

Niagara Escarpment **ViEWS**

SUMMER 2024 (JUNE, JULY, AUGUST)



Summer
IN LION'S HEAD

GREAT GARDENS OF **Grimsby**

FIRE!

**LION'S HEAD
FOODLAND**

**Rare Sights
at Cootes Paradise**

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**Chi-Cheemaun's
50th Anniversary**

**Film Institute on
Manitoulin Island**

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Summer 2024
(June, July, August)

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Views & Vistas, Favourite Photographs from the Entire Niagara Escarpment in Canada, Published 2021



Conservation

Halton Award, 2014

to Mike Davis in Media/Blogger Category

SINCE 2008

Escarpment Community



Shirley Boxem of Mulmur, one of our subscribers, recently sent us the kind comment “You are successful in making readers feel like part of a wonderful community through stories of people doing good things for the environment.” I don’t think we can take credit for actually making people feel like part of a community. I think that when we started the magazine, we believed that a community already exists, of people with physical, emotional or spiritual ties to the Escarpment, the entire long, spread-out Niagara Escarpment in Canada, and that we could reflect parts of this community to others.

This issue does celebrate the fact of community in some of its feature articles. The greatest example is in the town of Lion’s Head on the Bruce Peninsula. We had already planned to have Sandra J. Howe show the summertime appeal of

Lion’s Head when we learned of a terrible fire that damaged Hellyer’s Foodland last year. We immediately contacted a long-time contributor to the magazine, and resident of Lion’s Head, Chris Hamilton, asking him to give us the story. His tale of how the community of Lion’s Head and indeed the whole Bruce Peninsula, rallied to fill the huge gap left by the loss of Foodland, is emotionally moving.

Equally inspiring is the revelation that owners Kyle and Kara Hellyer decided not to move to a new building in a new location out of town, but to repair and rebuild the store where its roots go back to the 1800s. The reason? Community. The customers are neighbours and many depend on the store for necessities.

Chi-Cheemaun Community

This year is a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Chi-Cheemaun ferry. Over many years of sailing on her, we were fortunate to develop a friendship with one of her captains, Kerry Adams. Through photos and comments, we highlight some special moments we enjoyed as part of the community of regular passengers on this beautiful ship.

Anchor Inn as Home

Chi-Cheemaun, the “big canoe,” of course goes to big Manitoulin Island, which has a big sense of community. Late last year, community spirit solved a problem for people on the island who couldn’t find

shelter due to the shortage of available housing. Denise Callaghan, owner of Anchor Inn in Little Current, met the need by offering rooms for long-term rental at a modest price. Even a conference room was changed to a residence to fill the demand. When care for people outweighs the profit motive, community spirit is active.

This issue also shares the beautiful gardens of the Niagara community of Grimsby, and the beauties of the natural world in Cootes Paradise near Hamilton.

Centre Spread Photographs


We have opened the centre spread in each issue to other photographers, and this time we’re happy to publish a beautiful, unusual view of Georgian Bay by Sandy Richardson. If you have a special photograph taken from, on or of the Niagara Escarpment, with a view we haven’t already published, we may be happy to pay to publish it. Contact me to discuss this opportunity, but realize that we have only four issues a year, and have already received several wonderful images we’re planning to use.

Gloria


Gloria Hildebrandt


P.S. Wild animals need wild spaces.

Let us know what you think!


Write us at editor@NEViews.ca or
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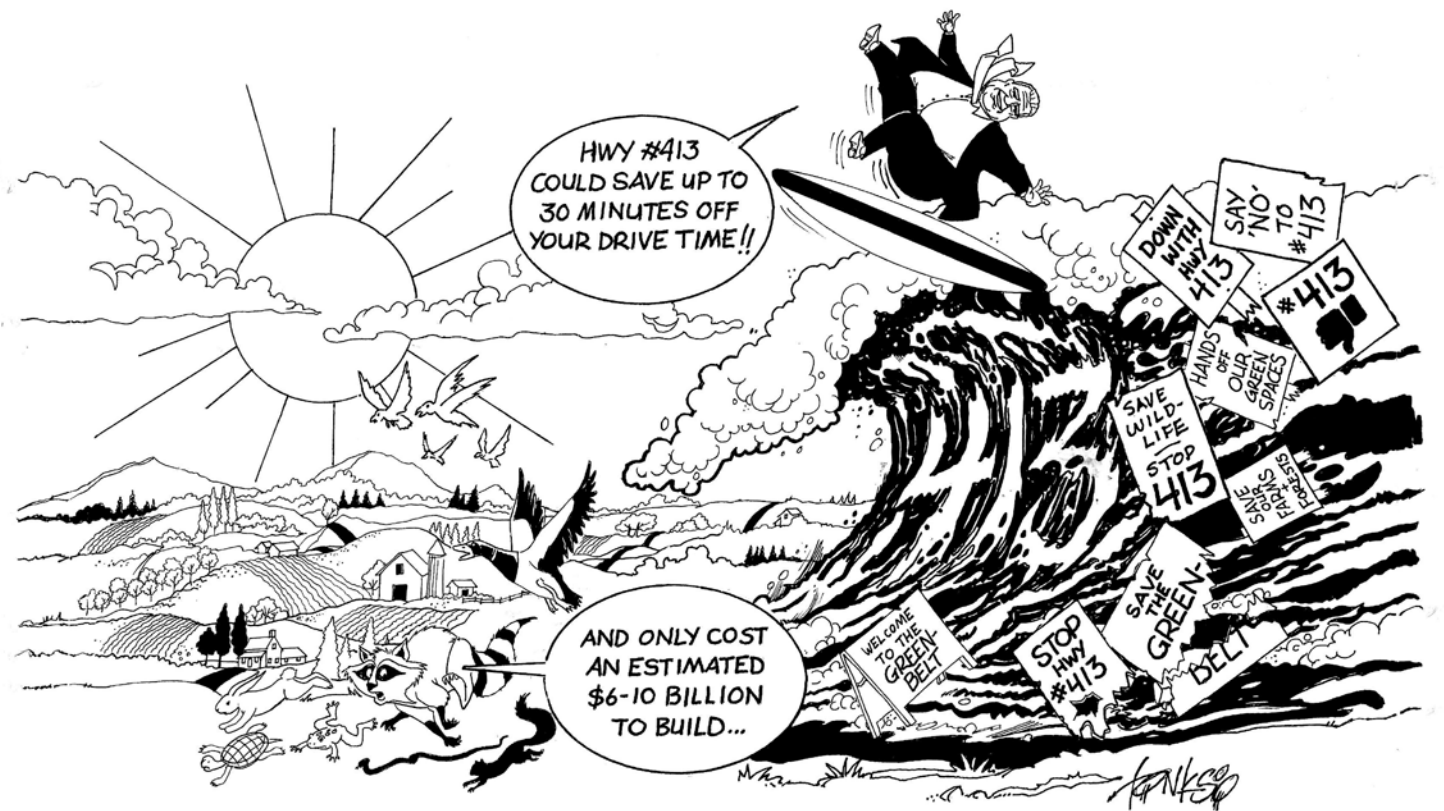
More Online!

 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 www.NEViews.ca.

