

Escarpment Views



Autumn 2010

Reflecting Niagara Escarpment lifestyles & values

**Ridgeway, The Battle
That Created Canada**

Ancient Fossils at Craigleith

**Harvest
Vegetable
Ammo**

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Escarpment Views

Autumn 2010

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PHOTO BY CHRIS MILLS

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Photos marked with **N** were taken by Mike Davis using equipment on loan from Nikon Canada: a Nikon D700 digital camera with 24-120 mm & 105 mm lenses & speedlight flash SB-900. *Escarpment Views* appreciates the use of the equipment.

Views... from the editor's desk



Let's Celebrate Foresight!

We're delighted that *Escarpment Views* keeps growing and improving. In this issue we introduce a new department called Foresight. This page at the back of the magazine directs us to the future. Here we share forward-thinking or enlightened actions and practices, and celebrate environmental good news and achievements related to the Niagara Escarpment World Biosphere Reserve.

In this issue we also take you, through words and photos, from old Fort Erie to Kemble near Owen Sound, and from prehistoric times at Georgian Bay to a contemporary harvest festival held each year. If you want more, we invite you to look us up online at www.EscarpmentViews.ca where we post a blog, keep a continuing

calendar of events, store our published features, and generally make more information available.

This autumn also means it's time for municipal elections. We urge you to pay as much attention to your options for local government as you might to provincial and federal elections. On Oct. 25, be sure to vote for those who will best serve your Escarpment municipality.

Please send me good news about the Niagara Escarpment or its communities, your story ideas and what you like or dislike about the magazine. I'll read everything that is sent to editor@EscarpmentViews.ca.

Gloria

Gloria Hildebrandt, Editor

...and from our readers

I work on the Chi-Cheemaun and enjoyed the article in the Summer 2010 issue of *Escarpment Views*. I would like to point out two errors though. The first concerns the photo in the lower right of page 6. That is not 2nd Mate Terry McMillan in the photo. It is 1st Mate Dave Grass. The second is in the "Fast Facts" list on page 7. The Chi-Cheemaun was re-engined in 2007 and now has four 2200hp CAT engines, not the two Rustons as listed.

Alan Constant

[Editor's note: We apologize for mixing up Terry McMillan with Dave Grass. As for the engine facts, we reported information that was provided to us. Thanks to Alan for clarifying this.]

I had to chuckle too when I read that on the Bruce Peninsula, most people will never see a Massasauga Rattlesnake because of its secretive behaviour and incredible camouflage. I have been a cottage owner on Coal Oil Point since 1977 and also own an eight-acre island at the

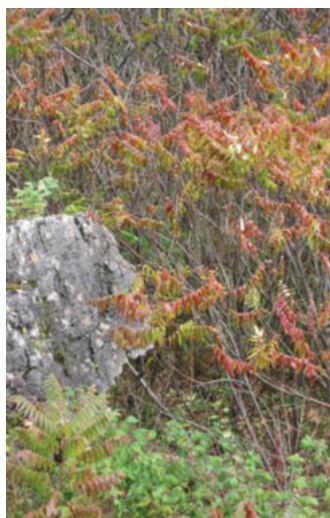
mouth of Willow Creek. At one time, I used to fish for speckled trout a few miles up Willow Creek. It was quite common to see rattlesnakes and I am sure it still is. This property is now within the boundaries of the Bruce Peninsula National Park, but there are no roads or paved trails for access. My wife and I walk around five miles most days in the Willow Creek area and we will see rattlesnakes on occasion. We used to pick raspberries in the Johnson Harbour area and the rattlesnakes were so common that we would wear hip waders for protection. The brush was quite thick and my wife even stepped on one once. Frequently, we would no sooner get out of the car and we would encounter a rattler. The point I would like to make is that all of the Park Wardens and writers that never get "off the beaten path" are not likely to see a rattlesnake. Get on a pair of chest waders and head up Willow Creek a few miles where very few people go and you should have no trouble viewing a rattlesnake.

Ian Pirie, Coal Oil Point

The following is an excerpt of a letter we received. To read the rest of it, go online to our blog at www.EscarpmentViews.ca and look under Bruce Peninsula:

I'm thinking about my home here in the Bruce Peninsula in terms of a sustainable community. So are a lot of other people, as evidenced by last fall's creation of The Meeting Place, the regular occurrence of Transition Communities get-togethers, the educational initiatives at the Lion's Head school, the numerous grass-roots organizations including the Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory and lately, some relatively independent efforts to generate local "clean" energy. What can I do to contribute to securing in the future a quality of life and standard of living I am now privileged to enjoy? How do we conserve and preserve the balance between development and preservation of this unique gem of a Biosphere? I am hoping that the knowledge generated by residents and researchers in this area will be part of the solution.

Arlene Kennedy, Tobermory



PHOTOS BY DIANE BATOR, ORANGEVILLE

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**Saturday & Sunday
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Visit our website for information on the artists and tour map

www.purplehillstour.ca



Events Along the Rock

Photos by Mike Davis except where noted.



Hot from the Big Green Egg: Lakeshore Living held a free BBQ and pizza demonstration at their Stoney Creek store on May 23.

On May 27, Marolyn Morrison, mayor of Caledon, right, presented Keith and Evelyn Thoy with a plaque of congratulations for the opening of Topnotch Consignment Furnishings.



Ken Hall, director of Giant's Rib Discovery Centre, presented Diane Perrault of Ancaster with a door prize gift subscription to *Escarpment Views* at the Giant's Rib Summer Solstice Fundraiser in Hamilton on June 17. **N**



PHOTO COURTESY CONSERVATION HALTON

RBC's Blue Water Project donated \$5,000 to Conservation Halton Foundation on June 11 for the Burlington BlueCreeks Project, which is aimed at improving Grindstone Creek. From left are RBC employees Grace Widuch, Sarah Adams, Gord Bryce, Conservation Halton Chair Brian Penman, the RBC mascot and Edith Fajszan of RBC.



Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority opened Jordan Harbour Conservation Area on June 20. A provincially significant wetland near the south shore of Lake Ontario at Twenty Mile Creek, it links the lake to Ball's Falls Conservation Area. Kayaks and a dragon boat were available to try out on the water. **N**

Coming Events

- Sept. 15 **Getting Off the Fragmented Focus**, Oakville hpcaonline.com
- Sept. 17-Oct. 3 **Downtown Localicious Experience**, Hamilton downtownhamilton.org
- Sept. 18 **NiEGGara Fest 2010**, St. Catharines nieggara.com
- Sept. 18 **The Equestrian Ride**, Dundas Valley conservationhamilton.ca
- Sept. 19 **Eden Mills Writers' Festival**, Eden Mills edenmillsfestival.ca
- Sept. 19 **Telling Tales**, Westfield Heritage Village westfieldheritage.ca
- Sept. 25 **Cootes Paradise Biodiversity Festival**, Royal Botanical Gardens opgbiodiversity.ca
- Sept. 25-26 **Purple Hills Studio Tour**, Creemore purplehillstour.ca
- Oct. 8-11 **Ball's Falls Thanksgiving Festival**, Ball's Falls Conservation Area ballsfalls.ca
- Oct. 9-11 & 16, 17 **Fall Into Nature**, Conservation Halton fallintonature.ca
- Oct. 12 **Encore Improv 3**, Oakville hpcaonline.com
- Oct. 22, 23 **Autumn Leaves, Autumn Feast, Autumn Memories**, Georgetown Bach Chorale georgetownbachchorale.com
- Oct. 29, 30 **Halloween's Past**, Westfield Heritage Village westfieldheritage.ca
- Nov. 10 **Communications Networking**, Oakville hpcaonline.com
- Nov. 19 **Advent Concert**, Georgetown Bach Chorale georgetownbachchorale.com
- Nov. 28 **A Family Christmas**, Georgetown Choral Society georgetownchoral.ca
- Dec. 10 **Handel's Messiah**, Georgetown Choral Society georgetownchoral.ca
- Dec. 17-19 **Chansons de Noël**, Georgetown Bach Chorale georgetownbachchorale.com



National Aboriginal Day on June 20 at Conservation Halton's Crawford Lake included

Please see www.EscarpmentViews.ca for more photos & listings!



Susan Powell, right, leads the other members of The Art Group in a laugh at the May 29 opening reception of Home Ground, an exhibition at Alton Mill Gallery. From left, the other artists are Ian Sinclair, Diana Hillman, Hugh Russel and Pam Purves.



The first Big Daddy Festival throughout Halton Hills featured several events over the Father's Day weekend, including the Steam Whistle/B2C Chill Zone in downtown Georgetown, where family-friendly music was performed. **N**



a performance to singing and drumming by the Gadaihongwas Dancers. Members of the

public were invited to learn the steps and take part in some of the dances. **N**





Fossil Hunting at Craigleith

Words & photos by Ken Haigh

My three children and I have come to Craigleith Provincial Park to find fossils, and we aren't disappointed. We have found fossils, thousands of them.

Craigleith is located on the southern shore of Georgian Bay at the foot of the

The shoreline of Craigleith Provincial Park on Georgian Bay at the base of the Niagara Escarpment is an Area of Natural and Scientific Interest because of the significant number of fossils found here.

Fossil Hunting at Craigleith



The author's sons are absorbed in trying to identify their fossil finds.

Niagara Escarpment and just north of the Blue Mountain Ski Resort. One of the chief attractions of the park, besides the sparkling turquoise waters of the bay, is the smooth brown shale that lines the shore. To a geologist, this shale is an outcrop of the lower Whitby formation. A palaeontologist would call it "upper Ordovician." In plain speech, this means the shale is about 450 million years old. It is the oldest exposed rock along the Escarpment.

"Look at this!" shouts my daughter, holding up a small square of fractured shale upon which a thumbnail-size bronze fan is embossed. "What is it?"

"It's a trilobite," I answer, "or rather, it is the back third of a trilobite, called the 'py-

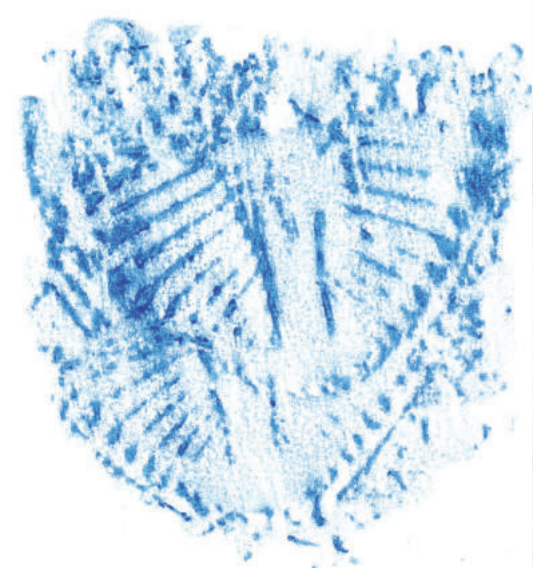
gidium.' It was a sea creature with a shell, a bit like a lobster. We are standing on the bottom of an ancient sea bed."

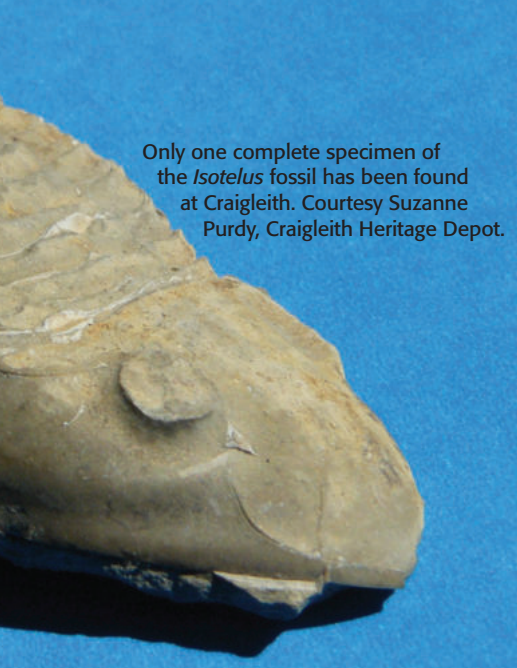
"Will we find fossilized fish?" asks my son.

"No, fish hadn't come along yet. In fact, there weren't even any land creatures yet. They would come later in Earth's history. But if we look closely, we might find other fossilized shells."

If I am sounding remarkably knowledgeable about fossils, I confess, I'm a fake. I am cribbing from notes I took from Suzanne Purdy at the Craigleith Heritage Depot earlier in the week. The depot is a restored railway station, famous for once being the destination of the Toronto ski train in the

Trilobite fossils such as the one shown here, are the most common fossils found at Craigleith.





Only one complete specimen of the *Isotelus* fossil has been found at Craigleith. Courtesy Suzanne Purdy, Craigleith Heritage Depot.



Parts of the *Pseudogygites latimarginatus* fossil are often found at Craigleith. Courtesy Suzanne Purdy, Craigleith Heritage Depot.



