by Mike Davis show you'd like us to feature next time, just



On April 19 at Halton EcoFest, Bob Barnett of Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy drew visitors to his information about tax savings for conservation agreements.



Justin Trudeau was the keynote speaker, and Linda Nasato of Goar Allison Ltd. attended the Halton Regional Chair's Breakfast on the Environment on April 23 in Burlington.



where *Escarpment Views* has been in recent months. If you have an event send us an invitation!

Carolinian Canada Coalition's fact-sheet entitled "Caring for Nature in Halton" was launched at Brookville Public School on April 16. The school has been recognized for its "living classroom," a garden of native plants that has been begun by teacher Susan Kennedy and students. Representatives from many interested groups and supporting organizations attended.

A meeting of Friends of Fallbrook was held in Limehouse on April 19 to share memories of a farmhouse near Ballinafad, that is threatened with demolition. The organizing team working to save the house includes left, Sandy McKay, third from left, John Carroll, Joan Kadoke and Wayne Gates. Second from left is Cathie Keir, a former resident of Fallbrook Farm.



Lined up for a view: members of the Halton/North Peel Naturalists Club join Laurie Reed, far left, for birdwatching at the heronry in his wetland on May 31. A Great Horned Owl was also nesting in sight.

Several local dignitaries joined the Honourable Jim Bradley, Minister of Transportation, front row third from right, in cutting the ribbon on May 9. The occasion was the opening of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority's Centre for Conservation at Ball's Falls Conservation Area in Jordan.

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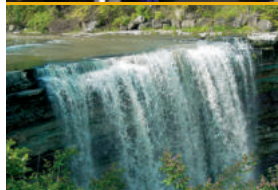
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Walk on the WILDFLOWER Side

Photos and article by Nandy Heule

Purple Flowering Raspberry is a relative of the rose that grows in woody thickets.

Sunny, cheery Jerusalem Artichoke can grow six to 10 feet tall.

The Niagara Escarpment is a showcase for wildflowers from the tip of the Bruce Peninsula, a northern orchid wonderland, to conservation areas along busy Highway 401 in central Ontario and south to Niagara Falls.

Hiking for wildflowers may well be one of the easiest ways to discover more about the Escarpment's rich ecological diversity. Plants show off their splendour to newbie naturalists and experienced hikers alike within predictable time frames. Often, they also bloom year after year in the same locations. This makes it relatively easy to plan a "wildflower hunt" and score quick successes. Even hikers who have never yet opened a field guide will often be able to spot and identify plant life within sight of a trail head.

A wildflower hunt can be a good way to introduce children to nature exploration. Unlike birds, bugs, fish, or four-legged creatures, plants stay put. They don't bite. They don't fly away. A child can carefully touch and smell. The intriguing common names of many plants may prompt kids to start asking smart questions about the



natural world. So why not pull on some hiking boots this summer and look for the plants listed below?

How Sweet the Smell

It may come as a surprise, but the Escarpment is home to a variety of orchids, a plant many may associate exclusively with the tropics. Wildflower enthusiasts from around the world visit the Escarpment during

late spring and summer to search for such beauties as the Yellow Lady's Slipper (*Cypripedium parviflorum*) or the much rarer Calypso (*Calypso bulbosa*). Over 30 different orchids grow in Bruce Peninsula National Park and area.

Artist Emily Carr, while recuperating from a stroke in the early 1940s, wrote a series of stories on wildflowers. In her book called *Wild Flowers*, she observes "The

The fairies' shoes of Yellow Lady's Slipper are a variety of orchids that hides in Escarpment lands from late spring to summer.



sweetest perfume of all the woods was that of a little flower called the Lady Slipper.”

Hope springs eternal

Although it has been almost 10 years since the high school massacre in 1999 near Denver, Colorado, the name Columbine may be forever associated with terror. In fact, the Wild Columbine (*Aquilegia Canadensis*) is one of the Escarpment’s prettiest flowers. It thrives in the most unlikely locations, on barren rocks and cliffs that make up much of the biosphere reserve. Flowering from May through July, the plant attracts hummingbirds and butterflies.

Italian, anyone?

Jerusalem Artichoke (*Helianthus tuberosus*) is a large sunflower that can grow as tall as six to 10 feet. Hikers can expect to find these cheerful, yellow beauties along river banks from August through October. When Italian immigrants first discovered and named the plant, they simply used the word *Girasole*, which is Italian for sunflower. Eventually, the name was distorted to ‘Jerusalem.’ Apparently, the plant’s

edible tuber roots taste a bit like artichoke.

Fashion colours

Relatively few wildflowers are orange in colour, but Spotted Touch-me-not, also known as Jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*), is one of the exceptions to the rule. It grows in abundance along the Escarpment for much of the summer. You may also find a yellow variety and the less common Glandular Touch-me-not (*Impatiens glandulifera*). Jewelweed used to be a common home remedy against poison ivy and itch from insect bites.

A rose by any other name?

Peterson’s field guide to wildflowers describes Purple Flowering Raspberry (*Rubus odoratus*) as “a shrub with maple-shaped leaves and rose-like flowers.” It’s part of the rose family and grows in the rocky woods, ravines and thickets of the Escarpment.

Indian Pipedream (*Monotropa uniflora*), Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*), Jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*) and Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*) are almost impossible to miss when walking the Escarpment during summer. Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*) is another pretty flower you may recognize from the garden variety. In August, Asters such as the deep purple New England Aster (*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*) start preparing hikers to warm up to fall colours and cooler weather.

A number of field guides are available to help identify flora correctly. For example, the *ROM Field Guide to Wildflowers of Ontario* includes photos on each plant and lists interesting tidbits of historical information about many species.

Nandy Heule is a PR consultant based in Brampton, Ont. Her Web site www.wildflowers4families.org offers information on wildflower hikes within the GTA and what to expect during specific times of the year. The site also lists wildflower books and Web links.



The delicate Wild Columbine can flower from May through July, attracting butterflies and hummingbirds.