 *Niagara Escarpment Views* is on Facebook as:
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READERS & VIEWERS



The kayakcleaning article looks great, a very nice spread! Loved the whole Spring 2024 edition, including the old Welland Canal story. Readers might be interested in knowing that the most tires that I ever collected at once (3) was from the ponds near Henley Island in St. Catharines—and there were many more seen but not collected!

Neal Bonnor, Dundas

Editor's note: We regret the error in Neal Bonnor's name on the cover of the Spring 2024 issue. Also, on page 23, the photo caption should read 150 items.

I was surprised today when my wife told me my picture

was in the latest issue of NEV. We've been subscribers for several years now, but I hadn't yet read the Spring 2024 issue. Sure enough, there I was presenting an 'Environmentalist of the Year' award to fellow Hamiltonian, Neal Bonnor. Although I've done more than my fair share of terrestrial garbage cleanup, Neal's efforts are exceptional and a real inspiration for us all. His contribution to cleaning our local watersheds – and beyond – were an excellent choice for a feature article in NEV. Well done!

Craig Cassar, Hamilton

So glad you shared the story of Neal Bonnor in your latest edition! A real eco hero. I live in Hamilton but have never heard of Neal or his work and it's so inspiring to hear of others who go the extra mile to care for nature. When my friend and I hike the Bruce Trail which runs thru

our city, we try to pick up trash. Sometimes it feels discouraging but Neal has brought fresh resolve. I hope others will be inspired too.

P. Grove, Hamilton



I want to thank you for the incredible job you do presenting any of the articles that I have written for NEV. The latest article about the Welland Canals turned out so beautiful even though I wasn't sure that I gave you enough to work with.

Art Weaver, St. Catharines

[Letter edited because of space.] I enjoyed reading Art Weaver's interesting and informative article about the Welland Canals in the Spring 2024 Issue of Niagara Escarpment News *[Sic. This*

should be Views.] However, some significant pieces of history were missing from his sections about the first two canals... The extension of the first canal to Lake Erie was not completed until 1833... When construction of the Second Canal began in 1841, I believe it also connected to the Welland River at Port Robinson. I grew up near Port Robinson and remember seeing two stone walls perpendicular to the River at Port Robinson which probably was the lock for the Second Canal.

David Morris, email



I really like how you put my article together. It is great being part of your publication.

Bruce Mackenzie, Grimsby

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■ READERS & VIEWERS

Love the Niagara Escarpment Views magazine! You do SUCH a great job... Since my wife and I moved from Toronto to Niagara-on-the-Lake three years ago, we've started reading every issue, every article. Thanks for the terrific read!

Steve Payne,
Niagara-on-the-Lake

I live in Mulmur just off the edge of the escarpment, near Airport Road and Hwy 89. It's beautiful here, and I enjoy doing Bruce Trail hikes with my friends. What I like about your magazine are the focus pieces on other sections of the escarpment that I have never seen. The recent piece on the Welland canal system was really interesting. You are

successful in making readers feel like part of a wonderful community through stories of people doing good things for the environment. As well, those geographic and/or historical gems hidden away in our communities encourage exploration and appreciation of what we have and where we are.

Shirley Boxem, Mulmur

I live in Cobourg but got your wonderful magazine from a friend. I was so inspired by the Butterfly Garden that I want to create one of my own at the side of my house. I have a few coneflowers in my back garden and do enjoy seeing all the Monarchs. I have tried starting from seed with no success with many plants so just buy the

plant itself but most of my local garden centers sell the mature coneflower for around 12.00. I could easily fit 30 plants in my future Butterfly Garden so want just to purchase small plants to start off with. Just wondering if you would know a garden center that would ship me plants in early Spring and other plants to attract the butterflies but with a smaller price tag than what I have been paying for the large plants.

Teresa Glover, Cobourg

I live in Wexford on the southeast coast of Ireland and I have become aware of your lovely magazine which I'd love to order but you don't offer an overseas option? Is there any possibility of getting it to Ireland? I'd be SO grateful as

my uncle Garrett Lacey who was originally from my home town of Wexford in south east Ireland, worked at the Falconbridge Gazette and was mayor of Nickel Centre from 1979-1982. This magazine is very nostalgic for my family as he lived in Niagara Falls for many many years before his death on Feb 18 this year (RIP) and we visited him there several times. If there's any way you could help, I'd be truly grateful and thank you so very much.

Bernadette Lacey,
Wexford, Ireland

Editor's note: We replied privately to Bernadette. A one-year international subscription to countries other than the United States, can be had for \$65 Canadian.

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WHAT'S IN BLOOM?

Lilacs May	Peonies Late-May
Iris Mid-May to June	Roses Late-June to September

MORE TO DO

Naturally

Escape to Nature

RBG's signature collections include Lilacs, Iris, Peonies, and Roses, offering stunning new blooms to experience from early May to after Labour Day.

Surrounded by the sustainable Rose Garden, the newly renovated Tea House offers an ideal spot to relax in nature's tranquillity, enjoying lunch, afternoon tea, or a sweet treat.

The Rock Garden Bistro features a garden-inspired menu with fresh, locally sourced ingredients. Its outdoor patio offers an inspiring bird's-eye view of the Rock Garden's lower bowl, a perfect spot to relax amidst nature.

Reservations for the Tea House at Turner Pavilion and the Rock Garden Bistro are available on OpenTable.



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▲ The band Queen Kong performed on Feb. 8 on the opening night of Royal Botanical Gardens' jazz festival Winter Tide, held in The Rock Garden Great Room.

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▲ From Barbie, The Movie, a pink Cadillac was displayed at the Canadian International Auto Show in February, and this interactive photo set was part of the fun. Even our salesman Chris Miller got into the act.

EVENTS

Photos by Mike Davis.



◀ Rick Hill, Indigenous Innovations Specialist, discussed the Two Row Wampum at the Two-Eyed Seeing gathering that Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network hosted at Six Nations in Ohsweken on March 14.



▶ On April 8, awaiting the total eclipse of the sun, members of the Manawan, Wemontachie, and Obejiwan First Nations from Quebec, celebrated close to the edge of Niagara Falls.



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Chi-Chee

PHOTOS BY MIKE DAVIS WRITTEN BY



◀ Captain Kerry Adams on the bridge some time ago.



▲ Captain Kerry outside the bridge sailing past Cove Island recently. "If I had a nickel for every photo taken of Cove Island, I'd be very rich," he has said. He is now operations director for Owen Sound Transportation Company.



◀ MS Chi-Cheemaun coming into port at South Baymouth.

maun at 50!

GLORIA HILDEBRANDT AND KERRY ADAMS



◀ Taken some years ago, this shows Captain Kerry on the bridge while the car ramp is being raised.

Celebrations are being held this year for the 50th anniversary of MS Chi-Cheemaun. Over many years of sailing on the ferry, Mike and I almost always happened to be on board when Captain Kerry Adams was at the helm. Robert Schreiber is also a captain with the ferry, but we never seemed to sail when he was working. Kerry was always so welcoming that we knew he would enjoy a brief visit with us and would let Mike take photos. Here are some memories over the years of sailing to and from Manitoulin Island.



▲ Vehicles leave the parking deck at Tobermory.