Since it's illegal to remove fossils from a provincial park, the author's daughter makes a rubbing.



1940s, but now a museum recounting the history of the Town of the Blue Mountains. Suzanne is the curator, and if you want to see someone get excited about a topic, mention fossils to her. Before coming to work at the depot, she worked for five years in the palaeontology department at the New Brunswick Museum. Suzanne gave me a tour of the fossil collection at the depot.

In addition to the trilobites, which are the most common fossil found at Craigleith, there are a whole tribe of weird and wonderful creatures to discover, the ancestors of modern clams, snails, worms, and squids. The largest fossil animal found at Craigleith is a five-metre squid (*Endoceras proteiforme*), who kept his soft parts protected in a cone-shaped shell. These giant squids were probably the top predators of their day.

There were also strange and wondrous animals who did not survive in evolution's lottery, animals like the Graptolites, whose fossil remains look like pencil scribbles on the rock, and curious animals like the lily-shaped Crinoids, who for many years were thought to be fossilized flowers. Since they have no living relations, we can only guess how they might have lived. Suzanne proudly pointed to one trilobite in the collection.

"I found that one," she said. "It's very rare to find an entire trilobite. We tend to find them in pieces. That one is called *Isotelus*. It's not uncommon in other places, but

It's illegal to remove fossil specimens from a provincial park. Take rubbings instead.

we rarely find it around here." She pointed to a second fossil. "In Craigleith, you will most often find that one – *Pseudogygites latimarginatus*."

She cautioned me though. "The exposed rock along the Craigleith shore is designated an ANSI [Area of Natural and Scientific Interest], and it's illegal to remove fossil specimens from a provincial park." She recommended instead that we take some paper and crayons and make rubbings of the best specimens we found.

I have followed her advice. I beckon the children and begin to distribute paper and crayons. They fan out, looking for the best examples to copy.

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Reliving History: Fenian Raids at Old Fort Erie and Ridgeway

Words & photos by Chris Mills



Women and children at war: women fought in 19th-century battles, sometimes disguised as males. This woman is a fife player in the regimental band, behind a boy flag bearer. In 1866 young sons of soldiers could join the forces as flag bearers or drummers.



War-hardened Fenians had recently survived the U.S. Civil War, so they knew the benefits of moving to the cover of farmers' fences. They took advantage of every opportunity at the Battle of Ridgeway and old Fort Erie.



Fenian re-enactors march from their camp to the battlefield. The flag of green with a gold harp shows artistic licence; it was designed from a painting of the Battle of Ridgeway.

They arrive in buses, vans and cars, from the U.S.A. and from across Canada. Men and women

range from pre-teen drummer boys and flag bearers, up to very retired seniors. They all share a passion for history, an appreciation for the camaraderie and a love of living under canvas. They're teachers, civic workers, law enforcers, and myriad other real life professionals. But put a black powder rifle in their hands, and this is how they spend the weekend.

Private Dave Fulton, 54, is a Toronto civic worker, but when he dons his British uniform

and picks up his flintlock, he's a member of the 1812 British 49th Regiment of Foot Grenadiers.

Everyone in combat signs a waiver for personal liability, and each of their weapons is inspected for cleanliness, function and the trigger safety.

As he waits his turn, Fulton says few re-enactors carry original flintlocks or percussion cap muskets. Pretty good replicas made in India sell for \$500 or \$600, but Fulton and his crew all carry genuine Italian Pedersoli replicas worth about \$1,200. "I'm a history fanatic," says Fulton. "I love



Fenian raiders at old Fort Erie with a U.S. flag of the 155th New York Infantry, an Irish infantry from south Buffalo.

A blacksmith in real life, Helmut portrays one from the 19th century while his partner Sian portrays a lady selling homemade tinworks, wooden toys and dry goods.

A flagbearer carries the flag of the 155th New York Volunteer Infantry of Irish from south Buffalo, still used in re-enactments of Civil War and Fort Erie battles.





British (Canadian) redcoats during the Battle of Ridgeway, before being overtaken by Fenians on the field at old Fort Erie.



Enactors take pride in their authentic replica materials, including guns, kit, clothes and tents.

The Battle that Created Canada

Historians consider the Battle of Ridgeway, which was one of the Fenian Raids against British North America in 1866, the battle that created Canada because it galvanized support across the country to create a Canadian Confederation against foreign intervention.

Following the end of the American Civil War, Irish-American “Fenians” bristled at the occupation of Ireland by British soldiers and believed that they could drive them out if they marched into and secured British Canada for ransom.

These were Civil War veterans, Confederates and Union, hardened in battle and skilled in warfare. Their mix of Confederate grey, Union blue and civilian outfits made a fine mash underneath the flags of the gold and green Irish Republican Army.

About 1,000 of them crossed the Niagara River at Buffalo, NY, and secured the railways, the telegraph office and the old Fort Erie that had been destroyed in 1814. They failed to recruit Irish Canadians in the region, so moved cross country to the town of Ridgeway where they handily beat Canadian militia of volunteers comprising several regiments from Hamilton, Toronto and locally.

They then returned to the old fort where they faced more British Canadian volunteers bringing up their rear, and routed them, too. The Fenians heard that thousands of British regulars were on their way and so abandoned the fort to return to New York to check on expected supplies and reinforcements.

On the water, Marine Guards of the USS Michigan arrested them and confiscated all their weapons.

There’s debate over whether the White House approved the raids as reprisal for British support of the Confederacy during the war. Andrew Johnson, the president, however, afterwards signed a declaration against the uprising and sent General Ulysses S. Grant himself to ensure the Fenians were stopped.

reenactments. It’s a lifestyle. And I can attend other re-enactments across the country by simply altering my uniform. Last year in Georgina, I’m a U.S. soldier sacking a town and shouting liberty or death!” Today, he’ll play a Fenian to pump up the numbers.

Private Erin Bottrel, 45, is a British drummer in the 12th York Regiment for York County. He’s been a re-enactor for 20 years. When he’s not in uniform he’s in anti-money laundering in Toronto. His wife, Karen Seeley, 47, is a writer.

