

Niagara Escarpment **ViEWS**

WINTER 2020-21 (DECEMBER, JANUARY, FEBRUARY)



Photography of
Jennifer Howard

WINTER KAYAKING NORTH OF BLUE MOUNTAINS

DAVID KENDALL'S FICTION:
BADLANDS CHAPTER
FROM HIS NOVEL *SLAG*

**PAINTED ROCKS
CRAZE**

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Niagara Escarpment **Views**



Winter 2020-21
(December, January, February)

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Photo by Albert Bedward.



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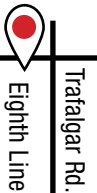
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OUR SECOND DECADE OF PUBLISHING



Conservation
Halton Award, 2014
to Mike Davis in
Media/Blogger
Category

Preparing for the Future

This summer and autumn more people than ever have been walking, jogging or cycling on the country road outside my office window. Some couples walk together every morning. Other people walk alone, at a brisk pace, some wearing headphones. A young man and woman push a baby in a stroller. Dogs are regularly being taken for walks. One woman jogs with her Australian Shepherd. In warm weather I used to see the same solitary cyclists out for a spin.

Everyone is keeping a good distance apart. Yet they've been reaching out verbally, to say hello or comment on the weather or ask how you're doing. For some of us – many of us? – these outings are the only socializing we do all day.

I hope that people continue to get out during winter. It's expected to be a long, difficult season for COVID cases. There is talk about COVID fatigue and depression. What can help is regular fresh air and exercise, even when you don't feel like it. Especially when you don't feel like it. I've taken my dog for a walk when I've been cold, unhappy, tired and bored, only to return to my cozy little house with more energy and lifted spirits.

Kindness

I know that some people are having a particularly tough time. If you can, why not check in with neighbours to see how they're doing? A kind word can improve people's moods.

Our readers continue to amaze us with financial gifts. We haven't asked for donations, but people have been surprising us with contributions. We are humbled, appreciative and plan to continue developing the kind of magazine content you want.

Last Pandemic Winter?

Let's also hope that this first winter of our pandemic is the last. Yet we're being told that until we have adequate therapeutic medicines, effective vaccines and/or swift and accurate testing and contact tracing, COVID-19 will continue to be a threat, likely through 2021.

While we must follow all developing scientific recommendations, some practices should continue. Staying home when you're sick should be obvious. Wearing a mask in public when you have a cough or cold seems a good idea. Instead of shaking hands with everyone, I like old-fashioned bowing to each other.

Clasping your hands together in front of your chest while doing this, is heartwarming.

Instead of waiting for things to go back to the way they were, let's improve them. Let's be better prepared for the next plagues that strike. Let's improve elder care. Let's end homelessness. Let's tackle climate change before it devastates us all.

With wildfires that have been burning in the west of the continent, hurricanes and floods destroying the south, and under-reported but devastating losses in the Arctic, will it soon be our turn to experience an extreme climate challenge here at home? One concern I've learned from home gardeners this year, is what a poor harvest there was. With an infestation of gypsy moths, I myself had no apples growing on my defoliated trees, although they have grown new leaves. Unseasonable cold followed swiftly by extreme heat led to poor yields. There were fewer pollinators working to produce fruits. Tomatoes took a very long time to ripen on the vine; many people resorted to picking them when green and hoping they would turn red indoors. Harmful insects, temperature swings, lack of pollinators and drought are some difficulties that could increase in future. Could food scarcity become a problem?

We may not yet know how, but it's possible that this pandemic is related to climate change. If people's crops are failing in other parts of the world, they have to turn to other sources of food. Viruses are crossing from animal

species to humans, perhaps through inhumane treatment and the consumption of wild animals. Could this be another way that climate change is harming us?

In This Issue

Keeping climate change in check is the subject of Bob Barnett's column in this issue. His "View of Land Conservation" in this issue is a timely wake-up call for us all.

We also offer content that is pure enjoyment. Our cover story takes us on a winter kayak trip north of the Escarpment in Georgian Bay near Collingwood. Author Albert Bedward shares plenty of tips for how to survive this chilly adventure.

Jennifer Howard does a lot of volunteer work for Procyon Wildlife Centre, and is just as dedicated to photographing wildlife at large. She shares some of her breathtaking winter captures with us.

David Kendall is an author with a long-standing, profound commitment to the Niagara Escarpment where he lives. His thriller novel *Slag* includes a chapter set in the Cheltenham Badlands, which you can read in this issue. He will donate a portion of the proceeds of the book to protection of the Escarpment.

Snuggle up and enjoy some good winter reading and viewing in this Winter issue.

Gloria

Gloria Hildebrandt

P.S. Wild animals need wild spaces.



Let us know what you think!

Write us at editor@NEViews.ca or *Niagara Escarpment Views*, 50 Ann St., Georgetown ON L7G 2V2.



More Online!

Keep in touch with Escarpment news between issues at our website. We have unique content not seen in the magazine, and you can leave comments in response. See <https://NEViews.ca>.



Niagara Escarpment Views is on Facebook as: www.facebook.com/N.E.Views

READERS & VIEWERS



Enclosed is my renewal. I can't send any meaningful donation at this time, so I've taken out a two-year membership. Hope this helps! I'm also writing to

say "thank you" for your excellent editorial in the Autumn 2020 issue. As you know, here in Hamilton we have almost weekly issues with people needing a rescue from one of our waterfall areas. It's so selfish and thoughtless of these selfie-seeking non-competent hikers. The risks they put the rescue responders in just for the sake of a thrill or a photo is unconscionable. You make this very clear in a no-nonsense tone. Here's hoping people read and inwardly digest your comments.

Trudi Down, Hamilton



A friend passed on your magazine which we thoroughly enjoyed, the July, August, September one. Please start [the subscription] with the next copy. The photos in the magazine are beautiful.

Valerie McAvoy, Burlington

Your magazine is one I always picked up at Decew/Morningstar Mill when I was a docent for the Miller's House. Sadly this season the Mill is closed, in fact fenced off to any visitors of the house, mill or Bruce trail. The magazine is brilliant! Informative, interesting and full of wonderful photography. Your summer 2020 issue with your heartfelt hope of continuing was particularly poignant, but direct and on point. We wish to make a donation and purchase a 2 year subscription for our son. Please send details of where that donation and request for subscription should be mailed.

Gail Coy and Frank Coy,
by email



See what influence your articles have on us readers! Here is what has happened today. We have several buckthorns on the property, apparently, which I was unaware of until my husband, Jock, pointed them out to me and started digging holes. But tell me please what is a farm jack and cable puller. He loves your magazine so when my grace period with my B&B, now closed due to the virus, is over, I will be taking out a subscription to your magazine and thank you for such informative articles. Nice picture of Mike working there.

Sandy Proudfoot, Farmer's Walk B&B, Mono



As per the recent Escarpment Views, Brampton Heart Lake Rotary would be delighted to invite Spencer to speak at our August 6th weekly meeting - via Zoom at 7:30pm for 15 minutes.

Syd Harmon by email



I am enjoying the new issue, and the apple pie cookies in the Foodland ad on page 7 sound delicious, but surely it requires baking. The bottom crust would surely disintegrate in no time from the apple juices unless it was strengthened by the baking. Now I may be wrong, although I did win the apple-pie baking contest on my street many years ago. Can you inquire with your advertiser if it forgot the baking instructions?

Doug Yonson, Nepean

Foodland's response:

The reader is correct, they would be soggy cookies. The baking instructions were omitted from the ad. I have added the correct baking instructions: 4. Brush remaining egg wash over lattice tops. Cover and refrigerate cookies 30 min. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 375°F (190°C). Bake 25 to 30 min., until cookies are golden brown and filling is bubbling. Cool completely on wire rack.

Foodland

I made the apple pie cookies from the Autumn 2020 NEViews. Found no oven temp or time and an extra tbsp cinnamon, but I managed to make awesome cookies by reading thru and correcting these and baked for 17 minutes at 425F. It might be better if someone reviewed the recipes before publishing, as a non-baker would struggle, and wonder what to do with the extra cinnamon, or have really spicy cookies.

Patricia Virag, by email

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READERS & VIEWERS



I am writing from Toronto Life magazine and was hoping to license this image I saw on your site...

Daniel Neuhaus,
Director of Photography, Toronto Life Magazine, Toronto



Is it possible to get a copy of the 2011 summer edition? I am particularly interested in the scenic caves in the town of Blue mountains. Many many thanks.

Irene McLeod, by email

I really enjoy your magazine, but the latest edition seems to be "sold out." I'd appreciate receiving the latest edition, if possible.

Barbara Palmer, Owen Sound

Editor's note: Back issues can be viewed online for free through <https://neviews.ca/back-issues/> or ordered at <https://neviews.ca/product/back-issues/> or by mailing \$10 to Niagara Escarpment Views, 50 Ann St., Georgetown ON L7G 2V2.



My NEV bandana isn't just fashionable and eye-catching; it has been a fine mask, too.