◀ On Jan. 12, 1974, the Chi-Cheemaun hull was launched in Collingwood by Collingwood Shipyards, Ltd.

Kerry's record is impressive. "The ship handling and dockings was something I got immense pleasure from. That's when sometimes your heart was really thumping, especially on bad days. I have figured out I had over 25,000 arrivals and departures over 25 years between Tobermory and Manitoulin Island. Several trips to Thunder Bay and Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, for drydocking every five years for inspection in there as well."

Kerry remembers one dramatic experience in particular. "We came into Tobermory on a bad weather day and cancelled the return trip to Manitoulin. I let crew go home and kept a small crew to stand by as it was really blowing a gale. Suddenly, one of the mooring cables broke and we were starting to fall away from the dock. We closed the car ramp quickly and started



Chi-Cheemaun means "big canoe" in Ojibwe. Beautiful art adorns her exterior.

to back away from the dock. The winds were so strong, we were very close to grounding on North Point by the time the ship got turned. We ended up anchoring down in Dyers Bay in the lee of the Escarpment for the night. It took some time to realize we let David

Mouland, the cook, off and we had to fend for ourselves until the next morning."

Looking back on all his years as captain, Kerry says "I'm proud that I was given command of such an iconic ship on the Great Lakes. I never took it for granted and

felt it a privilege. I'm proud to have worked with great crew members that often made my job easy on most days. I'm proud to be a second generation captain in our family. My father had 49.5 years of sailing experience and I will end with 48.5." **NEV**

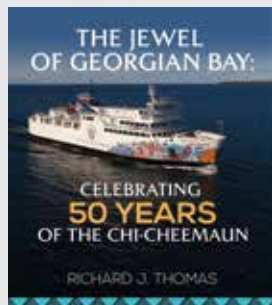
2024 Celebrations

Sailing Season:

May 3 to Oct. 20
Several daily trips between Tobermory and Manitoulin Island.

Chi-Cheemaun Festival Cruise:

Sat. June 15
Tickets required, sell out quickly.



This commemorative book, published by The Ginger Press, will be launched at the 50th anniversary celebrations in Tobermory on Father's Day.

Sail Through Time Exhibit


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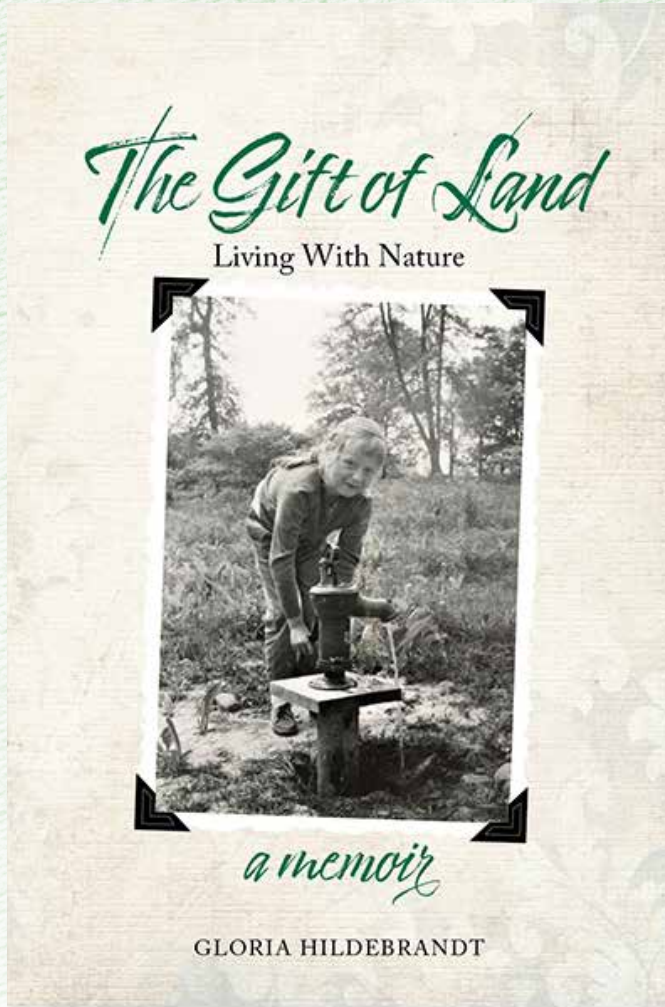
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Lion's Head Summer

WRITTEN & PHOTOGRAPHED
BY SANDRA J. HOWE

Students in a kayak class practise their skills just off shore at Lion's Head with the Niagara Escarpment cliffs in the background.

A scenic view of Georgian Bay with kayakers in the foreground and a forested hillside in the background. The water is calm and greyish-blue. In the foreground, a yellow kayak is partially visible on the left, and a white kayak with a person is further back. In the middle ground, a blue kayak with a person is visible. The background shows a dense forest of green and yellow trees on a hillside, with some buildings visible through the trees.

Ahhh, a Lion's Head summer!

What could be better? Whether you come for a weekend, a week, a season, or a lifetime, there is no place else like it. Nestled on the shore of Isthmus Bay, Lion's Head is surrounded by the towering, white limestone cliffs of the Niagara Escarpment. The crystal-clear, turquoise waters of Georgian Bay stretch to the eastern horizon. This small port town, located halfway up the Saugeen Bruce Peninsula, offers fun, adventure, relaxation, and serenity for everyone. Lion's Head is a destination that you can enjoy season after season, or generation after generation. It always feels like coming home!



▲ Lion's Head has a lovely sandy beach close to the centre of town.

Dave Irish and Christine Conway of Waterloo have spent two weeks every summer in Lion's Head for the past 15 years. "We just love Lion's Head!" says Dave. "It's our happy place, and there is nowhere we would rather be. We were hiking in the area when I proposed by the lighthouse. We were married on the beach, and took our wedding photos on a friend's boat in the marina. We camp at Lion's Head Beach Park to celebrate our anniversary. The fishing is incredible, and we enjoy the music, warm welcome, and amazing scenery." Christine adds, "This summer, we caught some huge

salmon and trout. We feel so blessed to share time in the Lion's Head community!"

Many families have a story like this about Lion's Head. There are cottagers and seasonal campers that are second and third generation visitors. Lion's Head is a small village with a friendly, small town feeling but it gets busy, especially on summer weekends. If you are planning to go, be sure to book reservations for food and lodging. There are a range of options to stay: bed and breakfasts, inns, motels, cottages, and campgrounds. Some excellent restaurants are located downtown, plus a few more in Ferndale

nearby. Hellyer's Foodland, the grocery store, also has lots of picnic options. Check first that they have re-opened after their devastating fire last year. If you plan to hike to Lion's Head Lookout, which is spectacular, you must book a parking reservation.

Parking throughout Lion's Head is pay-per-use; this helps generate municipal revenues to provide clean facilities, garbage collection, and other visitor services. Please follow the signage to avoid parking tickets. On summer weekends, a free shuttle makes a regular circuit of the village to help people move about the community. You can park at the arena on Tackaberry

St. for a reduced rate, and use the shuttle or walk to explore. Despite the abundance of guests, Lion's Head remains a welcoming, charming, laid-back community. Locals often approach visitors to offer advice or suggestions. While I was taking pictures for this story, a resident called across the street to ask if I had seen the lighthouse yet. Most people will greet you with a smile or a wave.

