

■ MIKE'S VIEW:

10 Years of Publishing

In the fall of 2007, 10 years ago, we registered the name of our magazine, then *Escarpment Views*, with a master business licence. We were off and running! What was I getting myself into? Gloria had asked me about starting a magazine and I offered a lot of encouragement, "Let's do it."

The Niagara Escarpment: I can see it from my house. I have hiked the Bruce Trail and really enjoy the rich and varied presentation of culture and nature all over the Escarpment. What an opportunity this would be to capture and share the many and varied views of the Niagara Escarpment.

What role did I take on with this new "calling?" The business of running a business. I really do like diving into the regulatory requirements, accounting, logistics, legal matters, contract management and sales aspects of magazine publishing. In keeping track of things, I know we are a millionaire of sorts; as of the Autumn 2017 issue, we printed 1,014,150 copies!

My photography skills grew organically. I am a Professional Engineer and needed to document my investigations through photographs. I set up each frame of what I wanted to document to tell the story. Gloria was the editor of another magazine before we started this one and she asked me to "go on assignment" with her as a photographer for a couple of features. It worked out, and I am now the principal photographer for *Niagara Escarpment Views*. In 2014, I was honoured with an award from Conservation Halton in their Media/Blogger Category!

Ethics

As a Professional Engineer, I work to a high standard of ethics. The print publishing sector on the other hand, seems to be the Wild West. Both Gloria and I work hard to maintain an ethical publication with high journalistic quality. It does cost us. We maintain a strong vision of covering the entire Niagara Escarpment in Canada. We want to remain true to the story with a unique perspective, so our writing is original and we use original photographs. We hire contributors. We copy edit to the extreme. I find some other publications don't have

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a strong vision, use stock copy and photos, and don't or can't copy edit. They are very good, however, at trying to undercut legitimate publications by discounting their ad pricing. We remain, on the other hand, true to our rates for advertising, by not discounting them just to get a sale.

Some advertisers say we are the only ones that stick to our rates; some have nothing to do with us, expecting a cut as a matter of course. We feel that we need to be fair to all of our advertisers by not favouring the "big guys" over the "little guys," who are more than likely to be small family businesses and paying their "full freight." This standard does cost us, as we don't "maximize our profits" with short and quick questionable gains but play the "long game" with high quality and ethical behaviour to maintain our loyal advertiser base. It is how we want to operate.

High and Low

A high point of the work is being able to be "part of things," to document significant events, to be around passionate people brimming with enthusiasm. The lowest point is the realization that the Niagara Escarpment is immense and that I need to travel it frequently to gather editorial, make sales calls and distribute copies. I am always in awe of the beauty of the Niagara Escarpment, but not necessarily the long stretches in the car between points.

I have lots of memorable points from the last 10 years. I remember being really fascinated with some



of a nice little stream that had some ice formations. I did not know it at the time but "Elvis" showed up as a small ice formation covering a twig. It is a pleasure to sometimes catch interesting things with my photography!

On assignment for a story we did on Ekarenniondi, a rock outcrop at Scenic Caves in Collingwood, we learned that in the history of the Petun people, it was considered the earthly representation of a deity called Oscotarach. Again, without realizing it, I took a photo of the outcrop that had an eerie look of a face and body!

I have met and photographed many a passionate person. Ann Beam who lives on Manitoulin Island is a large-format multi-media and pottery artist. I enjoyed her first hand explanations of her art and why she did what she did in creating her work.

I am fortunate to work at what I enjoy: experiencing nature, spectacular sights, culture, and meeting interesting people.

Mike Davis is co-founder and co-publisher of Niagara Escarpment Views.