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SPRING 2026 (MARCH, APRIL, MAY)



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Big Fat Stinky Woman and Other Stories,
Published 2025



The Gift of Land: Living With Nature: a memoir,
Published 2024



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



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



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Spring Activities



At last we're reaching the end of this winter's snowfalls, ice storms, high winds, days of shovelling and having to dress in layers of clothing. What's your favourite aspect of spring? Is it simply the ease of getting around? How about walking trails without being attacked by biting insects? Or choosing plant seedlings for pots to beautify your home? Maybe rewarding yourself with a favourite beverage outside on a patio? Are you a birder who loves to hear and spot beautiful migrants as they return or pass through? I think we're all looking forward to getting out into a gentler nature, watching the last of the snow melt, inhaling the fresh air, seeing early spring wildflowers, and getting back to our gardens. We'll return to strolling down charming streets, going to cafés, bakeries and restaurants, considering the new offerings in shops,

enjoying new or favourite attractions, and planning stays in resorts and B&Bs.

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In this Issue

Our features this issue are on a variety of topics and locations. Greg Noakes of Georgetown shares some of his beautiful photos of plants and animals. I'm always impressed by nature photographers' patience in getting a lovely subject, and having the technical ability to get an impressive capture.

If you're interested in learning about Ojibwe language, history and culture, Ojibwe Cultural Foundation in M'Chigeeng on Manitoulin Island is well worth the visit. You can even participate in their crafting sessions, as they're open to everyone. You don't need great skills or abilities to take part. If

you can't handle tiny beads, they have "pony" beads that are easier to use.

If there's an animal that simply terrifies you, and you're unable to enjoy the outdoors in case you encounter it, there's hope. Our feature on the most commonly feared animal has suggestions for how to overcome a debilitating phobia. A bit of knowledge has helped me get over an unreasonable fear of frogs and toads.

There have been big changes at Happily Ever Esther Farm Sanctuary (HEEFS), formerly in Campbellville. HEEFS has moved to a larger property in Sheffield, and the original Campbellville farm has resumed its old name of Cedar Brook Farm, with an interesting new mission. Many more farmed animals will be helped as a result. These developments are detailed by Sue Horner.

The United States


Political developments to the south of us have meant that we are unable to mail the

magazine to our subscribers in the U.S. Due to an executive order by Donald Trump, the traditional duty-free "*de minimus*" threshold of US\$800 was suspended indefinitely. All such postal shipments to the U.S. now require additional payments before crossing the border, regardless of value. We are unwilling to support this administrative and financial burden, and have reluctantly suspended mailing paper copies. We look forward to this restriction being eliminated, and being able to resume mailing our magazine to our U.S. subscribers. Meanwhile, we are offering them early free access to electronic copies of our issues. We regret the cause of this disruption in service.

Gloria Hildebrandt
P.S. Wild animals need wild spaces.

The offices of *Niagara Escarpment Views* are located on the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, specifically The Ajetance Treaty No. 19, of 1818, when Chief Ajetance sold the lands to the Indian Department of the government.

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.



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NEWS ITEM:
POLITICIANS SHIFT FOCUS AWAY FROM ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES, TO ADDRESS MORE IMMEDIATE VOTER CONCERNS LIKE THE ECONOMY, HEALTHCARE, AND INFLATION -



■ READERS & VIEWERS



Mike's centerfold sylvan image of Old Baldy [Winter 2025-26] brought back a recollection of my first close encounter of the escarpment kind, back in '57, very shortly after arriving in Canada. That's when our kinfolk were driven up to the secret "mountain" in some-ones Cadillac, in search of semi-permanent accommodation. Lo and behold, there was such a similar view of rock and forestry looking out the windshield, as we drove up James Street. And well do I remember getting seasick in

that chesterfield on wheels using that kaput macadam road, full of potholes; just as I felt on the recent voyage across an ocean left behind. (Keeping in mind, none of us five was used to car rides, coming from the Old Country where hardly anyone yet owned an auto.) I also recall, as a teen in the '60s, often climbing the "mountain" staircases, rickety as they were, with a bike on my back. The trip by bike down the brow by way of the Jolley Cut was, however, always much fun with the wind in my hair. No pedalling needed to get all the way to King or Main Streets. Since leaving HAMILTON I and my wife have moved multiple times to various towns, but always ended up near the slope/

scarp. It seems in Ontario one can't escape the escarpment.
Jürgen Müller, Hillsburgh

I would like to offer my opinion regarding the points specifically raised by Louise Dawe in her letter published in the Winter 2025-26 of NEV. My information is current as of December 27, 2025.

As for rebuilding the economy, the Republicans' "big beautiful bill," has delivered tax cuts for the rich, while reducing federal funding for Medicaid (health insurance program for low-income Americans), and SNAP (food stamps). According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), a non-partisan agency, households in the bottom decile of income distribution

will lose about US\$1,600 per year as a result of the law, while those in the top 10 per cent will see a US\$12,000 annual gain. As for tariffs and creating "American" jobs, according to US Bureau of Labor Statistics figures, if the whole US trade deficit were rebalanced through expanding domestic industries, this would (only) increase the share of manufacturing employment within the US by about one percentage point, from about 8% today to 9%, hardly transformative.

Regarding calling out corruption in the government, Mr. Trump should first look in the mirror. There being too many instances of corruption, please go to this 30-page report from the Campaign

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Legal Center (CLC), a nonpartisan legal organization dedicated to solving the wide range of challenges facing American democracy. https://campaignlegal.org/sites/default/files/2025-1/CLC_Corruption_Tracker_Nov20.pdf

As for illegal immigrants straining social services, the CBO found that between 50 percent and 75 percent of illegal immigrants pay federal, state, and local taxes. They also pay into Social Security and Medicare, benefits that they are not eligible to collect, only their children.

Regarding deporting criminals that are committing crimes against U.S. citizens, of people booked into ICE custody this fiscal year (since October 1, 2025), nearly three in four (73 percent) had no criminal conviction and the majority of criminal convicts were for vice, immigration, or

traffic offenses, not crimes (directly) against people.

As for working for World Peace, legal analysts and lawmakers from both parties have described the killing of at least 105 people in 29 strikes on vessels (so far) in the Caribbean Sea and the eastern Pacific Ocean since the beginning of September (with no evidence of any wrongdoing ever being presented), as extrajudicial killings, which are illegal under U.S. and international law. How soon before other countries, especially China, use Trump's actions as justification for their own attacks in international waters? **In conclusion**, I was surprised and disappointed that someone *choosing* to live in Canada, but also a U.S. citizen, would use the tired reference to needing a parka and toque in Canada, as if the idea was foreign to anyone living in the United

States. Hello, winter makes a freezing appearance in at least 19 U.S. states (alphabetically, Alaska to Wyoming).

Garry Tate, email

I very much enjoy your publication and although I do not think it is a proper form for political discussion, I feel I must respond to one of your letter writers, clearly a member of the MAGA crowd. She has every right to express her opinion, however odious it may be to many NEV readers - so I am going to express mine. The writer seemed to be triggered by this magazine's characterization of the current US administration as being 'bizarre'. I would think that majority of your readers would find nothing out of the ordinary with this adjective. She claims "He (Trump) is rebuilding the US economy.

Facts: (from The Economist) After weak job figures, he (Trump) sacked

the head of Statistics ... and paused nearly all official data releases, leaving policymakers "driving in the fog", as Jerome Powell, chair of the Federal Reserve, put it. So how DO you actually measure economic performance once you shoot the messenger? Btw, inflation is up and consumer confidence is down. The stock market is lower than Trump's first term and even lower than Obama's 2nd term. Trump also attacked Powell for not lowering interest rates - an attempt which is a clear case of government interference with respect to this formerly 'arms length' institution.

The writer goes on ... "He is deporting illegal immigrants ..." I'm certain he is but the arbitrary number of a request for 3000 arrests/day, given by Stephen Miller, means many other innocent people are being caught up by the ill-trained, goon squad called ICE, that are assaulting,

READERS & VIEWERS

teargassing, tasing, beating and incarcerating innocent American civilians just trying to go about their daily lives. Many of them have no criminal record and are in the United States legally, raising families, working and paying taxes. It seems to be open season on anybody of colour or anybody who dares protest peacefully, which still is a legal right in the US (for now).

The cold-blooded shooting of Renee Good is a case in point (and certainly not the only one).

“He is working for world peace...” Gaza, Ukraine and Cambodia are still hotspots and he has bombed boats and attacked Venezuela without justification nor authorization. He continually threatens Greenland, and now Cuba, Columbia, Mexico and of course, Canada - a country you enjoy residing in but is under economic attack from Trump's misguided and ruinous tariffs and his refusal to recognize CUSMA (which HE negotiated). He no longer cares about International rule of law and world trade legalities.

“Canada needs to clean the waste and corruption and work on our health care system.” No facts or specific evidence of ‘waste and corruption’ is cited, so this is a ‘fact free’ suggestion, going nowhere. As far as our healthcare system goes, sure it's always in need of improvement but at least Canadians don't suffer from huge medical bills, which is leading cause of bankruptcy in the US system - which, after Trump abolished Obamacare, is getting worse not better.