Relax or Be Active

Lion's Head offers plenty of activities to enjoy but is also a wonderful place to relax and unwind. Try a lounge chair at the sandy beach, or a cool beverage at one of the



▲ Popular for sailing, power boating, and fishing, Lion's Head Harbour has been described as the prettiest marina in Ontario.



▲ The August Civic Holiday weekend street party draws a good crowd for great music, food, dancing and fun for all ages.



▲ William's Cave on the Bruce Trail just north of Lion's Head has fascinating geology which Dennis Stier of Southampton is examining here.



▲ The restaurant part of Lion's Head Inn has closed, but there will be more options for accommodation.



▲ The shape of a lion's head is thought to be visible in the Escarpment cliffs across the bay, giving the village its name. This view is from the Bruce Trail just north of town.



restaurants. Sunrises over the Escarpment cliffs are enticing for some, while an evening of local music may suit others better. Harbourside Music features local talent on Friday evenings, 7-8:30pm through July and August, at the waterfront park; these events are by donation, and support community charities.

Don't miss the Lion's Head Farmers Market which happens Saturday mornings, 9am-noon from Victoria Day until Thanksgiving. It is a great place to sample local produce and baked goods, meet artisans, buy craft beer, enjoy a gourmet breakfast, and listen to more local music, all at the beach. How about maple kettle corn? Then, you can dive



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right in for a refreshing swim, or practise your sandcastle building. If you are a shopper, there are fun stores to peruse uptown. You can check out The Shops at 84 Main, which include Aunt Donkey's, the Dandy Lion, and Murdle's Mercantile. Or visit Poppa Bobbers, tucked away

upstairs in Scott's Home Hardware.

Long weekends in summer offer lots of family fun: the Canada Day parade, Rotary Big Breakfasts at the beach, free hotdogs and cake, the August Civic Holiday street party, the Bruce Peninsula Art Show, and the Quilt Show. There is always something



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happening! Connie Barker of Southampton stays with girlfriends at Lion's Head Beach Park Campground; she enthuses, "We have a great time here every visit. The people are really kind and helpful, the scenery is amazing, and we love the live music! We come back each year."

Outdoor Adventure

For outdoor adventurers, Lion's Head is an incredible destination. With Escarpment cliffs for climbers, the Bruce Trail for hikers, crystal-clear waters for paddlers, great fishing and views for boaters, and quiet back roads for cyclists, there are so many ways to be active in the fresh air. While the hike to Lion's Head Lookout is very busy, you can follow the Bruce Trail north along the shore to visit William's Cave, and other scenic lookouts. Kayaks are available to rent but please paddle within your skill limits as Georgian Bay can turn wild quickly. Storm watching can be fun too when you are safe and dry!

Bernie Wieder and family from Salzburg, Austria, spent an unforgettable day in Lion's Head while travelling by motorhome up the Saugeen Bruce Peninsula. "We feel very welcome here," notes Bernie. "We arrived late in town but friendly neighbours sent us to Rachel's Restaurant for fish and chips, and local entertainment. It was perfect! This morning, we walked to the marina and lighthouse, and had a quick swim. We would love to visit again on our next Canadian holiday." Perhaps, you'll meet them when you come to explore and enjoy the beauty and hospitality of Lion's Head. **NEV**

Sandra J. Howe's last feature for this magazine was "Traditional Teachings at Cape Croker Park," Winter 2023-24.



▲ The Weider family, from left, Sabine, Bernie, Johanna, and Julian, from Salzburg, Austria relax in front of their rented motorhome in Lion's Head Beach Park Campground.



▲ Local musicians provide free entertainment at Lion's Head Farmers' Market on Saturday mornings throughout the summer.

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Community Help After Loss

WRITTEN BY CHRIS HAMILTON

It was a dreary, overcast Tuesday afternoon in late August last year when the fire started. Those of us working that day at Foodland in Lion's Head were saying our goodbyes to the summer students and getting ready for the last long weekend of the summer. Upstairs in Grandad's Attic we first saw the thick, brown smoke begin to billow up through the wooden floorboards, and then the ceiling on the main floor. That's when staff immediately evacuated the store and called 911.



▲ In late August 2023, Hellyer's Foodland in Lion's Head suffered a significant fire. PHOTO BY MIKE HALL.

Fire at Lion's Head Foodland





▲ Fire crews from Lion's Head, Tobermory, Wiarton, and Owen Sound stopped the fire after a five-hour effort. There were no injuries. PHOTO BY MIKE HALL.

Outside the store, a small fire had begun in the old wall, built around 1934. Contractors performing the work used all the store's fire extinguishers, then all those at the hardware store. Fire crews from Lion's Head, Tobermory, Wiarton, and Owen Sound contained the burn after five hours with no injuries reported. Even though flames never burned anything inside the store, contents, equipment, and all were lost to smoke damage.

News travels fast. The streets were lined with people with their phones out, so naturally the word was out on

social media. The question everybody seemed to settle on was "What will we do now?"

You see, Lion's Head is in cottage country. Once you travel north on Hwy 6 past civilization, or Owen Sound, you are on the Saugeen Bruce Peninsula, a thin spit of land with one main road that ends in Tobermory. Wiarton is 25 minutes south of us and Tobermory is 40 minutes north: the nearest grocery stores. Lion's Head serves its 700 residents but also 4,400 from the surrounding municipality. Farms, rural businesses, neighbouring villages rely on a local food source. We have a significant

senior population, many of whom have no other way of getting food.

Fifth-generation owners Kyle and Kara Hellyer made the decision to repair the store rather than move out of town and build new. "This is more than just a grocery store, it's a place where the community connects every day," says Kara. "The customers are our neighbours, so they get a really personalized service in the store; especially some of our seniors who may need more help." At the time of writing, they are hoping for a re-opening in early summer.

Until then, we all will have to add an hour's gas

to our grocery bills. Those working in town at the bank, shops, hospital, school have less options for lunch or dinner. Perhaps 30 students will have to find part- and full-time jobs elsewhere. The school's Foods and Life Skills classes are unable to use the store. "Inconvenient" became the word around town.

Community Action

Yet on the day of the fire something remarkable began to happen. The community was already springing into action. Lifelong resident and long-time business owner Marydale Ashcroft's first thought was "How are



▲ The fire started between these studs, reached up to the second floor and then spread. PHOTO BY TONY AGUILAR.

► On the second floor, the fire spread through the floor, wall and ceiling. PHOTO BY TONY AGUILAR.



the seniors in this town going to get food? The community supports itself and its residents. People's first response is to help." Local business owners came together to bring staples, dairy, bread, and toiletries into their stores, working cooperatively, not competitively. At Marydale's business, The Shops at 84 Main, she also opened her community pantry: a free grocery rack with dried and canned goods and toiletries all donated.