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Trekking the Optimum Route: Hiking the Bruce Trail's

The new Bruce Trail route lets hikers enjoy the Bayview Escarpment, seen here from below.

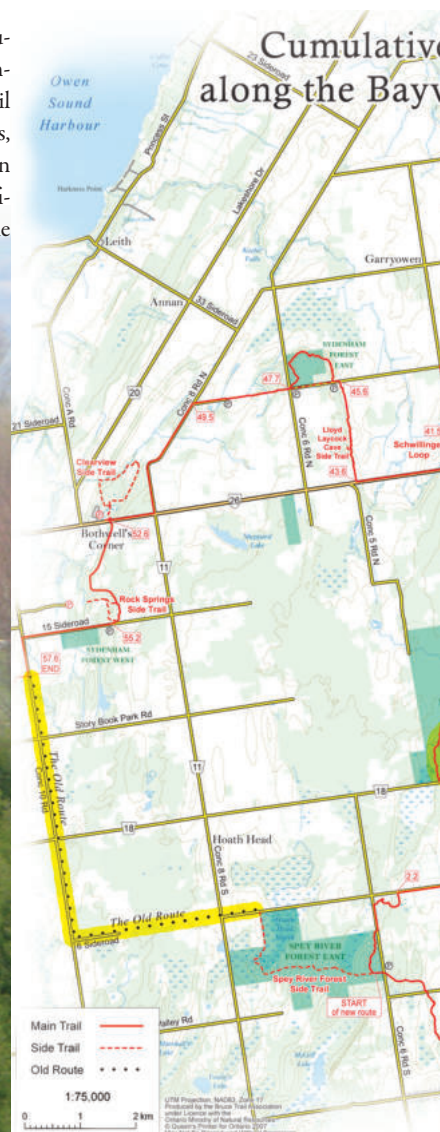
I was sitting on the edge of a limestone cliff overlooking the broad wooded valley below. I could see his speculative eye and the angry red of his featherless head. His head was turned toward the Bruce Trail just east of Owen Sound. If I had needed an excuse to justify the long kilometres, the Bruce Trail was already the longest and oldest hiking trail

In 1960, four men sat around a kitchen table looking at a map of Ontario. They called themselves the Bruce Trail Committee, and they were there because one of the men, Ray Lowes, a metallurgist at Stelco, had a dream, a long-distance

hiking path from Queenston to Tobermory along the Niagara Escarpment. Seven years later, with the help of hundreds of volunteers divided into nine local clubs, the dream had become a reality, and the Bruce Trail was born.

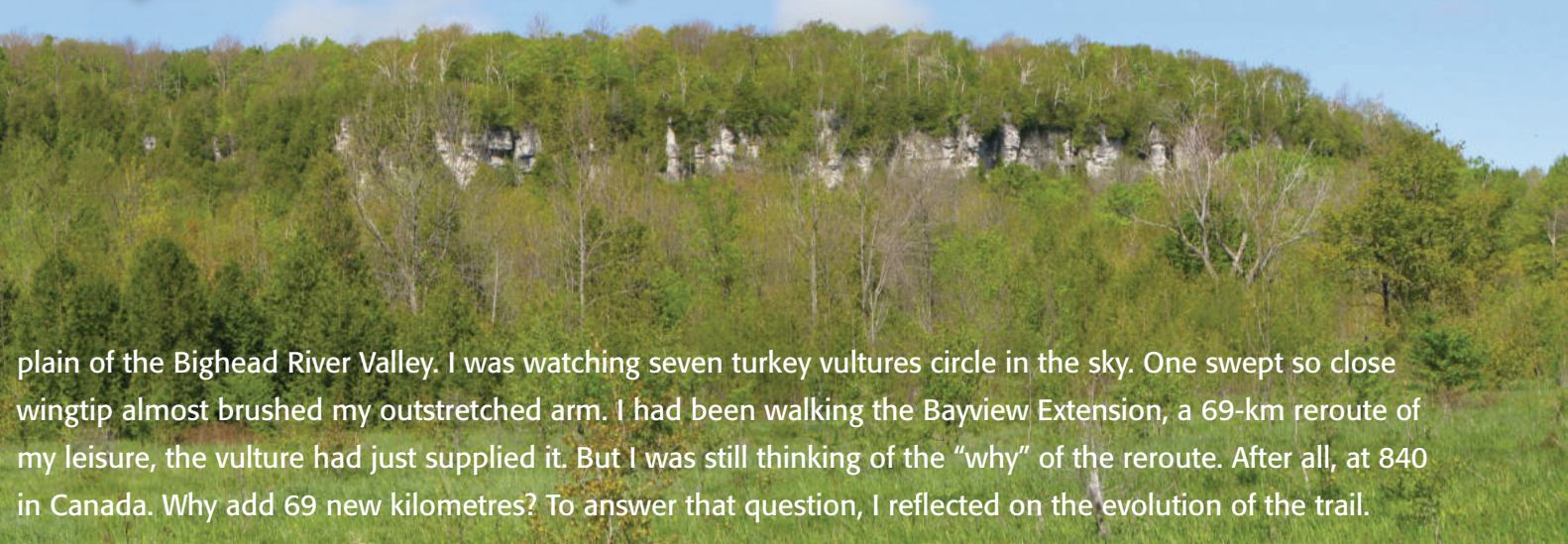
But, as Beth Kümmling, executive director of the Bruce Trail Conservancy, explains, "When the Trail was first laid out in the late 1960s, there was urgency to get the trail on the ground in time for the 1967 official opening of the Bruce Trail." The

Turkey vultures soar over Bighead River Valley



Bayview Escarpment Reroute

Text & photographs
by Ken Haigh



plain of the Bighead River Valley. I was watching seven turkey vultures circle in the sky. One swept so close wingtip almost brushed my outstretched arm. I had been walking the Bayview Extension, a 69-km reroute of my leisure, the vulture had just supplied it. But I was still thinking of the “why” of the reroute. After all, at 840 in Canada. Why add 69 new kilometres? To answer that question, I reflected on the evolution of the trail.

