



# The Esquesing

Nov-Dec 2017 Newsletter  
Volume 52, Number 2



## Special Edition

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**Commemorating the life of naturalist and  
artist  
Irene McIlveen**



## Talks and Walks

**Indoor:** 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 November 14, 2017, 7:30 p.m.**

### **An Amateur's Fossil Adventures in the High Rockies**

Beth Gilhespy, CEO of the Bruce Trail Conservancy and amateur fossil enthusiast, will take us on a visual exploration of her adventures in Yoho and Kootenay, showing the finds at historic and recent fossil sites and giving us a glimpse of busy Burgess Shale life a half a billion years ago.

**Tuesday December 12, 2017, 6:30 p.m.**

### **Christmas Pot Luck**

Come for gustatory pleasure of Ray Blower's legendary bean salad and for general conviviality. There will be an opportunity to show slides after we eat, but due to time constraints, please limit your presentation to 5-10 minutes.



## **Outdoor:**

**Saturday October 14, 2017 – 2 p.m.**

### **Big Tree Measuring at the Calcium Pits**

Bruce Side Trail along Twiss Road about 2.5km south of Steeles Avenue southwest of Campbellville. Limited parking is available along the roadside. Bill McIlveen will lead this hike to seek out and measure large trees.

**Sunday October 15, 2017 – 1 p.m.**

### **Nest box cleaning at Scotsdale**

Meet in the Scotsdale parking lot accessible from Trafalgar Road. Our annual inspection and cleaning of the nest boxes we've installed at Scotsdale.

**Sunday October 22, 2017 – 1:30pm**

### **Nest box cleaning at Forks of the Credit Provincial Park**

Meet in the Forks of the Credit parking lot west off of McClaren Road Caledon, between Forks of the Credit Road and Charleston Sideroad. Parking fee required. In the spring our club installed ten nest boxes at Forks of the Credit Provincial Park. They were a great success with at least 9 of them occupied by nesting birds. Now it's time to clean and inspect them so they are ready for next year.

**Sunday October 29, 2017 – 1:30 pm**

### **Spawning Brook Trout at Silver Creek**

Meet at the Silver Creek Education Centre parking lot on Fallbrook Road just north of 27 Sideroad. We will walk from there to the spawning beds.

**Sunday November 5, 2017 – time to be announced**

**Woody vegetation removal at Forks of the Credit Provincial Park**

Meet in the Forks of the Credit parking lot west off of McClaren Road Caledon, between Forks of the Credit Road and Charleston Sideroad. Parking fee required. Our club will partner with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to remove some of the shrubs and small trees that are colonizing the meadows and grasslands at Forks of the Credit Provincial Park. The objective is to maintain portions of these open habitats for the plants and animals that depend on them. These species include bobolinks, meadowlarks, clay-colored sparrows, monarch butterflies, hoary vervain and foxglove beardtongue.

**Sunday November 12, 2017**

**Late Flowering Plants Survey Hike**

Bill McIlveen will again be leading this 16th annual survey to find and identify any flowering plants that are still blooming late in the season at sites around Halton Hills. Meet at the parking lot of the old public school, Mary Street, Norval at 1:00pm where we will start monitoring at the Lucy Maude Montgomery Garden and Willow Park.

**Wednesday December 27, 2017**

**Christmas Bird Count**

The 25th annual Christmas Count for Halton Hills will take place in the standard survey area around Halton Hills on Monday December 27. The area will be divided into smaller areas with participants assisting experienced leaders. This is a great way for beginners to learn their birds. If you would like to join in any aspect of the count, please contact Bill McIlveen via e-mail at [wmcilveen@sympatico.ca](mailto:wmcilveen@sympatico.ca), at (519) 853-3948, or send us a message at [info@hnpnc.com](mailto:info@hnpnc.com), or call Fiona at (905) 693-9719.



Irene McIlveen 1993

## Remembering Irene McIlveen



On June 25, 2017 Irene McIlveen died following a lengthy illness. She was a particularly valued member of the Halton/North Peel Naturalists Club (HNP) and so the Club executive agreed that an issue of the newsletter dedicated to her memory was a worthy way to recognize her many contributions. As well, it offers people an opportunity to see some of her artistic talents.