So I would ask the letter writer to count her blessings and spare us the lectures about the faults in our own country. The mere fact that I am publishing these anti-Trump views, incredibly, means I can no longer safely

enter the United States without risk of being detained, arrested and deported to some other country and that is a risk that I will no longer take. In a country that used to value free-speech, it's now criminal to think differently than the current President, who is acting like a dictator.

Grant Ranalli, email

I am writing in response to a reader whose comment was published in your Winter 2025 issue mentioning that she took offence to a comment Ms. Hildebrandt had written regarding “... increasingly BIZARRE ADMINISTRATION...” Re, the US Government, more so, President Trump. Although Louise Dawe comments that she is a dual citizen, from the tone of the comment my guess is that she's an American first. Frankly, I am tired of listening to this [garbage] and wanted to reply. Ms. Dawe writes that, “He” is rebuilding the US economy. “He” is calling out corruption and waste in the government, lowering crime rates, deporting illegal immigrants that are straining social services and deporting criminals that are committing crimes against US citizens. And, “He” is working for world peace. I don't know, maybe I am completely uninformed to the latest news but the event that stands out in my mind is that “He”, single-handedly mobilized a mob of Americans instructing them to storm Capital Hill causing trauma, destruction and death. And after that, he managed to get elected again to cause more disruption and chaos. I find “him” terrifying and am mortified that so many people follow and defend such a human being and trigger-finger leader of the most powerful country. Seriously, you write that Canada needs a “wake up call?” Sorry Ms. Dawe, you might be living on

the wrong side of the border, besides it's warmer there!

Nicole Novak, email



Your magazine article on “Working Together to Limit the Impact of Gravel Operations” [Autumn 2025] is a very timely article. Based on my experience at the new Walker Duntroon Quarry I would mention to your readership there is a requirement of their license to monitor the groundwater as they are proposing to mine below the normal groundwater level as are many new and existing quarries. Walker's are required to submit an annual report on their water monitoring authored by their water resources expert. As the site sits at the headwaters of the West Beaver, Mad, Pretty and Batteaux watersheds and operation could have very serious impacts on the groundwater levels in the area. As a result it is very complex and beyond what a normal lay person could review and make meaningful comment on. It requires expert water resource review. My concern is it should also be peer reviewed by an independent recognized water resource expert and this is at this time not required and should be.

**George Powell,
retired professional engineer,
email**

I enjoy the magazine very much, it makes this wonderful resource, the Niagara Escarpment, seem like a whole rather than just a series of walking trails.

John Goyder, Oakville

I pickup your magazine at local Home Hardware here in Georgetown -- love it.
Mike Leigh, Georgetown

Your magazine was found at Foodland Tobermory last Saturday. We are life members of the [Bruce] Trail as my wife has now completed 2.75 end to end trail walks, me 1.5 times. Summer of 2024 she spent biking 10,602 km from Victoria BC to St. John's while I followed with truck and trailer. We enjoy travelling and exploring our country and its outdoor activities and your magazine has many interesting articles, therefore I decided to apply for more.

Mark Bender, New Hamburg



I really enjoy your magazine. I have the Welland Canals episode. [Spring 2024] Great stuff... I live in Caledonia. Grew up in Hamilton Ontario Canada

Mike Joncas, Caledonia



I just wanted to (belatedly!) say thanks again for making it possible for my family and I to have copies of the magazine with the Plewes feature [Winter 2018-19]. It's brought us a lot of pleasure to read about the history and reignited a passion for finding out more about our history.

**Emma Gosling,
Monmouthshire, Wales**

READERS & VIEWERS

Photos by Steve McNamara



◀ Snowy Owl,
north
of Belwood
Lake.

▶ Peregrine Falcon,
Royal Botanical
Gardens Arboretum,
Hamilton



◀ Osprey,
Guelph Lake
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EVENTS

Photos by Mike Davis except where noted



▲ The Saugeen Bruce Peninsula Gravel Gran Fondo ride on Oct. 7, 2025 began at Lion's Head and reached north to Cabot's Head, raising funds for Bruce Peninsula Biosphere Association. PHOTO BY DAVID KNIPE.



▲ In Autumn 2025, Escarpment Corridor Alliance became a land trust to protect land through ownership or conservation easement. Their first land securement is Metcalfe North, located next to Kolapore Uplands Resource Management Area and connected to Duncan Escarpment Provincial Park, in southern Georgian Bay. More about this land trust is available at NEViews.ca/escarpment-corridor-alliance-secures-metcalfe-north/. PHOTO PROVIDED.

- ▶ On Nov. 30 The Ginger Press of Owen Sound held its popular 40th annual Authors' Open House. Authors braved snowy weather to meet customers and each other, and enjoy an impressive buffet of spreads, cheeses, cupcakes and Richard Thomas's astonishing chocolate truffles.



▲ In Ballinafad, Lanzarotta European Market, also known as Julia's Garden Centre, held a Christmas market indoors and outdoors on November 22, to astonishing numbers of customers. PHOTO BY GLORIA HILDEBRANDT.



▲ City of Burlington announced on Jan. 8 that it has been recognized by CDP, formerly the Carbon Disclosure Project, with an "A" score for its leadership in transparency and action toward becoming a carbon-neutral city. This view onto Lake Ontario is from the top of the Escarpment in City View Park. PHOTO PROVIDED.



▲ On Jan. 8 Halton Hills Gymnastics Centre hosted a recognition event to celebrate their newly built viewing mezzanine, funded in part by the Ontario Trillium Foundation.



▲ Abitibi Sled Dogs of Timmins were featured on Jan. 24 during the Hamilton Adventure Expo at Ancaster Fairgrounds.



▲ As part of the official launch of Black History Month in Hamilton, a new bus wrap to honour artist Queen Cee, left, was created by artist Stylo Starr, right. PHOTO PROVIDED BY CITY OF HAMILTON.



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ough a Different Lens

The Nature Photography of Greg Noakes

I'm a nature photographer from Halton Hills. As an outdoor enthusiast, I'm always looking for ways to immerse myself in the natural world, and photography has been the perfect medium for me to do so. Photography for me is a way to connect with nature, explore new places, and see the world through a different lens. Living along the Niagara Escarpment and having the Bruce Trail in my back yard has been a blessing. I'm constantly inspired by its beauty and complexity, and I'm grateful for the chance to share my perspective with others. Whether it's a grand landscape or the details of a bird's feathers, I believe everything in the natural world has its own story to tell, and it's my job as a photographer to bring those stories to life.



▲ Western Honey Bee at Purple Loosestrife. It took a bit of patience and multiple shots to come away with a shot with the bee looking at the camera, but it was worth the wait.



◀ Scarlet Tanager. During an unexpectedly windy, wet, and stormy day, I ventured out not expecting to find anything when this Scarlet Tanager flew past, at eye level, trying to find a break from the storm.

▼ Eastern Chipmunk. An Eastern Chipmunk and I played Peek-a-boo in the late fall of 2023.





▲ American Mink. While I was sitting by the river passing the time, an American Mink approached me along the riverbank, curious about what I was up to.



▲ Eastern Black Swallowtail on Teasel.

► Red-tailed Hawk. I had the idea for a photo like this in my mind's eye for a while. A very minimalistic, single perch, a somewhat regal, posed bird of prey, and some dramatic skies behind. Thanks to a chance encounter roadside on a drive home one day, I've now got my shot!





▲ Eastern White-tailed Deer. This is from a chance encounter last fall in Halton's only provincial park, Bronte Creek Provincial Park, and an unforgettable experience.



▲ Red-tailed Hawk. After enjoying a meal, this Red-tailed Hawk posed nearby on an old fence.



▲ Eastern Bluebird. My personal favourite bird species.



▲ Red Trillium. A spring ephemeral. Fun fact, it smells like a "wet dog" to some!



▲ Green Frog with a "bubblebeard".

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▲ Eastern White-tailed Deer. Doe! [Doh!] I blinked!



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▲ Yellow-rumped Warbler, also known as a Butter Butt.



▲ American Toad.