Distances Bayview Extension



Map courtesy of Bruce Trail Conservancy

optimum route would have been to follow the Niagara Escarpment as closely as possible. But, because of the deadline and the fact that much of this public trail had to pass over private land, the best route was not always available at the time.

In 2002, four other visionaries sat around a different table and looked at a different series of maps. They were looking at the peninsula that jutted into Georgian Bay between Owen Sound and Meaford. The Escarpment

looped up into this peninsula as far as the Bayview Escarpment Provincial Nature Reserve, but the Bruce Trail cut straight across the bottom of this loop. If they could reroute the trail up into the peninsula, they could add 69 kilometres

A boardwalk reaches
into Bognot Marsh.



Trekking the Optimum Route: Hiking the Bruce Trail's Bayview Escarpment Reroute

to the trail and put the trail onto the optimum route (OR). It would be the biggest reroute in the Bruce Trail's 40-year history. But would it be possible?

Ron Savage, trail director for the Sydenham Bruce Trail Club, says "Back five years ago, Chris Walker, Ross McLean, Cliff Keeling and I decided that we would make another attempt at moving the trail onto the OR through the Bayview Nature Reserve. It had been tried sometime in the past, but failed due to lack of landowner support. This time it meant we would have to contact dozens of landowners for permission to use their land and to get approvals from provincial, county, municipal and conservation authorities for their lands. This time we were successful and with the help of hundreds of volunteers we opened the trail last fall."

I had heard good things of the new trail and resolved to check it out for myself. I decided to hike from the top of the loop at the Bayview Escarpment Provincial Nature Reserve to the Bognor Marsh Management Area, a distance of 21.3 km.

I couldn't have picked a better day. New growth was just beginning to show in the canopy of the hardwood forest. The forest floor was carpeted with wild flowers. There were masses of trilliums, both red and white, also yellow trout lilies, delicate Carolina spring beauties, patches of Dutchman's breeches, Canada bloodroot, jack-in-the-pulpit, and clusters of violets in shades of purple, white, blue and yellow. To my surprise, the forest was also full of butterflies, Mourning Cloaks awakening from their winter dormancy. Ferns were

It can be a tight squeeze through the crevice near Woodford.

View east over the Meaford Land Forces Training Centre for tanks and artillery



everywhere on the exposed limestone. There are 20 different varieties of fern in the nature reserve, including the rare Hart's Tongue fern. The trail bumps up and down over broken cobbles of dolostone along a fence marked with No Trespassing signs in both official languages, for the nature reserve borders the Meaford Land Forces Training Centre to the north and east. I soon approached the Escarpment edge and had a magnificent view to the northeast.

usually leaves the forest and, following an old fence line, emerges at the St. Vincent/Sydenham Town Line. A short walk along a quiet road brought me to another forest where the trail passes the ruins of a pioneer homestead. I flushed a ruffed grouse from a dogwood thicket that had once been the foundations of an old barn. At one point, I had to scramble through an ice-filled crevice so narrow that I had to remove my pack and carry it in front of me, sideways.

I stopped for a drink of water at the quiet hamlet of Woodford and chatted with the woman who is restoring the old coaching inn by the side of Highway 26. She pointed out the amenities: "Separate men's and women's parlours on the ground floor, kitchens out back, and a dance hall on the third floor. In the days when the stage coach to Owen Sound ran past here, it would have been a pretty lively place."

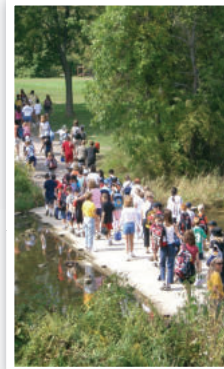
The two km of road walking south of Woodford were the most tedious, but the trail soon plunges down an unopened road allowance between tumbledown split-rail fences, until it reaches a peat-brown brook. A bridge across the brook leads to a cart track and once more to the top of the Escarpment. For the next hour the trail never strays very far from the cedar-fringed lip of the Escarpment. Finally, the trail descends to the valley floor and circles the Bognor Marsh. The quiet solitariness of the uplands was replaced by the harsh cries of marsh birds and the croaking of bullfrogs. I followed the boardwalks around the central portion of the marsh and climbed a viewing platform with a splendid view of the setting sun. I was sorry to see the day come to an end. But I knew I would return. ■

Ken Haigh has lived in Bhutan, China, and the Canadian Arctic, but now calls the Beaver Valley his home. His memoir of life in Bhutan as a volunteer teacher, Under the Holy Lake, was published by The University of Alberta Press in 2008.

In 1942, the Canadian government appropriated 17,000 acres of land to create a training facility for tanks and artillery. More than 100 families were forced to relocate. A whole community was lost. From the lookout today, you see only forest where once you saw farms, schools, mills, and churches.

From the lookout the trail turns south, wandering at times along an old cart track and at times along the perilous cliff edge. The trail even-

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The Grotto on Georgian Bay, Bruce Peninsula National Park.
Photograph by Robert McCaw



Market Foraging

By Deborah Palmer

Your senses are about to be satisfied at your local farmers' market. Maybe you just came for the eggs but stayed for the flowers. Markets are where we shop with our appetite and our hearts. Market foraging is joyful. Those of us who love food, love markets. At a glance, dinner tonight and every night for a week can be fully realized.



Kids and colour
abound at the Milton
Farmers' Market.

PHOTOS BY MIKE DAVIS

There still exists in us that joy of spectacle, the atmosphere of the fair, the feeling of community. Our sense of belonging and participating rises. The market, like a circus, will seem to mushroom into existence overnight.

Arriving at 5 or 6 a.m. from far and near, the farmers create a village in our midst. Stallholders spend days readying for our pleasure each market day. The laborious weeks of nurturing, raising those fruits and veggies up from babies, end in harvesting, packing, and driving in the still-chilly early dark hours. Then there is the excitement of set up, and the stage is set just for us.

