

The Giant's Rib

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

Stan Nowak, Editor
March 2012

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:  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, March 18th

The Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch

with Mike Street – Past-President, Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch



Bruce Duncan with a Red-tailed Hawk at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area.
(Photo: Barry Cherie)

Second only to his family, Bruce Duncan's greatest love was working with birds of prey – hawks, falcons, eagles, and vultures. A master bander known for not wearing gloves while handling even the largest eagle, Bruce spent many fall seasons banding these magnificent birds at Hawk Cliff, near Port Stanley, south of London, Ontario.

Starting in 1975, Bruce was one of an informal group of birders who, from a site at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area in Grimsby, identified and counted migrating raptors as they followed the escarpment to cross the Niagara Peninsula during the annual spring migration. On average, just over 15,000 raptors of 15 species are counted during the season, which runs from 1 March to 15 May each year. The data is passed on to and shared with other hawkwatchers belonging to the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA), a conservation group working to monitor, preserve and protect this family of birds.

In 1990, Bruce sparked the formation of the Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch (NPH) and became its first President. In addition to continuing the Grimsby count, the Hawkwatch's aim was to educate the public in the Golden Horseshoe Region about the natural phenomenon occurring each spring, literally over their heads. This is accomplished through an annual Open House, held every Good Friday since 1991, and by assisting visiting birders with identification at all times during the season.

On becoming General Manager of the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority, Bruce stepped down as President of the NPH, but continued until his passing to take regular count days and give talks on the spring migration to visitors at the Open House.

Born and raised in Montreal, H.M. (Mike) Street graduated from Loyola College High School and Loyola College, then completed his degree in Engineering at McGill University. In 1969, he moved to Ontario to begin a long career in Ontario Hydro coal fired generating stations, for two years at Lambton GS near Sarnia, followed by 30 years at Nanticoke GS on Lake Erie, which brought him to the Brantford-Hamilton area. Mike, his wife Carol and their daughter Alison have lived in Ancaster since 1978. After taking up birding in 1987, Mike met Bruce Duncan at a presentation Bruce gave on hawks and became hooked. He was the first Editor of the NPH Newsletter and succeeded Bruce as President of the NPH. Mike started and ran the Hamilton Birding Hotline from 1989 to 2001. In 1998 he founded, developed and operated for three years the ONTBIRDS Internet listserv, which today brings up-to-the-minute Ontario-wide birding information to over 2000 birders.



Mike Street
(Photo: Glenda Slessor)

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 Co-ordinator 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: Arts Program Co-ordinator Kenneth Hall kenjoan75@sympatico.ca

For the Month of March 2012:

A Walk Around the Dundas Valley

Featuring the artistic works of Paul Wright

Paul Wright has been taking photos for over 30 years, 29 years with 35mm film - and just started working with digital images in June 2010.

His professional experience includes commercial work for insurance companies and sporting event photography, including boat and bicycle races.

Paul has a Fine Arts diploma from Mohawk College and has been employed for over 35 years at the Hamilton Conservation Authority as an Assistant Superintendent for the Dundas Valley.

Paul takes most of his photographs within fifteen kilometres of the Dundas Valley.



Paul states, "It is very relaxing for me to sit or walk and take these pictures, it helps me to see nature in its real life than on tv or in books. Every day I go out shooting is rewarding if I can get 1 or 2 pictures."

He currently uses a Nikon d7000 camera now with either a Nikon 18-200 or a sigma 150-500 lens.

Paul's multi-media exhibition will showcase still photographs that will be available for purchase during the month of March.

Saturdays and Sundays only

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

Dundas Valley Trail Centre, Dundas Valley Conservation Area.