“The battle re-creation is for the audience, but we’re here for the campfire talk, the period authenticity, the tent life,” says Bottrel. “We put away the cell phones and channel changers. It’s our chance to run away from it, however briefly. However, all of us, me included, are rather too old for what we’re portraying, since those soldiers in 1866 would all have been 17 to 25 or

Continued on page 22



Ready, Aim, Chuck a Pumpkin! at the Kemble Harvest Blowout

Words & photos by Kelly Babcock

The cool air of autumn, wet earth and decomposing leaves make your sweater a friend and the occasional whiff of wild apples reminds you of baked desserts after harvest dinners. I'm tramping across open fields through slanting rain, recalling autumns of years gone by, when the tranquility is shattered by the sound of a pneumatic cannon firing a pumpkin through the sky. Applause follows the shot and ATVs

follow the flying gourd to measure its distance. There are better ways to make pie filling, but this is fun. The official Canadian national Pumpkin Chuckin' competition at the Kemble Harvest Blowout has begun.

Kemble, a picturesque hamlet firmly planted on the Niagara Escarpment between Owen Sound and Wiarton, used to be the home of fall fairs. We miss the baking, livestock and handiwork competitions that were part of these events but most Harvest Blowout attendees agree that there is a great deal



Trebuchet: a military machine used in siege warfare for throwing stones etc.

Trebuchets have fired pumpkins farther than 790 feet at the Harvest Blowout Pumpkin Chuckin' competition in Kemble, Ontario. Think of a biblical sling on the end of a long wooden pole and you have a trebuchet.



Mike Sutherland stands in front of his air cannon, "Silver Streak Chucker." Mike's crew, his kids, pose with him but everyone stands clear when this monster cannon fires. Mike is a Canadian record holder and his air cannons are famous in Kemble.

of fun to be had with spare parts, your imagination and a pile of pumpkins. 2009 was the fifth year for this new tradition; 2010 will be just as good, a way of celebrating the season with a literal bang.

Times change. So has this community but its tenacity keeps it alive. The Harvest Blowout is a result of Kemble's spirit. Last year, a silent auction raised more than \$4,000 for a 20-year resident, Billy Nicol, suffering from Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. Billy says "It's nice to have that kind of support.

Everybody seems to be one big family in Kemble."

Proceeds from the gate went to community projects and ongoing arena expenses. Non-profit organizations ran booths to fund their activities. The Kemble and District Lions Club sold hot dogs, sausages and beverages and the Kemble United Church teamed up with the Kemble Arena Committee to sell chili, rolls, pie, hot beverages and cookies. They work hard every year and they always sell out.

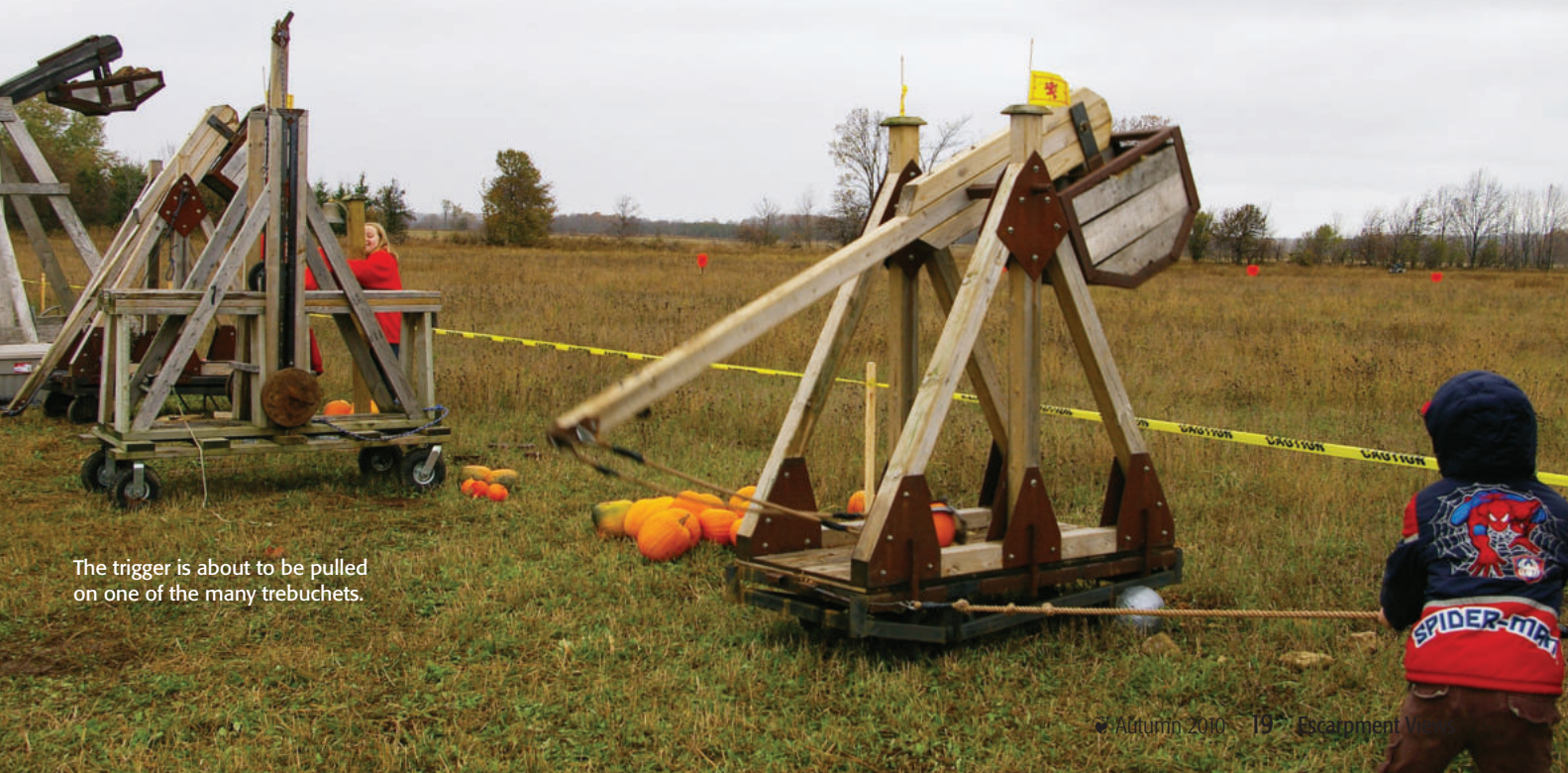
Continued on page 24



Team McGregor cocking a trebuchet. The McGregors come to compete and three generations of them are in attendance each year.