Every market has its personality. Markets can be an event for a neighbourhood or town as people make a celebration of the season, close down the streets, and meet friends old and new on both sides of the stalls.

The justly famous indoor year-round market in Hamilton at 55 York Boulevard has been keeping us well looked after since 1837. With food halls both upstairs and down and most vendors being long-standing local farmers, plenty of great advice and knowledge is always generously offered. A dazzling range of choice awaits you here: cheeses, meats and seafood, vegetables galore, and fresh fruit. Look out for specialty food stalls, exotic produce, spices and chilies. Expect to enjoy a couple of hours exploring this huge treasure chest for foodies.

The very fact that the market is enclosed means yummy smells! Oh, the fresh-baked breads at the foot of the scenic trip down the escalator! Anticipate the apple stall and its sweet winy aroma of fresh homegrown apples. A glance away is the slightly smoky mouth-watering scent of old-fashioned cured meats from the Mennonites. I smile just to think of the goose we bought there some years back. Rarely have I tasted anything so delicious.



Summer blooms at Milton's Farmers' Market

PHOTO BY MIKE DAVIS

I made a new friend that day in Hamilton, Riad, a charming gentleman whose pies easily surpassed his exalted description. They were so good that I kept looking inside to see if I could find the secret. My favourite purveyor of chilies and spices recalled my last visit. She knows the things I like to shop for, even after a year's hiatus.

The Milton market will spend 22 weeks offering us their best. Their 40 community-minded vendors sell their own fresh local produce, cheese, baked goods, meats, flowers and crafts. The market runs until October 11.

It's lovely on their Main Street, a great place to practise your lounging skills surrounded by all the market has to offer, and wonderful shops as well. The word in my ear is that the Cheese Factory, a little truck packed with great stuff, is pretty wonderful.

The Georgetown market is my home. Produce here is grown by the vendors themselves. Bert Andrews of Andrew's Scenic Acres, and Bob Alison, of Alison's Farms, two of the founding members, are still staunch supporters of this small friendly market. Ron Thiessen of Thiessen Farms in Niagara, and Mike and Wanda Hill of Hillview Farms in Lucknow, both have a long history from the beginning of this market. Peter Penner, another long-term vendor, makes the trip from Niagara as well. The market source here for cured meats and sausage of as-



Part market, part carnival, Downtown Georgetown's Farmers' Market is a magnet for the community.

PHOTO BY KIM FALLS

Baskets of produce from near and far let you bring home the harvest.

PHOTO BY KIM FALLS





Farm-fresh tomatoes glow in the morning sunlight.

PHOTO BY KIM FALLS

Some Escarpment Area Farmers' Markets

Burlington Mall Farmers' Market

Wed. & Fri. 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Sat. 8 a.m. to noon
Prospect Street Side of Burlington Mall parking lot
First Wed. of May to last Sat. of Oct.

Georgetown Farmers' Market

Sat. 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Main Street South, between Church & James Streets,
Downtown Georgetown
June 14 to Oct. 1

Hamilton Farmers' Market

Tues & Thurs. 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.;
Fri. 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.;
Sat. 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.
55 York Blvd., Jackson Square Shopping Mall,
next to Eaton Centre
All Year (Indoor)

Kerr Village Organic Farmers' Market

Sat. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Heritage Square, 340 Kerr Street
Oakville
June to Oct.

Milton Farmers' Market

Sat. 7 a.m. to noon
Main Street between Martin and James Streets
May 17 to Oct. 11

Oakville Farmer's Market

Sat. 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Hopedale Mall, 1515 Rebecca Street
May to Nov.

Owen Sound Farmers' Market

Sat. 7 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Downtown Market Building
114 8th East St.
Year round

Market Foraging

tounding variety and flavour is Lisa Alonzo, of Alonzo Cured Meats.

Every market day brings new foods. You hungrily wonder, will there be peas or corn, or new tiny potatoes with the rising scent of the good earth still on them? When summer breaks out, we enjoy the fruits of our friends' labour.

I love the afternoons in my kitchen after the market, humming as I unpack, wash and arrange my treasure. And treasure this is, real food, fresh, clean, healthy food. I savour the beauty of eggplant, peppers, zucchinis, and that ratatouille I am going to make. The peaches, apricot, and plums I will bathe in fresh mint, local honey and crystalized ginger. Potatoes lounge in olive oil and fresh thyme; tomatoes are lavished with tiny homegrown basil leaves, new garlic, with a slight toss of some flaky salt. And oh the asparagus, slim green stalks with royal purple crisp little heads, sublime! Roll these in olive oil and a little salt, then grill.

Perhaps only those of us in our often-inclement climate feel this strongly about our seasons and their pleasures. Having returned from years of living overseas, two things struck me with a shock of instant recognition, how much we love to talk about the weather, and how verdant our home is.

Clearly the draw to our markets is deeply rooted and ingrained. Any coincidence here to food analogies is just natural. More mindful of the provenance of food, we grow aware and value more highly the work involved on the part of our farmers who serve us so well. To share person to person the honest love for food makes us wise and wonderful.

We are a passionate people, but with our climate, we just have to keep our clothes on longer.

Deborah Palmer of A Movable Feast at Foodstuffs' 87 Up in Georgetown, has more than 20 years of experience as a chef, caterer and cooking teacher, and leads cooking sessions that draw on first-hand experiences from her extensive travels around the world.

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Misty's View of Cooking: Magical Organization

all similar tasks at the same time.

After your trip to the farmers' market or grocery store, bring in all your purchases to an immaculate kitchen with clear, pristine counters. Unpack each item and store the bags. Congregate all ingredient items before you and **"triage them"** for immediate attention.

The meat that will be cooked later, goes into the fridge, but the

this task. That means that all the trimmings have gone into your compost, all non-compost-friendly products are in the garbage, and your kitchen is once again immaculate with pristine, clear counters. Peelings, grocery bags, tags, elastics and flyers from the store create clutter in your work space and threaten to enter one of your dishes. Oust them away!

