



# The Esquensing

May-June 2017 Newsletter  
Volume 51, Number 5



## President's Message

With only one indoor meeting remaining before September, it's time for me to recognize some members who have helped our club thrive by offering their time and expertise.

Kudos to Kim Dobson, our bluebird box architect and engineer. Club members installed ten of Kim's bird houses at Forks of the Credit Provincial Park in April. One nest box is inscribed with a remembrance of Valerie Dobson who we lost this year to cancer. We have webmaster John Beaudette to thank for that idea. Find Valerie's bird house near a grand old white ash tree. (Many of us know where this tree is. If you don't, simply ask.)



Club members at Forks of the Credit Provincial Park, April 2017



Valerie Dobson's commemorative plaque

Recently, four club members graciously volunteered to manage a booth at Georgetown Market Place's 8<sup>th</sup> annual Earth Day and Sustainability Fair. My thanks to Margaret Beaudette, Tanya Piko, Alexis Buset and Yves Scholten. The set-up was impressive. It featured an aquarium with vernal pool creatures including fairy shrimp and caddisfly larvae – a real crowd pleaser.



Club display for the 8<sup>th</sup> annual Earth Day and Sustainability Fair at Georgetown Market Place

My thanks as well to John Beaudette who continues to creatively manage our excellent website and Lorysa Cornish who continues to welcome new members – we're closing in on 100 paid memberships!

I'd be remiss if I didn't thank Vice-President Ian Jarvie also, for ably piloting the ship when I couldn't make the April meeting. With so many members singing his praises I've tried to master a faux Scottish brogue, thus far with little success. Also elusive is Ian's wit. I remain essentially witless.

To all those who lead walks, thanks! Deserving of credit are Ray Blower, Fiona Reid and especially Bill McIlveen who once again is offering an impressive roster of Monday evening walks this year. (See Bill's list in this newsletter.)

Consider coming out for one or more of Bill's walks or any of the other outdoor events featured in this newsletter.

If I miss you over the summer I hope to see you in September as we begin another rewarding season of meetings and nature pursuits.

I wish you a summer filled with birdsong.

Don Scallen

## Talks and Walks

### Meetings:

Meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of the month, September to June at St. Alban the Martyr Anglican Church, 537 Main Street, Glen Williams, unless stated otherwise.

#### **Tuesday, May 9, 2017**

##### **Kevin McAuslan: Fungi**

Kevin is the Vice-President of the Mycological Society of Toronto. He will talk about the roles fungi play in the natural world, including the fascinating science surrounding the mycorrhizal relationships fungi have with trees and other plants. Kevin will also tell us about how fungi can be used in the garden, to benefit vegetables with these mycorrhizal relationships. If he has time he'll also touch on exciting research into the possible use of fungi to control pests and help rehabilitate polluted or damaged environments.

#### **Tuesday, June 13, 2017**

##### **Annual outdoor meeting at Scotsdale Farm**

Our annual outdoor meeting prior to summer break. Meet at 7 p.m. in the parking lot at Scotsdale Farm, entrance east off Trafalgar Road, north of 27 Sideroad, Silver Creek. We'll spend about 2 hours investigating nest boxes the club has put up at Scotsdale in recent years. This project, made possible by the construction efforts of club member Kim Dobson, has seen approximately 50 nest boxes installed at Scotsdale to attract nesting birds. We'll open them briefly to determine tenancy. Expect tree swallows, house wrens and, with luck, bluebirds.

#### **Tuesday, September 12, 2017**

##### **Nicola Ross: Hiking in Mexico's Sierra Norte Mountains**

Author and club member Nicola Ross is an inveterate hiker. She's also a keen observer of flora, fauna and local culture and is eager to tell us about her hiking adventure in Mexico's Oaxaca state last year. Nicola is the author of two hiking books: *Caledon Hikes, Loops and Lattes* and *Halton Hikes, Loops and Lattes*

### Outdoor Events:

#### **Sunday, May 21, 2017**

##### **Spring Birding at Thickson's Woods, Lynde Shores Conservation Area and Cranberry Marsh**

If he had only one day in the spring to go birding, this is where Ray Blower would go. These locations provide a wide variety of habitats including mature forest, meadows, swamps, marshes, old fields, and Lake Ontario and its shoreline. The result is a diverse collection of bird species, especially during spring migration. Scheduling on the Sunday of the Victoria Day holiday weekend has resulted, so far, in trouble-free driving to and from these Whitby birding hot spots. Bring a lunch, water, hat, sunscreen, binoculars, etc. Call Ray Blower, 519-853-0171, for starting location and times.