Rosalie Matthews Rufelds,
Ottawa

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QUICK ONE-POT BEEF & POTATO STEW

Prep Time: 10 min. | Total Time: 50 min. | Serves: 4

Ingredients

2 tbsp	olive oil
8 oz	blade steak, cut in 1-in. (2.5 cm) cubes
2 cups	mini potatoes
2 cups	whole green or yellow beans, trimmed
1 cup	shiitake mushrooms, stems discarded, sliced
1 cup	baby carrots
8 whole	pearl onions, peeled
5 sprigs	fresh thyme (or 1 tsp dried)
1 bay leaf	
Approx. 2 cups	beef broth
Salt and pepper to taste	

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 230°C (450°F). Heat oil in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat on stovetop. Brown all sides of the beef.
2. Add potatoes, beans, mushrooms, carrots, onions, thyme, bay leaf and broth to the pot. Bring just to the boil, then remove from heat. Cover and place in oven to braise 15 min.
3. Remove lid and continue braising in oven until potatoes are fork-tender, another 15 min. Add more broth to stew if needed. Discard thyme stems and bay leaf. Season to taste before serving.



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Chris Miller Awarded

A member of the *Niagara Escarpment Views* team as a salesperson and contributor, Chris Miller of Acton has been recognized by the Diocese of Niagara of the Anglican Church of Canada, with an Order of Niagara 2020.

In addition to serving for many years in a broad capacity at St. Alban the Martyr Anglican Church in Acton, Chris volunteers for a vast range of worthy community efforts. He chaired the marketing committee for The United Way for 20 years, was an organizer for Classics Against Cancer Car

Show, annually organized a team for Bethel Hospice Hike, and served on the board of Acton's Dougan Centre, which supports people with mental health concerns. Chris has also participated in the ALS Walk, the Terry Fox Run and for 15 years, served as master of ceremonies for the Canada Day Parade in Glen Williams. He and his late wife Sally were members of the Victorian Order of Nurses Friendly Visiting program. He has staffed Salvation Army kettles for Christmas and he drives once or twice a week for Cancer Assistance Services of Halton Hills.

► Bishop Susan Bell of the Diocese of Niagara with Chris Miller. PHOTO BY GAYLE WITHERS.



Exploring Nature Where You Live

Georgetown resident Don Scallen is well qualified to write *Nature Where We Live*. A retired middle-school science teacher and past president of Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club, he is

knowledgeable about how to spot wildlife and understand what they're doing. This slim volume encourages people of all ages to engage in year-round nature activities.

"Chapters include breeding salamanders in the spring,

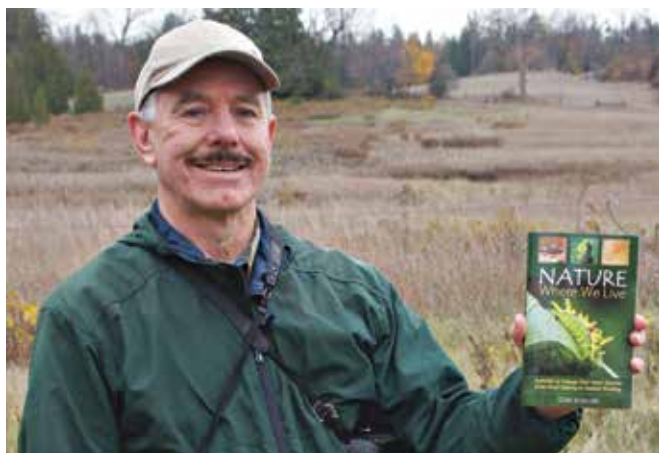
searching for caterpillars in the summer, learning about singing insects in the autumn and tracking animals in the winter," says Don. His many excellent photographs fully illustrate his educational points.

He names salamander spotting as a favourite activity. "Salamanders arrive at ponds just as our long northern winter is ending," he explains. "Their appearance signals that spring has arrived. They are beautiful creatures and we have only a brief window to experience that beauty before they leave the ponds and retreat underground for the rest of the year."

Nature Where We Live can be bought for \$20 from Urban Nature Store in Toronto and Mississauga, and

their online site; from Wild Birds Unlimited in Guelph; Booklore in Orangeville; and from Amazon. It can also be ordered from Don at donscallen232@gmail.com for \$20 plus \$5 shipping via e-transfer.

"I hope my book inspires people to learn more about the wildlife in their communities and in nearby natural habitats," adds Don. "I hope that people will arrive at a greater appreciation of these creatures and of their need for trees, wildflowers, clean water and other natural features. I also hope my book encourages families to explore nature together and to light the spark of a lifelong love of nature among the children of those families."



▲ Don Scallen's book *Nature Where We Live* has something for all ages.

BITTERSWEET

Saunders Bakery is Done and Dusted



The bench where it happened.



▲ Paul and Brenda, business partners until the end.



▲ Some of the old, specialized equipment that was used through the bakery's history.

It's goodbye to the Double High, the signature extra-large loaf of white bread that was one of the regular bestsellers at Saunders Bakery in Rockwood. Gone are the freshly baked-from-scratch cookies, buns, iced cinnamon rolls and beloved donuts.

Aprons were hung up, baking sheets were stacked, the floors swept and ovens turned off, all for the last time on Aug. 21, 2020. Business partners Paul Holman and Brenda Pettitt have closed the bakery and sold the

building. The new owners will not be running a bakery.

As we reported in a "Worth the Visit" spotlight in our Autumn 2017 issue, Saunders Bakery was first open in 1893 under the ownership of S. Grieve.

In 1914 Pete and Nellie Saunders bought the place and gave it their last name. In 1994 Paul and Brenda, who were at first employees of the bakery, became owners while retaining the well-known name.



▲ The baking is done. Paul Holman putting his hand into the mouth of the oil-fired Pendrith Bake-O-Mat.



▲ Brenda Pettitt and Paul taking cookies out of the Bake-O-Mat and putting them on a cooling rack.



▲ Sign of the history on the outside of the building.

Along with the building, which is located on a visible corner of Hwy 7 in the centre of Rockwood, the fate of the old equipment and fixtures is unknown.

There was a Hobart mixer from the 1940s but taking impressive pride of place was the oil-fired Pendrith Bake-O-Mat, as big and as hot as a fire-breathing dragon.

All the equipment was old, well-built and well-used.

"We left the oven, fryer and big mixers, but sold most of the small equipment and supplies. Cleaned out a

lot of stuff," notes Brenda.

Here are some glimpses of the hot interior of the bakery on one of the last days of operation this summer. Now, all the baking is done.



▲ Weights and scale for precision baking.



▲ What is the future for this bit of real estate?



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Little Rocks

THAT STAND OUT



Painted Rocks.
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Whatever you call them, they're small stones that have been painted with encouraging, inspirational or just fun messages, that are then left outside in public places where others can come across them. This activity has become a bit of a trend that has grown in popularity since the COVID pandemic began.

There is a short rail trail in Georgetown, stretching from John St. to Wildwood Road, that could have connected to the Trans Canada Trail, had the Town of Halton Hills not declined to assume ownership after the railway company abandoned it. The remaining rail line was given to adjacent landowners and the possibility of a longer trail was lost. Still, local residents enjoy using the short trail year-round. In spring when the pandemic lockdown took effect, adults and children began placing painted rocks along this trail. Here is a selection that Mike Davis found and photographed.



► The shape of the rock and its placement add interest to this art.



▲ A message nestled among debris in its natural state.



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While these rocks can be fun to paint and display, they shouldn't be left in natural, wild areas. Ontario Parks points out that not everyone may be using eco-friendly paint, and the wrong paint could be harmful to wildlife. Rocks are weathering down to dust and component minerals needed to keep things growing. Removing rocks from nature and leaving painted rocks in wild places are bad ideas.

► An eye-catching piece placed among tree trunks.





▲ Not a rock, but a tile with a good message for the future: "Keep Calm We Will Survive".

If you painted any of the rocks we feature here, please contact us at editor@NEViews.ca or 905.866.7888. We'd like to acknowledge you in the magazine!



