



President's Message

by Donna Tucker

Recently, I came across a West Carling Association (WCA) newsletter dated January 1990 sending me on an archeological dig of the archived newsletters on our website going back to 1977. I discovered a treasure trove of history and issues important to WCA that have influenced our development and activities.

I learned that history does indeed repeat itself. Some issues never seem to go away or just return wearing different clothes.

One of the hot topics from 1977 to 1982 was regionalization. A 1976 government study recommended annexing Carling into Parry Sound. At the same time, there was a proposal for a continuous shoreline township to run from Honey Harbour to Manitoulin with the mainland area east of Killbear Park linking with Parry Sound. The proposal flowed from a report commissioned by “engaged” residents of the Township of Georgian Bay and championed by the Georgian Bay Association. The rationale was

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A Message from the Editors

by Tom Betts and Nanci Wakeman

Welcome to *Shorelines*, the new look for the quarterly newsletter of the West Carling Association. We hope that you enjoy this issue, and that you will find the information to be informative and interesting reading.

It is our hope that the articles and information that appear in the newsletter will effectively bring the headlines from our West Carling shorelines to each and every member.

To that end, we value and need member input – we are always looking for contributions to the newsletter. These can take the form of general interest articles and short stories (either serious or humorous), timely news items and upcoming events, experiences on or near the water or at the cottage, photographs and sketches, poetry, tips and tricks relating to cottaging, etc. We want this newsletter to reflect the diversity of interests and expertise within our membership.

Please send any items for consideration to this address: tcmbetts@gmail.com. The deadline for submissions for the Fall, 2024 newsletter will be September 10.

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that 95% of the population in the area was seasonal and focused on waterfront issues with virtually no permanent population due to winter inaccessibility.

The Carling Cottagers (as WCA was known at the time) argued the incompatibility of the desire for urban expansion with the desire to maintain the environment and conservation of the area and favored inclusion in the archipelago township.

The Carling Cottagers' Association, dating back to the 1920's, sent out an appeal to members to support inclusion of the western shoreline and islands off Carling in the new municipality. At the same time, the Carling Township Council had committed to participate in the Industrial Park and the Parry District Planning Board – two initiatives seen as incompatible with the objectives and interests of the cottagers along with a concern about a rise in taxes should Carling be annexed to Parry Sound.

According to the narrative of the 1978 newsletter the threat of regionalization gave impetus to the waning Carling Cottagers' Association. The group gained new momentum, and the association was rebirthed as the West Carling Association and formed a liaison with "sister" ratepayer organizations in Carling to form the Shoreline and Island Property Owners (SIPO) to lobby to become part of the new archipelago group.

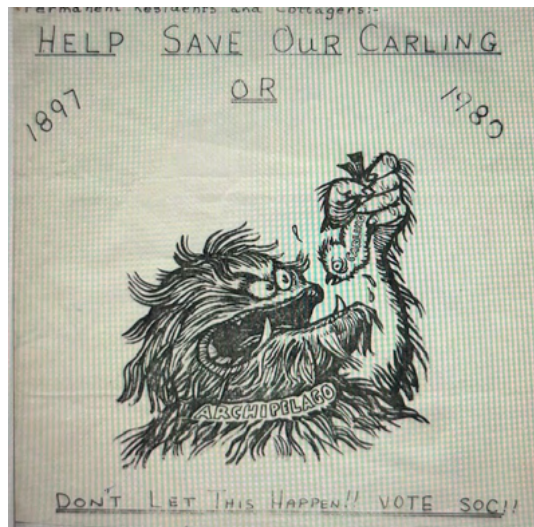
For the 1980 municipal election, spurred on by large tax increases over a two-year period, the SIPO group launched a campaign to achieve better representation of cottagers' interests and supported specific candidates who reflected their views. The cottagers felt that their submissions to Council were seen as a nuisance when they appeared before Council. There was further displeasure over Council providing \$50,000 of Carling reserves to help finance the new airport in

Humphrey. WCA's perspective, as noted in the September 1980 newsletter, was that "Carling is a wealthy township in which 85% of the assessment and tax base is derived from summer residents who want and require few services."

Simultaneously, a group of Carling ratepayers launched a campaign known as "Save our Carling" and favoured seeing Carling remain "as is." According to a 1980 WCA newsletter, opposition to the concept of the shore community were the following fears:

- Great expense would be incurred for road maintenance
- The manager engaged to manage the Township would have too much authority
- It was a sinister plot by wealthy islanders

As part of the campaign, the Save our Carling group used this image as part of their message, depicting a voracious beast deemed to be the new municipality devouring Carling.



The first phase of the shoreline community came into being in January 1980

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as the Township of the Archipelago running from Sans Souci to Bayfield/Nares excluded Carling. Phase 2 was to include the area from Honey Harbour to Sans Souci and would become the Township of Georgian Bay.