Cindy Lou's Ice Cream Shop began bringing in more dairy, grocery and hygiene products until their seasonal closure. Scott's Home Hardware set up an area for dry goods and then opened a dairy cooler. The Garden

In Thyme Country Market stayed open all year offering produce and baked goods. In Ferndale, Bear Tracks Inn offers in-stock items for sale as well: bread, vegetables, and dairy. Bain's General Store opened in February of 2024 offering another option for common groceries, produce, and dairy. By the Bay General Store in Pike Bay was another business stepping up. These shop owners are taking the time to shop for bargains so that they can keep prices and markups low.

The Golden Dawn Senior Citizen Home shuttles anyone to Peacock's Foodland in Tobermory free every Thursday. Some have no other way to get groceries. The day I rode, we had a few people

from Lion's Head, Ferndale, Stokes Bay, and Pike Bay.

The store's grocery delivery program was continued by volunteers Dona Ashcroft and Leann Rouse. They take phone orders, drive, shop, and deliver to those with mobility or support issues.

Now, eight months after the fire, we've all felt the added cost and inconvenience of travelling for food, but has there been a heavier toll?

The Lion's Head Food Bank has felt it. Donations are down, travel costs are up, and they have had to source grants from Community Foundations Grey Bruce and the United Way Grey Bruce to assist with their programs.

The Lion's Head Daycare has been hit, too. The receipt



▲ Kara and Kyle Hellyer worked with contractors to rebuild the store. PHOTO BY CHRIS HAMILTON.





◀ Scott Hellyer added dry goods and then a dairy cooler to Scott's Home Hardware to meet the need. PHOTO BY CHRIS HAMILTON.



▲ Don and Molly Bridge of The Garden In Thyme, remained open all year to provide produce and baked goods. PHOTO BY CHRIS HAMILTON.



▲ Marydale Ashcroft in The Shops at 84 Main at the community cupboard where donated items are available for free. PHOTO BY CHRIS HAMILTON.



◀ The Golden Dawn Senior Citizen Home offered a free bus ride for anyone to Peacock's Foodland in Tobermory every Thursday. PHOTO BY CHRIS HAMILTON.

program allowed customers to deposit their grocery receipts, with the store donating a percentage to the daycare. This and regular in-store fundraising programs don't exist now.

Resiliency

Yet we've seen some unexpected results. The town did not turn into a ghost town. Churches and community groups have provided meals and rides and support. Many of the regular clientele continue to shop in town, some shops even noticing new customers. Scott Hellyer spoke about the town's resiliency. "People can come to town, get their mail, stop at the pharmacy, the hardware store, the bank and get lunch. The community supports its businesses, and the businesses support the community."

If there ever was an ad for shop local, this was it.

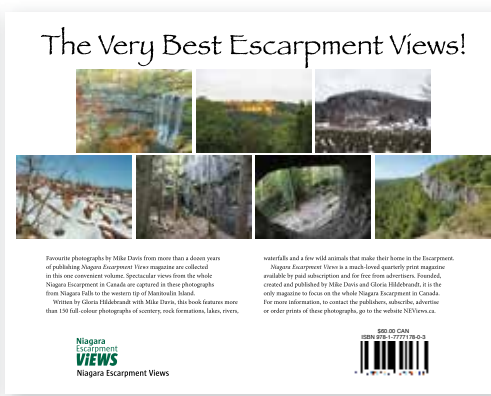
Kyle and Kara Hellyer have continued local youth sponsorships, Rotary, and are working tirelessly alongside family to get the store re-opened as soon as possible. Now, as the local shop owners wonder if they will have the resources to keep groceries in stock as peak season approaches, welcome news has arrived. Hellyer's Foodland should be reopening in June.

Lion's Head residents have been hoping for the return to normality, and the convenience of not having to drive out of town for a banana. So, if you're travelling up this way, you may just find it business as usual. **NEV**

Chris Hamilton's last article for this magazine was "Interpreting The Giant's Rib: Telling the Story of the Niagara Escarpment," in Autumn 2017.



▲ Linda Bain opened Bain's General Store in Ferndale in February 2024, giving another option for groceries. PHOTO BY CHRIS HAMILTON.



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Georgian Bay near Cape Chin.

PHOTO BY SANDY RICHARDSON.








COOTES
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WRITTEN BY PAUL WEINBERG

PHOTOGRAPHED BY MIKE DAVIS EXCEPT WHERE NOTED



Situated between Hamilton and Burlington at the furthest western end of Lake Ontario, Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) is a nonprofit agency that owns and looks after 1,100 hectares of protected gardens, trails, marshes and forest. At its heart and most dominant portion is the historic Cootes Paradise which is both a protected marsh and nature sanctuary.

Close to the Niagara Escarpment at the boundary of Hamilton and Burlington, Cootes Paradise features a large body of water that attracts hundreds of migratory birds. Here, Mute Swans enjoy the water on a hot August day.



▲ Osprey at Princess Point flying with a catch of Carp.
PHOTO BY MIKE DAVIS.

The diversity of wild plants here is made possible by the positioning on the Niagara Escarpment, explains David Galbraith, the RBG's head of science. "A large section of land faces south as an angle of the Escarpment to the sun, making for a warmer micro-climate. As a result, more southerly plants grow on portions of the area," he adds.

What You Can Do

The RBG's 1941 provincial legislative mandate encourages interaction between people and nature. At the head of the lake, Cootes is a major staging area for 277 different migratory birds, making it ideal for bird watching. One can also walk, canoe or just sit and relax on a bench on the site.

The latest 2022 RBG annual report shows that

about 285,000 visitors paid admission to visit the RBG and take advantage of various activities and programs for all ages. Its front office at 680 Plains Road West in Burlington is accessible by car from Highway 403 or by local bus. Half a million people visited the trails which can be reached without charge at free access points to the sprawling Cootes Paradise. One principal one is Princess Point which has a canoe launch and can be visited by local bus in southwest Hamilton.