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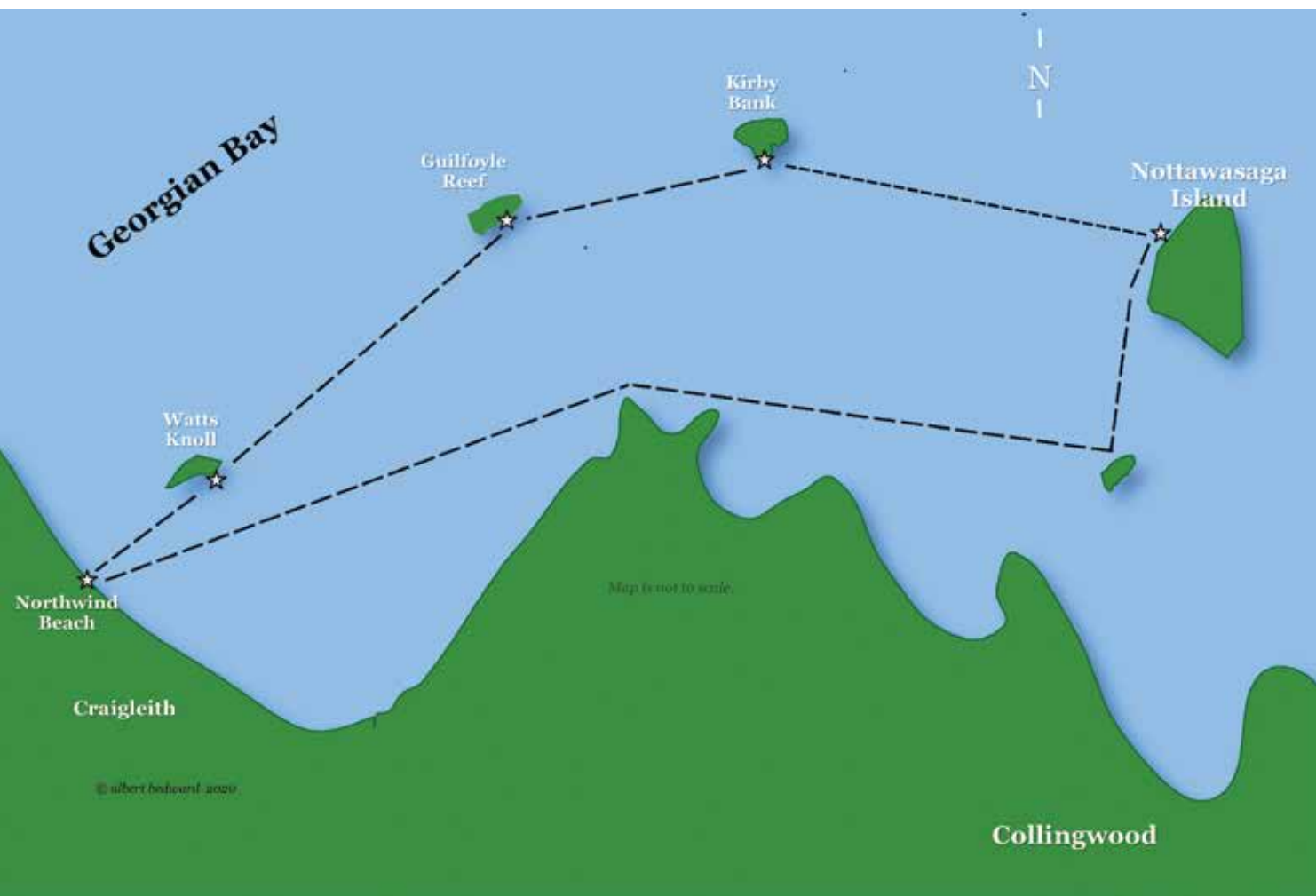
WRITTEN & PHOTOGRAPHED BY ALBERT BEDWARD

“**Mayday, Mayday, Mayday.** This is Kayak Cloud. I’m in the water hanging onto a white kayak. I flipped about a half km west of Nottawasaga Island, north of Collingwood. I’m wearing a yellow dry suit with an orange PFD and flashing light. Can’t re-enter my kayak. I’ve been in the water for a few minutes now, and I’m feeling a bit chilled. I’ll call every 15 minutes on Channel 16 or switch to Channel 69 if it’s busy.”

I am an open water paddler, which means if there is an island or a lighthouse in the distance, I’ll paddle to it. There is something calming about being far away from land. It feels like entering another world, leaving work and busy days behind. But the above example of an emergency call is not the type of call I want to make in the winter or at any time of the year. And there is a way to make every paddle, regardless of the season, safe and enjoyable.



To The Lighthouse: Author Albert Bedward and a friend paddling to Nottawasaga Island.



▲ Albert's map showing the route taken on the winter kayaking trip.

I wish I'd known this during an April round-trip paddle to Nottawasaga Island years ago. On that day, the forecast called for 30 to 35 km winds, gusting to 55 km after 2 p.m. So two of us, experienced paddlers, set out about 11:30 a.m. from shore, one km south of the island in Georgian Bay. This was an easy paddle, and we estimated it would be a 25- or 30-minute round trip. Then, halfway around Nottawasaga Island, the wind picked up with metre-high waves, and our short paddle lasted more than 50 minutes.

We returned moments before the winds gusted above 50 km. While my partner was mounting her kayak onto the roof of her van, the wind lifted

her boat off, which could have knocked her down if I hadn't been there. The kayak had not been tied down. Lesson learned. No harm. But it definitely changed the way I plan a paddle, and the healthy respect I have for weather, and water.

Life-Saving Equipment

Mid-fall to mid-spring requires a dry suit if you want to stay alive. A wet suit? It's great for summer but in late fall, winter and spring the cold water trapped between suit and body quickly invites hypothermia; it's like wearing a freezer. A dry suit only exposes your head from the top of your neck, and your hands from the end of your wrists. My dry suit has a built-

in hood, and I wear water resistant, windproof Merino gloves, topped with neoprene mitts, and on my feet neoprene boots. Underneath, fast-drying warm clothes. Simple and life-saving.

In 3- to 9-degrees Celsius temperatures, I team up with an experienced paddler, someone like me who knows how to perform an assisted rescue, so we can help one another. Below 3 degrees, there's no paddling for me, as hands, deck lines, sea kayak deck and everything else ices instantly with freezing spray. I love being on water but I have limits.

Standard equipment on my PFD (personal flotation device) is a marine radio, strobe light, whistle, water

knife, carabiner, and two power bars stuffed in one pocket and 500 mm of coconut water in the other. Around my waist is a tow-rope belt to assist the other paddler or clip to my kayak.

If paddling further than half a km from shore, I carry a flare pistol with four cartridges. In winter, a flare pistol or hand flares are essential for signalling an emergency. Mirrors work too, but a flare shouts: "Emergency! Send Help Now!"

Paddling is not a crapsheet; it's about your life and those who care about you. And everything is decided at the water's edge. If it doesn't feel or look right, find a safer spot or go home. There is always another day,



◀ Albert checking the GoPro camera on his kayak after landing at Watts Knoll. The Blue Mountains of the Escarpment can be seen in the distance.



On Guilfoyle Reef with Albert's friend looking back at The Blue Mountains on the horizon.

but never another life.

Cold-weather paddling demands extra attention, as our goal is to enjoy the paddle and to get back to shore alive, safe and dry, regardless of whether or not we reach our intended destination. I always carry a backup paddle, paddle float, water pump, extra water and a few GoPro cameras.

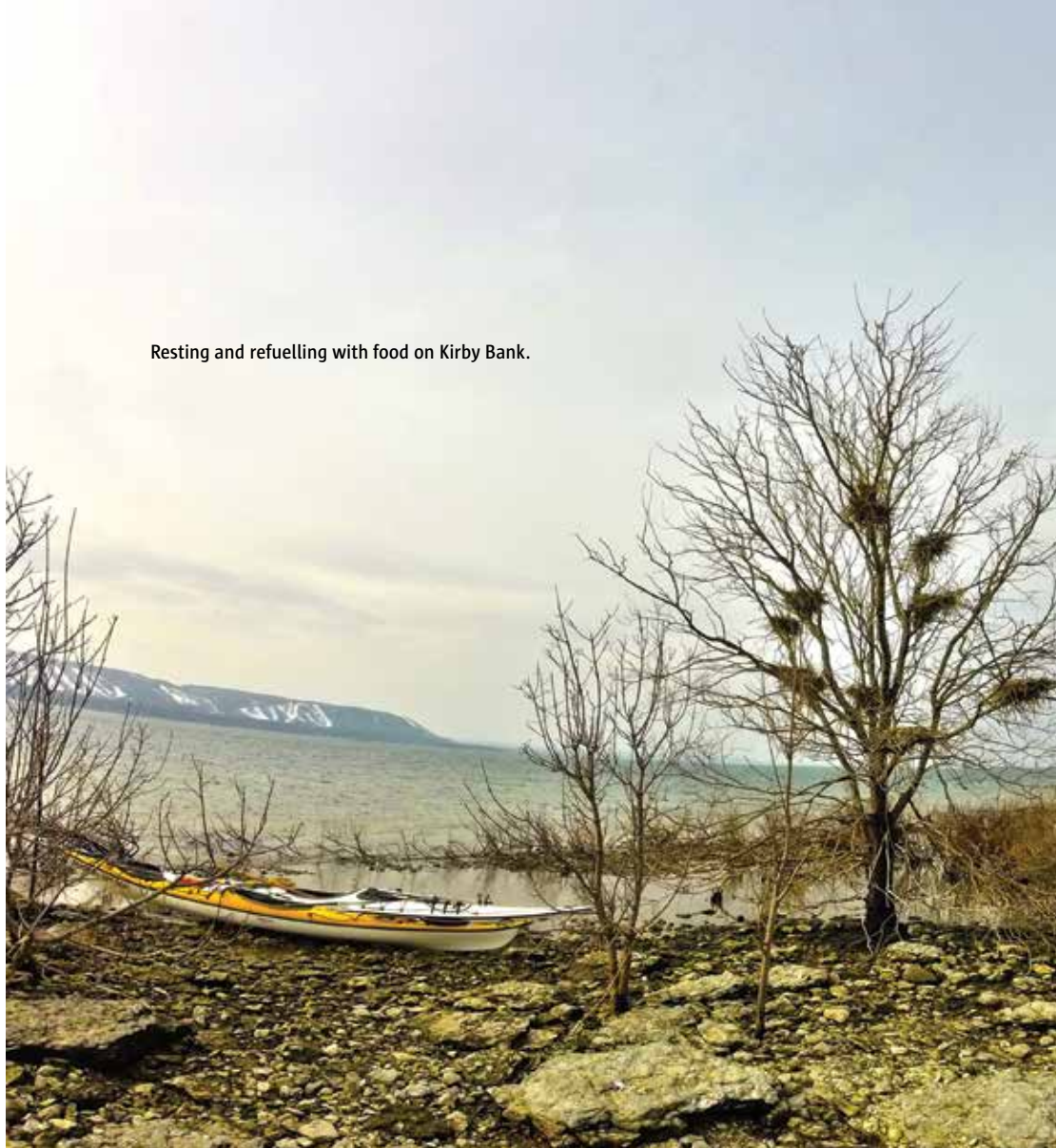
Though we are only paddling for a few hours today, we are always ready for a sudden shift in weather and water conditions, which could result in being stuck on a remote island. We therefore carry what we need to be well, which includes anything from a first aid kit, extra meals, sleeping bags, an all-season tent, extra rope, duct tape and clothing, to garbage bags, toiletries and whatever else might make winter camping both safe and comfortable.