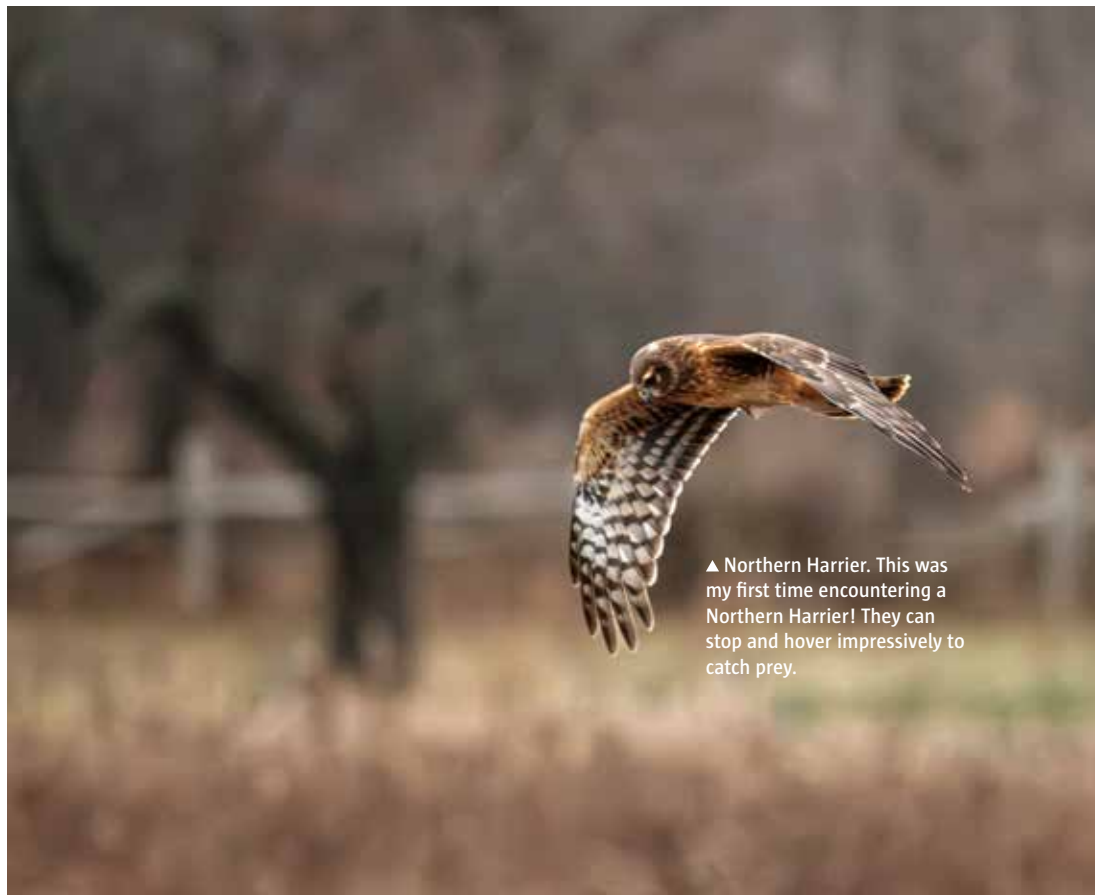
▲ Veery.



▲ Blue Dasher Dragonfly rests by a pond, a sign of a healthy ecosystem.



▲ Eastern Kingbird amongst the new spring growth.



▲ Northern Harrier. This was my first time encountering a Northern Harrier! They can stop and hover impressively to catch prey.

To find more about Greg's work, visit Instagram @RandomPhotoAdventure, his website randomphotoadventure.ca or call 647-803-3496. **NEV**

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Preserving and Sharing Ojibwe Culture

Written and photographed by Gloria Hildebrandt except where noted.



Elementary school teachers at Ojibwe Cultural Foundation learn native crafts to teach to their young students.



Ojibwe Cultural Foundation in M’Chigeeng on Manitoulin Island is available for all to use and enjoy, First Nations and non-First Nations people alike. All that’s needed is an appreciation for culture, history, language, or all three.

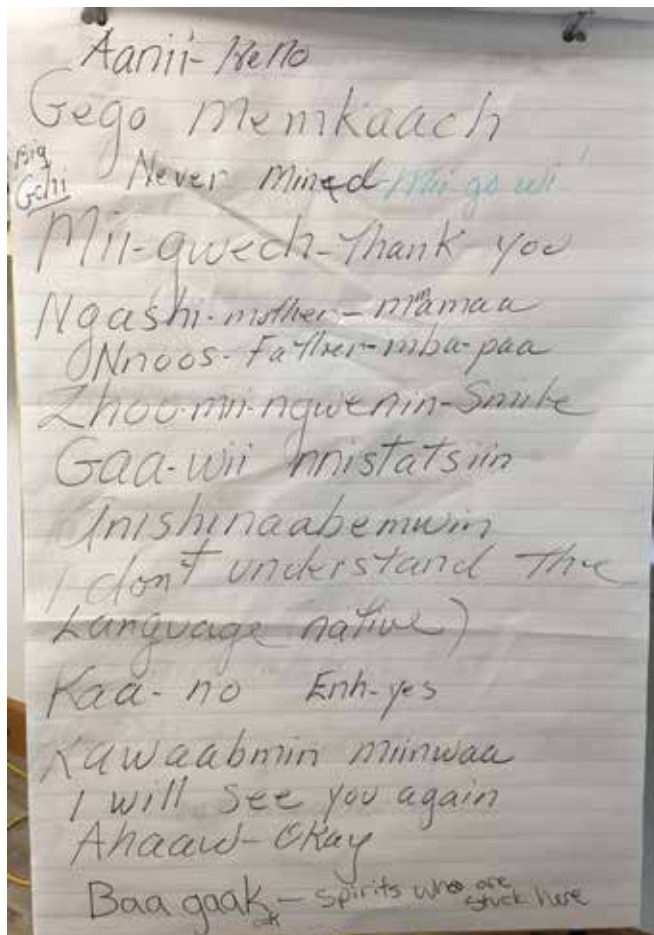


▲ Medicine bags in the process of being made and decorated with beadwork. PHOTO BY MIKE DAVIS.

Elementary school educators are at the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation, having a professional development day to learn about Ojibwe culture and share the knowledge with their young students. They're making leather medicine bags and drums. The bags have been worked on all week and tonight, supper will be served and beading will be done into the night.

Darlene Bebonang has been teaching beadwork and leatherwork there for 12 years. She offers public crafting sessions with materials provided, open to anyone, not just First Nations people. Every day from 10am to 2pm there is Open Studio Time with Darlene featuring a weekly craft, but anyone may use the studio as needed. Craft Night on Tuesdays between 5 and 8pm includes a meal as well as time to work on a selected craft piece.

On this day, Darlene



▲ Language notes on a flip chart: learning and practising the Anishinaabemwin language is the most important goal of the OCF.





◀ Beaded creations by Darlene Bebonang.

▼ Among the wealth of beads in the studio, from left, Eria Panamick-K, Valerie Assinewai and Darlene Bebonang.
PHOTO BY MIKE DAVIS.





▲ The healing lodge lets everyone sit as equals around the central fireplace where sacred items are ready for use. PHOTO BY MIKE DAVIS.



▲ One side of the entrance wall outside the OCF. The pictographs are the work of the late Carl Beam.



▲ Executive director Glen Hare in the central lobby or atrium. In the floor is the Thunderbird image, part of the symbol for M'Chigeeng First Nation. Changing art exhibits line the space. PHOTO BY MIKE DAVIS.

herself is working on a beaded bear band for a top hat. "I married into the Bear Clan," she explains. Her own beadwork can be bought in the building's Gift Shop, with her drop earrings, necklaces, sun catchers and other items available for sale.

She continues giving a tour of the crafts room, showing the beadwork that the women are working on, deer hides in different stages of processing, from off-the-drying frame to the softest, white version after being smoked and dyed, capable of being sewn with a needle without the aid of a thimble.

Eria Panamick-K, a summer student, is beading a pair of earrings for the gift shop. "There are lots of different ways to bead, to fix the bead to the work with the nylon thread," she says. The earrings she's making have the four colours of the medicine wheel: black representing autumn, the



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west, the physical; white for winter, the north, the mental; yellow for spring, the east, the spiritual; and red for summer, the south, the emotional.

Mission of OCF

The Ojibwe Cultural Foundation (OCF) states on its Facebook page that it is “dedicated to the preservation, revitalization and growth of the language, culture and arts of the Anishinaabek” on Manitoulin and the north shore of Lake Huron.

From outside, the modern building is intriguing, marked by sloping entrance walls with what looks like ancient pictographs on them, but were actually created by the renowned artist Carl Beam. Designed by the architectural firm Sears Russell of Toronto, inside, the building is even more beautiful. An open central lobby is lined with changing art exhibits and benches. In addition to the crafts room, other rooms radiate off this space: the healing lodge, art

Every person inside is regarded as equal.

gallery and a permanent residential school exhibit down a short hallway. The gift shop and administrative offices are close to the front door.

The healing lodge is a circular space with a central open fireplace where every person inside is regarded as equal. Two levels of seating ring the room. On the ledge around the fireplace are sacred items that must

not be touched: small rocks, palm-sized feathers and elements for burning and smudging: dried tobacco, sage, sweetgrass and cedar. This room is used for ceremonies, meetings, storytelling and other community meetings. The circular form echoes

traditional sapling-and-bark lodges.

The gallery contains a permanent fine art collection of works by the prominent Anishinaabe artists Carl Beam, Leland Bell, Daphne Odjig and others. Temporary exhibits show the work of other renowned visual artists in traditional and contemporary forms.



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Rainbow Lodge, Birch Island



Traditional art features images of flowers, leaves, strawberries. Baskets have been made from bulrushes, sweetgrass, quills or birch bark. One wall displays information about the clan systems and where they have been traditionally based on Manitoulin Island and around the Great Lakes.

It's fascinating to realize that the Great Lakes and all large waterways were used as transportation routes that were faster and more efficient to use than overland trails through forest and bush. Contemporary society thinks of highways and roadways as ways to move around, and shores as end points, not entrances for the movement of goods and people.