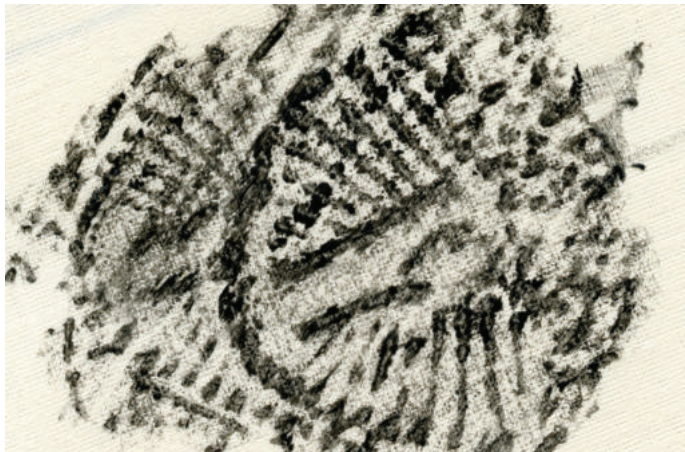


Kent Cruickshank and his cannon, "Rusty Brown." At Kent's feet is the yellow trigger valve and the hatch in the barrel where the pumpkin is loaded.



The trigger is about to be pulled on one of the many trebuchets.

Fossil Hunting at Craigleith



Continued from page 11

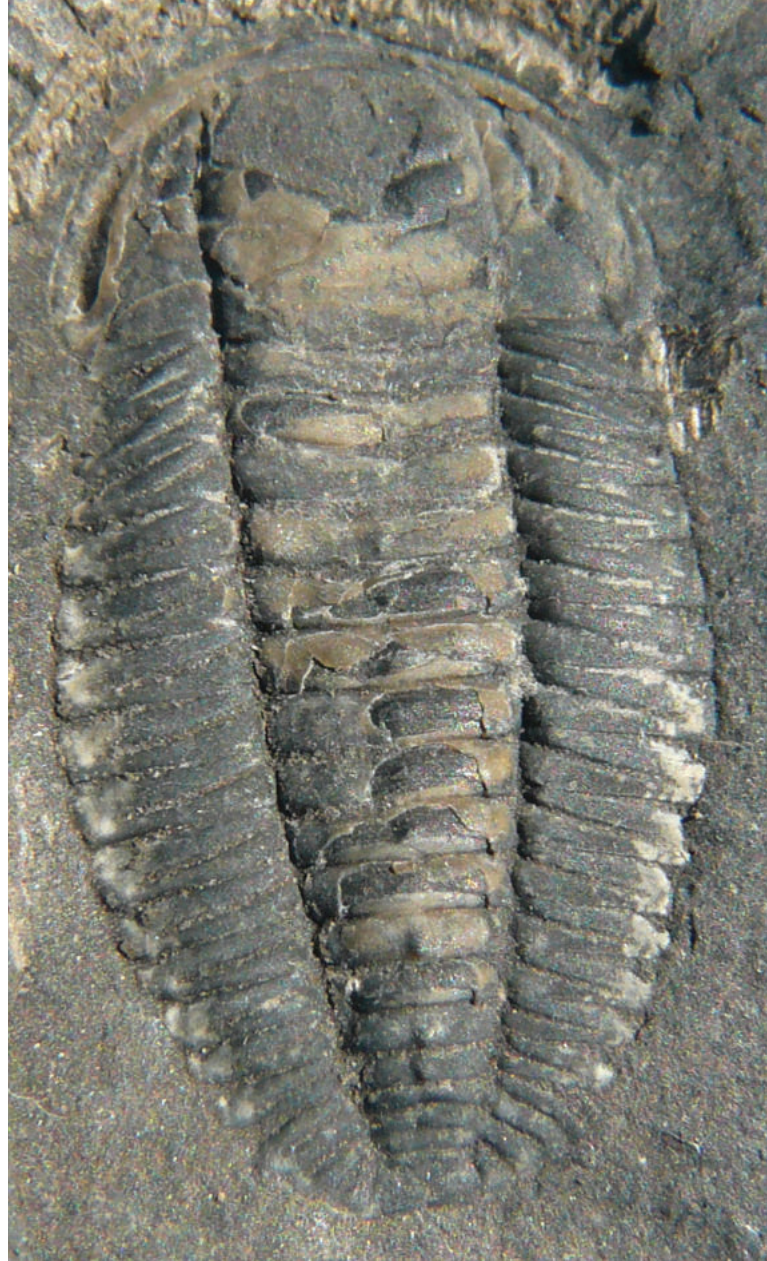
I had wondered just how significant these fossil beds were, and Suzanne had put me in touch with David Rudkin, assistant curator of invertebrate palaeontology at the Royal Ontario Museum. I put the question to David.

He replied that the Craigleith shoreline represented “the best natural exposures of this particular geologic unit anywhere in the province.” What made it exciting was the sheer number of trilobite fossils in the layered bedding planes, “a kind of natural trilobite labora-

tory,” which, when combined with the other fossil species found in the shale, allowed the palaeontologist to reconstruct the “communities that lived and died along with the trilobites during a very interesting interval of rapidly changing environments near the end of the Ordovician period. All in all, a pretty cool place!”

I wondered if the fossils were in any danger, since only a small portion of the shore was protected within the boundaries of the provincial park. David’s answer was more nuanced than I expected.

Craigleith Provincial Park is on Highway 26 between Collingwood and Thornbury. For more information see www.ontarioparks.com/english/crai.html. To learn more about fossils at Craigleith Heritage Depot, see www.thebluemountains.ca/Craigleith-Heritage-Depot.cfm.



Though less common than *Pseudogygites*, the fossil remains of *Triarthrus eatoni* can also be found at Craigleith. Courtesy Suzanne Purdy, Craigleith Heritage Depot.

PROTECTING THE NIAGARA ESCARPMENT



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He reminded me that it is impossible to preserve the shale, since it is constantly being eroded by waves, ice and winter storms. Each year, new planes of fossils are exposed. His chief concern was with "wholesale development of the shoreline" where large sections of the shore might be covered with concrete or landfill, and where access to the fossils for study would no longer be possible. He also worries about large-scale mining, as happened briefly in the mid-19th century, when the shale was crushed to extract the naturally occurring oil for use as a lubricant and lighting source. He also felt that it "might also be a good idea to set aside, perhaps on a rotating basis, a portion of the best outcrop as a reserve area with greatly reduced activity."

The children bring me their rubbings, and we try to identify their discoveries in an old field guide. I am amazed at what they have found.