By 1982, Carling “stayed as it was” with Carling Township carved out of the shoreline community surrounded by the Township of the Archipelago north and south of Carling with a section of Georgian Bay shore in McDougall. WCA and SIPO continued to work together and turned their attention to other issues including the purchase of road allowances, studying Carling’s development plan, offering constructive criticism where the plan contravened the rural/wilderness character of the community and continuing to become involved in Township matters while “developing communications with inland residents.”

Recently we have seen other attempts to bring the disparate West Parry Sound regions together amidst competing priorities. The municipalities of the West Parry Sound region have had a reputation for not working well together which came into play when the regional pool project was put together in 2021. In August 2023 Seguin Township and the Town of Parry Sound went to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and our local MPP Graydon Smith to discuss regional governance. From that meeting, came a proposal to initiate a planning study for the region and explore potential opportunities for shared services. The initiative died out when both Whitestone and McDougall refused to join in as they perceived that the study was a slippery slope leading to amalgamation.

Is it only a matter of time before the pressure to join forces comes back? There

are reports about the degree of debt that Parry Sound is carrying and speculation about the desire for poorer townships to have access to the stronger tax bases of Carling and the Township of the Archipelago. There are those who argue that if the region were one voice there would be greater opportunity for development. Seasonal and rural residents express fear of higher taxes and paying for urban services they can’t access.

The purpose of this message is not to say how the region should be organized but rather to reflect on what has gone before and pose questions for consideration. What if Carling had become part of the archipelago concept? What would Carling look like today and further, what will it look like in the future? Carling Council has committed to a strategic planning process this fall. It is critical that Carling residents have meaningful input into the process such that competing priorities are respected and considered.

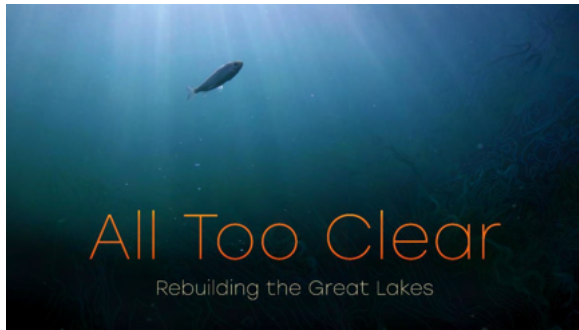
Editor’s Note:

As Donna has indicated in her article, the website maintained by the West Carling Association (westcarling.com) contains newsletters which reach far back in time.

Though there are gaps in some of the years, there is information which goes back into the 1970s! It is fascinating to consider the issues that were important many years ago (and might still be today), or perhaps to read about how the fishing was back in the “good-ole days.”

There is enough interesting reading there to keep a person busy for at least the next rainy day or two!

Have a look sometime!



"All Too Clear"

August 10, 6 p.m. at the Stockey Centre

Mark your calendars for the evening of August 10 to view *All Too Clear* – an amazing scientific documentary film with spectacular underwater footage and informative narrative to help us understand more about the impact of invasive quagga mussels on the ecology of our irreplaceable Great Lakes.

Georgian Bay Forever and the Georgian Bay Mnidoo Gamil Reserve present the film's premiere at the Stockey Centre in Parry Sound. Doors open at 6:00 pm for guests to meet their hosts, Georgian Bay Forever, the Georgian Bay Biosphere, and documentary producers, Inspired Planet. Enjoy several informative booths, a beverage at the cash bar, and a unique opportunity to see the underwater robots involved in filming.

Opening ceremonies and remarks will begin promptly at 7:00 pm. The 90-minute film will be followed by a Q&A period where guests can ask questions of the producers, Zach Melnick and Yvonne Drebert, and several of the scientists featured in the film.

All Too Clear uses cutting-edge underwater drones to explore how quadrillions of tiny invasive mussels are re-

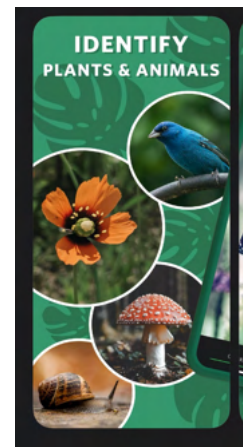
engineering the ecosystem of North America's Great Lakes at a scale not seen since the glaciers. The mussels are trapping nutrients, the building blocks of life, on the lake bottom. Without nutrients, organisms – from the tiniest plankton to the largest fish – vanish, creating vast biological deserts. The scientific community is divided into those racing to find a way to control the invaders and those who see an ironic silver lining in the new world created by the mussels – a once-in-a-lifetime chance to restore an ancient and forgotten native ecosystem.