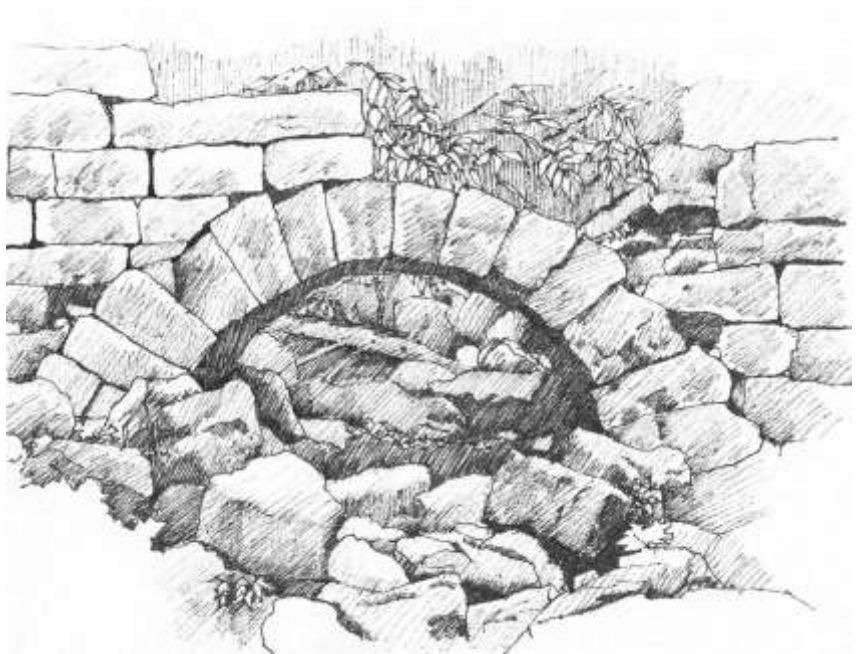
Irene was a local girl. She was born in Brampton and lived her early life on Heritage Road south of Huttonville. She attended Huttonville Public School and Bramalea Secondary School before graduating from Sheridan College. Her chosen field was graphic design. For most of her adult life, she followed her husband Bill from place to place as he pursued his education at Pennsylvania State University

then to Sudbury and eventually back to the local area. During this time, she served as an excellent mother to their son Eli while dealing with ongoing and increasingly difficult medical issues. Fortunately, she was gifted with a kidney transplant that served her well for over 29 years. But the many medical complications eventually overcame the positive aspects of the transplant. During those 29 years, which she considered to be borrowed time, she developed a long list of people that came to appreciate the many things she accomplished in her own quiet way.

In conjunction with Bill, Irene was a member of a number of naturalist organizations including the Halton/North Peel Naturalists Club. More on that later. The first group that she belonged to was the Sudbury Horticultural Society where she and Bill were active members until 1985. In that year, they moved back to Halton where they built a house south of Acton. That property served well as source of interest in many aspects of the natural world.

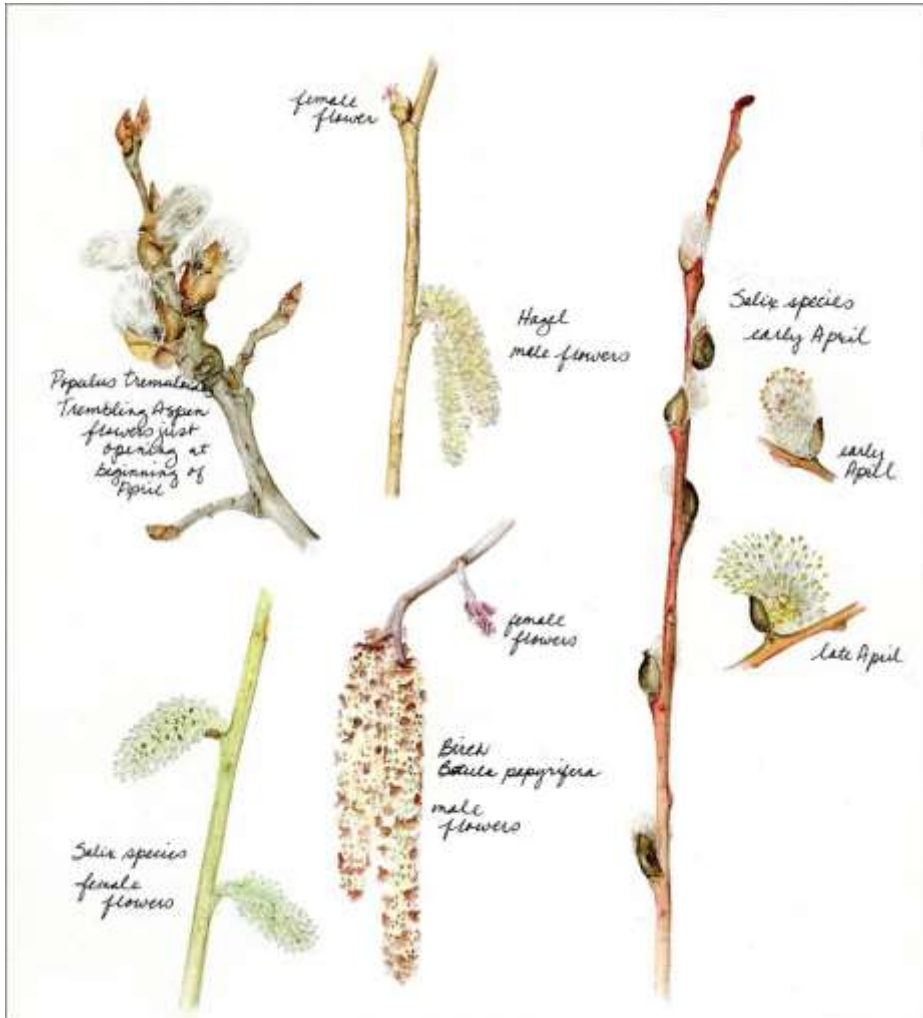
Irene started attending the meetings of the HNP club shortly after Bill joined the organization in 1986. She remained as a staunch member ever since. She served as HNP