Residential School Exhibit

A row of wood lockers identified by individual metal plates of punched numbers initially looks like nothing but old storage units. Yet secrets remain inside each one; photographs and information are displayed about the children who, in the early 1900s, were taken from Manitoulin and the north shore of Lake Huron to residential schools in the town of Spanish. The exhibit asks us to consider the children who were taken against their will, and to "feel their pain and confusion upon discovering textbooks and a society that had already dismissed Indian people as simple savages impeding the march of civilization."

Making the point further is an exhibit of an old social studies workbook of western Canada. The perspective is completely settler-based, touting the history and achievements of colonizers and showing an utter disregard for the knowledge of First Nations children.

The gift shop sells contemporary pieces, with some costing from very little to around \$100. In addition to beaded items, there are clothing, books, posters and Beam paints. Also of interest here



▲ Wooden lockers hold secrets about the residential school history. PHOTO BY MIKE DAVIS.

is a display of replicas of fragments found in various archaeological sites and stored in OCF's collection.

Preserving Language

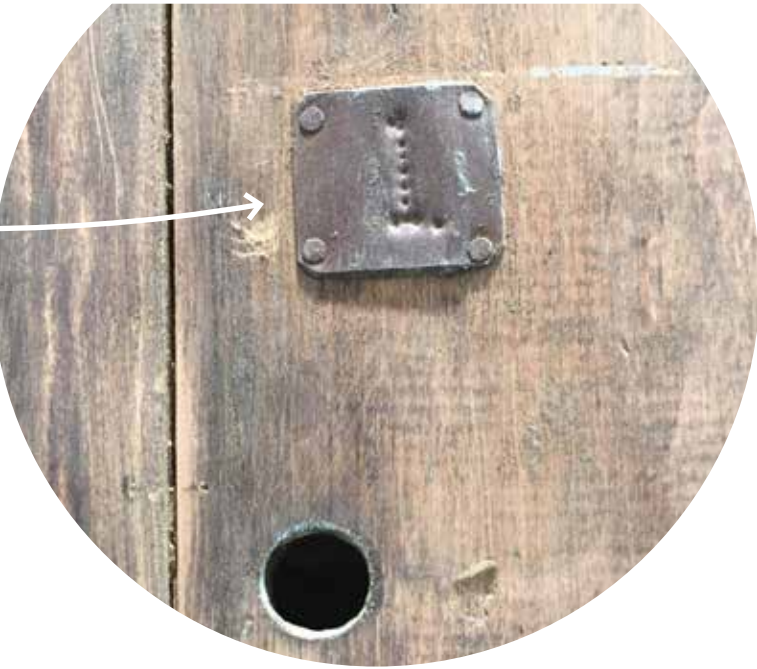
Located in M'Chigeeng First Nation, OCF is vital for all five reserves on Manitoulin.

Executive director Glen Hare states that the number one function of OCF has been preserving the language. A former Ontario Regional Chief with 39 years in politics, he adds "Our language is still at risk. It can't be used in some places. We can't use the language in the halls of school. In politics, I would say to the French, I respect your language, please respect ours. The cultural kicks in after that"

"We're very welcoming," adds finance officer Valerie Assinewai. "There's positive energy coming from here. It's helped with my own creativity. It was started because of a lack of Indigenous resources in schools. We're blessed to have this in our region." **NEV**



▼ A punched number plate on the outside of a locker.



▼ Inside each locker is a plaque of history about the pains of residential schools.




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Solitary Sandpiper photo taken by Rob Wray





Cherry blossom
time in April,
Centennial Park
in Dundas.

PHOTO BY MIKE DAVIS.



FOR *Love* OF A PIG

Written and
photographed
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At the original property of Happily Ever Esther Farm Sanctuary (HEEFS), a memorial trail lets visitors view stones that honour animal residents who passed away. A stone at the entrance reads "Esther Forever." HEEFS has relocated to a larger property, and the original farm has a new purpose.



Esther the Wonder Pig may be gone, but her legacy lives on. The “kindness movement” she inspired has doubled in power with the move of the Happily Ever Esther Farm Sanctuary to a bigger property west of the Niagara Escarpment near Hamilton. The original farm also has new life as an agrotourism destination, supporting other sanctuaries that are less visible without a media star like Esther.



▲ Esther the Wonder Pig in 2016, in the barn for breakfast, wearing a cupcake cape and giving a wary eye to Mike Davis. PHOTO BY MIKE DAVIS.

You'll find more pigs than ponies at a former horse farm 20 km from the original location of Happily Ever Esther Farm Sanctuary (HEEFS) in Campbellville. HEEFS moved to the new site in October 2024, carrying on the work of rescuing abused and neglected farmed animals sparked by Esther the Wonder Pig back in 2015.

"The move to our new farm was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that came about through the generosity of a supporter who made an equity donation, in addition to a bequest that was given to the sanctuary," explains Derek

Walter, HEEFS' executive director. "It's an amazing step up for the residents."

The property has about triple the acreage and plenty of room to grow. The higher elevation reduces the chance of flooding. The barns have three times as many stalls, which allows rambunctious goats to be separated from sheep. A riding arena became a pig village, and there's plenty of room to rotate pastures.

The property also allows HEEFS to expand its rescue and educational programs, welcoming more visitors to experience the mission of saving animals.

A New Purpose for Esther's Home

Meanwhile, rather than have Esther's first sanctuary sold and its storied history lost, HEEFS co-founder Steve Jenkins launched a fundraising campaign to keep the farm "in the family." Just as many people donated to the campaign to keep the farm as had been involved in its start.

"It meant a lot to many people in Esther's community that we keep the site," Steve says.

Taking back its original name, Cedar Brook Farm, the property will reopen this year as an agrotourism destination. The cow pasture will become

lavender and sunflower fields. There will be pick-your-own flowers and a pumpkin patch, a special event venue and guest accommodations. Produce from the orchard and a sprawling vegetable garden will go to local animal sanctuaries.

All profits will be donated to Operation Angels, a charitable organization created by Steve and his team. It honours Esther's legacy by providing financial support and educational programs for animal sanctuaries in Canada, the U.S., UK and Australia, many of which struggle without the visibility from a star attraction like Esther.



▲ At the new location for HEEFS, a flying Esther on the sanctuary sign waves her magic wand of kindness.



◀ The original property has resumed its previous name and now works to help other farmed animal sanctuaries and rescue organizations.

While the farm won't be a full sanctuary itself, it does have a small number of rescued animals by special request, a few pigs, sheep, turkeys, ducks and one llama. Visitors can take part in work days and community events, see the lagoon Esther loved and walk the memorial trail, lined with some 77 stones representing residents who lived out their lives on the property.

Esther's Early Days

Niagara Escarpment Views readers may be familiar with Esther, as are people around the world, in some 46 countries, at last count.

Adopted in 2012, Esther was a bright, playful pet who quickly captured the hearts of her "dads," Steve and Derek. As she grew, it became obvious this was no mini pig, and their suburban house in Georgetown was no place to keep what turned out to be a 260-kg animal. Raising funds to buy a farm in Campbellville, the family moved to what became HEEFS in 2015.

HEEFS grew beyond that one special pig. It became a registered charity, whose mission is to rescue abused, neglected and abandoned farmed animals, providing them a safe, life-long home. Some of these residents had been abandoned in a ditch or rental home or were found wandering in the woods. Some young animals aged out of petting zoos, and sometimes a person bought a pig or goat to roast and had a change of heart.

The result is a menagerie of about 65 rescues that includes pigs, cows, sheep, fowl, goats and one bonded pair: BJ the donkey and Escalade the horse. The environment allows animals to thrive, experience freedom and embrace the joy that comes with a second chance at life.

Esther embodied that joy. She sparkled on social media in cheeky poses, often



▲ Derek Walter with HEEFS resident Sammy. The Yorkshire pig was found abandoned in a ditch and tied to a crate.

sporting colourful sunglasses, wigs, sunbonnets and capes from her vast, often cupcake-themed wardrobe. Her fame spread in a TEDx Talk, several books and media interviews with CBC, CTV News, *The Washington Post* and more, although a planned movie fell through. Celebrity fans include comedian Ricky Gervais and climate activist Greta Thunberg.

Because of Esther, thousands opened their eyes and hearts to see pigs and all animals as individuals. Her life helped others see the magic of kindness and the power of a smile. That hasn't stopped with her death.

▼ About two dozen pigs call HEEFS home. The new property has enough space to rotate pasture use, giving the soil a break, allowing grasses to regrow naturally and helping prevent overgrazing.





▲ Steve Jenkins is proud of the garden at Cedar Brook Farm, which includes kidney beans, cantaloupe, rainbow corn, cucumber, gourds, honeydew melons, pumpkins, spaghetti squash, watermelons and Sicilian zucchini.



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◀ To let Esther beat the summer heat, a lagoon was built for her, which was a great improvement over the stack of kiddie pools that she used to lie in. Watching Esther “bathe” was a highlight for touring visitors. The lagoon remains, in her memory.

▶ The heart-hands gesture represents love and friendship. Close-up photos of volunteers’ hands forming hearts make up a quilt-like sign on the HEEFS barn.