The mussels have also had an extraordinary side effect: they've made the lakes clearer than ever. This clarity has been harnessed to film never-before-seen visuals: from dazzling shallow water worlds that look more like the Caribbean than the Great Lakes to previously undiscovered shipwrecks, completely entombed in mussels, 300 feet beneath the surface.

Don't miss this extraordinary event! Tickets are \$10 each to cover costs for the charities presenting this event.

APP Alert

Do you sometimes find yourself thinking, "I wonder what the name of that flower is?" Or wondering about a tree, or an insect, or a fish or a mushroom ... or pretty much anything that is or was at one time living? Then download the free Seek app from iNaturalist and your answer will be at your fingertips.



The Visitor

by Bruce Davidson

When you're living on an island a fair distance from the water, you don't expect a lot of friends and neighbours to drop by unexpectedly. Most people call ahead. So it was quite a surprise on a sunny Sunday morning in May, no less, to hear the uncertain trod of footsteps on my deck accompanied by slurred words that I deciphered as "*Hey man.*"

Startled out of my morning reverie with a cup of coffee in hand I glanced over to the direction of the voice to behold a most unsightly apparition. A man probably in his thirties was stumbling across the deck towards me while holding onto the railing for support. Even from a distance one could clearly see his bloodshot eyes, unshaven face, tangled mat of hair, and tousled clothes. The dirty bandage over his left hand completed the picture of somebody dead drunk, having chosen Sunday morning to grace my presence.

At a loss for words, I could only manage a weak "Yeah?"

"Can you tell me where I'm at?" came the halting reply.

"What?"

"Where am I?"

"You're on an island near Snug Harbour."

"What's that?"

Now he had me. How do you answer that? Taking a fresh tack I asked "Where do you want to go?"

"Waubashene."

"Do you mean Wawanesa or Winnitou or something that sounds like Waubashene?"

"Nope, Waubashene."

"Well, you're a heck of a long way away from there. How did you get here?"

"Paddled, I guess." And after a moment "Got no gas or money." At that he fumbled into his trousers, pulled out a billfold and opened it wide to prove that he was indeed lacking in funds. Why that should be a matter of pride was quite beyond me, but it seemed to give him great satisfaction to wave the empty wallet around.

On learning that his boat was pulled up on shore nearby, I told him to push it off and get into some deep water where I could get a line on his boat and tow him to the mainland. "From there you can call someone to come and get you," I explained.

A few minutes later I came up alongside a small tin boat with absolutely nothing in it except a paddle and some yellow poly rope. No lifejacket, no bags, no bailer, no suitcase, no charts, nothing at all. On my instruction he took the yellow rope and tied it onto the back cleat of my pontoon boat with a couple of shaky overhand granny knots. I slipped my boat into gear quickly as we were drifting to the rocks and watched in astonishment as he disappeared into the distance while I pulled away with a long line of yellow rope twisting and turning in the water behind me. Of course he hadn't tied the other end to his own boat – I hadn't told him to.

Once we were underway it took some self-control to suppress the smile that was sneaking across my face as I watched the vacant expression on my companion become somewhat animated for the first time as he crooked his head in wonderment to get a proper look at Snug Lighthouse as we went by. I imagined him thinking *Well I'll be darned if that isn't a real lighthouse beside us right here, wherever that is.*

The final treat of the day came at the Government Dock in Snug Harbour. My new friend untied the tow line while still in his

see **Visitor**, page 6

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boat. I noted a look of utter confusion as he started drifting helplessly away. Quickly grabbing my pike pole I brought him back to the dock, whereupon I was hugely entertained in watching him try to tie up. For anyone unfamiliar with it, the Government Dock at Snug is a proper dock with plenty of cleats. Looping a rope around any cleat is child's play. However, my erstwhile Monty Python decided to run the poly rope from the front of his boat around a post ten feet away, back around a cleat in the back of his boat and then back onto the dock whereupon lay a great cement anchor and chain. Unable to get the line through the anchor chain, he then found the large opening at the eye bolt and tied a series of granny knots directly to the anchor eye. Now that was imaginative! Where would that mighty inspiration have come from?

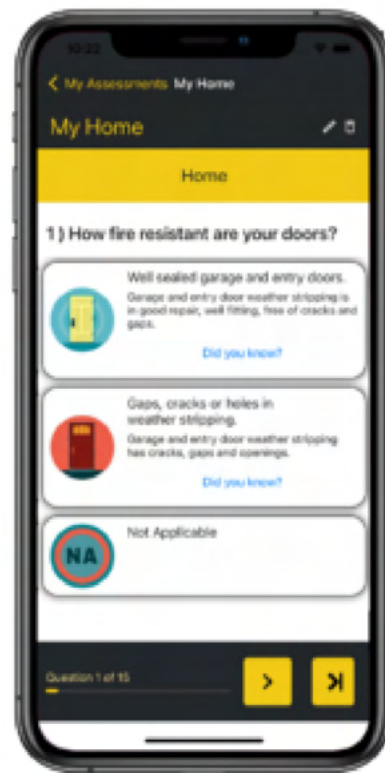
At my wife's insistence, I then gave him ten bucks, told him where the store was and suggested he call a buddy. The ten bucks disappeared into his jeans in a trice as he stumbled along the road over to Gilly's probably hoping to cadge a beer. (Good luck with getting a drink at Gilly's for ten bucks, I thought.)