Most cooking mistakes happen because too many extraneous activities are happening at the crucial moments when food evolves into cuisine. A good friend of mine, a chef instructor in Halton, once told me that **cooking is nothing more than damage control**. If you do everything possible to prevent disaster you will produce credible food products. Focus on the task immediately at hand, carefully watch what you are doing and nothing will ever get burnt!

Be honest. How many times have you peeled a clove of garlic, left the peelings on your cutting board, chopped the garlic beside the skins, placed the garlic in a hot pan with oil, and then looked into your cookbook for the next step?

While you were reading, even for a moment you protest, your garlic turned mahogany and your smoke detector started to scream. I've been there too...but that was when I was still doing too many things at once and in an ad hoc manner.

I have a confession to make. I am not a culinary magician. Sure, I can cook for 75 people with little notice, but the titles of wizard, guru, and heroine that friends, family and clients often attach to my name are not well founded. This ability is no mystery, it comes from a little concept that the French developed called *mise-en-place* (pronounced meez-on-plaasuh).

Here is its big secret: in a word – organization. Period. To illustrate its power, imagine for a moment, what a shoe factory might look like if each pair of Nikes were made from scratch beside the production involved in making jewel-encrusted mules with pink satin heels. Does the image of chaos come to mind?

In my early days of culinary apprenticeship this same picture could easily describe my attempts to get 15 menu items ready for the pre-theatre rush! Echoes of expletives hurled by my chef in broken English and fluent Hungarian, along with the odd dish or pan, resonate in my mind even today at the memory of it. For you, however, cooking might only mean complaints about your mess that stretches beyond the counter space in your kitchen.

Unfair as it may seem to you, the person trying to cook and feed the masses, leaving a trail of disaster behind may only result in criticism from your ungrateful, now-fed diners. Magical *mise-en-place* will transform you into an appreciated artist and your kitchen into a garret of inspiration.

Here is a simple way to approach the production of cooking. When preparing a dinner party, **do**



Food prep results in plenty of scraps that should be immediately tidied away for compost.



Perfectly prepared for cooking: top, sliced potatoes & zucchini; middle, match stick, fine dice & large dice of carrots, leeks & red peppers; bottom, sliced, fine and medium-diced eggplant & shallots.

onions, garlic, shallots and carrots get first attention. Remember that they are your flavour building blocks.

Here's a tip. All pre-preparation jobs can be done well before you stress about your guests' imminent arrival. Anything that needs to be trimmed, shucked, peeled, washed, soaked or have its labels removed, should be handled in **one focused session of activity**.

Afterwards there should be **no evidence** of your having worked at

All of your first-level *mise-en-place* items should then be contained in appropriate-sized vessels and stored in your refrigerator. The next time you approach the task of creating your dish or menu, even if it is only five minutes later, you will be faced with **un-dressed ingredients** awaiting your attention. And if you're a novice cook they will need to be just that – ready and able to easily give up their flavours and textures to you.

If you approach cooking in small, controlled stages, prepare your products in a logical sequence, and leave no evidence of each level of preparation, you will soon be able to create reliable dishes that cause your family and guests to wonder **how you did it all**. Was it magic? You know the answer.

Misty Ingraham is a chef and co-owner of the catering business The Portable Feast at Home, in Ancaster.

PHOTOS: MIKE DAVIS



Long-Lasting, Lush Lilacs

By Gloria Hildebrandt
Photos by Mike Davis

Lilacs bloom a short two weeks
in late May or early June. Are
they worth the trouble?

RBC's Lilac Dell offers intense colours and scents.



The hybrid *Syringa x hyacinthiflora* 'Maiden's Blush' in massive bloom.



Alex Henderson's job lets him stop and smell the lilacs. Here he holds *Syringa vulgaris* 'McMaster Centennial'.



Syringa vulgaris 'Sensation'

If you like burying your face in masses of stunning colours and inhaling rich scents to the bottom of your lungs, lilacs are worth the trouble. If you enjoy filling your rooms with vases full of lush branches of flowers, they are.

Lilacs have been so beloved for centuries that early settlers in Canada brought them from Europe to plant near their new homes. Some remain today as signs of vanished homesteads and ghost towns. Lilacs are native to Asia and Europe, so they appeal to people from many cultures.

"From childhood, people are used to seeing them," says Alex Henderson, curator of collections and horticulturist for the Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) in Burlington. "They were one of the first plants I became aware of. They took my imagination as a child."

Henderson originates from England, where he trained as a horticulturist and worked at some private gardens and at Kew Gardens. For the last 18 months or so he has worked at RBG, which has the distinction of being the largest

botanical garden in the world.

Henderson explains that there are 21 distinct species of lilacs. Only two of them are native to eastern Europe. The other 19 come from Asia. In 1563 the first Asian lilacs came to Austria as a gift from the ruler of Constantinople.

One of the European kinds, *Syringa vulgaris*, was used by Victor Lemoine of France in the 1800s to create hybrids. Lemoine's many French hybrids are still popular today. Later, a Canadian, Isabella Preston, was successful in developing large, late-blooming, extremely hardy hybrids. These Preston hybrids can even grow in Thunder Bay.

Care of Lilacs

For Henderson's four main rules for caring for lilacs, see the sidebar. He explains that lilacs don't like being waterlogged, that they need good light and should be irrigated in July and August when next year's buds are being formed.

Deadheading should be done to prevent seed production right after blooming. Dead flowers should not be ripped off, but snipped below the spent flowers.

Proper pruning leads to better flowers and leaves. Remove dead or injured material as well as any branches that are crossing

and could lead to wounds from rubbing. Good lilac bushes have seven to 12 stems that are six to nine feet high so that the blooms are at head height.

For the best blooms, he recommends branches of different thicknesses from three to eight cm in diameter. With branches larger than 10 cm in diameter, however, flower production decreases. These branches should be cut right to the ground. Henderson assures that suckers are good as they will eventually form new branches. He also suggests forking the roots slightly to stimulate growth.