Esther’s Legacy

Esther became ill in October 2017 and was taken to the Ontario Veterinary College at the University of Guelph. Unfortunately, the imaging tools needed to diagnose a large animal like Esther were not available in Canada at the time.

Within four months, generous supporters raised \$750,000 to buy a massive CT scanner big enough to hold Esther. It’s now housed at the vet college with the stipulation that farm sanctuaries can use the machine at no charge.

Esther’s eventual diagnosis was cancer. Surgery and medication prolonged her life, but she went through more health challenges and the pandemic before dying in her sleep on October 18, 2023 at the age of 11.

Her memory lives on, now in two physical locations as well as the minds and hearts of thousands, including her dads, although they have since split up. What started with one pig has blossomed into a full “kindness movement” guided

by humour and a positive attitude. Not a bad legacy for one little pig.

How You Can Help

Visit HEEFS (<https://www.happilyeveresther.ca/>) and Cedar Brook Farm (<https://stevejenkins.ca/cedar-brook-farm>), online and in person. Attend volunteer work events and help plant, tend and harvest the gardens; maintain the grounds; or give piggy belly rubs.

Donate money or goods/services for auctions.

Buy a T-shirt, tote bag, mug, Esther’s *10 Years of Magic* book or other merchandise.

Follow, like and comment on social media posts to increase Esther’s reach.

Encourage friends



▲ By a stencil made from a stamp of her hoof, Esther’s footprints lead home across the rainbow bridge at the entrance to Cedar Brook Farm.

and family to see farm animals in the same light as companion animals.

Sign and share petitions that oppose animal cruelty.

Be kind to all kinds. **NEV**

Sue Horner wrote “Cold Case Hunters Keep a Spotlight on Missing People” for the Winter 2025-26 issue of this magazine. Esther was previously featured in the Winter 2017-18 issue.



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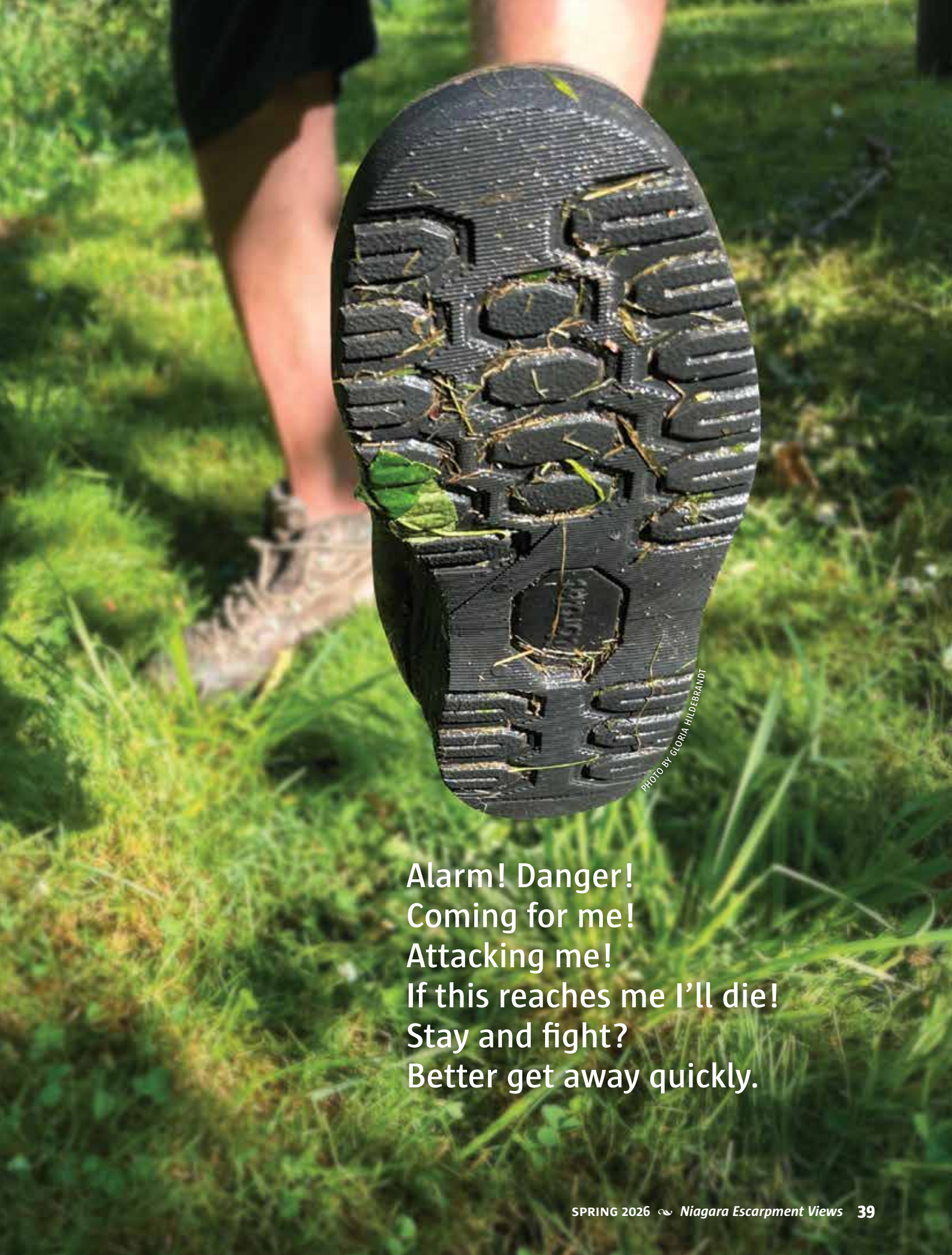


PHOTO BY GLORIA HILDEBRANDT

Alarm! Danger!
Coming for me!
Attacking me!
If this reaches me I'll die!
Stay and fight?
Better get away quickly.

The previous page tries to suggest what we humans are like to snakes. We are so much larger and more prevalent than they are, it's no wonder they fear us so. They can't swallow us, which is how they eat their prey, because we're too enormous. If they do manage to strike us, there is only one in Ontario that is venomous and it is only found in certain specific locations, including near some of the less-populated parts of the Niagara Escarpment. It is a threatened species, so sightings of a Massasauga Rattlesnake are rare. The best that all our snakes can do is try to get away

from us. We pose a real threat to them, especially as many of us loathe, hurt and kill them.

Despite the fact that they can't harm us, many of us are so afraid of them that we can't even bear to look at them in person or see them on TV, film, online or even photos of them in books or magazines. Some of us can't even handle seeing toys of them, or cartoon images, or plastic, obviously fake ones in gardening catalogues.

There's a word for this: ophidiophobia. The word comes from the Greek words *ophis*, or serpent, and *phobia*, or fear. It means an overwhelming fear of snakes.

What's to Fear?

They'll kill me.
They'll bite me.
They'll strike me in the face with their heads or mouths.
They'll wind around me and strangle me.
They look like no other animal.
They have no legs but can move very quickly.
They're ugly, without arms or legs, have no neck, eyes that don't blink, and a forked tongue.
They shed their skin.
They're slimy.

People without a snake phobia realize that these fears are not reasonable.



Any phobia can negatively affect one's quality of life, if it prevents someone from doing things where the perceived danger is thought to be. A snake phobia can keep you from enjoying the simple pleasures of being outdoors, in nature, doing gardening, having a picnic, walking or hiking on the Escarpment,

swimming in natural, safe bodies of water, and boating in canoes, kayaks, rowboats and other watercrafts.

Babies Not Afraid of Snakes

Phobias are usually learned, even those we assume to be ancient knowledge passed down through our genes to



◀ Tunde Otto, executive director of Willow Park Ecology Centre, giving a talk to the public in the park.

Any phobia can negatively affect one's quality of life.



▲ A DeKay's Brownsnake seen on Manitoulin Island. A very small snake, it grows to only 29 to 33 cm long.

keep us safe. Information on Instagram shares that “In an experiment featured on ABC Science’s program ‘Secret Science,’ researchers placed babies in a controlled room with non-venomous snakes to study natural fear responses. The goal was to see if humans are born with an instinctive fear of

snakes or if it’s learned through experience. “Surprisingly, the infants showed little to no fear. Some even reached toward the snakes with curiosity instead of hesitation. Scientists concluded that while humans may have a biological awareness of snakes, genuine fear usually

develops later, influenced by parents, culture, and personal experience rather than being an automatic reaction from birth.” **Conquering Fears** If you’d like a phobia to have less power over you, it is possible to diminish fears, no matter how out of control they seem. False beliefs and the

unknown are said to be the root of many fears. Self-help strategies can work, but if the phobia is severe, professional help can be effective. With phobias, the perceived threat is non-existent or wildly exaggerated. The best way to deal with a phobia is to be gradually and safely exposed to the trigger. In



▲ The hibernaculum in Willow Park Ecology Centre was created to give snakes underground protection, particularly in winter, when they brumate, which is the reptile's version of hibernating.

the case of snakes or other animals, it may mean first looking at images of them until your response lessens. Deep breathing can help calm you. Knowledge can decrease anxiety, so a next step might be learning to identify photos of our different native snakes. Learning about how and where snakes live may help, all without being close to them. When images of snakes produce less fear, it may be possible to attend an educational presentation on snakes. The professionals will give a completely controlled, safe program discussing the animals they have brought, and will never force anyone to get closer than desired.