And that was the last we saw of our mysterious visitor from Waubaushene. When we returned from Town several hours later the boat was gone. We dared not make inquiries at Gilly's lest we be discovered as the facilitators of some great misfortune inflicted upon them. We'd appreciate if you would keep it secret. I store my boat there.

[Editor's Note: "The Visitor" was awarded **First Place** by a panel of judges in the WCA Short Story Contest.]

Make your property more resilient to wildfires with the FireSmart app

The FireSmart Begins at Home app helps homeowners with voluntary wildfire mitigation activities. It guides users through a self-conducted home assessment to identify specific actions for reducing the impact of wildfires on their homes and properties.



Simple actions can have a big impact when it comes to protecting your home.

Check out the app and learn more about the FireSmart program [here](#).

The Georgian Bay Association also has some great resources and information on fire prevention for your cottage and home [here](#).

Confronting an Uber Porcupine *by Damian Cooper*

I'm more than happy to share our little piece of Paradise with the many critters that call this corner of Georgian Bay home. The "permanent residents" include foxes, mink, grouse, Massasauga rattlers, a huge turtle, bears, the occasional otter, beavers, herons, loons, cormorants, geckos, red and grey squirrels, chipmunks And that's not to mention the innumerable variety of birds and fish. The amazing part of sharing our property with this incredible array of wildlife is that everyone understands how to co-exist. It is extremely rare that we get in each other's way, or seek to invade each other's "property."

But then there's our porcupine. I say "our" because this very large, slothful, brazen creature of the night has made occasional appearances over the 13 years we have owned "The Snug." This spring/summer, however, has been different.

It all started during the third week of May. We had opened "The Snug" earlier that month and noticed on arriving that the doors on both sheds which I had replaced last summer had been attacked at some time between last October and now. Hmmm ... I wondered. Racoons? A bear? No matter. Very minor damage, considering the many calamitous things that can occur to a cottage over the winter months.

This time, I was up here by myself while having a contractor install a new shower. At 2:30 one morning, I was startled awake by a loud, incessant and rhythmical knocking sound. I leapt from my bed, grabbed a flashlight and ventured outside in the direction of the racket. Shining the beam on the outside West-facing side of the cottage, I searched for the culprit. Nothing. Then I raised the hinged wooden top of the pump

enclosure and there sat the confounded beast, chomping away on the inside wall. Noisily thumping the side of the enclosure while yelling obscene epithets merely caused the spiny intruder to look back at me, mockingly. Artillery was required! I hurried around the cottage to the shed and grabbed two sections of the pole for my chimney brush, thinking that ten feet of fiberglass between me and the villain's sizeable hindquarters would guarantee protection from those threatening quills! Prodding the creature's butt end while still yelling various curses did actually result in him slowly loping off under the cottage. I met him on the other side and eventually succeeded in nudging him off our property. Or so I thought ...

At 5:00 AM I awoke to the same damn noise! In the exact same place! This called for the nuclear option – a garden rake. Far from gentle prodding, I resorted to serious jabs to the hind quarters with this weapon. Once again, the home invader made a leisurely trek under the cottage to be met by me, once again, on the East side. There I continued with the butt jabs, at which point my opponent beat a slightly more hasty retreat up a white pine tree, squawking his own form of abuse at me as he did so.

I returned to bed, confident that this last, more physical response from me would deter the enemy from return visits to The Snug. But to be safe rather than sorry, the next day I covered both the shed doors and the pump house with chicken wire to a height of four feet.

It was perhaps ten days later when Nanci and I were both at The Snug. 2:00 AM. That incessant knocking again. But this time coming from the East side of the cottage itself. Switching on the outside floodlights revealed the wretched beast chomping away

see Porcupine, page 8

Porcupine, from page 7

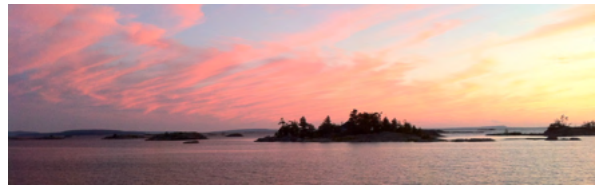
on the cottage wall! “*You’re supposed to eat tree bark, NOT stained plywood for heaven’s sake.*” Back to the shed for the garden rake. Same routine as before, although the spiny bugger opted for a ground retreat this time, rather than the pine tree. Upon inspection in the light of day, the damage to the cottage wall was significant. This called for research into new tactics. Google time. As well, we called our dear friend and close neighbor, Bruce Davidson who, it so happens, had dealt with no fewer than five porcupines on his Snug Island property over the years. Armed with his live trap, Bruce boated over to The Snug to offer his expertise.