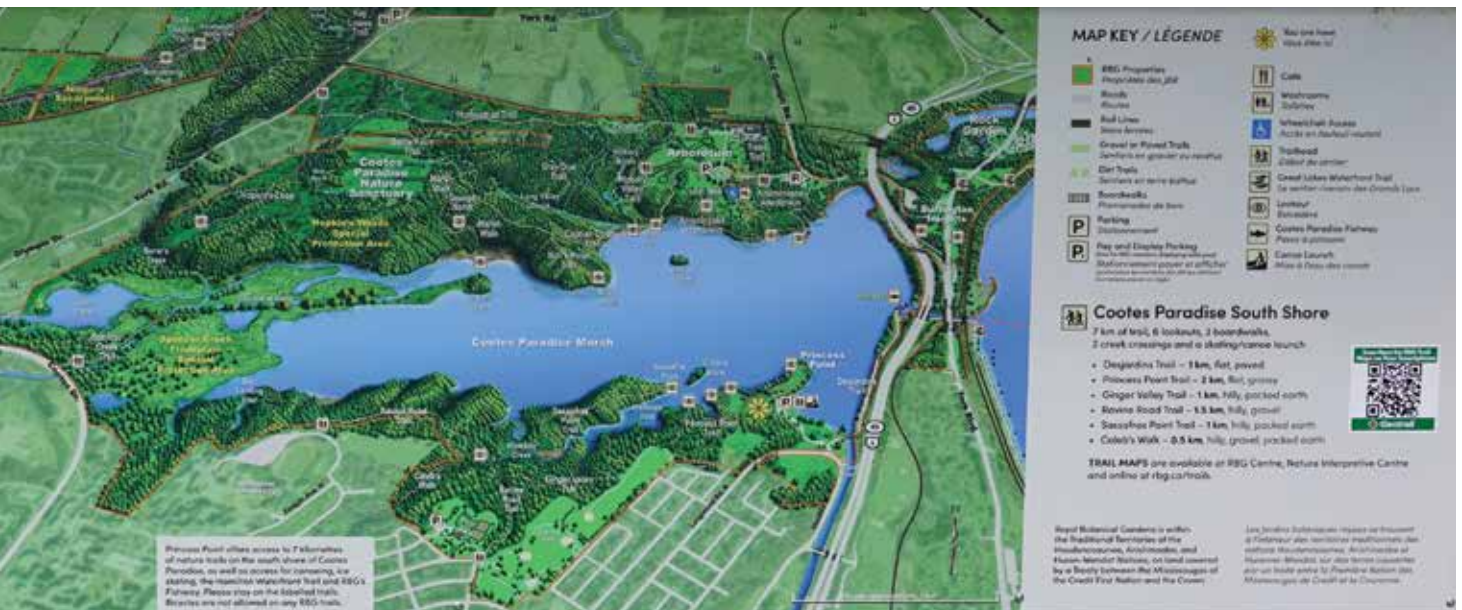
Exploring the RBG today, it's easy to forget that Cootes was not always this pristine. Once covering what is now southwest Hamilton, it was much larger than it is now. Historically, it has suffered from more than a century of neglect and degradation. When European settlers arrived in the 1700s, fish, wild



▲ Adult Bald Eagle feeding her two eaglets that were born in Cootes Paradise last spring. PHOTO COURTESY OF GARRINE TSANG.



▲ Great Blue Heron fishing.



▲ Map onsite shows Cootes Paradise Marsh at the western end of Lake Ontario, where the Niagara Escarpment curves around Hamilton and Hwy 403 crosses on Burlington Heights.



▲ Muskoka chairs invite relaxation with a wonderful view.



▲ Signage onsite explains that Princess Point gives access to seven km of nature trails on the south shore of Cootes Paradise, as well as access for canoeing, ice skating, the Hamilton Waterfront Trail and RBG's Fishway.

turkeys, turtles and other wildlife and plants abounded and represented important food sources for local Indigenous peoples whose earliest presence at Princess Point was roughly between 500 and 1000 AD, according to archaeological findings.

Serious remediation and restoration did not begin until the 1990s says Tys Theysmeyer, senior director of ecosystem stewardship programs and policy at the RBG. A trained aquatic ecologist, he arrived on the scene in 1997 just a few years after various levels of governments in Canada and the U.S. marshalled their resources under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement to target places like Cootes and Hamilton Harbour which had experienced severe environmental damage.

Challenges

Although both lie almost side by side in the west end of Lake Ontario, there are also important differences between these two. Because

water mostly flows out of Cootes Paradise through the Desjardins Canal and into Hamilton Harbour, Cootes is less affected by what falls into the lake from the polluting steel industry inside Hamilton Harbour, says David.

More significant sources of contamination for Cootes come from agricultural and urban development run off, clay extraction, the drilling of water in the marsh, sewage and invasive species, he and Tys say.

The RBG estimates there are more than 1,000 wild plant species on its natural lands and almost one-third of them originate outside North America. These invasive or foreign species arriving by ship, train and road can cause harm to the health and sustainability of local ecosystems and thus represent a challenge to restoration. One of the most pernicious is the common carp, originally an Asian fish that was introduced into Lake Ontario during the 19th century.



▲ The prairie habitat restoration project involves planting native prairie grasses and wildflowers, which gives habitat for pollinators, birds and other wildlife.

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▲ Cootes has extremely rare oak savannas which RBG maintains through careful management.



► Native plants thrive at Princess Point. Recently, the endangered American Chestnut has been planted as part of a restoration project.



▲ Some areas of Cootes Paradise are so sensitive that they're kept off limits to the public. These include areas of national importance for reptiles, amphibians and birds.

“The carp ate everything that was growing because they are bottom feeders,” says John Terpstra, a local historian and poet. “So, on the marsh, all of the plants were gone and that is why for so many years

we’ve had basically what boils down to a large reflecting pool in Cootes Paradise.”

At its height there were approximately 70,000 carp inside Cootes, according to the RBG. Along came the

Fishway which was set up in 1997 at the entrance to Cootes from the Desjardins Canal and those numbers dropped by 95 per cent. Meanwhile native fish, aquatic plants and amphibians have all appeared in greater numbers in the marsh. Cootes today has more than 60 different varieties of fish.

Using holding tanks, RBG employees at the Fishway identify and block carp from swimming into Cootes. Meanwhile, native fish also coming through the same route from the canal are separated and permitted to enter and spawn in Cootes in the spring.

Cootes has also managed to persevere despite a massive and accidental leak of 24 billion litres of untreated sewage into Chedoke Creek and the Cootes marsh starting in 2014 and lasting over four and a half years. The dredging of the creek has recently been completed in the first stage.

The situation was mitigated, says John, by the presence of

massive underground tanks in Hamilton that capture and store the overflow of storm water and sewage, which in the absence of this infrastructure, would have flowed directly into the creek and marsh. Instead, once the storm ends, city employees collect the sewage in the tanks and transport it to a wastewater treatment plant on Woodward Ave in the city.

Tys often works outside at Cootes on a myriad of projects for ongoing restoration. One restoration project is the recent planting of the globally endangered American Chestnut deciduous tree in research collaboration with the Canadian Chestnut Council. The tree once thrived in Dundas Valley and was prized for its wood and chestnuts.

But there are also some challenges. At present more than 50 different species are at risk in all wildlife and plant categories. And while it is lovely to have visitors, there is also an effort to keep



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them away at sensitive times
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“Basically, you don’t want
to interrupt the natural
processes of breeding

birds and flowering
plants,” Tys says. **NEV**

*Paul Weinberg is a Hamilton-
based freelance journalist.*

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Grimsby's *Great Gardens*

PHOTOS BY MIKE DAVIS

WRITTEN BY GLORIA HILDEBRANDT

Grimsbey Garden Club's 2022 self-guided tour offered 10 wonderfully varied gardens to explore. The owner-gardeners were present to field questions and accept compliments. The tour was a successful fundraiser for the club's community projects. These include providing hanging planters for downtown Grimsby, maintaining gardens on Elm St. and West Lincoln Memorial Hospital, giving student scholarships, and assigning Trillium Awards to deserving garden owners.

The next tour is June 22, from 10 to 4 pm, promising plenty of peonies, irises and roses. Details are at the club's website and through the Facebook page.



Breathtaking view. The back yard of Jim Howden and Ruth Moffat's house has three levels of terraces descending to Lake Ontario. A patio with a pool is at the top, while stone stairs lead down to another space resembling the prow of a ship. The final stairs end at a landing by the lake, from where kayaks can be launched. With a lovely bunkie to one side, there is no need for a cottage with this property.



▲ Jim Howden and Ruth Moffat on the pool level of their stunning lakeside terraced garden.



