

The Giant's Rib

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

Stan Nowak, Editor
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GIANTS RIB ESCARPMENT EDUCATION NETWORK

Giant's Rib goes GREEN

The Giant's Rib Discovery Centre has a new name. The organization, which is dedicated to educating the public about the environmental significance of the Niagara Escarpment and the importance of its preservation, is now called the Giant's Rib Escarpment Education Network (GREEN).

"As we began our efforts to expand and improve upon our existing programs, feedback told us that the words 'Giant's Rib' didn't resonate the idea of the Niagara escarpment," says Chris Hamilton, President of GREEN.

"It is one of the Escarpment's many nicknames, but the name 'Giant's Rib', we've been told, conjures up images of a rib joint. The new name more accurately reflects what we do and clearly associates us with the Niagara Escarpment."

By Gord Bowes

Courtesy Hamilton Community News

An Update from our President

Presented by GRDC President Chris Hamilton at our Summer Solstice fundraiser on Friday, June 20, 2014



Since our last fundraiser, the volunteers at the Giant's Rib Discovery Centre have accomplished so much! We participated in outreach events in Niagara, Halton, and Hamilton: Biosphere Bash at Ball's Falls, Hamilton Conservation Foundation Nature Crawl in the Valley, Mount Nemo Day at Mount Nemo C.A. and the Halton Forest Festival at Rattlesnake Point.

We partnered with the Dundas Museum to share our resources for their Natural History Display and hosted a Family Day Fossils for Kids at the Museum!

Our President spoke about the GRDC at the Halton Environmental Network's AGM as well as at the Iroquoia Bruce Trail Club's AGM!

We have increased our volunteer ranks and were able to deliver another successful Lecture Series, continued our popular Arts and Photography Series at the Centre and launched a wonderful weekly hiking program out of the Centre on Saturday mornings. Building on that success, we have just launched a new guided interpretive hiking program every other Sunday at Albion Falls, bringing our Biosphere education to a whole new area of the City, accessible by public transit and free to attend. As well we've just announced dates for monthly interpretive hikes at Crawford Lake!

We were the recipient two years running for the Allegra Footprint Fund Award, and now have our brochures and hiking programs advertised in libraries and community centres all across Hamilton!

Speaking of grants, we received a grant from the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation for \$10,000 towards our expansion project. The work is already underway to improve displays in our current centre, upgrade and redevelop our website into a one-of-a-kind educational resource on the Niagara Escarpment, improve our outreach materials and develop a travelling display which will act as a mini centre to be hosted around Ontario. Our first exciting improvement at the centre was the acquisition of a 417 million year old Giant Sea Scorpion Fossil! Visitors to the Centre have been very excited to see this magnificent specimen! We have also reached a tentative agreement to establish our first satellite centre in the Cabot Head lighthouse at Cabot Head!

We are talking with numerous groups along the Escarpment to establish a network of Centres in the future and working to deliver Escarpment education programs throughout the province.

More good news is around the corner and we expect that next year at this time we'll have much more to announce!

Since the 2014 June Fundraiser we've had a successful summer with our hiking programs, launched a new website and have received a \$12,000 grant from the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation for our expansion and improvement project. Visit the website for all the latest news."

The Bruce Duncan Memorial Lecture Series

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

First presentation of the Season: Sunday, October 26th, 2014

The Risk of Public Participation in Saving the Escarpment

With Monte Dennis, P. Eng., Environmental Advocate



Protecting the environment is not without risk. In Ontario, and in fact all of Canada except Quebec, citizens can be sued in a lawsuit better known as a SLAPP suit [Strategic Legislation Against Public Participation]. These suits can be initiated for any reason.

SLAPPs are meritless law suits brought to silence individuals, citizen's groups, community and environmental advocates.

Two citizens and a journalist have had, what is believed to be such a suit brought against them. Spending a lifetime advocating for the environment and unaware of these suits before being involved in one is a devastating experience.

These experiences and the process that follows will be discussed.

The effect on other communities experiencing similar events will be included.