**Friday, May 26 to Sunday May 28, 2017**

**South Peel Naturalist Club's annual Bruce Peninsula weekend:**

Explore the Bruce Peninsula in the company of fellow naturalists and under the guidance of expert leaders at Evergreen Resort at Mar on the Bruce Peninsula. The cost for the weekend, per person, is \$20 for the leadership and administration fee and \$236 (+13% tax) for accommodation. This price includes all meals and snacks.

This annual weekend event is hosted by South Peel Naturalists Club and we invite you to share the experience. For further information: [mail@spnc.ca](mailto:mail@spnc.ca) or contact Donna at 905-815-0933 or Audrey at 905-820-2571.

**Sunday, May 28, 2017**

**Heronry in Speyside**

Visit to an active heronry at Laurie and Judith Reed's property in Speyside. This event starts at 2:00 p.m. We can expect to see a number of Great Blue Herons on the nest, and possibly small chicks, as well as a number of other waterbirds and songbirds. We will be viewing birds from a raised deck (max 10 people at a time). Please RSVP Fiona ([fiona.reid7243@gmail.com](mailto:fiona.reid7243@gmail.com)) for car-pooling and more information.

**Saturday, June 10, 2017**

**First Annual Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club Big Bird Day**

Club members are invited to explore any of their favourite birding locations in Halton Region or north Peel Region (Brampton and Caledon) from midnight on Friday to midnight on Saturday. The objective will be to find as many species of birds in one day as possible. Time spent in the field and locations, within the parameters described above, is entirely your call. Any club members are welcome to participate. You can form your own teams, ask to be placed on a team, or simply do some solo birding. Please know that you don't have to be an expert birder to take part. This is a learning opportunity for all involved. And the overriding objective is simply to have fun.

Questions can be directed to Don at [dscallen@cogeco.ca](mailto:dscallen@cogeco.ca)

**Saturday, June 17, 2017**

**The Flight of the Cecropia Moth**

June is prime month for the mating of the exquisite silk moths that inhabit our area. Chances are Don Scallen will have at least one voluptuous female moth on hand this evening. After sunset she'll release come-hither pheromones that will send any nearby males (male *moths* to be clear!) over the moon.

This event will begin at 8:30 p.m. at Don's house at 62 Windsor Road in Georgetown. Dress for the weather and BYOB. Various tasty munchies will be offered to the human guests, but not to the moths as they haven't any functioning mouthparts. Heavy rain will cancel this event, otherwise it will be a go. Email Don at [dscallen@cogeco.ca](mailto:dscallen@cogeco.ca) if uncertain.

# Jelly Fungi

By W.D. McIlveen

I was recently (early March) making my first visit of the year to one of the local Regional Forest Tracts. There I came upon some fungi that had developed on the woody debris on the ground. Some of that debris had been left during the thinning of the plantations. The fungi present were of various forms, mostly woody tough types, that had developed last fall. But among them, there were some Orange Jelly looking a little worse for having spent the winter. When I realized that these were only present on the old wood from Spruce trees, I thought that they might make a suitable topic for a newsletter article.

While some species are obviously related to each other (e.g. in the same genus or family), others are only distantly related. They are related to true mushroom (Basidiomycetes) but are representatives from at least four different taxonomic orders - Tremellales, Auriculariales, Dacrymycetales, and Sebaciniales. Despite the seeming lack of taxonomic relatedness, they do share one feature in common and that is the texture of their tissues. True to their name, they appear jelly-like or gelatinous and many are rubbery. If they lose water from their tissues, they will shrivel, dry, and become hard. But if they are exposed to free water again, they can be restored to their original condition. Some of totally unrelated cup or sac fungi that are members of the phylum Ascomycota also share some of the jelly-like characteristics. Some of the coral fungi may resemble jelly fungi as well.

In their general appearance, most have an irregularly branched structure. Some are leafy, some are finger like, some are coral-shaped, and many are convoluted or brain-like. Their colours range from white to pink, brown, purple, and black. Many are yellow and orange in hue. The attached pictures show some of the range in colour and appearance of jelly fungi to be found locally. A few species may be poisonous and a few may be desirable for food. Most are described as edible but the texture and flavour are apparently less than agreeable. Their small size alone makes their collection for culinary purposes hardly worth the effort.