To Nottawasaga Island

“Nottawa” means Iroquois, and “saga” means mouth of the river. This February day we paddled to Nottawasaga Island from Northwind Beach west of Collingwood, resting on the islands called Watts Knoll, Guilfoyle Reef and Kirby Bank. There we ate snacks and admired the beauty of the Blue Mountains of the Niagara Escarpment to the southwest. I have always found the Escarpment breathtaking from the water or while hiking on any of its numerous trails. Open-water paddles, especially in winter conditions, leave you exposed to winds, fog, and high waves, so paddling close to any land mass is usually safer.

Ten days before a paddle, I start monitoring the area weather with an app called Windfinder, which provides graphical weather data, updated every four hours on wind speed and

Resting and refuelling with food on Kirby Bank.



▲ Kayaking in open water toward Nottawasaga Island.





▲ Landing on Nottawasaga Island.



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N0A 1J0. 519.587.2980 hobbitsee.com

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Procyon Wildlife
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905.729.0033 procyonwildlife.com

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The Owl Foundation
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- Hand flares or flare pistol with flares if paddling over 1.852 km (minimum 6)
- Radar reflector tape if paddling great distances or in remote areas
- VHF Radio, if licensed to operate
- 1 litre of water minimum
- Snacks (protein bar, fruits, nuts)
- Kayak Skirt
- 2nd Paddle
- Sunglasses
- Hat & clothing for weather conditions
- Sunscreen
- Lip balm
- First Aid Kit

EXTRAS

- Kayak repair kit
- Dry bags
- PFD knife
- Map in waterproof case
- Float plan left with family/friend
- Quick-dry spare clothing



▲ The compass in winter. Below 3 degrees Celsius, everything ices over from freezing water.

direction, tides if present, air temperature, clouds, precipitation and air pressure.

Last, we always leave a float plan with a friend or family member. It includes who is paddling and level of expertise; planned route, departure and return times; emergency contacts, kayaks information, equipment...



What remains of Nottawasaga Island Imperial Lighthouse, which was completed in 1858. The apparent curve in the tower is caused by the GoPro camera setting. The Nottawasaga Lighthouse Preservation Society aims to restore and protect this landmark.

and where we left the car(s). Better safe and prepared.

Knowing we were ready for almost anything, we paddled towards Nottawasaga Island without a care in the world. And after all this preparation, we had a beautiful, white-cloud and blue-sky day, and hours of peaceful paddling, focusing on nothing but being

out there, which is one of the rewards for working. **NEV**

Albert Bedward is a trainer, IT specialist, writer, and avid sea kayaker. His last feature for Niagara Escarpment Views was "Big Canoe Run: Paddling from Tobermory to Manitoulin Island," in Summer 2019.

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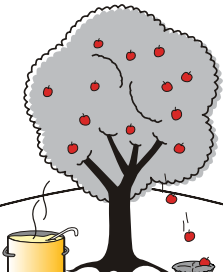
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Owen Sound seen from 8th Street Bridge
across the Sydenham River.

PHOTO BY MIKE DAVIS.





WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY

A Huge Part of My Life

BY JENNIFER HOWARD



This photo was shot as the sun was setting. I was sitting in my car thinking time to go, when this beautiful Snowy Owl, who was sitting on a pole, flew. As these birds depend on hunting to survive I do as little as possible to disturb them. What makes this shot special is how the setting sun caught her underneath when she flew. I have learned how to read these birds and suspected she was about to fly. I had my camera ready, so I zoomed in on constant shoot. My patience paid off.

In winter photography can be cold. Dress warmly and keep your camera warm. You can use a lens warmer for that, or Hot Paws. Or just tuck it in your coat. Winter photography can have a lot to offer: owls, deer, coyotes, fox, the tiniest snowflake, hoar frost on roadside grasses. The sun glistening on fresh-fallen snow. A snowfall itself. Or the magic of bird prints in the snow from a bird who has caught something. Christmas lights covered with snow after a storm. Snow devils out on the lakes, blowing up and twirling. It's a great time to catch animals and birds. The big thing is open your eyes and be patient. And, of course with a lot of my shots it is just pure and simple luck. Being in the right place at the right time and making sure you have your camera ready to roll. Animals and birds don't wait. A lot of my photos I got from just sitting under a tree, or at the edge of the water. So dress warmly, layer, and get out there. And take a nice thermos of hot chocolate to go. Because winter photography can be truly magical.



◀ Photographing beavers is one of my favourite pastimes. They are amazing animals and incredible parents. Super architects and managers of wetland areas. This beaver had come out to explore on a mild February day. Love the contrast of him against the snow.



▲ This beautiful Longtail Duck is a male. He was close to shore and the sun caught him beautifully in the fairly calm water. Again patience, being quiet and still and using a telephoto lens, usually gets you that special photo.



▲ I was photographing this adult Bald Eagle by the water when these three crows came in. Ironically the eagle was not the least bit bothered and the crows did not seem too concerned either. It was an overcast day in early winter. I can't say that I have ever seen this since, where everyone got along in such close quarters. The composition of this photo with the branches and the contrast of the birds makes this shot special to me.

► While I was strolling by the water's edge, this beautiful Mink appeared, a lovely surprise. Keeping your eyes open may find you some great shots, even in winter.





I love this photo of the Herring Gull looking into the water. It's soft and has a hint of reflection. It appeared he didn't even know I was there. Taken with a 150 to 500 mm lens from the shore.



When photographing wildlife, you must respect their space. No photo is worth stressing them and making them miss a meal. When photographing this eagle, I tried to stay out of sight. As this eagle came in from the lake to a tree nearby, I didn't even see it had a fish. I took the shot and then after it landed noticed it had a fish. Sometimes you get things you don't see until later, which is exciting.



▲ There is nothing like a pair of Red Foxes in the snow. These two greeted each other as I stood by my car on the road nearby. Unfortunately, they were used to people. Please never feed wildlife, but keep them safe and wild. They are so healthy with their big bushy tails and make a beautiful contrast against the snow.



When these eagles, one adult and the other immature, started doing dives and aerial acrobatics, it was spectacular. It's all part of growing up in a Bald Eagle family. Again, I was quiet and used a telephoto lens. I love how the natural light caught these two.



▲ Taking a walk, I felt something looking at me. It was a beautiful Great Horned Owl with big yellow eyes peering at me through the branches high up in the tree. I zoomed out and put my camera in manual focus. The one eye is perfect, clear and it stands out. A perfectly natural shot.



You never know what you may see on a winter's walk. A walk in the woods led me to these three: a male Pileated Woodpecker, a male Hairy Woodpecker and a female Downy Woodpecker: three species together in close quarters on the same tree, one that looked like many woodpeckers had tasted. Both seemed to be waiting to get the Pileated's spot when he left.





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► Sometimes Mother Nature throws something really special our way. Again on a walk, I came across this gorgeous blond squirrel. Winter walking can be very special indeed. The color of this little squirrel was just beautiful.

◄ Opossums have been successful in surviving here in our winters. They are susceptible to frostbite in their ears and tails but seem to be doing okay. I noticed this one while driving along a back road. Of course, I had to get a photo of it and make sure it was okay. He was, so I left him to continue his journey as I did mine.



◄ Not what you usually see in the heart of winter, this American Robin had luckily found some sumac to feast on. He was not looking any worse for wear. It was quite the find as I was out for an afternoon drive. Wildlife are incredible at how they can learn to adapt. I love this as a robin in winter is not the norm and he looks nice and healthy.