In his entertaining compendium, *A Short History of Nearly*

Everything, Bill Bryson notes that the likelihood of any bone being fossilized is about one in a billion, and that the likelihood of that bone being discovered is even less. Only one species in 10,000 even makes it into the fossil record. Any fossil is therefore something of a miracle. Yet, trilobite fossils are numerous. This should not surprise us, given that trilobites have been around for so long. They entered the fossil record in what has been called the "Cambrian explosion," an enormous eruption of new life that began about 540 million years ago, and survived for the next 300 million years, until they vanished in the puzzling "Permian extinction," which wiped out about 95 per cent of the fossil record. Compared with trilobites, humans have only been around for the blink of an eye, and are likely to vanish much sooner. **EV**

Ken Haigh, author of Under the Holy Lake, lives in the Beaver Valley.



EDEN MILLS WRITERS' FESTIVAL
September 19, 2010
 Noon 'til six

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Reliving History



Fenian re-enactors line up to receive a new flag, the true green and gold colours that they would have carried on their 1866 raids of British territory.



Guy Larocque of Quebec, in white shirt, keeps an eye on the Fenian rifles, most of which are replica percussion-cap black powder muskets.

Continued from page 15

so. It's a typical situation in the re-enacting hobby since younger people are either not interested or can't afford it."

Greg Fekner, a Confederate with the 10th Louisiana Company C, is actually a 29-year-old museum curator from Woodstock, Ont., in his third year of re-enactments.

Today he and members of the American Civil War Historical

Re-enactment Society are Fenians. Their weapon of choice is a percussion cap musket, so everyone has a PAL (possession and acquisition licence).

"Some people may think we're a bunch of crazy gun-loving yahoos," says Fekner, "but we're educators and we're entertainers. We also know that one single accident would end it. That's why training and safety are primary. It's a great way to teach history for young and old, and it's my chance

NiEGGara Fest Sept. 18, 2010



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Bone up on your history and folklore and discover the origins and traditions of Halloween's past. Runs from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. each evening. Admission fees: adults: \$11, seniors/disabled: \$10, children 6-12 years old: \$6.50. Children 5 and under are free. Parking is free. For more information, please visit www.westfieldheritage.ca.

Call 905-525-2181 or visit www.conservationhamilton.ca

to do the living history part of it. It gives you a better perspective of history, away from the textbooks."

Les (Leslie) Peplinski, a 37-year-old English and history teacher from Brantford, joined the Civil War re-enactors 20 years ago when as a 17-year old she became a drummer boy.

"No one knows, but there's belief that 400 to 500 Civil War soldiers were women," she says. "Once you start, you don't want to leave. We're like a family. These guys practically raised me. My mom thought I was insane but now my three boys are into it,

too. My husband's not into it but he knows that this is my form of escape."

Meanwhile, camp followers with their familiar canvas pavilions include people like Sian, 43, and Helmut, 56, sutlers from Hamilton. Sutlers are merchants who followed the soldiers to provide services and merchandise for them to buy. Helmut is a genuine blacksmith, but goes mobile on weekends.

"All my life I've been following re-enactments, except for a few years in university, blacksmithing at Black Creek Village and doing work for the Royal Ontario Mu-

seum," says Helmut as he pumps the bellows on his fire. His wife is usually with him, although she's cut back on some of the longer distances from home.

Active in re-enactments for 27 years, Sian is a sociology professor for an Ottawa university. She makes wood and tin toys, and finished leather goods. She fell in love with the activity as a teenager when she met friends who were associated with Fort York in Toronto.

When the battle begins, real blasts fill the air; orders shout, wounded die, and columns disappear in the smoke while Jim

Hill, Niagara Parks Commission's superintendent of heritage, provides enlightening historical commentary.

Overnight, the rains come and pound red coats and blue coats alike. In the morning, only a handful has decamped, but everyone else rises with remarkable cheer to fight another round. But this time the other side wins.

Revisionism. Just for sport. **EV**

Chris Mills photographs and writes about activities and subjects through the Niagara region. He hasn't shot a blackpowder gun in anger or strife in recent history.

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Ready, Aim, Chuck a Pumpkin!

Continued from page 19



Mike Sutherland's "Silver Streak Chucker" firing the winning shot of 2,510 feet. It almost looks easy.

The Big Guns

The air cannons are the most spectacular of the pumpkin launching categories. It takes time and technology to build one of these guns. The result is a machine that will shoot a pumpkin as far as possible without shattering it in the air. The pumpkin must be intact when it hits the ground. Records are broken regularly.

Practising at home, Kent Cruikshank achieved 1,500 feet with his air cannon, Rusty Brown. I asked about other distances he had measured. "We were shooting at night so we

don't know," he said. They were unable to find many of the spent projectiles the next day.

Happy to talk about the winter project they had built and pulled by trailer for 100 km, Adam Shefter and Ace Strong of Gorrie, Ont., came to Kemble hoping to win. Adam's welding shop and Ace's pumpkin field inspired them to build the air cannon they called the Double A Flying Circus. They called on friends to acquire enough parts for their shot at the nationals.

Adjusting the angle of their launcher's massive barrel, Adam told me, "We were shooting 32 degrees." Ace added, "We haven't had much time to play with it." I left them calculating air pressure.

Who won in 2009? At 1,461 feet, Ace Strong and Adam Shefter took fourth place, third place went to Shawn Bridge with a shot of 1,548 feet, Kent Cruikshank took second with a shot of 1,690 feet and local hero, Mike Sutherland, the '08 Canadian champion, decisively took first place with 2,510 feet. Who will win this year? There's the question.

The medieval categories, trebuchets and catapults, came next. Design modifications change these ancient war machines into veggy

launchers. Still a war of sorts, the competition is friendlier in nature. After all, they're not shooting at each other. This category is appealing to people with technical curiosity or historical interest. Again records have been established and smashed but misfires can be as spectacular as the good shots. One trebuchet launched a pumpkin roughly 30 yards – backwards.

Pumpkin Chuckin machines amaze and impress spectators. Larry Bluhm of Georgian Bluffs



Adam Schefter and Ace Strong stand next to the "Double 'A' Flying Circus.

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December 17, 18, 19, 8 pm \$40

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said "I think the cannons were a big success." His wife Sue added with a smile, "It really is a show of male testosterone, isn't it?"

Over the years, competitive challenges have been added that test strength and skill. Turnip tossing for distance and accuracy, hay bale throwing and potato peeling events go on throughout the day.

Hairspray Power

New in 2008 was the potato cannon competition. Spud guns, built from ABS plumbing pipe, use compressed air or hairspray to launch a potato. These guns are judged on accuracy rather than distance. Considered dangerous by some, they are still crowd pleasers. I can vouch for the thrill involved. I had the opportunity to fire a gun being developed for the 2008 competition. One shot was all it took. In 2009 I brought my own, a light duty unit known to refuse to fire. I stepped up to take my turn and can happily report that after competing in a field of nine I was tied for second place. That sounds impressive, but in truth, only one team man-

aged any points, the rest of us having been skunked. I left vowing to return with a more accurate model.