One of the most common species is known as 'Yellow' or 'Orange Jelly'. Many field guides list this one as *Dacrymyces palmatus* but it is more properly known as *Dacrymyces chrysospermus*. Unfortunately, some people have also applied the common name 'Witch's Butter' to this species thus adding to the confusion of names and species identification. Witch's Butter is more properly applied to *Tremella mesenterica*. Some 161 species of *Dacrymyces* have been described world-wide but it is uncertain how many of these are valid species. Proper identification and separation of these and similar species needs to be done using microscopic characters.

Although there are reports of Yellow Jelly (*Dacrymyces chrysospermus*) occurring on maples, perhaps in error, it is a species that is essentially confined to conifer (e.g. Spruce, Pine, Fir) wood. Here it is a saprophyte that lives on the dead tissues of stems and branches. By contrast, the similar *Tremella* species are to be found on hardwood. But apparently, not all is as it seems when these are observed on wood. *Tremella* is actually a mycoparasite or a parasite that attacks another fungus species. *Tremella aurantia* attacks the ubiquitous wood rotter, *Stereum hirsutum*, while *Tremella mesenterica* parasitizes species of *Peniophora*, another wood-rotting fungus. Another species formerly known as *Tremella mycetophila* and as *Christiansenia*

*mycetophila* is also a mycoparasite. Currently known as *Syzygospora mycetophila* or Collybia Jelly, it attacks the very common Oak-loving Collybia (*Gymnopus dryophilus*).

So next time you are in the woods or similar places, look for examples of these interesting mushrooms. Noting the host wood species might be a good aid for identifying those that you encounter.



*Ascotremella faginea*, Beech Jelly, Crawford Lake, 1970



*Calocera cornea*, Clublike Tuning Fork, Elliot Tract, 2003



*Dacrymyces chrysospermus*, Yellow Jelly Fungus, Rattray, 2013



*Exidia glandulosa*, Black Jelly Roll, Limehouse, 2016



*Tremiscus helvelloides*, Apricot Jelly, Aberfoyle, 2005



*Tremella mesenterica*, Witch's Butter, Campbellville, 2012

## Fascinating Nature Gleanings from the Web

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2017/03/wisdom-of-trees/>

These are accounts of stunning trees around the world, notable for their size, longevity or cultural significance. One story is about a trembling aspen grove in Utah that is, in fact, a single organism, covering over 100 acres. Its roots may be thousands of years old, possibly making it the oldest living thing on the planet.

<http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/04/04/522598144/video-badger-burying-a-cow-surprises-scientists>

Scientists were puzzled when a calf carcass they placed in the Utah desert simply disappeared. Reviewing video from trail cams, they found the culprit – an American Badger. The resourceful badger had buried the carcass. Underground, it fed happily on the calf for at least 11 days.

<http://www.indefenseofplants.com/blog/2017/4/9/the-worlds-only-known-photosynthetic-vertebrate>

From club member and herptile aficionado Yves Scholten, comes this fantastic story about symbiosis between spotted salamanders and algae.

<https://www.theweathernetwork.com/news/articles/rare-mountain-lion-discovered-in-northern-ontario/80768>

Ontario cougars exist! (Well at least in northwestern Ontario.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j6fhE4sCP4A&w=720&h=405>

Club member Darryl Gwynne brought my attention to this youtube video showing Red-throated Caracaras (tropical birds related to falcons) attacking wasp nests swarming with angry defenders. The birds eventually prevailed.

Watching this video reminded me of a remarkable event I witnessed several years ago in my front yard. A male cardinal showed interest in a small paper wasp nest hanging from the soffit of my house. Hovering briefly, it plucked the nest from the soffit, carried it across the street and then ate the wasp larvae on a neighbour's lawn.

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/09/110929235201.htm>

And speaking of Darryl Gwynne, this story details his discovery of a tragic love connection between Australian jewel beetles and beer bottles back in the 1980's. For this seminal research, Darryl was awarded an "Ig Nobel" prize – an award of dubious distinction.

Don Scallen

## Two nature mysteries that I'd love to find answers to

The preceding article about weird and wonderful nature stories on the web got me thinking about some of the nature mysteries that I've puzzled over for a long time. Perhaps someone out there can help me out.