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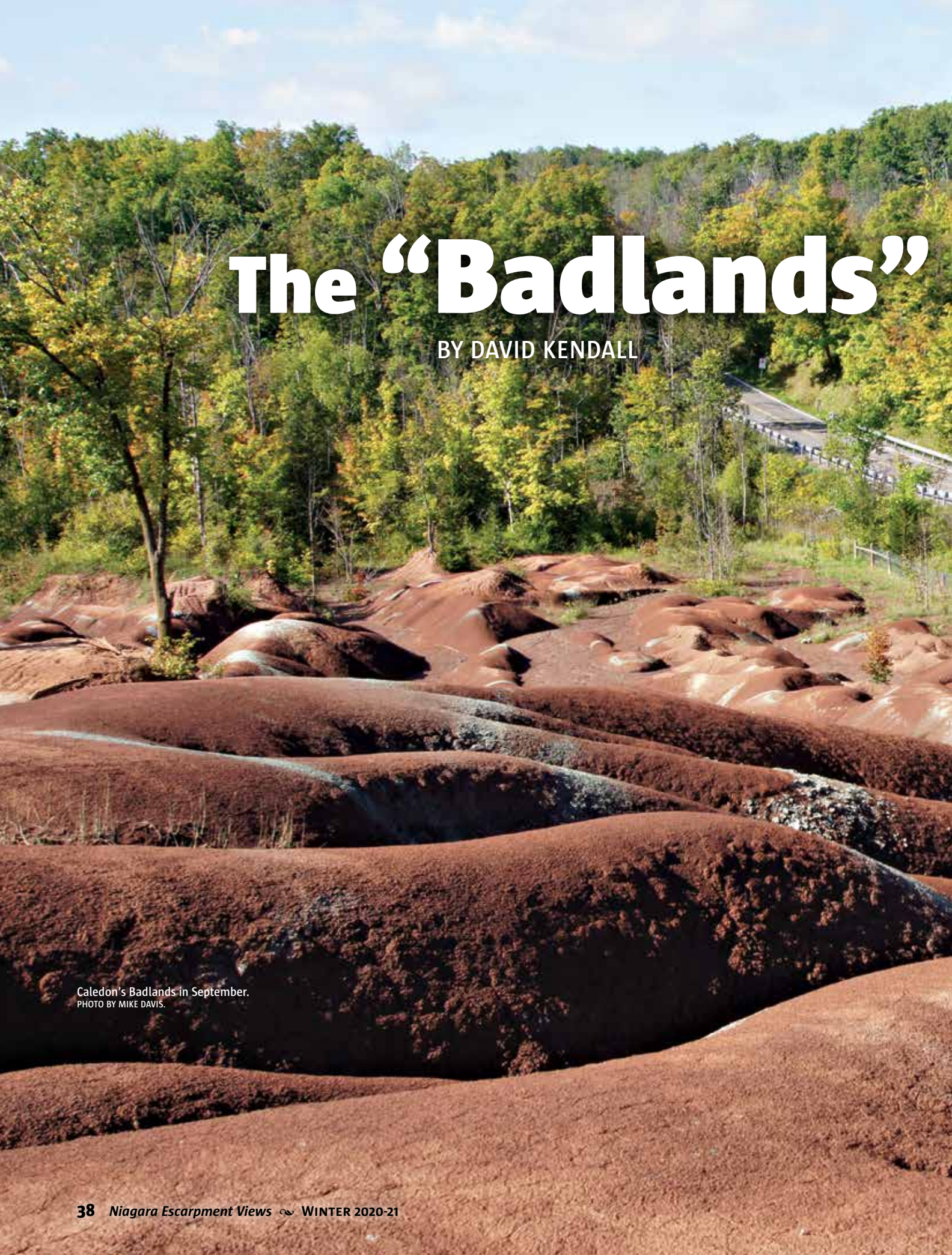
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I am a professional photographer and have used my talents to help identify species at risk to protect them and their habitat and to identify different birds and animals in biological surveys. I have been published in various magazines and won two education conservation awards for the educational values of my photos. My work is available for sale and can be seen at natureworksphotography.blogspot.com. Contact me about what you are looking for. I also sell very popular 4x6 photo cards, singly or in a package.

I just wrote a children's book on Ontario turtles, called *A Shell's Life*, that is being published by Toronto Zoo's Adopt a Pond program.

I also volunteer for Procyon Wildlife Centre in Beeton, which takes in orphaned, injured and sick animals. I am their official photographer for their web and Facebook pages, and write a monthly article for their newsletter. I do photo fundraisers, photos of families and pets with Santa, Easter Bunny and last year we added a fall theme, which are all fun ways to help raise money for animal care. **NEV**



The “Badlands”

BY DAVID KENDALL

Caledon's Badlands in September.
PHOTO BY MIKE DAVIS.

Chapter of *Slag*

For winter reading, we present this excerpt of the novel Slag. It is chapter six, which is set in the Niagara Escarpment, and introduces a character who becomes crucial to the story.

Introduction to *Slag*:

Inama Meena is a *dalit*, an untouchable born to be spurned by the rest of Indian society, bound by a belief that he earned this life of lowly drudgery in a previous incarnation. He immigrates to Canada and works as a street cleaner. Can a person so warped of spirit resurrect himself in the “land of the free”? One day, in a Spadina Avenue gutter, his broom unearths a severed finger. It happens outside an up-market Chinese restaurant. So starts Inama’s incursion into the dark world of the illegal shark fin trade.

***Slag*, Chapter Six:**

He meets her on the Cheltenham Badlands, Elisa, just two days before he will meet the dismembered finger. He, Inama-cum-Michael Meena tagged Slag, aged twenty-four, and with lean arms that have never held a woman of sound mind.

He arrives there in his first car, steering with two hands and driving with fearful adherence to the rules of the road. It is a whitish Toyota Corolla, old enough to have wind-down windows, with 235,000 kilometres under its drive-belt and a body that looks like a tossed-away pork ‘n bean can after a year of rain and sleet. A workmate commuting from Brampton first urged him to visit the spot, specifying that a lot of ‘your people’ liked to go there.

Continued on page 41



PHOTO BY MIKE DAVIS.

Today is his second time to the Badlands, a beveled expanse of red clay ridges and gullies an hour's drive northwest of Toronto that attracts scores of visitors on summer weekends. This time he has brought bags. The Toyota's trunk holds half a dozen jettisoned plastic bags, emptied of the gravel that a homeowner on a side street off Spadina Avenue used in repairing his concrete walkway.

He has brought the bags almost as an involuntary reflex: he was born to the impossible task of sweeping order into a cluttered world. Garbage galore speckles the Badlands and he will collect it.

Rich men are able to despoil with bulldozers and pollutants and boardroom decisions that blight great tracts of earth, air and water. But littering is a poor man's despoliation. It is environmental degradation minor—small in solitary, and deadly in a crowd—like pestilential germs. Everything we make becomes garbage. Everything. Even ourselves, reduced finally to strewn ashes rife with ingested chemicals.

He acknowledges these things, but such considerations bear limited relevance. Littering is the source of his income. His harvest. He is a living, breathing broom. True, he was born to it. But he honestly appreciates his role.

Were he in Singapore where nobody litters, he'd be out of work. How do you say 'kick my ass for two bucks' in Mandarin? Or Sanskrit? Fortunately, he has splashed down in Canada where it seems everyone litters.

It's like fishing where the fish are always biting. The Toronto gutters are unfailingly abundant. All that varies is the species of fish. Tim Hortons, McDonald's, Nestea, Canada Dry, Budweiser,

Crispy Crunch—all in a day's work. Kleenex tissue, Player's cigarettes, Spearmint gum wrappers.

He is, this early Saturday afternoon, carrying two of the bags from the Corolla trunk, one for unredeemable junk including the most repellant such as abandoned diapers and snotty tissues, one for recyclables—bottles and cans, paper and cardboard. Beer cans garner a nickel apiece and liquor bottles twenty-five cents. But he isn't in it for the paltry revenues. He's in it because he's Slag.

He is more than Nakusa, the scurrilous epithet often enough tossed at his mother. What he will pick up is *nakusa*—the unwanted. That he might pick up *someone* wanted never enters his head.

When he sees young people strolling Toronto streets, hand in hand, laughing, chattering, exchanging, he does not feel a lack in his own life. The notion that what they share might also be his does not scratch the veneer of his sense of function. Naturally, he must take a woman one day, to procreate. He knows, not without a slight tightening of the lips, that she won't be one of those leggy things his eyes covertly woo in the downtown streets. She'll be a *dalit* component of a negotiated package. The woman he dares dream of is one who will never drop a scrap of paper. His grandmother will find him one when the time comes, perhaps even that fat Daiko. But his current duties are his goals—to house and feed himself, to clean up the messes of others, to mail a modest monthly remittance to his mother and grandmother along with a brief letter in transliterated Hindi that the

shop-keeper at the end of the lane will read to them for a couple of rupees.

As a kid he used to fantasize about what evils he must have wrought in his previous life to merit re-birth as an outcaste. Now grown up and educated, he doesn't believe that stuff, even though he does, sort of, psychologically.

His intellectual repudiation of the very foundations of Hinduism he keeps private, perhaps because he views himself as secret sinner, or more likely because there is no one to tell. According to ancient Vedic hymnal texts, the first god Prajapati, Lord of Creatures, sacrificed himself to create the world. From the divine fragments of his immolated body

*...his gaze
travels downhill,
traversing the
undulating
Queenston shale
of the Badlands
with its deep iron
oxide blush.*

originated the caste system that so castigated his mother. Prajapati's mouth, according to the sacred doctrine, gave life to the priestly and ruling Brahmin caste; from his arms spilled the second tier Kshatria caste called the Warrior, while from the thighs poured the third-level merchants and landowners, known as the Vaishya. Then at the bottom, the Shudra, the vast servant and artisan class was spawned from Prajapati's feet. Beneath all of these, too foul even to claim a godly source, teem the unclean millions, the ones

who scour gutters and latrines, the ones whose very shadow contaminates the enlightened.

Such beliefs that served to define his lot in life, he denied and even learned to mock while at university—a postured rebuttal. But alone, clutching at right practice within an alien culture, the Slag who disclaimed religion is still imbued with Hindu custom. He is, as it were, a bright servant.

From the edge of Olde Baseline Road his gaze travels downhill, traversing the undulating Queenston shale of the Badlands with its deep iron oxide blush. His eyes flit over the enclosing scrub and thorn bush, across the Peel Plain and finally to the distant Toronto skyline some sixty kilometres southeast. It was farmland once, this present-day tourist site, ploughed by hard men from Scotland, grazed down by sheep and Hereford cows, eroded into a clay badland by a thousand hoofs joined with a hundred years of spring runoffs and the sudden torrential rains that pour over the Caledon hills. You'd have to fly to Utah or Alberta to see the like.