After quizzing me on the details of its previous sorties, Bruce said, “Anticipating a porcupine’s direction of approach is critical. Then we set the trap, building a virtual funnel leading it to the entrance. Find all the step ladders and other paraphernalia – not wooden, of course – so that we can build this funnel.” That task completed, I placed sliced, salted apple segments into the trap as bait. But then Bruce said, “Now the piece de resistance – some of my prized blooms.” Porcupines admire roses and peonies, don’t you know?

The next morning – nothing in the trap! Actually, that’s not true. A chipmunk was contentedly chowing down on the apple segments, its light weight at no risk of triggering the trap.

After a second fruitless night – pardon the pun – Nanci and I tried a variety of strategies for the rest of the week, aimed at deterring the beast, since he clearly wasn’t interested in being caught! These included leaving the flood lights on – only to wake up to the entire cottage smothered in every kind of moth imaginable, encircling the cottage with garden furniture, ladders, storage bins, etc., and most recently, painting the entire bottom

three feet of the cottage with a solution of cayenne pepper and Mexican hot sauce. Update: it is now July 12 and we haven’t been visited by our porcupine for almost a month. I’m touching wood as I write this!



Georgian Bay Land Trust protects 32,900 acres through the Corridor Project

The Georgian Bay Land Trust (GBLT) is thrilled to announce a significant milestone in protecting Georgian Bay’s irreplaceable wilderness for everyone. The Land Trust and the Township of Georgian Bay have signed an agreement to conserve a network of land stretching from Honey Harbour to Twelve Mile Bay, directly conserving 553 acres of municipal land and providing additional protection to 32,900 acres of crown forests and wetlands.

This is just the beginning of the Land Trust's ongoing Corridor Project, which aims to secure our region's ecological integrity and protect public access to nature. It will create a protected habitat corridor along much of Georgian Bay's eastern shoreline.

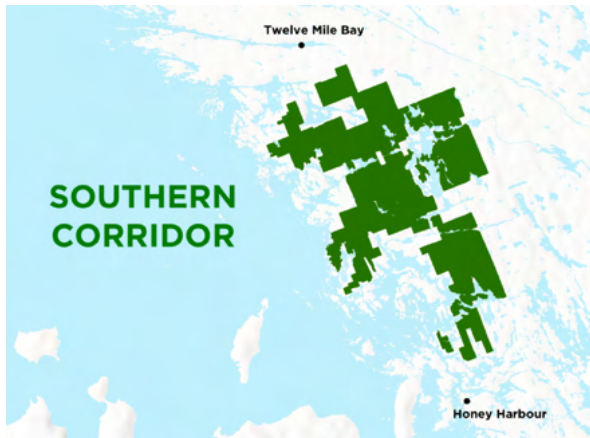
Why is a corridor important?

People need access to nature, while nature requires space and connectivity to survive. In Canada and around the world, animal populations and the habitats they depend on are

*see **Corridor**, page 9*

Corridor, from page 8

vanishing at an alarming rate. Just south of Georgian Bay, 70 per cent of Ontario’s forests and 80 per cent of its wetlands have been destroyed, and pressures are growing in the Georgian Bay area. We are incredibly fortunate that eastern Georgian Bay remains a haven with large areas of primarily intact wilderness, serving as a refuge for many plant and animal species that struggle to survive elsewhere. Our natural areas are an extraordinary legacy to leave to future generations and the world – significant places to protect.



The historic agreement between Georgian Bay Township and the GBLT has a significant impact on land protection. It involves conserving a 553-acre network of township lands that span from northern Honey Harbour to Twelve Mile Bay and from Highway 400 west to the coast.

The township has zoned these lands for environmental protection due to the critical forests and wetlands they contain. The agreement with the Land Trust now makes this status permanent while ensuring that the land remains open for public recreation and Indigenous use. This agreement was developed in consultation with Moose Deer Point First Nation and does not include any lands being

returned to Moose Deer Point by the Township.

Importantly, the newly protected lands surround approximately 32,900 acres of equally ecologically significant crown land. Preserving the township property adds a substantial layer of protection to these lands. The result is an extensive protected corridor that fills the gaps between existing conservation areas and dramatically increases long-term resiliency in the landscape.



Creature Feature

The gray tree frog (*Dryophytes versicolor*) is familiar in cottage country and throughout much of the eastern U.S. and southeastern Canada.