▲ Sue Gemmil's front garden bed is a punch of gorgeous English country style. The shady back garden includes the striking native Cup Plant.



▲ Laurie and Bruce Mackenzie have a Trillium-award-winning natural garden. Native species including Dwarf Iris and Lakeside Daisy are nurtured here. Bruce is a naturalist and contributor to this magazine.



▲ A native Prickly Pear cactus is thriving and blooming in the Mackenzies' garden.





► The Cup Plant benefits wildlife by holding water in leaves at the base of the stem.

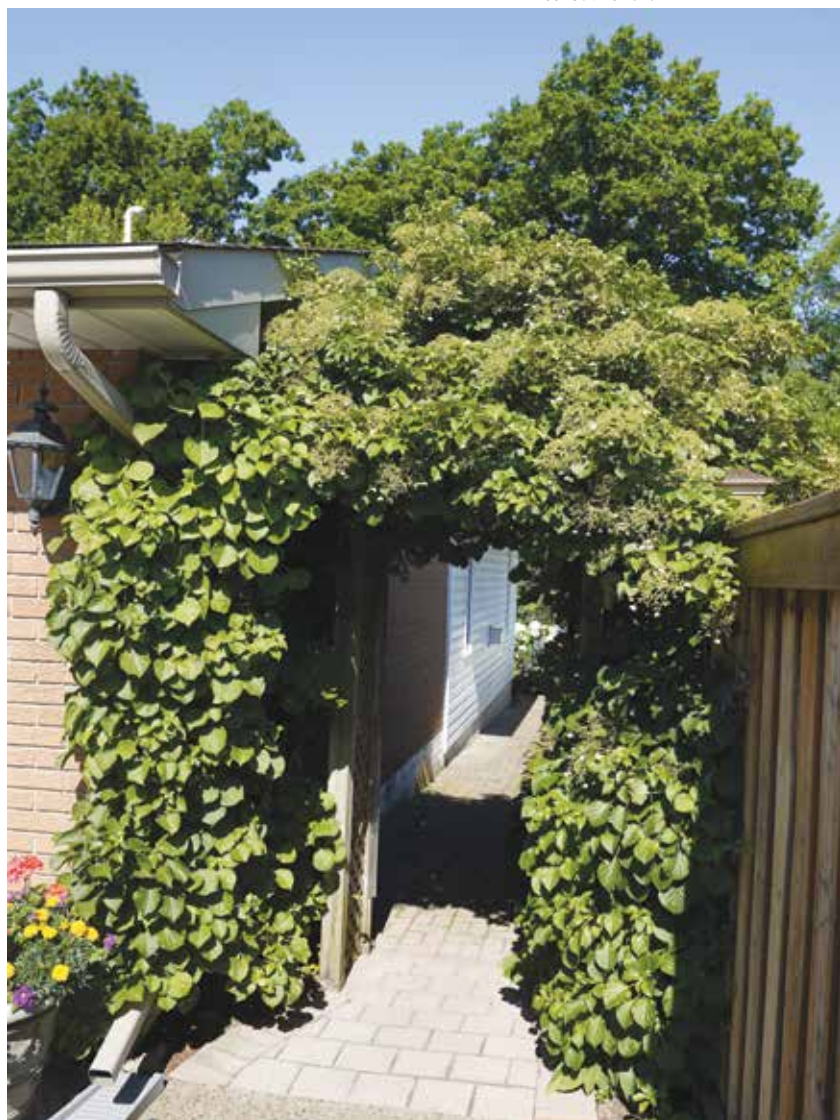


◀ Sue Gemmil has included a large variety of annuals, perennials, shrubs and trees for fascinating displays.

▼ An impressive Climbing Hydrangea forms an arch to the entrance to the rear garden, cared for by Carol Drenth.



▲ Front and back, the Mackenzies' property is shaded by 27 species of trees.





▲ Carol Drenth among the blooms in her 10-year-old lush back garden.



▲ A small waterfall and pond, surrounded by rocks and beautiful plants, delight the eye in the front garden of Ruxandra and Alex Bucataru.



▲ The large, 43-year-old mature garden at the edge of the Niagara Escarpment, and owned by John and Jo-Anne Holbourne, has Forty Mile Creek passing through it.



▲ Just one striking idea from the almost-two-acre garden of the Holbournes is the use of Oxalis shamrocks as edging plants.



▲ Ruxandra and daughter Audrey hosted visitors to their impressive back garden full of flowers and vegetables.



▲ Jay DuBoisson is at home in her magnificent back garden.



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▲ There's plenty of room to wander and explore Jay DuBoisson's plantings.



▲ A spectacular front garden bed showing variety and repetition is the work of Donna and Marty Tyre.

◀ Donna Tyre in her garden-filled back yard.



▲ Deena Errampalli was the chair of the 2022 Grimsby Garden Club tour.



▲ A large patio looks onto richly planted raised vegetable garden beds in the Fishers' yard.



► Joe and Sharon Fisher rest in the shade of their well-designed garden.

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PHOTOS BY MIKE DAVIS
WRITTEN BY GLORIA HILDEBRANDT



Located in M'Chigeeng First Nation on Manitoulin Island, Weengushk Film Institute (WFI) is a non-profit, artist-focused film and television training centre. It is intended for Aboriginal youth and people of diversity, and was established in 2002 by award-winning artist and filmmaker Shirley Cheechoo, who serves as executive director and artistic director.

WFI teaches technical skills and creative development, preparing students for employment in media and entertainment. Internships and job placements are available thanks to associations with alumni and professionals. WFI programs also count as university credits for BA degrees.

One of the programs

offered is called Journey for Knowledge, considered to be transformational to students. "We focus on land-based learning, Anishinaabe language, traditional food and cultural exchange," organizers note. A visit last year showed several people at work on their individual crafts and film projects.

Ross Armstrong, an



▲ Serene Manitowabi shows the top part of a dress she's making.



▲ With his traditional dance regalia hanging behind him, Hunter Smith, a Mohawk, is making a wampum belt.



▲ Presley Meawasige, working on a 22-minute film called *Raining Sisters*. She is director, producer and writer of the film.

► Craig Fox, a well-known drummer, shows one of his own creations.



► Gerard Armstrong models a shirt he made.



▼ Paul MacIntyre takes a break from working with leather.



Ojibwe language instructor and land-based coordinator, shared some knowledge. Of traditional drums, he said “Every drum has a different sound. The first drum you make, you must give away. Then you can make another one that you can keep.”

Of the Ojibwe language, he says that the written language has so many letters, that syllables are not the way to teach people. He prefers to teach through sound. “I show children a thing like leather so they see, feel, smell it,” he adds. “They learn better that way.”

Last June, the Weengushk Youth Group travelled west on a cultural exchange to B.C., coming home through the U.S., visiting tribes along the way. This summer the Weengushk International Film Festival will be held at the AOK Four Directions Complex and Manitoulin Hotel and Conference Centre, from July 11 to 14. The special program this year honours residential school survivors, known as warriors.

Reflecting on the success of WFI since she founded it, Shirley acknowledges “the empowerment of Indigenous voices through film, a medium that can convey the deep and complex histories, challenges and resiliency of these communities.”