The team of Brian Ferguson and Dr. Murray McQuigg won with one hit. I asked Brian if he came to play or to win. "Both!" he replied. Competitors in '08 with a hairspray-powered gun, they stepped up their game in '09 with a pneumatic unit, handing over last year's model to their spouses.

The Escarpment is a beautiful backdrop for a day of fun for neighbours from around the corner, around the Bruce Peninsula and farther

afeld. New friends and old gather to challenge and watch and then reminisce at the annual costume dance at the arena. It is a rare soul indeed who leaves without at least the start of a plan percolating in his mind for some form of machine to fire some type of vegetable at the next Harvest Blowout in Kemble. **EV**

Kelly Babcock's family has lived more than seven generations on or near the Grey and Bruce sections of the Niagara Escarpment where he now lives as a fixture in his wife's antique shop. Kelly's website is at www.writeofway.ca.



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Misty's View

of Preserving the Harvest

The sky is intensely blue; there's a crisp snap in the air and the first hints of red and gold adorn the trees. My favourite season has arrived! Fall is a time of renewal, not a time of decline, especially if you view the return from vacationland of family, friends and school

mates as an opportunity to **really get cooking again!**

Summer salads and grilled meats are fresh, fast foods; but autumn fare is slow, thoughtful and rich in flavour. It takes time to build structure into braised dishes, fruit compotes, homemade tomato sauces, mincemeat filling for Christmas pies.

The comforting return to the stove and oven signals preparations for the long winter ahead. Think of the pioneers who carved out some of the life we know today. They had to prepare to fill their larders with food stuffs that would take them into the spring and early summer months. Their lives depended on it.

As current proprietors of the earth, we look to the past these days, for ways of being more "green." As individuals, we might consider learning how to make the most of the fall harvest ourselves like our forefathers did. Instead of walking past the large bushels of peppers, tomatoes, eggplants, apples and pears that show up in late August and September, you might decide to take a few home with you this

time. Once purchased, you will need to rally your troops to help you **turn these mountains of fresh products into conserved, preserved edible delights.**

Oven-Roasted Tomatoes

Don't try to do it alone! I know many Italians who have a veritable family brigade of household helpers who know that the arrival of several bushels of Roma tomatoes means only one thing, mass production. Later in the year, however, these conscripted participants are happy and proud to have the fruits of their labour show up in memorable family dishes.

You can take the harvest bulk food challenge even if you only take one bushel home. Try an easy product for the first time, like oven-roasted tomatoes. There are many recipes available that will turn a large quantity of Roma tomatoes into homemade sun-dried tomatoes.

Get the entire family involved. All it takes is a son or daughter to help with deseeding the quartered pieces, an oven set low at 130 degrees, and an evening plus overnight stay of 12 hours on trays for the prepared tomatoes to be ready.

Depending on the herbs and olive oil asked for in your recipe, these tender, ruby slivers of tomato will delight you on pizzas, in pastas, or simply added to stews, soups, sauces or salad dressings, for an intense injection of rich, tomato flavour.

If you are more courageous, I suggest purchasing a home canning kit that will allow you to preserve applesauce, jams, jellies, relishes, soups and sauces. This standard canner method is similar to those used by culinary experts like your great grandmother, grandmother or mother, and uses sterilized glass jars as safe containers for your culinary creations. And if you are particularly successful with a recipe you might plan on dressing up your jars and **giving them out at holiday time!**

Capture Freshness

Don't want to bother with jars? Today's freezer bags are especially designed to guard your food against dehydration for up to six months. Ever wondered how to preserve green beans, for example? Blanching and refreshing is the answer. Just bring a very large pot of water to a rolling boil, drop in the beans, fish them out with a sieve once they are a brilliant emerald green (about two minutes) then quickly plunge them into a bath of ice water. Re-boil the water and you're ready for the next batch. Make sure to keep the bath water full of ice, so as to shock the beans cold, arresting the cooking process before it damages the delicate green chlorophyll. These par-cooked vegetables are ready to be drained and stored in a freezer bag. Volia! You have captured some **freshness to enjoy when the snow flies.**

What's most important about getting involved in the harvest bonanza is the message you send home to your family and friends. Yes, we live in a world where products are designed for convenience. Yes, we are busy. Yes, we might have missed certain life lessons on our path to success. But we might also look to the past to infuse the future through simple, thoughtful acts in our kitchens.

Food influences the world; how we use it can too. **The harvest is in. What will you do with it?**

Misty Ingraham and Bill Sharpe of Ancaster own the catering business The Portable Feast at Home.

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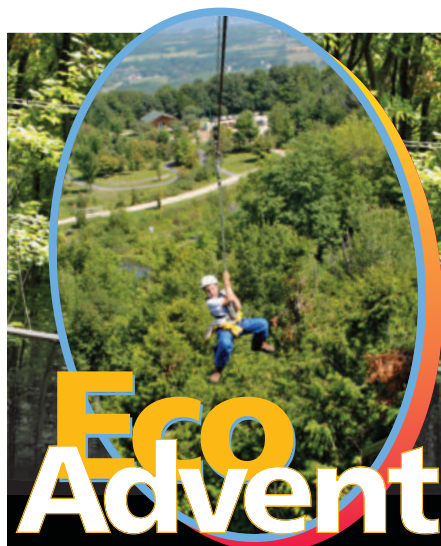
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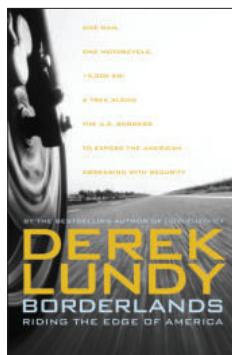
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Book Views

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Borderlands: Riding The Edge Of America

By Derek Lundy

The year he turned 60, investigative reporter Derek Lundy embarked on a unique adventure to take a firsthand look at the borders of the United States and her

neighbours, Mexico and Canada, from the vantage point of his trusty motorcycle. In his new book, *Borderlands*, he traces this odyssey, looking at the shared interests and vast differences between the three countries and examining the U.S. preoccupation with border security and safety which has changed since the events of 9/11.

This was a personal, life-affirming trip for Derek as well. Three close friends had died the previous year and he needed to get out in the world and grab onto

something challenging to his sense of adventure and his interest in history and journalism. By riding a bike he found more accessibility to places and people but also, sometimes, a wariness of an "outsider" riding into town. The trip was difficult both in terms of the terrain, with some off-road biking, mountains and deserts, and the weather which varied from freezing rain and snow to baking hot temperatures in the south. The book is a fascinating story of his personal journey and also his

reporting of the politics of the border.