A chimney swift—rare in these parts, though he is oblivious to species beyond his own—harries a broad-winged hawk that lifts heavily from a deeply incised groove where rain has swept garbage against a low embankment of yellowed sedge. A photographer focuses behind a tripod, attracted by the irregular swirls of grey clay streaking the windswept red ribs. A notice, once hammered into the ground at the entry point, now knocked to the ground, reads: *'Take nothing but photographs and leave nothing but your thanks.'*

He lowers his gaze, bends barehanded to retrieve a blue cigarette carton with white lettering. At work he uses

government-issued gloves. He'd never before worn such contraptions, he who has disposed of other people's excretions much of his life. He slips the cigarette box into the refuse bag. A candy bar wrapper, four tissues, three plastic water bottles—one still half full, which he drains before stowing in the recyclables bag—an expired fireworks rocket, a Nestea can. How illogical it seems out here where nobody is assigned to clean up, this despoiling of a spot to which they travel specifically for its pristine beauty. People, who in all likelihood hold better positions than he. In India, at least, there was a careless reasoning that in tossing away, one was providing employment, even sustenance, for the low castes. And in Toronto, the litterers pay taxes for people such as he to clear the gutters.

"I know you want to forget about it. But it's the third time, and I just can't."

Slag looks up. They're getting out of a silver Acura that has pulled in beside his Toyota. She is all in black, a short, quilted jacket that fits over her svelte form as though it was vacuum packed. Long, slim jeans that end with running shoes that look like they get some use. A smooth, earnest face that retains its beauty even when enraged.

"Come on, Elisa. It won't happen again, I promise." He's tall, mid-thirties, a buzz-cut topping a face that's raw as though shaved with a blunt blade. In one gloved hand, a bag of take-out food. The other hand reaches for the woman, but she'll have none of it.

"Yes it will. You know it will; so don't compound your lack of consideration with false promises."

He mutters something out

of the corner of his mouth, as he passes Slag to begin the descent of the clay slope. She glances over. Standing, bags yet thin and curling about his legs, Slag feels the impact of her stare. She turns away.

"No, I won't shut up. Don't you understand? When you make me stand on a corner dilly-dallying around for an hour, that's an hour of my life you've just thrown away. More than that, it's a declaration that for you there are greater priorities than me."

Their voices fade away. Not every young couple in this adopted land is hand in hand, laughing, chattering and exchanging.

He steps over some shards of glass embedded in the clay, reaches for a small black plastic bag, heavy with dense contents. Dog poop. Some dog-owner must have stooped, felt the heat of the waste through his plastic shrouded fingers, the steam in his nostrils, and knotted it all neatly inside the bag. Left exposed, the scat would have been compost in two months. The bag will last a hundred years.

He hates them, in a way, these people who mark their passing in plastic and glass. It's their blatant illogicality—to come to this beautiful rural spot and turn it into an urban dump.

By the time he nears the bottom, where the erosion narrows and tails off, he has returned to the car trunk for the third and fourth bags. Just as well he brought extra bags—these two will be full before he can complete the circuit up the other side and back to the road. The scrub bush forming a fringe around the red soils is fairly dense, multi-twigged, and regrettably thorny. The low branches catch at his cap as he ducks and slithers low through the shrubbery,



retrieving the detritus of this season and previous seasons.

Tourists—he sees them that way—glance his way obliquely, seemingly taking him for a hired Badlands worker. They munch their take-out lunches and swig their bottled drinks, but they don't cast away their droppings, at least not in his presence. Knowing that to pollute is a sin, they prefer to sin without witness.

A long thorn etches a horizontal carmine stripe just below his right temple, near the rim of the hat. He doesn't blame the thorn—it is the bush defending itself. He blames the tourists. A spurting anger, an anomaly triggered by sudden pain. If you must drop your shite, do it where a man can pick it up without having to squirm through the prickles like a snake. In fact, don't drop your shite when no one's looking, or toss it into the bush so no one can

see, or scrunch it up to make it look small—stand up for your rights. Be proud of who you are, you disgusting pigs.

It's only for a moment, his rage.

He can hear them once again, just over a rouged spine with a dorsal fin of fading goldenrod, the voices of the tardy man and the indignant woman. He can't quite make out their words, but then, he isn't spying, is he? Suddenly her voice breaks off. He thinks to detect the sound of a blow, an expulsion of breath. He rattles his bottle and tin bag loudly and mounts the ridge that separates him from the quarrelsome pair. The woman is on her back, sprawled, hands cradling her face, hair a black halo against the maroon clay. The man wheels toward Slag, his eyes small within a rubicund face, mouth wet. His cocked fist falls to his side.

"What you lookin' at,

junkman?" he says.

Slag's gaze drops. He stands mute.

"Put her in yer dirt bag with the rest of the shit. Yappin' bitch—she's all yours." And he's gone, a quick waft of perspiration as he passes and strides up the hill.

He hesitates to approach her. She isn't crying, not moaning, just an inert stretch of black cloth and two pale hands.

It's not his business. It's hardly the first time he has seen a man strike his woman. A man has an obligation to discipline a disrespectful wife. But this one has been called garbage, and his mother was called garbage and his is a lifelong commitment to picking up garbage.

She cringes as he steps near, jerks again when his bag of recyclables clatters to the ground. He crouches beside her, indecisive, he who has never touched a woman not of his family. Perhaps she smells him, a different scent from that of the other man, a different weight in the surrounding air. Her hands slide down her face and her dark, Eurasian eyes look into Slag's.

"Are you hurt?" he manages.

Stupid, redundant question. Her lower lip is split and dribbling blood.

"Is he gone?" she asks.

"Yes."

"Then I am well," and she attempts a smile, which quickly freezes as the stretched lip stings. She sits up. "Thank you for coming."

"It was..." he begins, and his eyes lower. "You're welcome."

She seems to sense something, flicks her head toward the trash bags. "Do you think I'll fit?"

For an instant he considers it seriously, clasp that lithe form, balancing her on his knee as one hand props open the lip of the bag while

the other slides this living litter into the plastic mouth. Then he laughs, just a little. It is the first spontaneous joke he has ever shared with one of the opposite sex.

She stands to her feet, slaps red dust from her jeans.

"Would you like some tea?" he asks. He pulls an old-fashioned thermos from a loop at his belt, then realizes he has no cup. He is accustomed to drinking from the metal cap that screws down over the cork.

"Please." She takes the thermos from his hand, tilts a steaming trickle into the cap, aims for the uninjured side of her mouth, places her lips where his have so often visited.

He watches, half repelled, half allured. That she would allow her mouth to go where the lips of an untouchable have touched.

Finished, she notices a brief smear of blood on the aluminum top and flushes momentarily. "I'm sorry," she murmurs, and wipes it against her jeans before handing it back.

He nods, still more unbalanced than she who is wounded.

"It's delicious tea," she says. "Indian *chai*, is it not?"

He smiles. "Yes." He tucks the flask back in his belt. "In my car I have food. *Samosas*. Do you eat such things?"

She glances around. "But there is still litter to pick up." She steps toward a dented Styrofoam cup, gathers it up along with a crumpled foil wrapping, then hesitates for an instant over the two bags before selecting the correct one.

Her nails, he notices, are flawless, a dark red that blends with her rich skin.

"Come on, I'll help you. Sing for my supper, as my aunt likes to say." She picks up the litterbag, moves over to a clump of grass nestling



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a plastic water bottle. She holds it out, waiting for him to retrieve the recyclables bag. "I'm glad we don't allow handguns in Canada," she says. "I'd be up for murder. I just hate people who dump their crap."

"Thank you," he says, taking the bottle and unscrewing the blue top before he drops it into his sack. "I take off the cap. Otherwise the bottle won't compact properly."

"It's me who's doing the thanking," she says. "Thanks for saving me from that dork. And thanks for cleaning up after the rest of the world's dorks."

He has heard that about North American women—very firm in their convictions. He's not convinced this is a good thing. But he does hear in her words his own conviction.

She seems unashamed of such degrading work, plunging into the brambles after things that glint and flutter, emerging triumphant. At a certain point they converge, coming from opposite sides into a tiny glade where secretive picnickers have strewn their leavings. A scarlet condom droops from a nest of brown autumnal leaves, lewd and somehow menacing. He tries to position himself so she doesn't see it, but her eyes are quick.

"Nice," she says. "Communing with nature."

So she knows what it is.

In the city he would use his broom. Mad with embarrassment, he pinches the dangling rubber between two twigs and drops it in among the gathered trash. That she should see such a thing. He departs the cleansed glade without a word.

They work their way up the steepening Badlands border until they climb over a low roadside guardrail and lug

the bulging bags along the shoulder of the road toward his car. He pauses at the peak, looks back and inhales the view. There is reason he finds beauty in a cleaned ditch, a cleaned valley, a cleaned landscape. There was no litter before man. Everything issued clean from the Creator's hand.

The trunk is crammed with the first two bags, so he removes the tin of *samosas* and sets the third and fourth bags like two portly passengers on the back seat. He turns and she is looking back over the ribbed descent. "You know this is part of a UNESCO biosphere site," she murmurs, almost to herself. "I could write a piece about this. Beauty and the beasts."

He follows her stare, starts to circle the car to open the front passenger door. But she already has the door wide and her trim black jeans are settling onto the stained vinyl.