Willow Park Ecology Centre (WPEC) in Norval, between Georgetown and

Brampton, occasionally hosts such events.

“Presenters bring animals they have rescued or keep for other reasons, to show guests, to teach them about the beauty, habitat, needs and survival strategies,” says Tunde Otto, executive director of WPEC. “They’ll also teach how to handle snakes, and usually you can hold them.” If people are afraid of snakes, presenters and park staff members help them understand them.

“We offer a place to feel safe, to ask questions and express concerns,” Tunde adds. “Connecting people to animals being just like us, with similar needs for food, shelter and community, helps reduce fears.”

How Snakes Behave

When WPEC was created

in 1998, a hibernaculum or winter shelter was put together for snakes. In a discrete place near the wetland, rocks and tree stumps were piled, creating small open spaces between them, and then buried to provide protection below where frost can reach.

“We do not know if that is where they hibernate,” explains Tunde, but the park as a whole is home to several species of snakes that have been observed there: Common Gartersnake, Common Water Snake, Dekay’s Brown Snake, Eastern Foxsnake, Eastern Milksnake, Grey Rat Snake, Northern Red Belly.

“All animals have a place in keeping an ecosystem healthy and a role to play in food chains,” adds Tunde. “Snakes aren’t ‘after us,’ they’re just

busy doing their own thing to survive and have young, just like people. They eat a wide variety of prey, including rodents, insects, birds, amphibians, and other snakes, depending on the species. They help ecosystems by controlling pest populations, acting as a food source for other animals, and contributing to nutrient cycling. Snakes help us and ecosystems by controlling rodents, which means they also indirectly help reduce the spread of diseases like Lyme Disease carried by ticks, because rodents act as a host for larvae and nymph ticks.”

Snakes want to be left alone. Any threatening behaviour they might display, like shaking their tail, coiling up and lifting their head,



▲ A little Eastern Milksnake winds harmlessly around Mike Davis's hand. This specially protected snake has often been persecuted because of a slight resemblance to the Massasauga Rattlesnake.



▲ Gloria Hildebrandt touching a ball of two snakes a few years ago, held by professional presenter Jenny Pearce of the former Sciensation! Ssnakes!!

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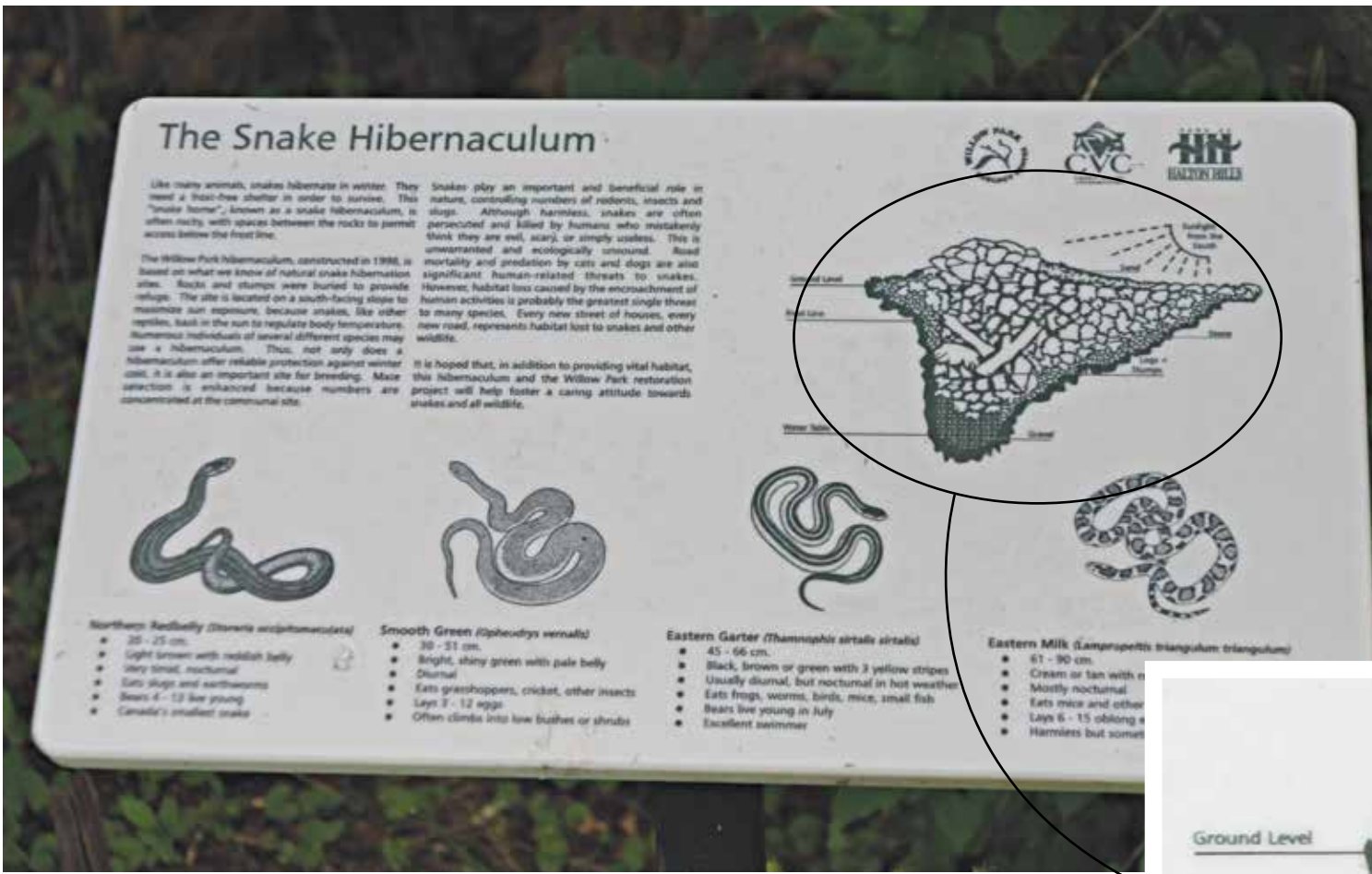
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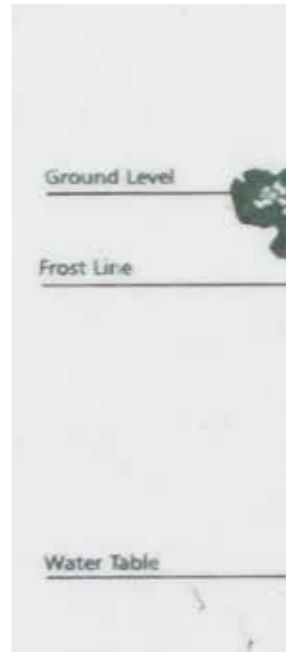
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▲ A good educational opportunity is provided by this sign near the hibernaculum in the park.



▲ An educational presentation on snakes and other animals is sometimes offered at Willow Park Ecology Centre in Norval.



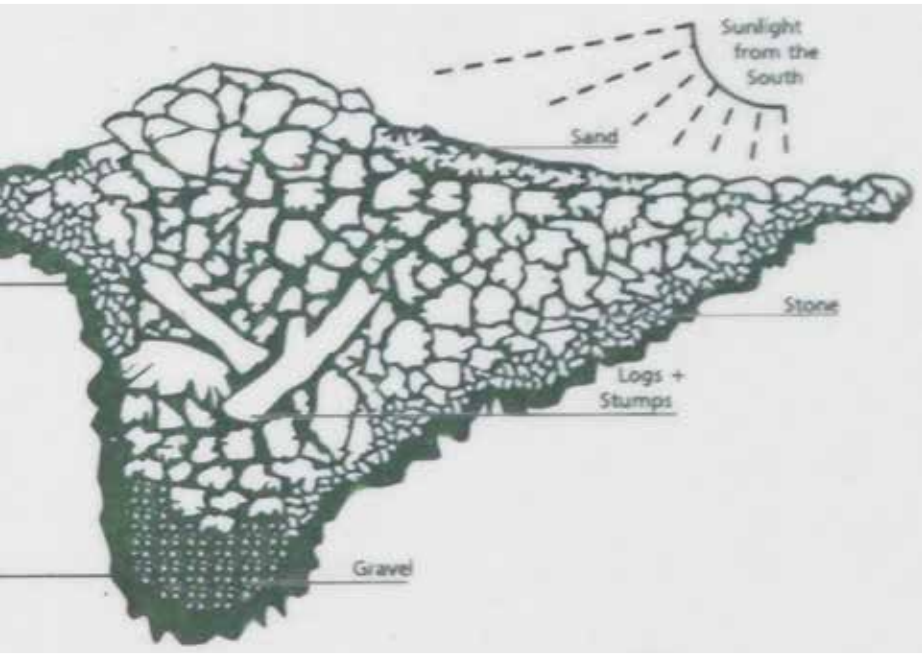
even darting their head at us, is likely because they feel threatened or cornered. When not harassed, they tend to move away from us and hide. They do not seek us out to do us harm.

your fear. Just being able to live and let snakes live in your environment can give you an increased quality of life, letting you enjoy the pleasures of the natural world. **NEV**

Take Control

If you want to improve your quality of life by decreasing your phobia about snakes, you can begin to take control by gradually and safely facing your fear. Try to breathe calmly after being startled by a snake in images or reality. Challenge your negative thoughts about snakes. Have someone who's not afraid of them, support you as you see a snake. Realize that you never have to get to the point of touching or handling a snake. You don't need to have a snake slung around your neck to prove that you've conquered

Foster a caring attitude towards all wildlife.



