



Gloria,
Kelly & Thomas

View From the Editor's Desk : A Horse on the Drive

While I was working on this summer issue early one evening, I glanced out my front window to see a neighbour, Barbara, and her horse Whiskers on my driveway. Thinking that Whiskers wanted a carrot as I had given him before, I stepped outside. Instead, Barbara asked if she could go cross country behind my property to the town line in order to avoid going home the way she came. The reason was that Jim the farmer had let his cows out into

a field next to the road and they were galloping around in joy. Unfortunately, Whiskers was so terrified of the cows that Barbara could barely control him. Even at my place, he was backing up, tossing his head, snorting, stamping and pawing the ground.

"He's full of adrenaline," said Barbara.

I told Barbara that there was a way to go cross country, but I would have to show her. I put my boots on, put my border collie Kelly on a leash so she wouldn't herd Whiskers, and joined Barbara and Whiskers in my back yard. We headed off across my father's property, where his terrier Thomas joined us, barking and charging at Whisker's hooves, outraged at the horse on his territory.

As we started cross country, the dogs settled down and seemed to accept Whiskers into their pack. I let Kelly off the leash. At a boggy stretch, Whiskers refused to go on. Barbara said he didn't like having his feet sink in mud. With Whiskers in a lather, we had to search for a relatively dry passage. We also had to watch for wire fences. I learned that dogs can easily go almost anywhere, while horses have particular needs. He accepted a grassy patch that had shallower water, and he acted calmer as soon as he was on higher ground.

Then we had to consider which parts of the hedgerows had flat-enough openings to let a horse through. While I was clipping away some overhanging grape vines, Whiskers brushed past me as if to say that a few vines didn't worry him. Once he was on the next wide-open farmer's field he stopped, sniffed the air and whinnied.

"He knows he's near home," Barbara said.

They crossed the field heading to the town line and then Barbara called out that there was no fence; they could get onto the road. She thanked me for my help and then she and Whiskers trotted back to the stable.

As I walked back to my house with the two dogs running ahead of me, I realized that this is what I love about country living: the easy access to natural spaces and closeness to the animal world. Over the years I've seen a cow grazing in my father's vegetable garden, a pony loose on the front lawn, three escaped horses in a neighbour's back yard, and occasionally a horse galloping riderless down the road. Neighbours help when they can, phoning owners, trying to keep the animal confined, or stopping traffic until the escapee can be brought back to safety. I've had more than one unusual adventure with horses, and it adds to the pleasure of country life. I hope that Whiskers knows he can find refuge and a carrot or apple when he turns into my driveway.

In This Issue

Summer is definitely the time for outdoor adventure. In this issue we present what some people are doing in Escarpment lands during the summer. Young athletes are training for triathlons in Collingwood. Civil War re-enactors are fighting near Milton. Antique lovers are seeking treasures in markets all along the Escarpment. And recently, university students in Hamilton designed fashions out of waste materials, which reminds us not to litter when we're out this summer.

Photo Notecards

A new development here at *Escarpment Views* is our creation of photographic blank notecards. We keep hearing such compliments about the photography in our magazine, that we decided to make some of it available by producing cards featuring some of Mike Davis's photography. We have three sets: the first four cover photos from the magazine, four images from Scotsdale Farm, and four shots from the RBG's Lilac Dell.

These cards are beautiful! I use them all the time for letters, as greeting and all-occasion cards. To share some of these beautiful Escarpment views, see the order form on page 25.

And get out there this summer and have an adventure or two!

Gloria

Gloria Hildebrandt,
Editor

Featured Letter to the Editor

I read with interest Gary Hutton's article on Wild Orchids but I have a few comments. First of all 44 orchid species are listed for the Bruce Peninsula. Another two are found in Grey County making a total of 46 for the two counties. The "Orchids of Bruce and Grey Counties" which is published by the Bruce-Grey Plant Committee gives details of these species which will cover most that are likely to be found on the Niagara Escarpment. It costs \$18.95. Another publication which some may find useful is "Checklist of Vascular Plants for Bruce and Grey Counties, Ontario" (\$5.95). It includes ferns as well as flowering plants and clues you in to what is actually found in this area. Our fern book and geology book are also very relevant to the Niagara Escarpment. All our books are available from the Ginger Press in Owen Sound and many other outlets. Details may also be found on the Owen Sound Field Naturalists' Web site, www.osfn.ca.

Many of our orchids are found off the escarpment in the fens along the Lake Huron shore, such as Singing Sands, Petrel Point and Oliph-

ant. Bogs are extremely rare in southern Ontario. They are by definition wetlands with little water movement, dominated by *Sphagnum* mosses and therefore, very acid. The wetlands that occur west of the escarpment have continuous water movement due to the tilt of the Michigan Basin. They are also high in calcium due to the composition of the escarpment rocks.

... I would certainly endorse what Gary said about not transplanting orchids. They produce so many seeds that if you take an air sample anywhere in the world, literally, you can find orchid seeds. Yet they will only grow in company with the right mycorrhizal fungus in exactly the right habitat. Moreover, because of their dependence on fungi which have a tendency to pollute their own surroundings, over a period of time they change locations. Another very good reason for preserving large areas of diverse habitat.

Joan Crowe, Bruce-Grey Plant Committee,
Owen Sound Field Naturalists