She writes stories, he thinks.

"I'm a reporter," she says, as though following his thoughts. "One of just two on a local weekly newspaper you've never heard of. We distribute through here and further north."

A reporter. He reads the Toronto newspapers—mainly secondhand after readers discard them—so he has noted the female bylines. But to see it in the flesh, to think that women do such work.

"Not much of a newspaper, truth to tell. A freebie, mostly ads," she adds. "But it's a start. Asshole who's run off with my purse is the ads manager."

The *samosas* are cold, of course, but freshly baked from Kensington Market earlier that day. Fortunately, he has a tube of hand cleanser in the glove compartment—an occupational practice he has acquired in Canada. Its antiseptic sharpness wars briefly with the emanations rising from the Indian pastries, until he ratchets down the side window and the medicinal fume drifts into the countryside.

"I can't eat your lunch," she says, her eyes belying her protest.

"Look—eck, do, teen, char, panch—five of them," he counts. "I can't eat them all."

He lets her pull one of the pastries from the tin.

"Yum," she says. A flake has roosted on her wound. White

on red, an edible poultice. "We brought boring old tuna sandwiches for lunch, and now that fool has driven off with them, not to mention my purse. But these are the best."

There are three left, a number that presents yet another dilemma. The first two of them, no problem. He'll happily give her the last one, but he already suspects she won't stand for that.

"No way," she says when he offers. "Thanks anyway. I'm guzzling your lunch as it is."

He rests the tin on his lap, the lone *samosa* poised for final delivery.

"Okay," she ends the standoff. "If you don't mind my fingers, I'm going to break it in half."

Apparently he doesn't mind those fingers one bit, because a second later he can feel them pressing against the bottom of the thin floor of the tin atop his groin, gripping the pastry and tearing. The dark red nails show pale scratches now, and at least one has sacrificed its perfect edge to the Badlands clay. The *samosa* doesn't split tidily, but tidily isn't on his mind at this tactile instant.

"I can't tell you how yummy

A note from the author, David Kendall:

I am a farm boy who became a professional writer. Sallied forth with an MA in Spanish literature only to find 21 years of joy as a staff reporter at the *Toronto Sun Newspaper*. Took an unpaid leave every five years to research and scribble in the Third World. Since retiring, I pen "ecological thrillers" such as *Slag*, with conservation officers instead of cops, trade in endangered species instead of drugs. I have visited every place I describe from the Amazon jungle to north of the Arctic Circle, from Cuzco to Nauru, from Halifax to Hong Kong, from the Niagara Escarpment to Rajasthan.

My first novel *Lazaro* co-won the Seal First Novel Award and was later released as an MGM feature motion picture titled *Where the River Runs Black*.

My ties to the Niagara Escarpment began in my youth. Our Hereford beef cattle farm near Inglewood stretched from the base of the Escarpment. In 1967 I helped cut the trail across our land for the newborn Bruce Trail. My father Douglas Kendall was a signatory to the letters patent forming the Bruce Trail. Since 1999 when I moved out of Toronto to Belfountain, in Caledon, I cleaned the litter from the Bruce Trail and the Badlands, until it was fenced off recently. Grecia and I live in a house 30 feet from the Escarpment's 80-ft vertical drop. Yes, vertical--the next house along the road the owner fell to his death over the cliff. We have placed a conservation easement on our seven acres of forest above the cliff, with the EBC as guarantor. The seven acres we owned below the cliff we donated to the Bruce Trail Conservancy, (BTC), a segment of the BTC's "ideal route."

these are. In our house we're so middle-of-the-road Canadian. A *samosa*. What's that? Like yikes! Lock the doors! My family thinks McDonald's is the height of gustatory excellence."

There's a McDonald's on Spadina where once a week he treats himself to lunch. He decides against mentioning it. Gustatory? Well, she is a writer. Maybe that's how writer-women talk.

After they munch down the last of the paltry lunch, he pours her another capful of *chai*. Again she protests, so in the name of fairness he tilts the thermos to his mouth to suck down the final drops.

"I have yet another kindness to beg of you," she says.

"A ride," he says, forthright beyond his ken. "I'll drive you home." **NEV**

The price of the book *Slag* is \$15.95. A portion of the proceeds from the sales of this book will be donated to the Bruce Trail Conservancy and Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy.

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Ten steps to Protect Nature's "Factory"

By Bob Barnett

Nature can be viewed as a giant factory producing both essential goods and things we love. Trees convert carbon dioxide to oxygen which is essential to life. Swamps soak up water after a rain, preventing floods, and remove silt and chemicals while cleaning rivers and refilling aquifers. Nature provides houses for birds in the trees, and holes for mammals and reptiles. Meanwhile an army of worms, spiders, snakes, birds, bats and insects clean up things we don't like. Mosquitoes, dead things, including us, poop and even invasive plants like Purple Loosestrife, all feed beneficial things, creating functional worth as well as beauty and health. We capture this beauty in photographs and travel the world to see it. Forest therapy is known to quiet our minds; we recover from injury and illness faster if we can see a tree.

This amazing factory generates services that economists in a government report, say is worth \$85 billion dollars a year in southern Ontario alone. They have valued things like climate regulation provided by trees. Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy (EBC) has found corporations like Desjardins which are willing

to pay \$100,000 per year for us to remove carbon dioxide and store it long term in trees and ultimately soil.

Who Benefits?

Who owns this amazing factory? About 90 per cent is owned by people like you and me and sometimes by corporations and the people we elect. Municipalities, provinces and the federal government own about 10 per cent as parks and nature reserves.

Elinor Ostrom, who summered on what is now an EBC nature reserve, won a Nobel prize for describing how groups of people self-regulate the use of nature for the benefit of the entire group. Lobster fishermen regulate the number of traps and where individuals can set them. She called it regulating the commons after the shared pasturelands in England. The English House of Commons then decided it was better to privatize those lands to let individual owners make a profit.

There are few rewards for protecting the nature we all need, but financial incentives for draining swamps to grow more crops, cutting trees to pay taxes or feed lumber products into the economy, or simply building a house. Homeowners don't like mosquitoes so they replace trees with lawns. It is

in every landowner's interest to sell resources and reduce the value produced by the commons. You can't convince most people to be altruistic when offered thousands or millions of dollars for their trees, rocks, water or the land itself.

Ecological restoration is a very poor substitute for protecting what exists. Quarries filled with water are not as good as natural lakes. Planted trees take centuries to develop a well-rounded ecosystem. Canada's current forest harvesting emits more

carbon than it sequesters. Few people know or care that only 15 per cent of forest products sold will last 100 years like mature carbon-absorbing trees.

We should set rules to protect nature's factory and prevent individuals from stealing our common inheritance for their personal benefit. Famous ecologist E.O. Wilson calculates that we need half of the surface of the earth to provide the services we need. Canada and 193 other countries aspire to protect only 20 per cent today and 30 per cent by 2030.

Ten Steps

Will we and our elected representatives have the courage and foresight to head off the loss of nature's services and prevent catastrophes like climate change, lack of fresh water, loss of biodiversity and nature's health-giving and aesthetic powers? Here's a list of what we need to do.

1. Tax lands only when developed or resources are extracted (property and capital gains taxes).
2. Award constitutional rights to nature as Ecuador, Bolivia, India and some U.S. municipalities have done.
3. Restore the office of environmental commissioner.
4. Empower senators with an environmental mission or create a House of Natural Rights to review legislation.
5. Include forest carbon sequestration in climate recovery programs.
6. Provide more financial support to nature conservation initiatives.
7. Ensure that regulations to protect nature are upheld strictly and vigorously.
8. Support measures to fight invasive species.
9. Remove subsidies and support for programs that reduce nature's services, while supporting programs that increase these services.
10. Include the addition or loss of nature's services when making decisions and budgets which impact the environment.

EBC is contesting, through Ontario's Local Planning Appeal Tribunal, the rezoning of this north Bruce Peninsula property from a protected designation, to "resort residential," which allows development. PHOTO BY BOB BARNETT.



Please join us in the fight to make these changes. Our elected representatives are like factory managers. They shut down nature's production when, for example, tar sands are developed or subdivisions are built. They increase nature's production when they protect nature.

You can help them make wise decisions by participating in your community's planning decisions.

Bob Barnett of Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy is available at 888.815.9575 or rbarnett@escarpment.ca or online at www.escarpment.ca.

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A COVID Winter

By Gloria Hildebrandt

This may be a winter shaped by COVID-19. That means, at a minimum, continuing with mask wearing, social distancing and avoiding large groups of people. What will Christmas and the other holidays be like? Had we all known back in March that we likely would be in this global pandemic for about a whole year, we probably wouldn't have believed it.

Yet for those of us who live in the country near the Escarpment, things will likely be pretty much the same. As someone with a trail-filled rural property, I know what to expect of my winter days. Health permitting, I'll have my usual solitary daily walks through the forest. They will be solitary as far as people go. I'll have my dog Thomas with me, who has known this property since he was a puppy, first owned by my father and now living with me. I'll be happy to see signs of wildlife out back, certainly birds, perhaps White-Tailed Deer, doubtless tracks, scat, scratchings and rubbings of shyer mammals like coyotes, porcupines, raccoons, squirrels, voles and moles.

When I sit on my bench under a White Pine at the back of the property, I usually notice the birds. Nuthatches and chickadees hop among the branches. Crows and ravens sometimes fly overhead. Woodpeckers are investigating tree trunks for bugs. Often, I hear the "chrrr" of the Red-bellied Woodpeckers. When I sit still outside for a while, I observe more wildlife than I think is there at first.

