

The Giant's Rib

Dedicated to increasing awareness and protection of the
Niagara Escarpment World Biosphere Reserve

Stan Nowak, Editor
December 2011

www.giantsrib.ca
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The Giant's Rib Discovery Centre is now on Facebook!

Visit our website and look for the link: [f Login with Facebook](#) for all the latest news and updates.

The Bruce Duncan Memorial Lecture Series

This series, proudly sponsored by the Giant's Rib Discovery Centre, is named in honour of the former General Manager of the Hamilton Conservation Authority and is dedicated to promoting the Niagara Escarpment as an internationally-recognized World Biosphere Reserve, as well as being a truly unique topographic feature of our natural and cultural heritage.

Next Presentation of this Season: Sunday, December 4th

Creating Ecological Improvements within the Red Hill Valley since the Construction of the Red Hill Parkway

with **JAMES ROCKWOOD** – Environmental Coordinator, Public Works Department, City of Hamilton



The **Red Hill Valley** in Hamilton is named after and home to the Red Hill Creek, which flows from the Niagara Escarpment to Hamilton Harbour, a distance of 7 kilometres. The name comes from the reddish soil, rich with iron. Estimated to be 1,600 acres (650 ha) in size, the Red Hill Valley was the site of a protracted battle over an expressway through the valley, ultimately constructed in 2007.

Construction of the expressway, now known as the **Red Hill Parkway**, was fought by environmentalists for many years. The expressway was proposed as part of a plan to bypass Hamilton and encourage development to the south and east of Hamilton. The valley was chosen for the route of the expressway in the 1970s. The route was chosen over urban routes to avoid destruction of existing neighbourhoods and the resulting land costs.

Following government cancellations and environmental assessments, compromise plans proposed in the 1990s to save the valley were ultimately rejected. The final design did incorporate some compromises intended to ameliorate the effect of the expressway on the valley, including reducing the expressway width to four lanes from six, cleanup of toxic lands along the creek and creek habitat improvement.

James Rockwood holds a Bachelor of Science in Physical Geography and is a certified Environmental Professional specializing in Natural Resource Management and Communications and Public Awareness.

Prior to coming to Hamilton to work on the Red Hill Valley Project, he was a Forester in British Columbia for 14 years. In this context he has extensive experience dealing with professionals of various disciplines and perspectives, Regulatory Agencies, First Nations, Contractors, NGOs and members of the Public on a variety of controversial projects.



James is still fully involved with the Red Hill Project, working on the Integrated Monitoring and Ecological Restoration Programs in and around the valley.

The Bruce Duncan Memorial Lecture Series

The Complete 2011 – 2012 Program

- October 23 **The Wonders of Long Point, One of Canada's World Biosphere Reserves**
STUART MACKENZIE – Land Bird Program Coordinator for the Long Point Bird Observatory
- November 13 **Jon's Journey - Experiences in Exploring the Natural Areas of Hamilton**
JON WELLS – Award-Winning Reporter for the Hamilton Spectator
- December 4 **Creating Ecological Improvements within the Red Hill Valley since the Construction of the Red Hill Parkway**
JAMES ROCKWOOD – Environmental Coordinator, Public Works Department, City of Hamilton
- January 22 **The Formation of the Niagara Escarpment**
Professor NICK EYLES – Expert on glaciations and ice sheets
Author – Ontario Rocks, Canada Rocks
Advisor and participant with CBC's Geologic Journey and Host of Geologic Journey – World
- February 12 **Trails Along the Niagara Escarpment Utilized in the War of 1812**
JOHN BRYDEN – former journalist for Hamilton Spectator, Globe and Mail and Toronto Star
Former MP, Historian, Author and Researcher
- March 18 **The Niagara Peninsula Hawk Watch**
MIKE STREET – Hamilton Naturalists' Club.
A local expert on Hawk Migrations
Developer and Hamilton-Wentworth Coordinator of ONTBIRDS
- April 29 **The Natural Treasures of Carolinian Canada**
LORRAINE JOHNSON –Editor / Author, City Farmer
Lecturer- York University
- May 13 **The Effects of Climate Change on the Ontario Wine Regions**
ANTHONY SHAW – Professor, Department of Geography, Brock University
- June 10 **Escarpment Parks and Open Spaces: Effective Management Planning**
SUSAN COOPER - Natural Heritage Advisor, Land Use and Planning Department, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources

Presentations will be held on Sunday afternoons, from 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. at the former Parks Canada Discovery Centre on 57 Discovery Drive, Hamilton, now administered by the Hamilton Waterfront Trust.