**Mystery number one:** How did fish get into the kettle ponds at Forks of the Credit Provincial Park?



Forks of the Credit Provincial Park

At least three species of fish inhabit the ponds at Forks of the Credit Provincial Park: brook stickleback, pumpkinseed sunfish and at least one species of minnow (*Cyprinidae sp.*)

The lakes are stand-alone, without any connection to other bodies of water. The Credit River is hundreds of metres away and separated from the ponds by steep valley walls. The twain shall never meet, even in a hundred-year flood.

But the fish are there. The three species are not prized gamefish. If largemouth bass were present that would almost certainly indicate human agency. Could the fish have arrived in a bait bucket? The minnows perhaps – but the sunfish? And the sticklebacks? I've never seen these tiny fish used as bait, but do realize this is one possible way they could have arrived.

If the fish weren't placed in the ponds by people, all possible answers become intriguing: eggs or small fry carried in the feathers of waterfowl? Fish delivered by tornados or waterspouts? Fish arriving in the ponds thousands of years ago, via icy waters networking the landscape as the glaciers retreated?

Other ideas?

**Mystery number two:** Why aren't we afflicted by malaria in Ontario?

Before you answer that it's because malaria is a tropical disease, consider that malaria was the greatest cause of death during the building of the Rideau Canal which opened in 1832. It may have claimed up to 500 lives during construction. Moreover, malaria wasn't confined to the area around the Rideau Canal. It was also present in other areas of Upper Canada.

Explanations of its disappearance include the use of the malaria fighting drug Quinine, the draining of swamps where malarial mosquitos bred, and the installation of windows and screens to keep mosquitos out of homes. These appear lacking though.

Anti-malarial drugs may protect against the disease, but they don't eliminate it. And neither of course, do screens and windows. Even with the draining of wetlands it's hard to believe that there wasn't still lots of water for mosquitos to breed in. Moreover, the mosquito that carried malaria in Ontario, *Anopheles quadrimaculatus*, is still with us.



Mosquito larva

The disappearance of malaria here in Ontario is all to the good, but it remains a mystery.

Don Scallen

*Photos by Don Scallen*

## Naturalist Club Evening Walks – Summer 2017

Halton/North Peel Naturalist and South Peel Naturalist Clubs  
All walks are on Mondays and start at the meeting location at 7:00pm sharp.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Destination</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Leader</b>
15-May	Shanahan Tract	Campbellville Parking	Dawn Renfrew
22-May	Sixteen Mile Creek Valley	Upper Middle Trail	Bill McIlveen
29-May	Scotch Block	Hwy 401 at Hwy 25	Fiona Reid
5-Jun	Acton Swift Watch	Acton Prospect Park	Emily Dobson
12-Jun	Scotsdale Bird Box	Scotsdale Farm	Bill McIlveen
19-Jun	Riverview Park Streetsville	PineCliff Park	Bill McIlveen
26-Jun	Forks-of-Credit Park	Forks-of-Credit Park	Don Scallen
3-Jul	Credit River Streetsville	River Grove Community Centre	Bill McIlveen
10-Jul	Hardy & Crozier Tracts	Hwy 401 at Hwy 25	Ray Blower
17-Jul	Marco Muzzo Memorial Park	Marco Muzzo Park	Bill McIlveen
24-Jul	Conely Tract	Campbellville Parking	Bill McIlveen
31-Jul	Hungry Hollow Georgetown	Hungry Hollow	Bill McIlveen
7-Aug	Swift Night Out	Oakville	Emily Dobson
14-Aug	Speyside Area	Hwy 401 at Hwy 25	Fiona Reid
21-Aug	Rattray	Green Glade School	Kirsten Burling