▲ This diagram shows the structure of the hibernaculum and how it provides safe, frost-free spaces for animals to shelter through the winter.

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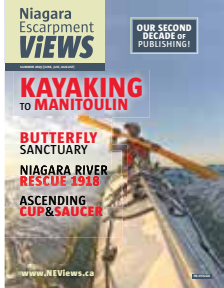
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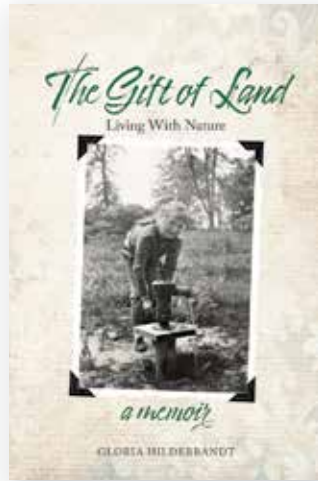
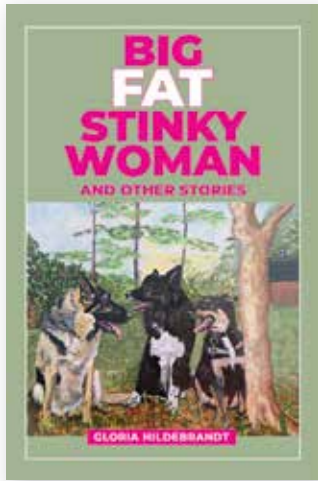
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Reviving Acton's Fairy Lake

By Ann Lawlor,
Mayor of Halton Hills

Prospect Park located on the edges of Fairy Lake in Acton, Town of Halton Hills, is near the Niagara Escarpment and is within the Credit River watershed. Over the years, the water quality of the lake has degraded and swimming is not recommended. Currently, there is a five-year plan to restore the lake environment to health and enhance its beauty. Ann Lawlor, Halton Hills mayor, explains what has been happening here.

Why Fairy Lake Needs Rehabilitation

Prospect Park is an approximately 25-acre parkland complex, situated on a 14-acre peninsula that extends into the approximately 69-acre Fairy Lake. The picturesque lake in the centre of Acton is a mill pond created in the 1800s that now struggles with high levels of salt, nitrogen and phosphorus. These pollutants come from decaying organic matter and the nearby neighbourhood and farm runoff into creeks and channels that flow into the lake. Waterfowl droppings, particularly from geese, foul

the park and beach area and then leach into the water.

Fairy Lake, though a habitat for some of Ontario's at-risk species, is also plagued by invasive flora and fauna which are outcompeting native plants and animals. Invasive fish include the destructive Round Goby which eats the eggs of native species such as bass. Similarly, phragmites, tall grasses that are highly invasive and destructive, have formed dense thickets along the shoreline and are displacing native vegetation. This results in a loss of biodiversity and reduces the resilience and health of the lake. All these factors diminish access to and enjoyment of Fairy Lake and degrade the downstream Credit River environment.

Is There Danger in Using the Lake?

The Halton Regional Public Health Unit has regularly tested water quality at the Prospect Park beach area and often recommends against swimming due to high bacteria counts related to waterfowl and poor water quality where there is blue-green algae accumulation. Since the algae can cause skin irritation and nausea, restoring

the lake's health is not just about beauty and nature, but about safety for everyone.

What's the Plan?

Last year, I joined forces with Credit Valley Conservation (CVC), Town staff, and the Region to launch the Black Creek Subwatershed Project. We dusted off old studies and, together, developed a five-year strategy to clean up Fairy Lake, supported by Halton Region funding. Now in year two, CVC experts are working side-by-side with our community to bring the "Fairy Lake Revival!" project to life—a name chosen to inspire public participation and pride.

Similarly, the SNAP, or Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan, is a multi-faceted neighborhood program of CVC that has been initiated in Peel and in Hungry Hollow in Georgetown. We are introducing it in Acton to support new environmental activities with businesses and residents. All of it will help "clean up" and improve the health and biodiversity in Fairy Lake and the surrounding area.

Last summer's Mayor's Fishing Derby kicked off the Fairy Lake Revival! and public participation. Local

fishers, young and not-so-young, were able to snag a few dozen invasive Round Goby fish and get them out of the lake. We all had fun and learned a lot that day!

Specific Actions

CVC's Neighbourhood Action Plan will support the Town of Halton Hills' Fairy Lake Revival! initiative by improving water quality, creating healthier habitat and supporting wildlife. Acting on recommendations from the Black Creek Subwatershed Study, Halton Region's Total Phosphorus Offset Strategy and Town of Halton Hills' Fairy Lake Water Quality Update, SNAP will help reduce phosphorus and other pollutants entering Black Creek and Fairy Lake, giving fish, aquatic insects and many species better chances to thrive. Climate-smart habitats created by tree plantings and green infrastructure will cool urban areas for people, while creating forage paths for pollinators, shaded corridors for wildlife and more.



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Heritage Designation

Not only natural features are important for preservation. Last year, Halton Hills Council gave a heritage designation to the public property at Prospect Park and Fairy Lake. The identified attributes contributing to the heritage value include the central location within Acton; existing built features - the 1926 bandstand and pillars at the park entrance, the 1867 Acton Drill Shed and the 1934 Pioneer Cemetery Cairn. Natural and human-made features within the landscape include: Fairy Lake and the extant dam; the former drive track; and the mature deciduous and coniferous trees. Prospect Park and Fairy Lake represent a significant cultural heritage landscape, meeting eight out of nine

Ontario Heritage Act criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest. The park and lake are jewels of Acton, indeed!

Achievements

The big accomplishment is the development of an action plan, with funding, to remediate the lake and greater watershed. I'm excited to see Town and CVC staff connecting with local groups and residents near the lake and beyond to involve them in the cleanup plan and neighbourhood-based activity. The passion for Fairy Lake runs deep in our community and people are keen to join in. We are seeing environmental science in action and together we're making a real difference.



Hoping to catch a big one at the Mayor's Fishing Derby, Fairy Lake, July 2025. PHOTO BY BARRY BEST.

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Harnessing the Sun's Energy for Art

By Nicholl Spence

While browsing a lovely fabric store near our family cottage I happened upon the art of nature's photography: Cyanotype printing. Cyanotype printing uses the sun's UV light to create photographic results on paper or fabric. You create your artwork using foliage from an assortment of plants, berries and stems. Cyanotype is a UV-light-sensitive emulsion that I purchased from the small shop near my cottage, but I have also seen it available on Amazon. Cyanotype can be purchased as a two-bottle sensitizer set or pretreated fabric sheets. The resulting artwork creates deep blue and white images and was historically used for blueprints in the mid 1800s.

Discovering this process, I quickly got to work and gathered an abundance of different materials for my designs.

To begin, I used sprigs of lavender, several maple leaves and maple keys. This project can be exposed on paper or fabric and I chose to use pieces of cotton muslin. I used the two-part Cyanotype mixture and when I mixed part A

with part B, the liquid was activated and became sensitive to sunlight (UV light).

In a dark room, I used a foam brush to evenly coat the muslin with the Cyanotype liquid and then covered the fabric with parchment paper and set it in a dark room free from UV light to allow the fabric to dry.

Using an old picture frame with the glass removed, I laid my prepared muslin onto the board and arranged my garden leaves on top of the muslin. I then sandwiched everything with the glass to keep the leaves flat to the muslin and placed my frame outside in direct sunlight. Depending on the day and the intensity of the sun, you may need to leave your cyanotype in sunlight for 15 minutes to one hour. You will know the photographic process is working because when you lift a side of the leaf it will appear darker than the exposed sunlit areas. This is a similar result to what you would see in photographic silkscreening. When you see this contrast, take your frame inside, remove the glass and leaves and continually run your muslin under water until the water runs clear. Allow your muslin to dry and iron out the creases.

I am thrilled with my



▲ An assortment of leaves and maple keys is arranged on the UV-sensitive prepared muslin cloth.

results and plan to sew my pieces of muslin together to create a re-usable market bag. Feel free to write us and let us know what you created with your Cyanotype!

Follow Along

You can find how-to tutorials on my YouTube channel @FarmhouseStudioOnFifth.

Nicholl Spence is a freelance graphic designer who works from her rural farmhouse home office in Erin. Among her work is the design and layout for this magazine.



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▲ From exposure to final artwork, the above image shows the final result.