Parking is free, but there is an admission charge of \$3.00 for each of the presentations. Refreshments will be provided after each presentation, along with an opportunity to talk with our guest speaker!

For further information: Kenneth Hall (kenjoan75@sympatico.ca), Stan Nowak (basil.cottage@sympatico.ca).

The Giant's Rib presents:

Art and Photography of the Heritage of the Niagara Escarpment

Celebrates 'the art' of the natural and cultural heritage of the Niagara Escarpment featuring a new local artist every month at the Dundas Valley Trail Centre, Dundas Valley Conservation Area, 650 Governor's Road, Dundas.

Saturdays and Sundays only from 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Park entrance fee is \$4.00 per person (walk-in or bicycle) or \$7.00 per car. No admission fee for children under 12.

There is no admission fee to view the exhibit, but donations are gratefully accepted.

For further information: Artistic Director Nancy Clarke Hauser nancyclarkehauser@gmail.com

For the Month of December 2011 (first two weekends only):

Highlights of the Escarpment

Photographic Works from Shirley Dennis.



Shirley Dennis is an award winning photographer who specializes in landscape, nature and animal photography. Shirley makes her home in Dundas, Ontario and is passionate about the outdoors. She enjoys hiking and horseback riding in Dundas Valley and the surrounding area and finds inspiration for her photographs wherever she walks and rides.

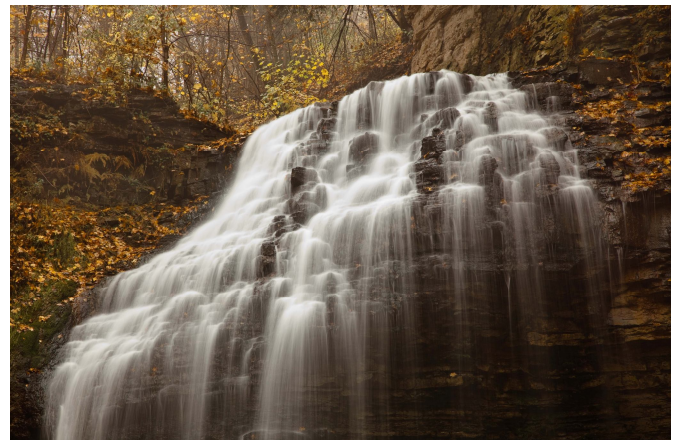
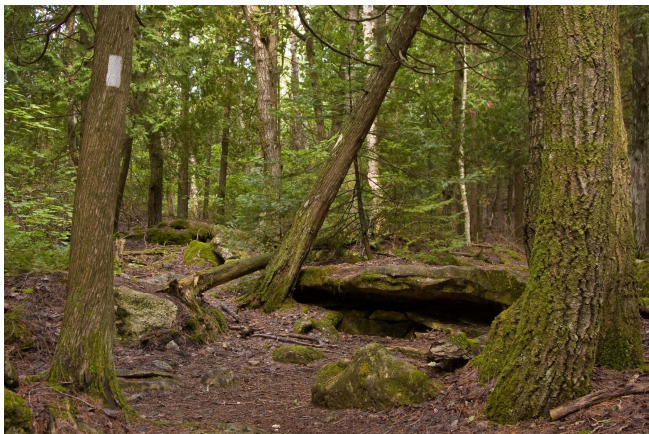
Shirley also travels extensively and with a keen eye for exceptional compositions she has captured stunning images in many parts of the world.

With a photographer's instinct for catching the perfect moment in time, Shirley vividly captures the beauty and drama of the world around her. Whether it be a contemporary composition or a classic scene of nature, an awe-inspiring landscape or an intimate study of texture.

In a professional capacity, Shirley photographs pets and horses. She has the ability to capture the unique personality of each animal that she works with and produces wonderful natural images of the animals in their own surroundings.

Shirley is a member of the Hamilton Camera Club, the Latow Photographers Guild and Studio 12 (a photographic artists' collective). Her images have recently been on display at the Print Studio on James Street North in Hamilton and the Burlington Arts Centre.

E-Mail: sadennis@cogeco.ca



Saturdays and Sundays
Dundas Valley Trail Centre, Dundas Valley Conservation Area.