The Literary Rib

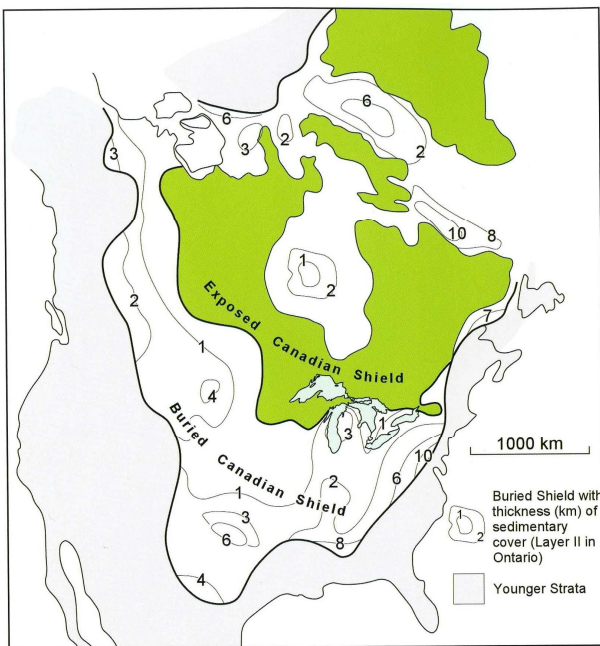
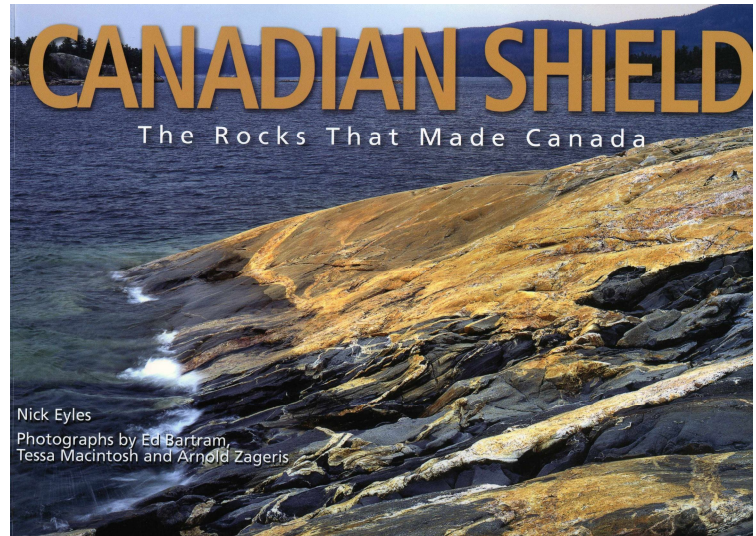
Canadian Shield: The Rocks that made Canada

Nick Eyles
Fitzhenry and Whiteside 2011

Photos by Ed Bartram, Tessa Macintosh and Arnold Zageris
128 pp \$40.00 paperback

If you own a cottage in Muskoka, Parry Sound or Haliburton or have the good fortune to visit one owned by a friend, this could be a welcome addition to the coffee table book collection, or it might make a great house gift!

In 128 pages, it is essentially a “photo essay” on the Canadian Shield. Photos take up most of the page space. They are laid out on facing pages (many are full page). The three photographers are from Georgian Bay, the Northwest Territories and Labrador. Each has contributed photos from their “home turf”. Though photographs dominate, there is text also. A single column of text runs down the gutter edge of many pages, giving the reader an introduction to the physiography and geology of the Shield.



Nick Eyles, a recent speaker at our Bruce Duncan Memorial Lecture series, is the author of the text. As was the case in his work on CBC’s “Geologic Journey”, he seems to be constantly striving to strike a balance between scientific accuracy and layman’s understanding. For the most part, he gets it right (notwithstanding terms like “exhumed peneplains”, “felsenmeer” and glacioisostatic depressions”!

The photos are technically good, though I would have preferred to see fewer shots of “Georgian Bay banded gneisses” and more photos illustrating the many themes in the text; for example, showing the impact of the shield on human settlement? A more careful selection of photos to illustrate the written text would make the volume more accessible to the layman.

The final pages are photo credits, but as a geographer I say “where’s the map”? Keying the photos to a map of Canada would add to their value and it would give a useful spatial context to the images.