At the house I'll have to keep replenishing the bird feeders. I have different kinds of feeders available year-round but in winter they are especially



▲ My bodyguard.

important for bringing colour and life to the snow-covered herb garden just beyond a picture window. You can't ease up on feeding the birds and squirrels. They can come to depend on your food and could suffer without it. If you begin, you need to continue until warm weather returns. I find it costs a fair bit of money each year, almost as much as having another pet. Like a pet, they let me know when they're hungry because the feeder is empty. They must sit in trees and watch me, because soon after I've refilled the feeders, the animals are back at them.

Wildlife Is Watching

I've also been watched by wildlife in the forest, and I don't mean by little creatures. The deer usually see me long before I notice them. In fact, if they made no sound or movement at all, I might never know they're there. Often, it's Thomas who frightens them into fleeing, which is an amusing

sight, as the little dog barrels after the large bounders.

Once when I was using my walking stick to scrape soft ice off a boardwalk, Thomas suddenly ran back to me, then behind me, and I heard growling. I spun around and Thomas was defending me from a neighbour's dog who was just steps from me. I was able to pet it and Thomas stopped growling. The two dogs sniffed each other in greeting and then the neighbour's dog left.

The way that dog was able to come up right behind me without my noticing, made me realize that other animals could do that too. I might actually be vulnerable alone in the woods, except that animals fear humans and I'm usually with a dog who protects me.

A Coyote's Meal

Another wintry day, I was on a bench in the back, when Thomas returned to me with a dead rabbit in his mouth. How strange that he could have

found a dead animal that hadn't been eaten by a coyote. Surely Thomas was too small to chase a coyote off its kill. When I mentioned this to a friend, he said "Thomas couldn't have kicked a coyote off its kill. But you could have." I was alarmed to think that perhaps a coyote had been feeding nearby, who became startled by me and ran away, giving Thomas a chance to grab the meal.

Occasionally on a walk I'll come upon blood on the snow, perhaps just one red smear with a bit of fur or feathers. I'm always sad to see evidence of the death or injury of an animal, but as a naturalist, I suppose I shouldn't get emotional. If one animal dies, somebody else had a meal, I guess.

As long as the deaths I observe this winter are part of the circle of life, and not the result of COVID-19, I should consider myself very fortunate.

Gloria Hildebrandt is co-founder, co-publisher and editor of Niagara Escarpment Views.

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Suburban Girl Takes on the Escarpment Forest

By Katelynn
Baksa-Wiltshire

Growing up in the GTA I'd say I got an unconventional first full-time job last summer as an editorial assistant for this magazine which deals with the Niagara Escarpment. At first I was hoping to have a job at my local grocery store, close to home and an easy commute. When that fell through, little did I know that my next offer would be the exact opposite of what I saw myself doing. I did not grow up near a forest, but near townhomes, traffic and malls. Yet I was always up to go for a hike or rock climbing. I am not a conventional teen. I always had a heavy schedule as I was dedicated to being a national gymnast. At 11 years old I began training 24 hours a week and was soon competing internationally. Training and having a full-time job are similar in that both require dedication, self discipline and both would make me question why I was even there. I thought the magazine would make a nice fit for my interests and fill my time.

Working on a magazine, you'd think, "Okay, writing, pictures, smack it together and bam! Magazine." I had no idea what went on behind the scenes. My expectations going in were that I'd be doing some office work and light outdoor care of the property, but in fact it entailed much more. I ended up enjoying a lot of what I did, from updating the database of ads, composing articles, day trips to deliver magazines and meeting with the printer. However, the forestry work and battling mosquitoes were aspects I did not like so

much. I didn't know what lay ahead when I first started.

Enjoyable Work

I came to enjoy different areas of the job and others that I didn't like so much. While I found that I hate sitting at a desk for eight hours a day, I loved seeing the real-life outcome of the desk work. I discovered interesting and unique retailers and others who were unique in unusual ways. One establishment serves toilet-themed desserts like "poopable tea" and "doo-doo waffles" while you eat sitting on a toilet! I could see the outcome of scouting and researching companies, to actually going to the storefront and handing them a magazine, explaining who we are and what we do. The conversations from passionate business owners, proud of the companies they've built, exchanging a word with us, opened my eyes to hidden gems in different cities along the Escarpment.

The fulfillment came from seeing the process from desk to storefront, delivering magazines to companies, to refining the final draft and last, meeting with the printer. It was worth seeing all the work that goes into only one issue, come full circle to a finished product. I can't imagine doing the same process four times a year every year.

Another aspect I revelled in was having free rein to write and proof two articles, one a column and one a full-length feature. Rather than write a meaningless high school essay, I got to gather my research first hand by hiking a section of the Bruce Trail, taking pictures and putting it all together. I'm looking



forward to seeing the final product in a future issue. The outcome is definitely more rewarding and more full scale. The difference to me is that at school I hand in my paper on a desk in a pile with countless others, compared to having a page of my very own published in a magazine. For people to read and hear what I have to say is way better than having my voice get lost in pages and pages of endless words on a desk somewhere where a teacher may or may not care to listen.

Unpleasant Work

What I didn't enjoy was mostly the outdoor work especially when the weather was hot and buggy. Pulling pesky Buckthorn and maintaining the trails in the heat, with only mosquitoes to keep me company, was not my ideal work day. The

forestry work may come as a shock but is in tune with the whole theme of the magazine. As the property we work from is a part of the Escarpment area, it is our responsibility to care for and maintain it. And as a worker I shoulder some of the responsibility. The property acts as the thought before the magazine, the idea behind which this magazine was created. Both property and magazine go hand in hand, under the same umbrella to bring the Escarpment home to you as readers.

Katelynn Baksa-Wiltshire is a first-year student at University of Ottawa who retired last year from an intense amateur career as an acrobatic gymnast, becoming a member of Team Canada for the 2019 Pan Am Championships in Mexico and winning a bronze medal.

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Missing AND Murdered Females

Red dress art installations are drawing attention to countless North American Indigenous women, girls and “two-spirit people” who have disappeared or been found murdered over the last 40 years. Here are just two recent installations that were in the Escarpment area.

Both installations were inspired by Jaime Black, a Métis artist who founded the REDress Project in 2010 to inspire other artists to use the colour red to draw attention to missing and murdered Indigenous women. Red is thought to be the only colour that spirits can see.

“The Promenade of Pain” floated in Burlington’s Spencer Smith Park from Oct. 3 to 16, 2020, and was created by Burlington artist Amber Ruthart, a First Nations member of White Bear Clan.

“Whether they flutter in the wind or drape eerily still, the dresses are not what haunts you but rather the absence of those who wore them,” notes Angela Paporizo, manager of arts and culture with the City of Burlington.

Red dresses signify the mysterious loss of Indigenous women, girls and others.



◀ A girl's-sized dress represents the harm done to the youngest of females.

▼ Red ribbons tied around White Pines with reconstructed longhouses in the background at Crawford Lake.



“Red Ribbons”

“We had many consultations with our grandmothers, spiritual healers, elders and knowledge holders who told us that hanging the red dresses brings the spirits of the women back,” says Sherry Saevil, an Indigenous educator with Halton Catholic District School Board, who helped organize an installation at Crawford Lake near Milton.

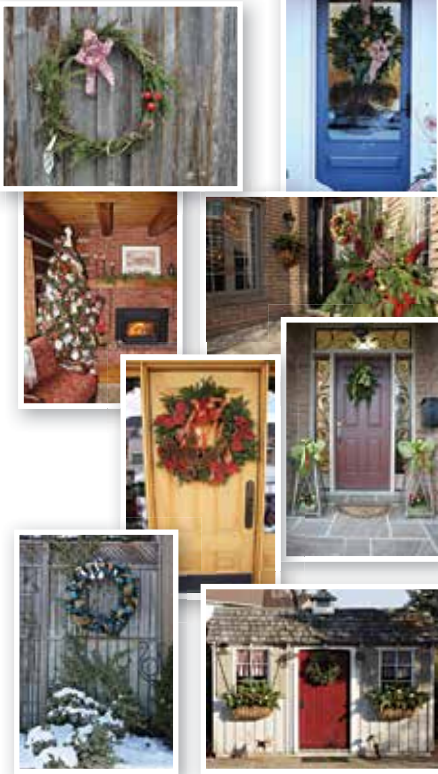
Instead of hanging red dresses, they invited visitors to tie red cloth around a White Pine, a symbol of peace, and take a moment of silence. This installation was held from Oct. 4 to Nov. 25, 2020.

“It is important for the general public to know about the colonial violence against our women,” adds Sherry, “and to stand in solidarity to end this violence. Why do Indigenous women and girls go missing on a daily basis without police intervention and public outcry to demand that this must stop?”

Continued on page 55

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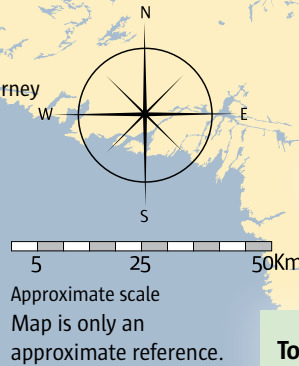


▲ Red dresses flutter in "The Promenade of Pain" installation in Burlington's Spencer Smith Park.

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