9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

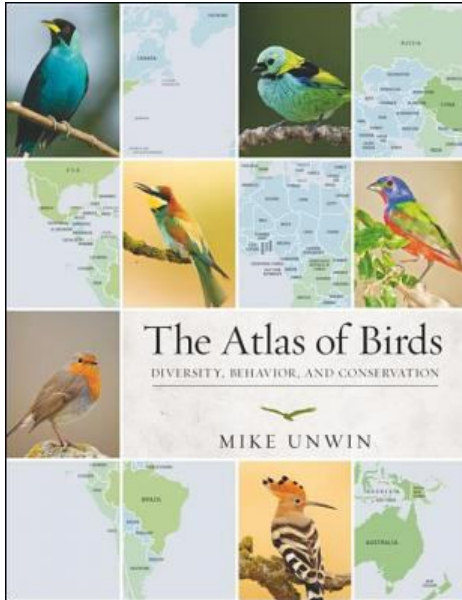
The Literary Rib

A Book Review by Ken Hall

The Atlas of Birds

Author – Mike Unwin

Publisher – Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford



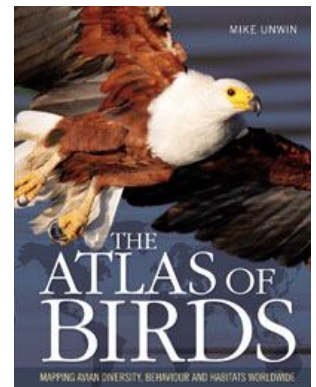
The Atlas of Birds captures the breathtaking diversity of birds, and illuminates their conservation status around the world. Full colour maps show where birds are found, both by country and terrain. The book reveals how an astounding variety of behavioral adaptations – from flight and feeding to nest building and song – have long enabled them to thrive in virtually every habitat on Earth. Maps of individual journeys and global flyways chart the amazing phenomenon of bird migration, while bird classification is explained using maps for each order and many key families.

Conservation provides a strong focus throughout, with maps illustrating where and why birds are most under threat, and what is being done to protect them. Separate sections examine key factors influencing their distribution and endangering their survival, from deforestation and climate change to invasive species and cage-bird trade. Bird groups most affected, such as island endemics, are highlighted, while a fascinating chapter explores the

complex historical relationship between birds and humans, with maps and data for everything from poultry farming to birdwatching.

The Atlas is divided into 8 parts:

- Introduction to Birds
- Where Birds Live
- Birds in Order
- How Birds Live
- Birds and People
- Birds Under Threat
- Protecting Birds
- Bird Table



The maps are supported by an authoritative text that uses the latest data and case studies from Bird Life International. Packed with sumptuous photos, original diagrams, and imaginative graphics that bring the numbers to life, this book is a stunning and timely insight into perhaps the most colourful and intriguing group of organisms on our planet.

Mike Unwin is a natural history writer whose work has appeared in leading publications such as “Birds”, “Bird Watching”, and “Birdwatch”. His many books include “The RSPB Guide to Birdwatching” and “Southern African Wildlife: A Visitors Guide”.

Waterfalls along the Niagara Escarpment

by Joseph Hollick



Billy Green Falls, also called Battlefield Falls in the past, is located on Battlefield Creek on the west side of Centennial Parkway in the Stoney Creek section of Hamilton. It is located on public lands owned by the City of Hamilton as part of the roadway allowance for Centennial Parkway.

Billy Green Falls is a complex ribbon falls with a height of 17m (56 ft.) and a width of 6m (20 ft.). This is a lovely waterfall which can be seen from the roadway if driving upbound, however Battlefield Creek does dry up and thus the best time to view this waterfall is after a rainfall or during the spring snow melt.

During the War of 1812, Billy Green, whose family lived in this area, scouted the movements of the American troops camped in the area and took this information to the British at Burlington Heights. Knowing the terrain, he then let the British soldiers to the American encampment in Stoney Creek. A short but fierce battle ensued on June 6, 1813 and the Americans retreated, thus preventing the American takeover of this area and possibly Canada.

To reach Billy Green Falls, take Centennial Parkway southbound off the QEW; proceed past King St. at the base of the Niagara Escarpment, and about 2/3rd the way up the escarpment pull off over the rounded curb onto the shoulder beside the second ravine. You should notice a dirt access route for the City of Hamilton crews to maintain Battlefield Creek at this location. Billy Green Falls is about one minute away from the roadway by following this access route.



Happy waterfalling!

Joe Hollick is the GRDC's Waterfalls of the Niagara Escarpment Research Coordinator and has developed a presentation of the Waterfalls of Hamilton.