Submitted by Ron Fulton
Giant’s Rib Volunteer

Waterfalls along the Niagara Escarpment

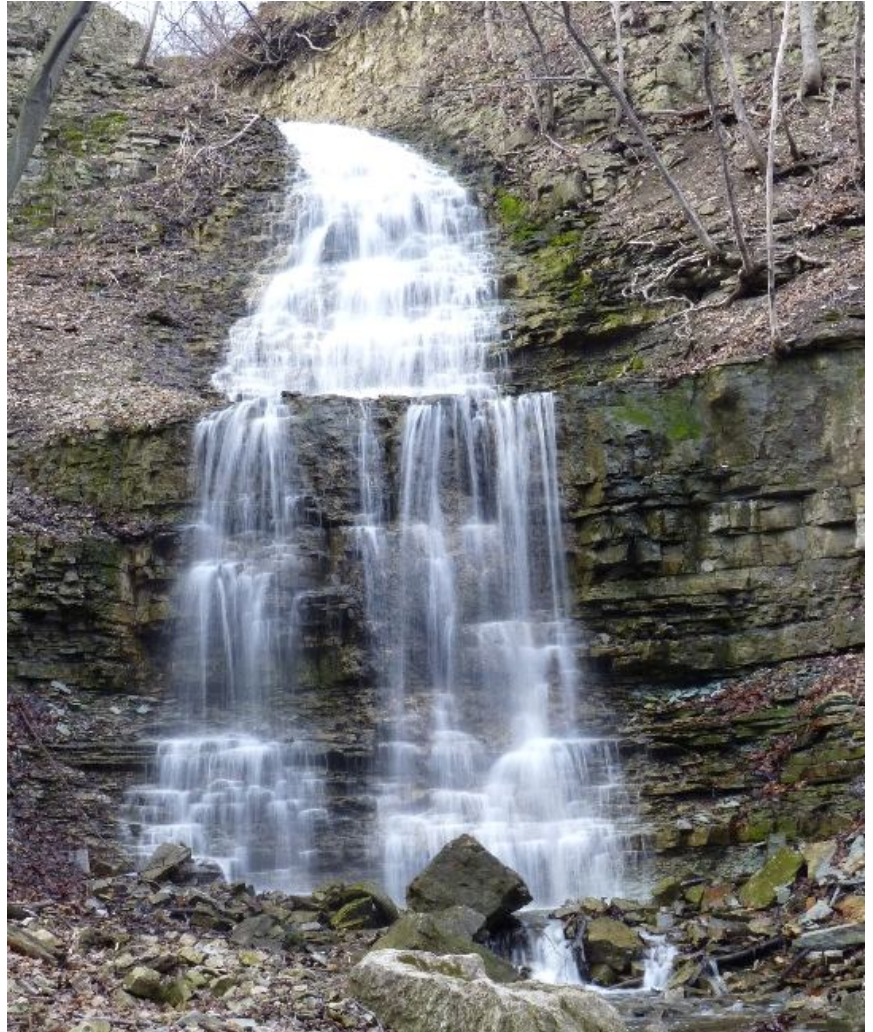
by Joseph Hollick

Scenic Falls is located on a tributary of the Chedoke Creek, in west Hamilton, just inside the eastern boundary of the Iroquoia Heights Conservation Area, thus on public property.

Scenic Falls is considered a Terraced Ribbon Cascade with a height of 20m (66 ft.) and a width of 6m (20 ft.). It has flow for much of the year however it can dry up during extended dry periods. The best time for viewing it with heavy flow is after a rainfall or during the winter snow melt.

Surprisingly, not too much is known about this waterfall. Most likely the waterfall is named after the nearby Scenic Drive, aptly named for its scenic location along the top of the Niagara Escarpment overlooking the City of Hamilton. There also appears to be a man-made rock channel above the waterfall however no information has been found as to when or why it was built.

To reach this waterfall from the Lincoln Alexander Parkway, exit onto Mohawk Rd. West. Follow Mohawk Rd. to Scenic Dr. and turn left. Then follow Scenic Dr. to the escarpment where it takes a 90 degree turn to the right. Just past this bend there is a small parking lot on the left side (brow side). Then follow the Chedoke Radial Trail / Bruce Trail to the left or west direction for about five to ten minutes to the first ravine. Scenic Falls is located at this ravine.



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



If you have been studying the Niagara Escarpment in your classrooms studies this year you might like to consider arranging a field trip to the SCENIC CAVES in the Collingwood / Blue Mountain area.

For their NATURE ADVENTURES Program, SCENIC CAVES offers an educational package for teachers and students from Grades 4 to 8. They claim that their programs meet the expectations as outlined in the Ontario Curriculum for Science.

The titles of the packages are:

Grade 4 – Habitats and Communities

Grade 4 – Rocks, Minerals and Erosion

Grade 5 – Weather

Grade 6 – Diversity of Living Things

Grade 7 – Interactions with Ecosystems

Grade 8 – Water-systems

Here is the Grade 4 package on Rocks described in more detail.

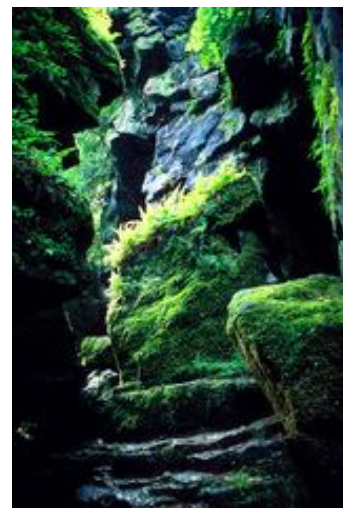
Is the phrase “As Solid as Rock” really accurate? Looking at rock leads one to believe that it is stable – yet over time, it is subject to dramatic change.

Not only does it crumble, but it metamorphoses as well.

Through this unit students will be introduced to the basics of geology, erosion and the ever-appealing world of fossils.

The students will locate and photo, sketch, imprint or take a mould of a fossil. They will then conduct a field investigation to determine the environment in which the fossil lived, the geological period of the fossil and the rock and determine what principals of geology apply.

When walking along the paths the students will identify, document and map evidence of glaciation. They will make guided observations about the soil surrounding the escarpment face and search for evidence of life in the soil.



The SCENIC CAVES 3-hour ECO-ADVENTURE TOUR includes:

A tree-top Canopy Walk,

A 1000 ft. Escarpment Zip Ride,

A 300 ft. forest Zip Ride,

A walk across a 425 ft. Suspension Bridge,

Caves and Caverns and unique Flora and Fauna to explore!



The first ECO-ADVENTURE TOURS begin in May. Reservations are required.

If interested, phone 705-446-0256, extension 227.

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.

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.

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 and join our Team today! We hope to hear from you soon !



Your Giant's Rib Discovery Centre's Board of Directors for 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	New Direction's Co-ordinator
Danya Scime	Co-ordinator, Special Events

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unless you really need to.***

***But, by all means, please feel free to share your newsletter
with others via e-mail.***