She knows that “WFI is not just a place of learning but a place of meaningful transformation, impacting both individuals and their communities at large.” **NEV**



▲ Tobacco in red cloth, a traditional gift from Ross Armstrong.

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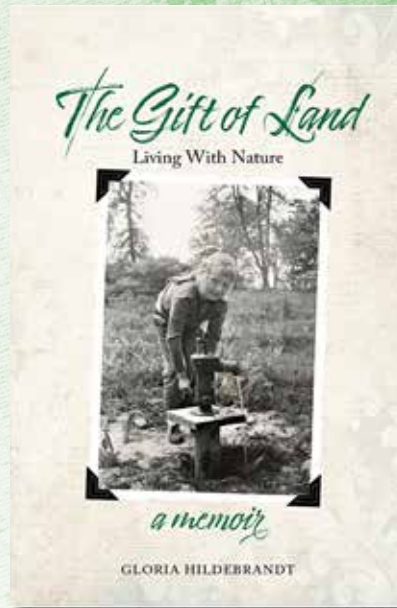


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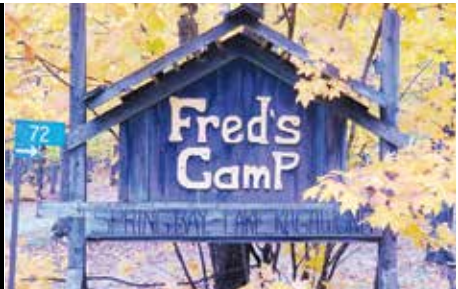
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The Wainfleet Bog

The Heart and Lungs of the Niagara Watershed

By staff at Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority

Bogs play a vital ecosystem role. Acting like a sink, they absorb rainwater, store it underground and then slowly release it into nearby streams. Bogs are also key to flood management and prevention since they absorb runoff and help to prevent soil erosion, hence the need to preserve and restore these important greenspaces.

World Bog Day is celebrated every year in July. This year, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) joins the celebrations by shining a spotlight on the importance of bogs and the unique ecological gem that it proudly takes care of: the Wainfleet Bog.

Natural and Heritage Value

The Wainfleet Bog Conservation Area is located in the Township of Wainfleet and City of Port Colborne and is part of the only bog wetland in the Niagara Peninsula. It is provincially significant and is the largest remaining bog within southern Ontario, providing habitat to a variety of unique plants and animals. The underlying peat material has live sphagnum moss and other bog plants growing on top, like Labrador tea, cotton grass and leatherleaf, making it different from other wetland areas.

Relatively young in geologic terms, this domed bog was formed between 12,000 and 5,000 years ago as the glaciers from the last Ice Age melted and retreated. Water ponded in the low, flat land behind the adjacent

Onondaga Escarpment, which prevented surface water from draining south to Lake Erie. Over time, this open water area filled in as plants died and provided habitat for flora and fauna able to withstand the acidic and low nutrient soil conditions.

As a result of more than 200 years of expanding agriculture, peat extraction and transportation activities within and around the bog, it decreased in size and function. The remnant bog is currently 1,460 hectares or 3,607 acres.

Since 1996, NPCA has dedicated immense efforts to restoring the Wainfleet Bog and slow the factors degrading this unique ecosystem. The west half of the property has received rehabilitation activity, while the east half is maintained as status quo for existing species to adapt to changes.

The following recovery and rehabilitation activities have been completed:

- Several internal peat canals have been blocked and bare peat fields have been treated with shallow surface indentations to maintain water levels at the site.
- Surface indentations have been planted with native plants to provide food and expand habitat and cover for plants and animals at the bog. Plantings included seeds, hard stem cuttings and plugs of leatherleaf, Labrador tea, sheep laurel and blueberry. Weed-free straw mulch was used to maintain moisture and minimize frost upheaval.
- Half of the non-native European Birch trees on site have been cut to help maintain water

levels, minimize soil temperatures, and provide surface cover for small mammals, reptiles and amphibians.

- A monitoring program was established to evaluate rehabilitation activities, including ground water levels, vegetation changes and sensitive animal populations.

The involvement and assistance of many partners and stakeholders have made this rehabilitation project a reality and includes local community members, nature and conservation clubs, schools, partner municipalities and government agencies through funding, on-site labour, and assistance with surveys, inventories and monitoring.

NPCA is committed to preserving and restoring the Wainfleet Bog, which functions as the heart and lungs of the Niagara Peninsula watershed. Further to the 1997 Wainfleet Bog Steering Committee, the NPCA established the Wainfleet Bog Advisory Committee in 2022 to enhance collaboration and expertise in the

rehabilitation of the site.

Visit the Wainfleet Bog

For those looking to explore a natural and historical landmark, the bog is worth a visit. When guests are not looking at the unique wildlife growing around them, they can see the historical machines and railroad tracks used for peat extraction. You can also see strips of preserved peat soil and learn first-hand from NPCA staff about the Wainfleet Bog's ability to absorb large amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, in addition to a lengthy list of unique environmental benefits.

Trails and boardwalks await to wind you through this wet, wild and wonderful place. There is also plenty to see and experience as bog plants, butterflies, migrating songbirds and animals make their homes in the restored habitat of the area.

For more information, visit: <https://npca.ca/parks-recreation/conservation-areas/wainfleet-bog> or contact NPCA at 905-788-3135; info@npca.ca. Follow on social @NPCA_Ontario



▲ Wainfleet Bog's trails and boardwalks lead visitors through its unique habitat. PHOTO PROVIDED.

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- 1/4 tsp Pepper (1 mL)
- 2 Chopped Green Onions
- 1 Tomato, finely diced
- 2/3 cup Frozen Corn, thawed (150 mL)
- 1 cup Shredded Monterey Jack Cheese (250 mL)

Spicy Barbecue Beef Kabobs

- 1/2 cup Compliments BBQ Sauce (125 mL)
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- 4 Store-made Beef & Vegetable Kabobs

Directions

1. Scrub potatoes and prick all over with fork. Microwave on high for about 10 min., or until fork-tender. Cool until comfortable to handle. Cut in half lengthwise. Scoop out flesh, leaving 1/2-in. (1-cm) flesh intact. (Reserve scooped-out flesh for another use.)
2. Season skins with salt and pepper. In bowl, combine green onion, tomato and corn. Divide evenly into potato skins. Top with cheese. Grill, closing barbecue lid when not basting (see step 3), 8 to 10 min. over medium-high heat, or until cheese melts.
3. Meanwhile, mix barbecue sauce with chipotle chili pepper. Place kabobs on the heated grill, turning and basting with the sauce 8 to 10 min., or until cooked through.
4. Serve with Southwest Potato Skins.

Tip

Freeze scooped-out potato and add to soups.

Ancient cedars grow on Old Baldy in Beaver Valley. From Views & Vistas: Favourite Photographs from the Whole Niagara Escarpment in Canada – Niagara Falls to Manitoulin Island.

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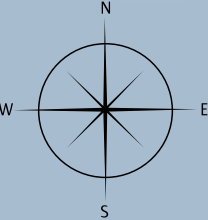
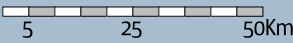
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