If you're interested in having Joe present this to your group, please contact him at **905-628-3132** or at joehollick@sympatico.ca

Teachers' Corner

by Ken Hall

HOME SCHOOLERS' AFTERNOONS ROYAL BOTANICAL GARDENS, NATURE CENTRE

Home Schoolers' Afternoons are held at the Royal Botanical Gardens' Nature Centre from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. each 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month for age 4 to 12 and the 3rd Tuesday of the month for ages 13 to 17.

A fee of \$7.50 includes HST. Registration is required on line at www.rbg.ca or by phone at 905-527-1158 ext. 270 at least one week prior to beginning the program. Please note child's age when registering.

You and your children will join the Nature Centre staff for outdoor education programs. Themes and activities vary each session.

For additional information, contact Public Programs programs@rbg.ca , www.rbg.ca, or phone 905- 527-1158 ext. 270.

If you know teachers or anyone else who would be interested in this information, please contact Ken Hall at 905-627-1320 or at kenjoan75@sympatico.ca
Please note that past items from "Teachers' Corner" are available at www.giantsrib.ca in the Newsletters section.

Come Join the Friends of the Giant's Rib



Would you like to make a difference?

The Executive of the Giant's Rib Discovery Centre is looking for volunteers who wish to assume leadership roles with an organization that strives to educate the public on the need to preserve our magnificent Niagara Escarpment as a World Biosphere Reserve.

If you are such a person, please contact **Ken Hall** at **905-627-1320** or at kenjoan75@sympatico.ca

You will learn more about the goals and objectives of the Giant's Rib and also have the opportunity to express what skills and talents you could offer to help the organization achieve its present undertakings and to move forward in new directions.

Come on and join our Team! We hope to hear from you!

Rib Facts

The Niagara Escarpment World Biosphere Reserve

The Directors of the Giant's Rib Discovery Centre form a Committee of the Niagara Escarpment World Biosphere Reserve. Their basic responsibilities are directed to helping ensure that the Niagara Escarpment continues to meet the three basic criteria of a biosphere reserve:

- Contribute to conservation of landscapes, ecosystems, species and genetic variation;
- Foster economic and human development which is socio-culturally and ecologically sustainable;
- Provide support for research, monitoring, education and information exchange related to local national and global issues of conservation and development.



The UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Designation

The biosphere is all of the land, water and atmosphere that support life.

A biosphere reserve is an international designation of recognition from UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) for an area in the world which is deemed to demonstrate a "balanced relationship between humans and the biosphere". By this is meant that collaborative efforts among people in the designated area serve to promote the sustainability of local economies and communities, as well as the conservation of the terrestrial/or coastal ecosystems they are in.



Happy Holidays

*From all of us at the Giant' Rib Discovery Centre,
we wish upon you and yours the very best of this Holiday Season!
May all the fortunes and blessings of the New Year be
with you all in 2012!*



Your Giant's Rib Discovery Centre's Board of Directors for 2011 - 2012

Executive Officers

Kenneth Hall, President **John MacRae**, Treasurer **Joseph Hollick**, Secretary

William Edwards	Web-Site Administrator
Kenneth Hall	Co-ordinator, Bruce Duncan Memorial Lecture Series Co-ordinator, Arts Program
Chris Hamilton	Outreach Co-ordinator
Joseph Hollick	Co-ordinator of Niagara Escarpment Waterfalls Research Co-ordinator of Site and Building Development
Ernie Kuechmeister	Co-ordinator, Recognition Program
Dr. John MacRae	Director of Audio-Visual Presentations
Maya March	Field Trip Co-ordinator
Nancy Martin	Publicity and Communications Director
Stan Nowak	Newsletter Editor
Donna Quigley	Volunteer Co-ordinator (interim)
Danya Scime	Co-ordinator, Special Events

*The Board of Directors of the Giant's Rib Discovery Centre would like to thank outgoing Board Members **Nancy Clarke Hauser**, **Jack Lee** and **Mike McCallion** for all their contributions to the Giant's Rib cause; you will all be greatly missed!*

*The Board also welcomes new Board members **Chris Hamilton**, **Maya March**, **Nancy Martin** and **Donna Quigley** to the Giant's Rib team!*

We look forward to working with you all in anticipation of an exciting and productive year in 2012!

***Please consider the environment.
Don't print this Newsletter
unless you really need to.***

But please feel free to share your newsletter with others via e-mail.