As the scientific name implies, this small frog can vary its color from gray to green to brown to better blend in with its environment.



Gray tree frog
(Photo: Cyndy Betts)

Their loud musical trilling can be heard on warm evenings from late spring through early summer.

Lily

by Roxy Sloan

Lily was my family's beloved and beautiful Siamese cat. She was curious, brave, yet gentle and oh-so lovable. She was a lover of many things but most of all adored her summers spent on Georgian Bay. Here is the true tale of Lily's individuality that led to this 'see it to believe it' encounter.



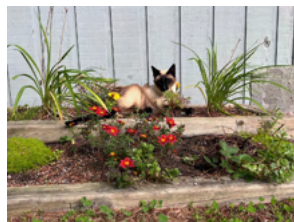
One particularly sunny morning, Lily awoke from her slumber, jumped down from her favourite sofa,

went out onto the deck, down the step, and toward her favourite flowerbed for her daily dose of sunbathing. Now picture a typical cat. Do you envision a wily and sly little hunter, ready to pounce on a mouse and deliver it to your front door? Well, this was not Lily. Although innately curious, the only catches we'd seen from endearingly cross-eyed Lily were of the insect family.

As Lily lazily relaxed on the flowers, I was picking tomatoes for breakfast from my nearby garden. I glanced over at Lily, noticing a dragonfly had just landed on a spiderweb in the flowerbed. Lily watched as it struggled to get free.

Before I had much time to decide whether to help the dragonfly or remind myself that spiders must eat too, Lily stood up.

Assuming the spider would be too late anyway, for Lily may finish the poor thing off, I saw her stick her paw out and poke



at the dragonfly, undoubtedly entranced by its movement.

By doing so the dragonfly became free.

What happened next surprised me most of all. She did not swat or try to catch the dragonfly. She simply watched it flutter away. With the dragonfly now out of sight, Lily sleepily lay back down, resuming her much needed time in kitty-cat dreamland.

The biggest question of all was apparent: Had Lily purposely freed the dragonfly?

I believe so.

Lily the hero.

Saviour of dragonflies.

[Lily is on Instagram @lilys_big_adventures]

[Editor's Note: "Lily" was awarded **Second Place** by a panel of judges in the WCA Short Story Contest.]



Wildflower Wonders

From July to September, along the shores of Georgian Bay, watch for the vivid scarlet of cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*). The plant prefers damp areas, and its tubular flowers are pollinated primarily by hummingbirds. Sadly, overpicking has reduced stands of this beautiful flower in some parts of its range.

(Photo: Tom Betts)



Mom's Vireo

by Tom Betts

My mother passed away on Earth Day in 2018, just a few months shy of her 90th birthday. During the 57 years that I was lucky enough to know her and learn from her, one of the things that sticks with me the most is the appreciation that she had for the simple things in life. Some of this no doubt was accentuated by her loss of vision during the last 15 years or so of her life – when you are nearly blind, you quite naturally become aware of simple joys. However, I believe this is an admirable quality that I can attribute to her for all of her life.

One notable example of this quality is seen – and heard – in a little bird from cottage country that I have dubbed “Mom’s Vireo.” After vacationing for many years in Ontario, my parents decided in 1998 that it was a good time to purchase a cottage along the shores of the Georgian Bay they had come to know and love. We had grown used to the 9-hour drive from Pennsylvania and were now prepared to do it more often.

At our cottage, a tree-covered path winds its way up a gentle slope from the little channel where we dock our boats. It is a short walk to the cottage and it takes just a minute or two, but the little bit of forest is something that many boat-access properties do not have. We have always enjoyed this stark contrast from the often exposed landscape of Georgian Bay and its many islands.

For as long as I can remember, a red-eyed vireo has called this little bay-side forest its summer home, and it starts its singing early in the morning and doesn’t rest until late in the afternoon or perhaps early evening. My mother took quite a liking to this songster whom she couldn’t even see, and I remember so vividly the countless times we would be walking up the path from a boat outing or a fishing trip and my mother would pause, listen,

look skyward, and then say, “There’s my vireo.”

Red-eyed vireos are among the most common birds in the mature forests of eastern North America. In northern climates, this range can extend as far west as British Columbia. Nondescript birds about five inches in length, both male and female are olive-green above and a pale whitish in color on their underparts. This camouflage and their preference to stay high in the treetops means that they are rarely seen. But if they are, one



might also notice a bold stripe across and slightly above the eye, a gray crown, and possibly even the namesake red eye.

Though they leave us in the fall and spend winters in South America, they return with the warmer weather and spend most of the summer singing cheerfully from the treetops. There, a pair will put together a cup-shaped nest in a fork of a tree branch and will lay from one to five eggs, eventually feeding the little ones an endless supply of caterpillars, aphids, and other tasty delights.