"Treat them mean, keep them keen," he says with a grin.

Rejuvenation Pruning

If lilacs have grown out of control, they can be rejuvenated. For three years, prune back one third of the growth right down to the ground. That way, in three years there will be new growth, intermediate growth and older growth. From the third year, regular pruning can be done to keep the bushes in good shape.

Feeding

Henderson advises cutting a mulch circle around the drip line to keep weeds down and moisture in. Every spring, add fertilizer that's high

in phosphate, to promote flower production. Every third year, it's good to sprinkle ground limestone around the drip line.

Propagation

Within two weeks of flowering, it's all right to transplant suckers. Another technique is to take softwood cuttings off the main plant in the early morning. Dip the end in rooting hormone, plant the cutting in clean soil and cover it with plastic to keep it moist. When roots form, repot in bigger

Extend the Blooms

Henderson recommends planting three different kinds of lilacs that bloom at different times, to get a long blooming season of six to seven weeks:

1. Hyacinthiflora (first to bloom)
2. French hybrids (mid season)
3. Prestons (late flowering)

pots. This method can take four years before there will be blooms. A third way is grafting, but Henderson admits this is not for most amateur gardeners.

Lilacs in the Dell

RBG has one of the largest lilac collections in the world and is the International Registration Author-

Colour Categories of Cultivated Lilacs

1. white
2. violet
3. bluish
4. lilac
5. pink
6. magenta
7. purple



Caring for Lilacs:

1. Plant in soil with good drainage.
2. Provide at least four hours of sunlight a day.
3. Water well in July and August.
4. Prune and deadhead.

People find the blossoms picture perfect.



Relaxing in the dell.

Long-Lasting, Lush Lilacs

ity for new lilac cultivars. There are more than 1,600 cultivated varieties of lilacs. RBG has approximately 633 kinds.

"All our plants are like library books," Henderson says. "Each one is numbered and documented."

An overwhelming number can be seen in bloom at the RBG's Lilac Walk and Lilac Dell. The dell was begun in the 1960s when Katie Osborne provided a generous donation to increase the number of lilacs. Henderson sees the collection as having great cultural value to the people of Ontario and all of Canada. There is a problem, however.

"A lack of recent funding has led to the irrigation system not functioning well," he says. "It's old and needs replacing. For this, we need sponsorship or donations."

RBG hosts an annual lilac festival when the blooms are at their peak. When the weather cooperates, people flock to them in great numbers. Henderson is often stopped to answer questions or take photos

of people. He obliges with great patience, seeming to enjoy their pleasure in the gardens.

Visitors approach the dell by way of the Lilac Walk which is planted as a teaching garden going from the original species of lilacs to some of the many hybrids. There are many cries of "Ooh" and "Ah" and "Smell this!" as people explore the blossoms.

In the dell that slopes down a hillside, people with cameras are everywhere, unless they're sitting on benches or the ground, simply relaxing and feeling transformed by the beauty. Henderson explains that the slope of the dell gives various experiences of scent. In the evening when the cool air sinks, the bottom of the dell captures all the fragrance.

One close-up inhalation of a scented lilac is worth all the care.

For information about other popular garden events this summer at RBG, see www.rbg.ca or call 905-527-1158. ■

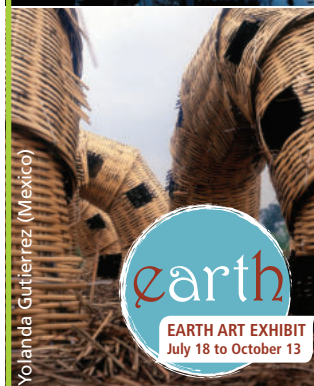
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SoundArt, July 4 through Labour Day; Rock Garden. Soundscapes by featured artist Anne Karhu (Finland)

SculptArt, July 25 to October 5; Hendrie Park Gardens. Sculpture by Canadian artists in the gardens to unite nature and art lovers; curated by Abbozzo Gallery



Earth Art Exhibit, July 18 to October 13; International and Canadian artists create environmental and ephemeral art installations in the gardens and natural lands; curated by John Grande

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Seana's View: Getting the Most Out of Theatre

I was at a movie recently where a man answered his cell phone and thought it was enough to get out of his seat and talk in the aisle! Sometimes people are just unaware that what they are doing is affecting anyone else. But if someone in the cinema is talking loudly or snapping bubbles with gum, the show will likely go on. Not so in the theatre.

Let me suggest some practical ways to make the theatre-going experience enjoyable for everyone.

If you bought tickets early, check them carefully! Make sure you have the right date and time, and at large festivals, the right theatre. I have seen many patrons find out at the last minute that they should be in another theatre, or like visitors to a

garden, that they should have come last Friday.

Know if latecomers are allowed, in case you get caught in traffic, and know if there is an intermission, or use the washrooms ahead of time. For older patrons, that might mean less coffee right before the show. Though we want you to be alert, we also want you to be comfortable

If you have a hearing problem, check if there are audio aids at the theatre, and if you wear a hearing aid, that they are compatible. As an audience member, if you hear the loud hum of a hearing aid next to you, let your neighbour know it is making a noise, as the person will likely not be aware of it and it is very difficult for ushers to detect. There are few sounds more brain-numbing than the piercing din of a hearing aid gone wrong.

Speaking of sounds: unwrap your candies before the lights go down. If you must unwrap during the play, do it quickly. It is much better to have one short sharp burst than the endless "I-am-doing-it-quietly" crinkle. And do it during a laugh or a scene change. If your candy unwrapping obliterates the words which reveal who did it in a "who-dunnit," you might find your neighbours not as friendly as when you first sat down. There is no rewind in live theatre.

So turn off your cell phones, and don't text either! The newest challenge with student audiences is the

blue glow of students texting on cell phones. Not only is it distracting, it is unsafe. Actors can use certain lights in the house for landmarks if they are dancing or doing physical stunts. It is not just the cell phone ringer that can destroy a moment onstage for actors and the audience.