Lundy has written several other books including *Godforsaken Sea*, an account of the Vendee Globe around-the-world single-handed yacht race and *The Bloody Red Hand*, his look at the history of Northern Ireland from the point of view of his ancestors.

Knopf Canada, 2010, \$32

Reviewed by Catherine Randall of Curiosity House Books & Gallery, Creemore



Bruno - Chief of Police & Bruno - The Dark Vineyard

By Martin Walker

Great wine, sumptuous food, idyllic location, and a body or two - well who could ask for anything more in this new page-turning series of crime books.

Captain Bruno Correges, Chief of Police in sleepy, little St. Denis, a town in France's beautiful Dordogne region, is a gentle, caring and respected policeman but make no mistake, he is unflinching and decisive with his investigative skills.

Bruno - Chief of Police, the first book in the series, deals with resentments left over from World War 2 when a local Algerian man is murdered. Marry the his-

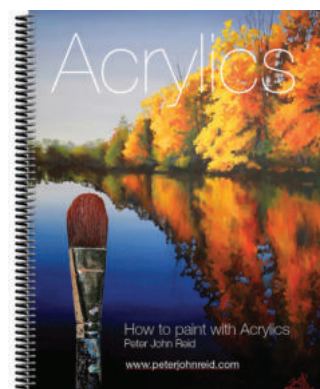
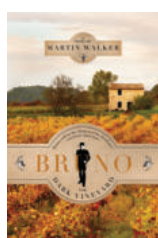
torical detail with the atmospheric smells and tastes of market stalls in rural France and you'll be salivating for the next book.

Eco-commerce, winemaking production and a body in a vat of wine challenge Bruno in the second book, *Bruno - The Dark Vineyard*, which is just hot off the press. And to top it all off, there is a Canadian connection with one of the main characters!

Author Martin Walker has imbued this charming series with engaging characters and interesting storylines. See for yourself why the staff at BookLore choose Bruno as a favourite hand-sell.

Harper Collins, *Chief of Police* \$13.9; *The Dark Vineyard* \$27.99

Reviewed by Nancy Frater of BookLore, Orangeville



How to Paint with Acrylics

By Peter John Reid

Landscape artist Peter John Reid has collected years of teaching notes into one comprehensive self-published volume of lessons, exercises, observations and demonstrations using acrylics to produce striking art. Illustrated throughout with full colour examples of his own art, *How to Paint with Acrylics* is not only an excellent compilation of acrylic techniques, it also provides a unique perspective on painting. The author, a well-known local artist, reveals step by step how he produces his own award-winning works.

"A big part of this book is about seeing colour," says Reid. He discusses hue, value, saturation and contrast and describes how to use this information to match every possible

colour with acrylic paints. Colour charts are included as well as heavy paper worksheets for applying mixed paints to create hands-on colour samples. He also describes the importance of developing critical skills and includes a list to consider when analyzing and evaluating paintings, followed by perceptive critiques of two of his own works.

"You can do a lot of things incorrectly in a painting," he muses. "This book is intended to help you maximize your ideas, know how to fix things that aren't quite how you envisioned, and know what you did right when it does work." *How to Paint with Acrylics* is more than a personal perspective on creating art. Reid, who was formally trained, reveals how he paints and encourages readers to try a wide variety of approaches to enhance their own artwork. Combining painting techniques with insight into one artist's approach to his work, *How to Paint with Acrylics* is an excellent addition to every artist's reference library, from beginner to advanced.

Self published, 2009, \$35

Reviewed by Maryann Thomas of The Ginger Press Bookshop and Café, Owen Sound



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Foresight

The seeds of our future are taking root right now, for better or worse. This page shares better, forward-thinking ideas and celebrates significant environmental achievements that can help us lead the way in creating a healthy, sustainable example of a thriving World Biosphere Reserve.

RIGHTS FOR NATURE “Ecuador has become the first nation on Earth to put the rights of nature in its constitution so that rivers and forests are not simply property but maintain their own right to flourish. Under these laws a citizen might file suit on behalf of an injured watershed, recognizing that its health is crucial to the common good. Other nations may follow Ecuador’s lead. Just as legal systems once reeled to comprehend women or former slaves as fully entitled, law schools in the U.S. are now reforming their curricula with an eye to understanding and acknowledging nature’s rights.”

From “Water is Life,” by Barbara Kingsolver, in *National Geographic*, April 2010

HALTON REGION FIRST TO COMMIT TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD

In April, Halton Region became the first region in Canada to adopt sustainable food procurement practices for its municipal food services. Fresh vegetables that have been certified by Local Food Plus (LFP), specifically peppers, onions, carrots and tomatoes, are being used in the Halton Region cafeteria. LFP certifies Ontario farmers and processors who follow such sustainable practices as reduced pesticide use; safe, fair labour conditions; humane care of livestock; reduced on-farm energy use. LFP then connects certified farmers and processors with food service contractors, restaurants and grocery stores. LFP hopes that providing local produce will support Ontario farmers and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

NIAGARA ESCARPMENT VALUED IN WISCONSIN

The Niagara Escarpment is beginning to be acknowledged for its location in Wisconsin. The State of Wisconsin has proclaimed the year 2010 as the “Year of the Niagara Escarpment” to foster awareness and recognize the Niagara Escarpment’s significance as a geologic and natural resource in the state. On Sept. 27, “Rocks, Roots & Revenue: A Symposium on the Niagara Escarpment and Geotourism” will take place in Menasha, Wisconsin.

NIAGARA ESCARPMENT LANDS ADDED

In June, the Niagara Escarpment Commission celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Niagara Escarpment Plan, and also had 750 hectares (ha) of land added to the Niagara Escarpment Planning Area:

- 93 ha: The Cootes Paradise Link in Hamilton between properties of the Royal Botanical Gardens
- 411 ha: The Pleasant View Survey in Hamilton near Hwy. 403
- 108 ha: The 407 Gap Lands in Burlington north of Dundas St. and west of Hwy. 407
- 70 ha: The Dufferin Quarry addition in Milton
- 80 ha: The Weinberg Property in Grey Highlands along the Beaver Valley

20 YEARS A UNESCO WORLD BIOSPHERE RESERVE

In July, Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment celebrated the 20th anniversary of the southern portion of the Niagara Escarpment having been designated a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve in 1990.



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Kevin Flynn, MPP
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