▲ Above two examples of rinsed, dried and ironed muslin after exposure. Once rinsed and dried the exposed areas are vibrant, deep blue with the unexposed areas remaining the colour of the fabric. The result may resemble tie-dying.



◀ This image shows the contrast in colour you will see after exposure to sunlight.

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A Wild Future Taking Shape

By Beth Gilhespy

If you walk in nature often enough, you begin to notice subtle changes. A meadow that remains open year after year because it is carefully managed. A wetland that feels just a little quieter, more settled, because it is no longer under threat. A stretch of forest where the future feels less uncertain. These are not dramatic transformations, but they are exactly what enduring conservation looks like.

Over the past two years, Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy (EBC) has been building momentum toward a Wild Future. Quietly launched in 2024, the Wild Future campaign is a long-term effort to permanently protect thousands of acres of ecologically significant land along the Niagara Escarpment corridor, the Saugeen (Bruce) Peninsula, and Manitoulin Island. These are landscapes many readers of *Niagara Escarpment Views* know intimately. They are places discovered step by step, season by season, through hiking boots, canoe routes, binoculars, and curiosity.

What makes this moment different is scale — and urgency. The pressures on Escarpment landscapes are

accelerating. Development edges closer to sensitive wetlands. Regulatory protections are weakening. Fragmentation nibbles away at forest interiors. Resource extraction interests continue to scar the landscape. At the same time, opportunities to protect large, intact properties are becoming rarer. When they appear, they are often fleeting, demanding decisive action backed by strong stewardship and sound finances.

Remarkable Milestone

In 2024 and 2025, our vision of a Wild Future translated into tangible, lasting results. In December 2025 we reached a remarkable milestone: the total amount of land protected by the EBC since its visionary founding surpassed 25,000 acres. With the support of donors, foundations, and conservation partners, we completed the protection of the 600-acre Benallen wetland and forest complex near Owen Sound, a landscape of exceptional biodiversity and hydrological significance. We also secured shoreline, bluff, and interior forest refuges on Manitoulin Island, the Saugeen (Bruce) Peninsula, and along the Niagara Escarpment corridor. In

every case, conservation went far beyond simply “buying land.” It involved meaningful partnerships, careful stewardship planning, ecological monitoring, the engagement of dedicated volunteers, and the creation of financial reserves to ensure these places are cared for long after the moment of acquisition has passed. This work may be quiet, but it is what makes conservation — and a Wild Future — truly permanent.

Looking ahead, the Wild Future campaign remains ambitious. Our goal is to create a connected network of protected lands that supports biodiversity, climate resilience, and the quiet human experiences that make the Niagara Escarpment landscape such a powerful place to be. It is about ensuring future generations can still walk beneath ancient trees, follow cold streams to the edge of a cliff, or stand at a Lake Huron shoreline and feel deep time written into the rock.

We have already begun our Wild Future work for 2026. One delightful property has been preserved on Manitoulin Island near Misery Bay, and several more projects are underway. One forthcoming acquisition

will protect nearly 400 acres of woodland, meadow, and shoreline teeming with species at risk. Another is a sparkling waterfall near Owen Sound, beloved by the local community for generations, that will now be protected forever. And two landowners, one on the Saugeen (Bruce) Peninsula and another near Erin, have generously offered to donate their beautiful Escarpment lands, ensuring their care continues beyond their lifetimes.

\$5 Million Worth of Land

As these agreements are finalized, we will begin fundraising for acquisition costs and long-term stewardship. The total value of land expected to be preserved in 2026 under the Wild Future campaign approaches \$5 million. It’s an inspiring figure, and a reminder of the responsibility that comes with success. I am continually astounded and humbled by the commitment of donors who understand that investing in conservation is an investment in connected, sustainable landscapes where wildlife can thrive; in resilient natural systems that purify air, protect clean water, and help mitigate the impacts of climate change; and in the health and



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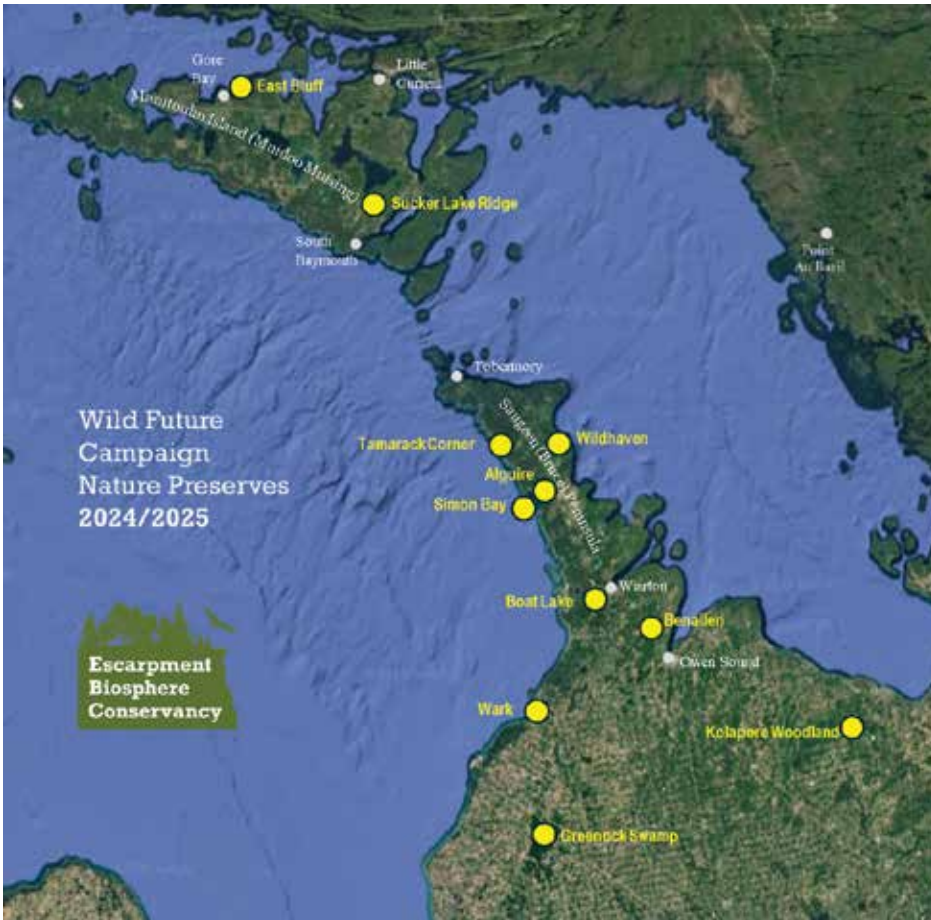
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▲ Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy's 2024 and 2025 Wild Future Campaign nature preserves. IMAGE PROVIDED.

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For those of us who love the Niagara Escarpment, protecting natural spaces is both practical and deeply personal. Every conserved property represents a choice to value continuity over short-term gain, and care over consumption. Thanks to a growing community of supporters, that

choice is being made again and again.

A Wild Future does not arrive all at once. It is built patiently and deliberately, one wild acre at a time.

Beth Gilhespy is chief executive officer of Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy. Reach her at beth@escarpment.ca or 437.331.1341. For more information, see www.escarpment.ca.

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Total Time: 40 mins | Serves: 4

Ingredients

6 strips	<i>Compliments</i> Old Fashioned or Black Pepper Bacon, finely chopped (7 oz/200 g)
2 cups	chopped fresh or frozen rhubarb
½ cup	finely diced onion
2	cloves garlic, minced
1 tbsp	minced fresh ginger
1 tsp	ground allspice
¼ tsp	ground cinnamon
1 cup	<i>Compliments</i> Spirited Mickie Sweet & Tangy Bourbon BBQ Sauce
4	Canadian Chuck Beef Burgers (5 oz/150 g each)
4	<i>Compliments</i> Hamburger Buns

Directions

1. Set large saucepan over medium heat. Cook bacon 5 to 8 min., until bacon is lightly browned and crisp, but not dry. Transfer bacon to plate and remove all but 2 tbsp (30 mL) bacon fat from saucepan.
2. Stir bacon, rhubarb, onion, garlic, ginger, allspice and cinnamon into saucepan over medium heat; cook 5 min. or until vegetables are softened. Stir in BBQ sauce and bring to a simmer. Immediately reduce heat to medium-low and continue cooking, stirring occasionally, about 15 min. until thickened. (Cool completely before storing in refrigerator in sealed container for up to 2 weeks.)
3. Meanwhile, arrange burgers on grill preheated to medium-high heat. Cook 5 to 6 min. per side or until cooked through. Grill buns 1 to 2 min. to lightly toast.
4. Arrange burger patties on buns and top with 2 tbsp (30 mL) bacon jam. If desired, garnish with arugula, tomato slices and red onion. Serve with baked sweet potato wedges on the side.

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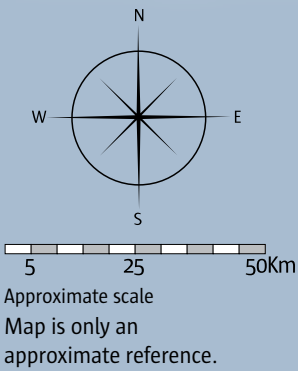


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