Please respect the stage and the set. If you are in the front row, don't treat the lip, or front part of the stage, as a coffee table for your programme, or a footstool for your feet. To theatre people, that is like placing shoes on an altar. It is where we work, it is part of the world we are trying to create for you. Foreign objects may be in our path as we walk, run, fight or dance across the stage, and are safety hazards. Mostly, they are distractions, and may result in a rattled or offended actor losing concentration and not giving you a best performance.

I have nudged someone's feet off the stage as I came toward the audience, and snatched someone's program off the stage as the curtain fell.

At intermission or after the show, linger and look at the stage if you like, but please don't walk on it or touch it. The set and props on the stage were made, found or bought with great care, and have to last for the run of the show.

But by all means, respond to the performance. If you feel like laughing, laugh. Don't be intimidated if people look at you or shush you! They didn't find it funny; you did. I have been grateful when a line that I thought was funny finally got a laugh. I wanted to meet the person who had the same sense of humour as I.

The only time shushing is appropriate, I think, is if there are long discussions going on in the audience during the play. In some cultures, discussion is the norm, and encouraged. Here, we discourage off-stage dialogue while the play is in progress. But the audience is our *raison d'être*: you are why we do what we do. Your response gives us clues as to whether or not we are succeeding in our attempts to make you laugh, to capture your attention, to rivet you to your

seats, to make you breathe with us, to make our story clear, to connect.

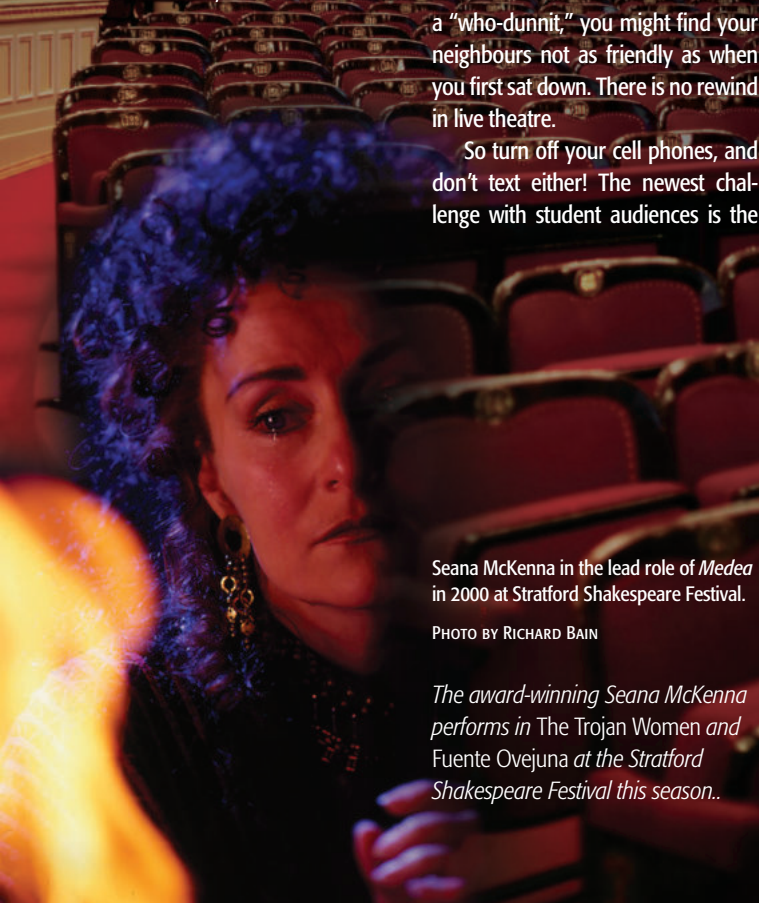
I was once asked if people ever respond too much, or inappropriately. At a student matinee of *Antony and Cleopatra* in Montreal, the obscene comments from a small group

of boys resulted in the actor who was playing Antony walking off stage, with me following. It took half an hour to get us back on stage, and students who couldn't miss their buses had to miss the second act. The few ruined it for the many.

Everyone there that day learned that the theatre is live, and that contrary to the old adage "the show must go on," the play can indeed stop. Live human beings are doing it for other live human beings, and the experience of "playgoing" relies on the mutual suspension of disbelief. If you interfere with that suspension, it is as if the fluorescent lights have abruptly come on at closing time. And the moment of magic is gone.

Another memory of audience response that was a highlight of my career came during *Medea* at the Tom Patterson Theatre at Stratford. As I was reaching for the hand of my very young son to take him to his death, he hesitated and looked back to the women of Corinth. He then looked at me, and as he took his first step towards me, a woman in the front row involuntarily whispered "Don't go." This still gives me shivers. At that moment that woman in the audience became a woman of Corinth who lived thousands of years ago. She was not only watching and listening to this ancient story, she was in it. I will never forget it. I knew that we were all in this together, this theatre, this life, these stories. And that we were doing our job.

My last suggestion for getting the best out of the theatre experience: applaud, even if you hated it. It is an act of generosity and kindness, and is simply courteous, to acknowledge people who have shared time with you, who have worked hard, and who have tried their best to please you. At the very least, they learned all those lines. We hope.



Seana McKenna in the lead role of *Medea* in 2000 at Stratford Shakespeare Festival.

PHOTO BY RICHARD BAIN

The award-winning Seana McKenna performs in The Trojan Women and Fuente Ovejuna at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival this season.

Histories and herstories of the escarpment



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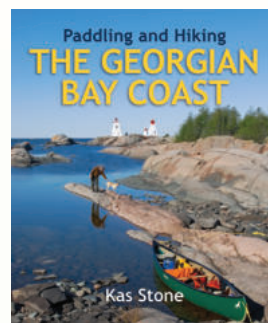
Sculptor: Ernie Fauvelle, 1.23 m (48")

Book Views: For the Outdoors

Summer means the cottage for some people, their own or ones they rent or visit. For others, it means weekend day trips to a beach on one of the Great Lakes. Here are a couple of books suitable for these people, a third that explores the plant life of the southern territory of the Niagara Escarpment and a fourth, a powerful parable for the environment.