**Campbellville** – Commuter parking lot southwest corner Hwy 401 and Guelph Line

**Upper Middle Trail** – Parking area off Old Upper Middle Rd and McCraney St West, east bank of Sixteen Mile Creek

**Hwy 401 at Hwy 25** – Commuter parking lot at SE intersection of Hwy 401 and Hwy 25, Milton

**Acton Prospect Park** – Prospect Park at Knox and Park Ave., then check for Chimney Swifts in town

**Scotsdale Farm** - parking lot at Scotsdale Farm, east of Trafalgar Rd, north of Sideroad 27, Silver Creek

**PineCliff Park** – Parking lot near Creditview Road and Credit River

**Forks-of-Credit** – Parking lot off McLaren Drive, south of Charleston Sideroad. Entrance Fee in effect

**River Grove Community Centre** – North side parking lot at River Grove Centre, Streetsville

**Marco Muzzo Park** – Parking lot north of intersection Perennial Dr. at Flagstone Dr., Mississauga

**Hungry Hollow** – East end of Foxtail Ct, east of 8<sup>th</sup> Line, Georgetown

**Oakville** – Old closed high school east of Reynolds St. between Sheddon Ave and former Oakville Trafalgar Hospital

**Green Glade School** – Green Glade off Meadow Wood Road, Clarkson

For more information, call Bill McIlveen (519) 853-3948



American red squirrel by Tanya Piko

Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club, Box 115, Georgetown, Ontario, L7G 4T1  
Charity Registration number: 869778761RR0001

Executive			Appointments	
President:	Don Scallen	(905) 876-6180	Membership:	Lorysa Cornish
Past President:	Fiona Reid		Newsletter:	Tanya Piko
Vice President:	Ian Jarvie	(905) 877-1441	Ontario Nature Representative:	Don Scallen
Secretary:	Emily Dobson		Public Relations:	Rose Barcarse
Treasurer:	Anne Fraser		Webmaster:	John Beaudette
			Member at Large:	Janice Sukhiani
			Member at Large:	William McIlveen
			Crozier Property Steward:	vacant
			Hardy Property Steward:	Ray Blower

Membership for one year: \$30 Single; \$40 Family  
The Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club is an affiliated member of Ontario Nature.

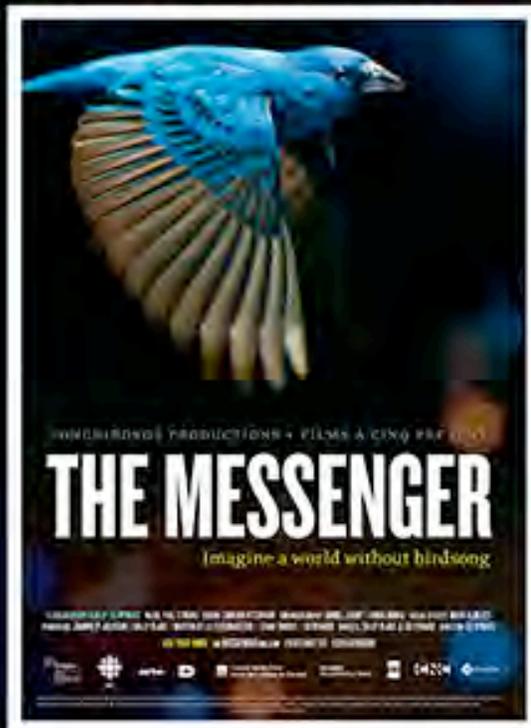
[www.hnpnc.com](http://www.hnpnc.com)

# Halton Hills EcoFilm Fest

Presented by

P.O.W.E.R. & The Town of Halton Hills

Protect our Water and Environmental Resources [www.powerhalton.ca](http://www.powerhalton.ca)



## WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 2017

Evening Films  
Start at 7:30 p.m.

JOHN ELLIOTT THEATRE  
9 Church St. Georgetown, ON  
[http://www.haltonhills.ca/  
Theatre/index.php](http://www.haltonhills.ca/Theatre/index.php)

\$10.00; \$5.00 Students  
@ Library Box Office

### "The Messenger: Imagine a World without Birdsong" International Day of Biodiversity

*Can you imagine a world without songbirds? A forest without beautiful melodies?*

The Messenger, directed by Su Rynard, documents the imperiled birds and analyzes how their fate could reflect our own. A visually stunning piece, this movie will take you from the northern reaches of the Boreal Forest to the base of Mount Ararat in Turkey to explore the human impact on these songbirds, and the mass depletion across continents. While they are in danger, viewers will also get a glimpse of the organizations who are working to encourage action in order to protect these music makers.

**Guest Speaker:** Don Scallen, President, The Halton North Peel Naturalists Club.

**Table Talks:** Paloma Plant, Program Coordinator of FLAP (Fatal Light Awareness Program). Dr. Elisabeth Richards, Master Gardener, EcoPartner: The Butterfly Garden Project. Leslie Adams, Halton Peel BioDiversity Network.