The lecture will try to convey this information as well as make the audience aware of how the Escarpment, Green Belt & Oak Ridges Moraine reviews for 2015 might be affected.

Ways to move forward, to convey information on how to proceed and what can be done to eliminate SLAPP suits will be discussed.

Monte Dennis, is a professional engineer, having earned his BASC in 1967 from the University of Waterloo. He is a member of Professional Engineers of Ontario [PEO], having been employed with IBM (Advanced Manufacturing and Design, Design & Application, Apollo Project), and at Conestoga College as Professor of Electronics Technology.

He is currently self-employed as the owner of St. Jacobs Foods and as a furniture design and model / prototype manufacturer.

His involvement with environmental issues has been prolific, serving:

- as Chair of the Speaking Team and as a Technical Team member for POP [People or Planes], Pickering Airport;
- as a co-founder of CORP [Citizens Opposed to Radioactive Pollution] protesting the nuclear dump in the Madoc area, he has testified at numerous inquiries;
- as Vice-President of CONE [Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment];
- on the steering committee of COPE [Citizens Opposed to Paving the Escarpment];
- as Co-chair of RBGC [Rural Burlington Greenbelt Coalition];
- as Transit Committee Chair for BG [BurlingtonGreen];

He was also nominated for the BurlingtonGreen 2012 Eco-Award.

Please note that all presentations will start at **1:00 PM** on the last Sunday of every month from October to April at the former Parks Canada Discovery Centre, now administered by the Hamilton Waterfront Trust.

Parking is free, but there is an admission fee of \$5.00 for this presentation.

Refreshments will be provided after each presentation along with an opportunity to talk with our guest speakers. Please check our website www.giantsrib.ca for upcoming presentations.

For further information: Sylvia Zsidi sylviaz@cogeco.ca

Art and Photography of the Heritage of the Niagara Escarpment

For the Month of October 2014:

The Artistic Works of Paul Duff

EDITOR'S NOTE: Unfortunately, Mr. Duff passed away earlier this month. The display will be from the personal collection of Kenneth and Joan Hall.

Born in Hamilton, Canada, January 15th, 1928, Paul Duff has been painting professionally since 1945. A graduate of McMaster University and Hamilton Teacher's College, he subsidized his career in the visual arts as an itinerant teacher in Switzerland and Brazil.



At age 22, he exhibited with members of Canada's Group of Seven, leading to official recognition by the National Gallery of Canada as a Canadian Painter in August, 1956.

Nineteen years later, he was invited to exhibit at the National Gallery of Brazil in Rio de Janeiro. The next year he became the first Canadian to receive an honorary citizenship to the City of Rio de Janeiro and later inducted as a member of the order of Honorary Cariocas.

Paul Duff returned to Canada in 1981. His paintings appear in public and private collections with representations in Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Germany, France, Holland, Switzerland, Brazil, Bermuda, the Philippines, China, and the

United States. To date he has had ninety-one solo exhibitions on three continents.

In May, 1997, a painting from his Scottish collection was acquired by the National Gallery of Scotland for their permanent collection. About the same time, Paul Duff was conferred a knighthood in the Order of St. Andrew of Jerusalem.

For further reference, see the Canadian Who's Who, 2005 edition, the Allgemeines Künstler-Lexikon, (World Biographical Index of Visual Artists, 2001 edition), the art library and archives of the National Gallery of Canada.

He is the author of the book, "The Eternal Apprentice" (1999) used as a text-reference book at the Ontario College of Art and Design, and Sheridan College. In 2009, his autobiography, "My Life, My Art" covering seventy years of his career was published and is available through his gallery (226-974-1928).

Celebrating 'the art' of the natural and cultural heritage of the Niagara Escarpment regularly featuring a local artist at the Dundas Valley Trail Centre, Dundas Valley Conservation Area, 650 Governors Road in Dundas. Saturdays and Sundays only from 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM. Park Entrance is \$9.00 per car, but walk in and bike in is free.

Your parking fee supports the Dundas Valley Conservation Area and can be used towards visiting any other Hamilton conservation area that same day. There is no admission fee to view the exhibit, but donations are gratefully accepted.