Paddling and Hiking the Georgian Bay Coast

By Kas Stone



This is an intriguing guidebook for people looking for active summer outings, although information is also given for enjoying the sites in other seasons. But **who can resist Georgian Bay in summer?**

The book is a thorough **guide to the whole bay**, from Killarney in the north, Parry Sound in the east, Collingwood to the south and Tobermory to the west. It introduces 38 of the best places for canoeing, kayaking or hiking along the coast, but it's more than an excursion guide. It also gives the natural history of the landscapes as well as the history of human development of the area.

Explored by the British in the early 1800s, the bay was named to honour King George IV. The Niagara Escarpment on the western Bruce Peninsula is described as having originated as a coral reef in a tropical sea, rivalling Australia's Great Barrier Reef.

In chapters covering the Hibou Conservation Area at Owen Sound to the tip of the Bruce Peninsula, there are **photographs, maps and descriptions** of such high-lights as Indian Falls, considered

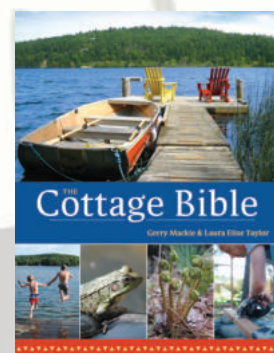
a miniature Niagara Falls, Bruce's Caves, the Grotto at Indian Head Cove, Flowerpot Island, and many shipwrecks that at times are clearly visible from the surface of the water, including those at Fathom Five National Marine Park.

Author Kas Stone has created a guidebook that will surely prompt many people to **head to the bay** for rejuvenating summer breaks.

The Boston Mills Press, 2008,
softcover, \$29.95

The Cottage Bible

By Gerry Mackie & Laura Elise Taylor



For almost every question anyone might have about cottage life, this is a fun reference. When the authors use the word "cottage," they explain "What we are thinking about is **a getaway place** in the form of a dwelling that is generally small, simple and close to or on the water – and a source of great pleasure and enjoyment."

There are detailed chapters on the formation and structure of lakes, on boating, swimming, cottage maintenance, fishing and living with wildlife, both animals and plants.

"Our intent in this book has been especially to **consider the importance of the natural world** around us as it relates to life at the cottage," they write.

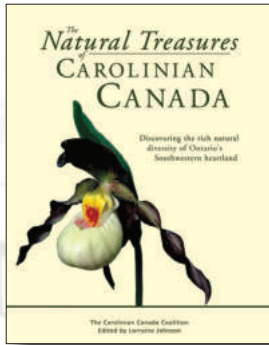
Perhaps the single most important bit of information in the whole book is on page 188: the recipe for the **skunk odour remedy** that includes peroxide. It really works.

The Boston Mills Press, 2007,
softcover, \$39.95

By Gloria Hildebrandt

The Natural Treasures of Carolinian Canada

By The Carolinian Canada Coalition



Part of southern Ontario is biologically more similar to North and South Carolina than it is to the rest of Canada. Roughly covering west from Toronto's Rouge River Valley to Grand Bend on Lake Huron and south to the U.S. border, **Carolinian Canada includes the southern part of the Niagara Escarpment.** Yet there are no firm, fixed boundaries.

A description of characteristic trees shows the mixture of species that grow here: "Even in the heart of Carolinian Canada, where southern forest icons such as Tulip-tree, Sassafras, Tupelo, and an assortment of oaks and hickories are well established, common boreal species such as Paper Birch and Quaking Aspen persist. Here, Larch and Black Spruce, classic species of northern muskeg, sustain some of their southernmost populations on the continent."

The authors state that this is "an area of biological richness unmatched anywhere else in the country," and that "close to one-third of Canada's **rare and endangered plants and animals live in the Carolinian zone.**"

Efforts to protect the species in the area were begun in the 1980s, and 38 Carolinian Canada Signature Sites have been identified. The Carolinian Canada Coalition, credited as author of this book, has been involved for more than two decades and is now promoting private stewardship.

The book is divided into three parts, focusing on plants, animals and caring for nature. Plenty of large, **excellent, full-colour photographs** of individual plants, animals and landscapes instantly convey good information.

James Lorimer & Company Ltd.,
2007, softcover, \$34.95

Flight of the Hummingbird

By Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas



This "parable for the environment" is a lovely little book, illustrated with **powerful drawings** in the Haida Manga style created by Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas, an artist living in Vancouver.

The story at the centre of the book is a tale about a forest fire and a hummingbird, and was inspired by a parable of the Quechuan people of South America.

The Dalai Lama and a Kenyan woman who founded a Green Belt Movement and won the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize, have contributed the afterword and foreword of the book.

Some find this parable **inspiring**; others might find it **heart-breaking**. Either way, it's a beautiful volume.

Greystone Books, 2008,
hardcover, \$16

By the river, mill, cottage, meadow and stream...

Come to the Eden Mills Writers' Festival to hear this year's spectacular line-up of authors read to you all the long, lovely afternoon.



Saturday, September 6: Seminar on Travel Writing and the Planet, with Taras Grescoe (*The End of Elsewhere, Bottomfeeder*), Susan Catto (*Live and Work in Canada and the U.S.*), Laurie Gough (*Kiss the Sunset Pig*) and Chris Turner (*The Geography of Hope*).

Sunday, September 7 Sets & Sites:
Over 40 authors read in the open air!
20th anniversary set w/ Michael Ondaatje, Leon Rooke & Jane Urquhart, **Going Carbon-Neutral** w/ Chris Turner & Taras Grescoe, L.M. Montgomery w/ Mary Rubio & Elizabeth Waterston, **Poetry Slam** w/ Mad Adam & Noah 23, Adisokaun w/ Drew Hayden Taylor, **Fringe** w/ this year's winners, **Young Adult** w/ Arthur Slade, **Children's** w/ Dennis Lee

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