Without question, red-eyed vireos are most famous for their singing. Musical phrases (in the cadence of “Here-I-am, Where-are-you?”) will be repeated over and over, and over again. And again. And again. It is not a stretch to describe their singing as *nonstop* during the daylight hours. In fact, some sources credit the red-eyed vireo with the record for “most songs sung in a single day,” with more than 20,000 recorded! The Guinness World Records officially logs this number at 22,197 during a 10-hour period!

see **Vireo**, page 12

Vireo, from page 11

My mother never tired of hearing her vireo, and today, six years after her passing, I do not tire of it either. Though we have likely passed through a few generations of vireos by now, every cottage season the familiar singing returns and fond family memories stay alive. In fact, on many a summer day at the cottage, I find myself taking a pause on the path, glancing upward into the glossy green leaves of the oaks where there is music playing, and saying quietly, “There’s your vireo, Mom. Still bringing simple cheer to a complicated and troubled world.”

Wait Times at the West Parry Sound Health Centre Emergency Department

[West Parry Sound Health Centre](#) (WPSHC) has [rolled out a new tool](#) to better inform the community about wait times in the emergency department.

The health centre now features a wait time tracker [on the left hand side of the agency’s website](#). It shows how many patients are waiting, and the approximate time until you will see a doctor.

The emergency department must always prioritize critical patients, which can result in rapidly changing and longer wait times for those with less critical needs.

Recognizing the process can be frustrating, WPSHC hopes the new tool will help decision-making and empower people in matters related to their health.

If you are experiencing a medical emergency you must still dial 911 or proceed to the nearest emergency department. The tracking tool will assist those seeking care for less critical emergencies through the WPSHC

Emergency Department to assess the timing of their hospital visit.

Designed to inform people of the current wait, in real time, the tracker also provides predictive data showing average wait times over the course of the day.

The predictive data — illustrated by a white line on a graph — will become more and more accurate as the tracker is able to collect more data.

These trends will allow individuals with non-urgent needs to better plan their visit, and will hopefully result in better workflow for the dedicated staff overseeing the emergency department.

Hospital staff understand that waiting is difficult, and that not knowing what’s going on behind closed doors can be frustrating. While the tracker won’t be able to change how long you may have to wait, it will hopefully give patients and families more information to better inform their decisions about the timing of seeking care.

In addition to wait time information, WPSHC has also included information about potential alternatives to access qualified health advice. While many concerns will still need to be seen to in person, the expanse of virtual care options in our region can help individuals make more informed decisions about how to proceed.

Services, such as [Health811](#) where any individual in Ontario can dial 811 to speak with a qualified health care provider at any hour of the day, for free, are not well known about yet, but can be useful tools.

This information, along with minor ailment consultation available through some local pharmacies, and access to the [North East Virtual Care Clinic](#) operated by nurse practitioners, has all been collected and included on the tracker for ease of use.

To see the tracker, visit [wpshc.com/disclaimer/](#).

The Perfect Rock

by Larry Moses

Some stories are long— this one takes several billion years. This story takes place in West Carling and its surrounding areas. It involves the sculpturing of rock but also the evolution of the human consciousness of those who live and visit here, to be able to appreciate this rock.

Of course I will shorten my story by telling it in minutes, but you must realize that the mountains resting on this Georgian Bay area took several billions of years to sink into the cooling magma of the earth's surface. That, along with erosion, left these mountains vulnerable to the mile high glaciation which through thousands of years brought the present state of rock formations into reality in our community.

For all those who love the Georgian Bay Area, the rock base and sculpted rock shorelines, dressed by rugged forestation of sometimes gnarled bonsai pines, entertain the eyes perpetually.

Certainly, we have noticed that Parry Sound highways cut through massive rock hills. Everywhere, we see the practical use of "locally found rock" gracing fireplaces, cottage siding and walkways.

We might ask why the texture and lines of these flattened eroded surfaces point in different directions — some transcending vertically, some laterally. Why are there differences in colours and textures?

Unfortunately rock-question answers are very hard to come by.

Anyway, the purpose of this story is for you to focus on the outcast rocks of glaciation — the Outliers. The smaller ones that were dragged and shifted by the advancing glacier and then abandoned by the receding melting glacier. These rocks were turned over and over

by the glacier constantly shaping them during their miles and miles of trauma.

These rocks were squeezed above the land-base of granite and below the mile high glaciers. The crushing weight of the glacier combined with the grinding of the Outlier rock on rock base was all that was required to smooth out the edges of the most- jagged rocks and turn them into quasi-spherical shapes of all sizes.

Often these rocks were, with the melting of the glaciers, pushed and dumped over the edges of Georgian Bay's rock shorelines and into the shallow waters of the bay.

There the rocks found new sources of carving pressures from the powerful wave action during Georgian Bay summer storms and winter ice.