Please check our website www.gantsrib.ca in the coming weeks for a complete schedule for all the artists for this season.

For more information: Robert Gerritson rjgerritson@cogeco.ca

Waterfalls along the Niagara Escarpment

by Joe Hollick



Balls Falls is located on Twenty Mile Creek in Balls Falls Conservation Area in the Town of Lincoln in the Regional Municipality of Niagara. Its coordinates are 43° 7' 57.55" N, 79° 23' 0.74" W.

Balls Falls is the lower waterfall on Twenty Mile Creek and is also known as Lower Balls Falls. It is considered a Plunge Classic type falls and has a height of approximately 27.5 m. (90 ft). Twenty Mile Creek can almost dry up during long dry spells and surprisingly this waterfall can be reduced to a trickle, however when this occurs, the various rock layers of the Niagara Escarpment behind the waterfall are clearly visible.

This waterfall received its name from Mr. George Ball, who in 1824 began construction of a woollen mill located between Lower and Upper Balls Falls. It was leased out and in 1829 an advertisement in the St. Catharines Farmer's Journal indicated that it had been leased to Jacob Snure. The mill is gone and the entire area is owned by the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority.

To visit Balls Falls, exit the QEW at Vineland, exit 57 (Victoria Road). Take Victoria Road south, also called Niagara Regional Rd. 24. Follow this road up the Niagara Escarpment until you reach Sixth Avenue (about 5.9 km). Turn left onto Sixth Avenue and follow it to Balls Falls Conservation Area (about 0.7 km). There is a fee to park in the Conservation Area. Then follow the pathway beside the creek downstream to Balls Falls.

Happy Waterfalling!

Teachers' Corner

by Ken Hall

Teachers: Take time to introduce your students to Ontario's turtles. Eight magnificent turtle species reside in Ontario. They are the Common Snapping, the Eastern Spiny Soft Shell, the Midland Painter and Western Painted, the Stinkpot, the Map, the Blanding's, the Spotted and the Wood.

Unfortunately, many of these turtle species are at risk of extinction, so get your students looking for them while there is still an opportunity to find them.

The most common turtles to spot along the Niagara Escarpment are the Common Snapping and the Midland Painted Turtles.



We will concentrate in this report on describing the **Common Snapping Turtle**.

The Common Snapping Turtle is the largest freshwater turtle in Canada. Adults are usually 20.3 – 36 cm in carapace length and weigh between 4.5 – 16 kg. Some individuals can reach sizes in excess of 47 cm. in shell length. Carapace can be light brown to black in colour. Young turtles have three longitudinal keels, (raised ridges), while older turtles may be smooth. The plastron is yellowish, very small and cross-shaped. It doesn't offer much protection for the turtle's underbelly.

The head has barbels on the chin and the neck is covered with rounded tubercles. The serrated tail is crocodilian in appearance and is the same length or longer than the carapace.

Snapping turtles are omnivorous often scavenging for food. Main staples are fish invertebrates and plants, but their diet can include salamanders, toads, frogs, tadpoles, small turtles, snakes, young waterfowl, small mammals and carrion. They have a sharp beak and strong jaws.

In Ontario, females do not breed until they are 17-19 years old. But it is size more than age that determines when a female is capable of breeding. Females build nests in May and June, in gravel, sand, soil or mulch. Females lay a single clutch of between 20 – 40 eggs. The eggs resemble ping-pong balls. The eggs hatch in the Fall and hatchlings are 2-3 cm. in length. They immediately hide under the leaf litter and/or move towards water.

Eggs may not hatch at all if all temperatures are cold. The temperature of the egg within the nest determines the gender of the hatchling.

The common snapping turtle prefers slow moving water with a soft bottom and plenty of vegetation

Snapping turtles rarely leave the water. They hibernate in the muddy bottom of a wetland, under logs or under overhanging banks of ponds, streams or lakes.

The common snapping turtle is not designated as a species at risk, provincially in Ontario. However, there are many traffic mortalities as females search for nest sites. In some areas the common snapping turtle is considered a food delicacy. Many populations are impacted by over-trapping. They are often persecuted due to misinformation on its perceived threat to game fish and ducks as well as to people (especially swimmers). They do not bite swimmers.

