

# View From the Editor's Desk: Facing Winter

**W**inter. After the ice storm of last year, when a broad section of central southern Ontario and the Niagara Escarpment suffered extensive power failures and significant damage to trees and forests, this is a word that many people now dread. Some people are like me, still cleaning up broken branches, no longer in the yard around my house, but in my 14-acre woodlot.

After the yard was cleaned, our priority was to clear branches from the many trails through the property, so that we could continue doing what we love every day, year round, whatever the weather: walking our dogs “around the back,” as we call it. Clearing branches means separating brush from firewood, cutting large pieces into manageable sizes to fit a small tractor and wagon, and taking everything back to the yard.

Now that the paths are clear, we're starting to work on the areas beyond. It's a difficult job that may still take several months.

If I think of another storm like the one we had, my heart sinks. Yet the reality of climate change is that we

can expect more extremes of weather. Companies selling generators, battery-operated backup systems, emergency preparedness products, even wood chippers, are probably still doing well. But let's hope we won't have another weird winter.

## Snug at Home

Our Winter issue is our annual celebration of the warmth of staying inside our homes, and this year we give “armchair tours” of two very different houses. One is a dramatic, minimalist, contemporary, new design near Jordan. The other is the restoration of a heritage log cabin, once the clubhouse of the Caledon Ski Club, which Dan O'Reilly brought to our attention.

New, old, in between, Escarpment houses tend to be close to nature and fascinating to explore.

## Outdoor Activity

Niagara Escarpment lovers don't spend the whole winter inside, however. We follow Sandra J. Howe as she cross-country skis the Kolapore Trails on the Escarpment south of Georgian Bay. The views she shares, prove that the effort and exercise are worth it.



▲ Female Hairy Woodpecker at the icy bird feeders.



▲ Beautiful but deadly: the Ice Storm of 2013 coated everything an inch thick, resulting in too much sudden weight for trees to bear.

## Singing Dogs

We also look at a misunderstood and persecuted animal species: coyotes. These wild creatures who call and sing nightly from rural and forested spaces on the Escarpment, or who wander into populated neighbourhoods, strike primal fear among many people. Their similarity to savage wolves of myth and fairy tales means they are sometimes killed on sight, regardless of their actions.

Chris Mills shares the work that Coyote Watch Canada, based in Niagara Region, is doing. Their Compassionate Wildlife Community program should be embraced by more towns, if we want to live among animals on this increasingly crowded planet.

And I am not the only person to think that a world without wild, free animals is an unacceptably impoverished place. This is why my editor's view always ends with the important reminder: **Wild animals need wild spaces.** For that is what the Niagara Escarpment should continue to offer all living things.

Don't agree? Think I'm right? Either way, please write to me by Canada Post or email. We love sharing your views as well.

## Famous Train Photo

Mike Davis's photography continues to get attention. Last issue, I was pleased to announce that he had won an award from Conservation Halton for his great photos. This issue, he shares his experience taking photos while on a tourists' train ride through Escarpment country. What he captured ended up in several local papers, as well as on the front page of *The Toronto Star*. Many photographers work their entire lives without reaching this achievement. We're lucky that he shares his work with us each issue.

*Gloria*

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*P.S. Wild animals need... you know.*



▲ Behind my house, Dec. 23, 2013. Debris filled my yard.



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