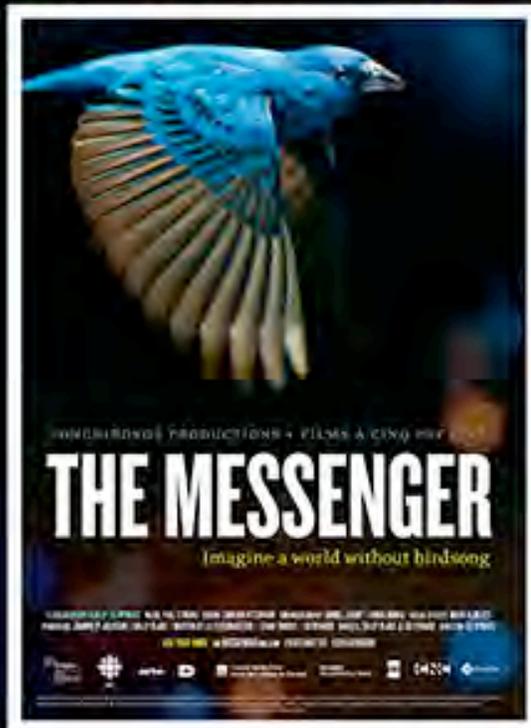


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Presented by

P.O.W.E.R. & The Town of Halton Hills

Protect our Water and Environmental Resources [www.powerhalton.ca](http://www.powerhalton.ca)



**SUNDAY,  
JUNE 4, 2017**

Afternoon Film  
Starts at 1:00 p.m.

**TRINITY UNITED CHURCH.**  
70 Mill Street East;  
Acton, ON L7J 1H3.  
519-853-2090

Sponsored by  
Halton / North Peel Naturalists  
<http://hnpnc.com/site/>

**\$5.00 Donation**

## **"The Messenger: Imagine a World without Birdsong" World Environment Day**

*Can you imagine a world without songbirds? A forest without beautiful melodies?*

The Messenger, directed by Su Rynard, documents the imperiled birds and analyzes how their fate could reflect our own. A visually stunning piece, this movie will take you from the northern reaches of the Boreal Forest to the base of Mount Ararat in Turkey to explore the human impact on these songbirds, and the mass depletion across continents. While they are in danger, viewers will also get a glimpse of the organizations who are working to encourage action in order to protect these music makers.

**Guest Speaker:** Yves Scholten, HBSc, Terrestrial Planning Ecologist, HNPNC

**Table Talks:** Paloma Plant, Program Coordinator of FLAP (Fatal Light Awareness Program) Dr. Elisabeth Richards, Master Gardener, EcoPartner: The Butterfly Garden Project. Norm Hohban of the Halton Wood-carving Club



# Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club Membership Form

\_\_\_\_\_ Renewal or \_\_\_\_\_ New Member(s)                      Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## Membership renewal fee

from September through to August      \_\_\_\_\_ Single (\$30.00)      \_\_\_\_\_ Family (\$40.00)

## New members' fees from sign-up date:

December through to August      \_\_\_\_\_ Single (\$22.50)      \_\_\_\_\_ Family (\$30.00)      March

through to August      \_\_\_\_\_ Single (\$15.00)      \_\_\_\_\_ Family (\$20.00)

June through to August      \_\_\_\_\_ Single (\$ 7.50)      \_\_\_\_\_ Family (\$10.00)

Do you have any suggestions for programs or field trips?  
\_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about our club (newspaper/website/friend/other)?  
\_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

### WAIVER OF LIABILITY

(must be signed by anyone planning to attend field trips or other outdoor activities)

In making this application, I affirm that I am in good health, capable of performing the exercise required to participate, and that I accept as my personal risk the hazards of such participation and will not hold the Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club or its representatives responsible.

In consideration of the Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club accepting my application, I hereby and forever release and discharge the Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club and its officers, directors, servants and agents from any liability whatsoever arising as a result of my participation in these trips and declare that this is binding upon me, my heirs, executors, administrators and assigned.

Signature(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

Meetings are at St Alban's Church in Glen Williams (see next page) starting at 7:30 p.m.

Please fill out this form and bring it in to next indoor meeting or mail with payment to:

Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club, P.O. Box 115, Georgetown, Ontario, L7G 4T1

# Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club

## Meeting Location

St. Alban the Martyr Anglican Church, 537 Main Street, Glen Williams