All information in this article has been extracted from the Toronto Zoo's "Turtle Conservation Curriculum Resource". To obtain the Toronto Zoo's booklets and to receive additional information on turtles, contact the Adopt-A-Pond Coordinator

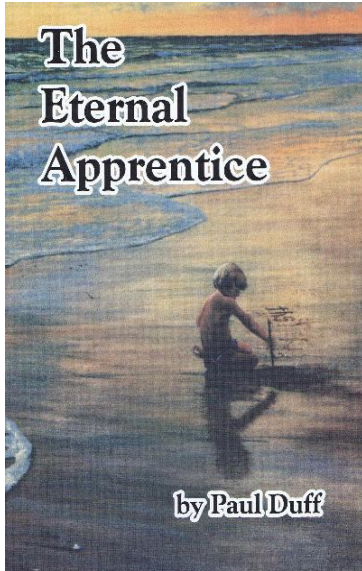
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The Literal Rib

A Book Review by Stan Nowak

EDITORS NOTE: In memory of the late Paul Duff, accolades about his books from his gallery's website are offered here in this month's GR Newsletter.



“Paul Duff’s book provides the reader in search of artistic fulfilment, with cogent, practical advice, based on fifty years of spiritual and aesthetic commitment.”

*The Honourable Lincoln M. Alexander, P.C., C.C., K.St.J., O.Ont., Q.C.
Former Lieutenant Governor of Ontario*

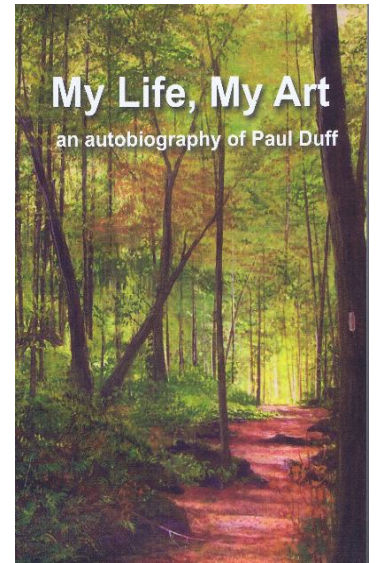
“Paul Duff’s life in art is a story of determination to succeed as a painter coupled with the realization that making a living may require time spent away from the easel. For how long? As long as it takes, for a successful artist like Paul will never put commercialism ahead of artistic integrity.”

Dr. Peter George, President & Vice-Chancellor, McMaster University

“A parallel theme that haunts him throughout his life is his ability to generate funds to meet his living expenses. He resisted and continues to resist the temptation of succumbing to the lucrative market of reproduction prints for no other reason than to promote the status of Fine Art in our Culture.

I thought that I knew Paul Duff. This book was a revelation that gave me a much deeper appreciation of the man - as it will you.”

*David Haley, Editor
“The Eternal Apprentice”
August 8, 2008*



Please contact the Paul Duff Gallery at www.paulduffgallery.com or call 226-974-1928 to inquire about the availability of these books.

Giant's Rib Photo of the Month



An aerial view of Queen Mother Mnidoo Mnising Provincial Park, one Ontario's five new provincial parks.
(Courtesy Ryan Gardner of Ontario Parks)

2 new provincial parks on Manitoulin Island feature unique ecology

Two new parks on Manitoulin Island are set to open with the objective of protecting some unique local ecology.

The province of Ontario, in partnership with the Nature Conservancy of Canada, will open five new provincial parks and expand three others.

Two of those, located on or near Manitoulin — Strawberry Island and The Queen Mother Mnidoo Mnising — share a rare ecological feature in common — alvar, according to Ryan Gardner, superintendent with Ontario Parks.

Alvars are rare, harsh environments of open, bare limestone with little to no soil.

"They're subject to extremes, from very, very cold in the winter to intense heat of 43 C in the summertime," said Gardner.

"And they also have seasonal flooding in the spring and because of those extreme conditions, they're home to some pretty unusual plants from southern to arctic to prairie type vegetation."