Passing over the shallower Bay water by boat, one often sees these gorgeous rocks. Existing in the crystal-clear water of Georgian Bay, these sculptures amaze the mind not only with their size but also with their continuously different presentation of shape.

Simultaneous with this process of rock formation these billions of years, were the changes in DNA form until we presently have the human with an advanced, evolved mind – a human mind that can appreciate rock only for its beauty.

With these thoughts in mind a friend of mine with 60 years of Georgian Bay observational experience and I with 50 years decided to visit the outer islands.

As was expected, the glacial dump of rocks just off the western side of an island contained several hundred rocks in water 10-15 feet deep. Snorkelling over these we were able to see many rocks – ancient in age, never seen by human eyes and utterly beautiful.

Unexpectedly, in one area 20 feet from the

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water's edge, were several hundred "Outlier" glacial rocks, possibly thrown back onto land from shallow bay water by winter storm and ice action. It was interesting how quickly we could explore and examine these hundreds of sculptures.

And then there it was — "The Perfect Rock."



I immediately brought this rock to the attention of my friend. He fully agreed — in all his time on the Bay he had never seen a better representation of a perfectly, glacially, carved Outlier masterpiece - carved I might add over thousands of years by only the natural forces of the universe with no human intervention!

As the rock weighed about 60 lbs and was far from the boat we decided to leave it behind for the next observer, but we left it there with great reluctance.

Five months later in December, at the beginning of a grey, colourless, Canadian winter day with snow swirling around, I met with my Georgian Bay friend again for an annual pre-Christmas lunch.

Ironically, the lunch was at the "Snug Harbour" restaurant in Port Credit.

My friend and I often exchange gifts at our annual Christmas lunch and after lunch and after I had given him his gift, he excused himself to go to his van to get mine.

Shortly thereafter my friend entered the restaurant pushing a cart containing a large box, wrapped in Christmas paper.

When I unwrapped it imagine my delight! There it was "The Perfect Rock!!"



I might add that this rock is a "Perfect Triaxial Ellipsoid." Of course I have included a picture! Just imagine for a moment its creation.

On the Formation of Haumea

Haumea is one of the oddest objects in the solar system. It's in hydrostatic equilibrium (and therefore qualifies as a planet by my definition), but it's extreme 4 hr. rotation has stretched it into a 'triaxial ellipsoid' (i.e. a flattened prolate spheroid)...



[Editor's Note: "The Perfect Rock" was awarded **Third Place** by a panel of judges in the WCA Short Story Contest.]

I named this place Listening Point because only when one comes to listen, only when one is aware and still, can things be seen and heard. Everyone has a listening point somewhere. It does not have to be in the north or close to the wilderness, but someplace of quiet where the universe can be contemplated with awe.

Author Sigurd F. Olson

Phragmites, Be Gone!

by Tom Betts and Richard Wilson
(photos: Tom Betts)

Recently, on Wednesday, July 31, WCA members Richard Wilson, Bruce Kelly, Joe Tucker, and Tom Betts joined forces with a team of six “Phrag-Busters” from Georgian Bay Forever in an effort to eradicate two stands of invasive phragmites on Franklin Island. Peter Hopperton and Bruce Davidson both contributed their time and boats earlier in the year for full days of survey work to search out this nasty plant

The team from Georgian Bay Forever consists of a full-time program manager and five summer students who are all enrolled in ecological based studies. Thanks to a generous contribution from Carling Council they spent the entire week in our area and have removed 16 known stands from our coastal areas.

Phragmites is an aggressive invader in coastal and wetland areas of North America, and constitutes a serious threat to native plants and animals in and around Georgian Bay. It outcompetes local wetland vegetation and is an inhospitable host for virtually all wetland



A stand of invasive phragmites, just as the team gets to work on it.

wildlife, even snakes. Controlling shoreline phragmites involves cutting the hollow stems of the tall stalks below the water level, thereby drowning the roots of the plant. Large stands may take 4-7 years to completely eradicate.



The same stand of phragmites, after removal. Native plants and animals will now find a more hospitable environment.

Wilson was particularly excited to see the progress – or the lack of progress – at the sites that were targeted on July 31. “This whole area was covered with phragmites last year,” Wilson said as he spread his arms wide to indicate a long stretch of shoreline. “But look at this! Just look! We cut this area last year and I would estimate the re-growth to be covering only half the area it did last year. We’re making progress!”



Nicole Carpenter rescues a Blanding's turtle from the dense tangle of phragmites.



Richard Wilson cleans up the cuttings from what had been an extensive stand of phragmites.



After an hour of intense cutting, Bruce Kelly has his hands full with phragmites stalks.



WCA and Georgian Bay Forever teamed up on 7/31/24 against invasive phragmites along the shores of Franklin Island.