Alvars are mainly present in the Great Lakes basin as well as in the Baltic Seas in Europe.

"One of the species that grows on alvars is Manitoulin Gold, which is a little yellow daisy-like flower," he said. "It actually has the highest concentration of Manitoulin Gold in those parks anywhere in the world."

Gardner added that the two parks are not going to see any significant development but rather remain mostly untouched.

"They'll be no campsites or visitor facilities, but they really do offer some outstanding opportunities for low-impact hiking and a chance to explore some pretty rare and unique natural environments on Manitoulin Island

Come Join the Giant's Rib Discovery Centre!



**Do you love the
Escarpment too ?**

The Discovery Centre Needs Your Help!

Are you interested in the Niagara Escarpment World Biosphere Reserve? Do you want to learn more about it and contribute to its protection?

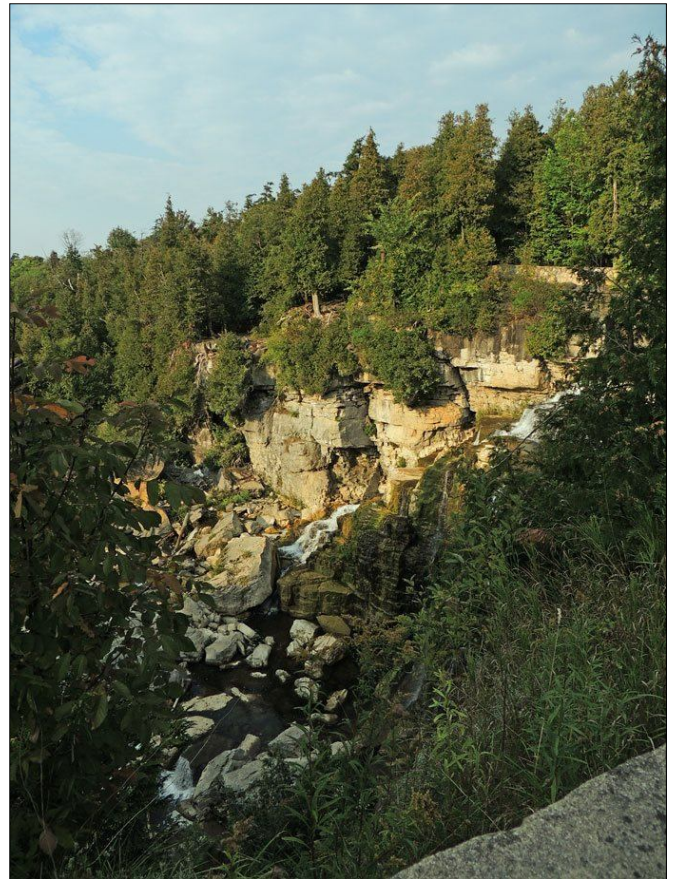
Volunteering with the Giant's Rib is one way you can do that. We have positions available for volunteers on weekends at the Centre, and Director openings as well. We're growing and expanding, so if you're excited about the Niagara Escarpment, this is the place to be.

Please visit www.giantsrib.ca to learn about available positions.

About the GRDC

The Giant's Rib Discovery Centre tells the story of the Niagara Escarpment through interpretation at the Centre on weekends and through our public outreach programs. These include a weekend Arts and Photography Series featuring a local artist each month, guided interpretive hikes, the Bruce Duncan Memorial Lecture Series, and we offer a Grade 4 curriculum-based Rocks and Minerals unit to elementary schools free of charge. We require interpretive volunteers to work half-days on weekends at the Centre (located within the Dundas Valley Conservation Area at 650 Governor's Road in Dundas) and co-ordinators to manage public programs and support our annual fundraiser in June.

For detailed descriptions, please visit www.giantsrib.ca



**If you are interested in any of these positions,
or if you have a specific skill set you feel may assist us,
please contact Chris Hamilton at chamilton@giantsrib.ca**



Your Giant's Rib Discovery Centre's Board of Directors for 2013 - 14

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unless you really need to.***

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with other friends via e-mail.***