Newsletter Editor for several years. She contributed a number of short articles, summaries and line drawings to the Newsletter. Her other contributions to HNP activities included sorting the



Jaquith slide collection, assisting in Christmas Bird Counts and Amphibian Surveys and she was an active member contributing photo collections at member nights

She and Bill were members of the Field Botanists of Ontario from 1987 to the present. They regularly attended organized field events and helped lead several of those events. Irene organized the seasonal field events in 1993 and 1994.



They were members of the Toronto Entomological Association for 25 years. During that time, they attended several field trips and nearly all of the monthly meetings. Largely due to Irene's observations, they contributed many butterfly and moth records to the annual Lepidoptera summaries published by the organization. She was an active member and regularly showed photo collections at the member's meeting each September.

In about 1992, Bill and Irene began participating in the evening walks organized by the South Peel Naturalist Club (SPN). In 2004, they formally joined that

organization. Bill has organized those walks for nearly 25 years as a joint effort between the HNP and the South Peel group. Irene led a number of those walks when Bill was on the road for work. As well, she helped lead the various trips associated with the annual Red Bay Weekend organized by the SPN.

Irene and Bill joined the Waterloo-Wellington Wildflower Society in 1991. Irene was an active member and contributed photo collections at member nights there.

### **The Nature of Irene**

It was commonplace for Irene to be the person at the back of a line on walks. She was always looking for hidden plants, animals and other organisms to show to the group, to enjoy observing, or to take photographs. Not infrequently, she would bring some interesting item from home to supplement the on-site discoveries.

Although she had not trained in the biological field, she showed herself to be a highly skilled illustrator of plants and other biota. Many of her drawings were included in various newsletters of

the HNP and Field Botanists in those years when the publications were produced only in black and white. She used her skills in the street signs designed for the Town of Georgetown. She also produced the many drawings of buildings for brochures produced by the Acton BIA, for Halton Hills, and Willow Park.

While she lived in Sudbury, she was a member of the Sudbury Horticultural Society where Bill was president for a few years. She provided the cover illustrations for the annual yearbooks from 1983 to 1996 which included about another 10 years after she moved to the Acton area.

Notably while she was the editor of the HNP Newsletter, she contributed a number of articles. These included a series of her favorite walk locations. These locations included Blue Springs Scout Reserve, Burns C.A., Scotsdale conifer swamp, Crawford Lake, Shanahan Tract, Snyder Tract, and the Yaremko-Ridley Tract (Calcium Pits). She also prepared articles about Lady Beetles, Bugs in the House, Tiger Beetles, and invertebrates at Rattray Marsh as well as trip reports to the Britton Tract and to Hilton Falls. She carried out monitoring of the butterflies on the Dufferin Aggregates quarry rehabilitation site and co-authored reports on her observations with Bill in 2000, 2001, and 2002. Also with Bill, she was a coauthor on reports on mapping of Bald-faced Hornet nests in North Halton, cattails with split-head, the discovery of the fourth record of Dainty Sulphur butterflies in Ontario (near Blind River) and the late-flower monitoring done by HNP members.

Over the years, Irene participated in Christmas Bird Counts at Sudbury, Gore Bay, and Halton Hills. She also participated in the Orillia Butterfly and Dragonfly Count for a few years. She studied moths at the backdoor lights at home for many years, photographing many of those as well as other insects in the backyard and elsewhere. Some of these finds were used as the subjects of her illustrations. She shared the 'Conservation Award of Distinction' from CVC with Bill in 2002.



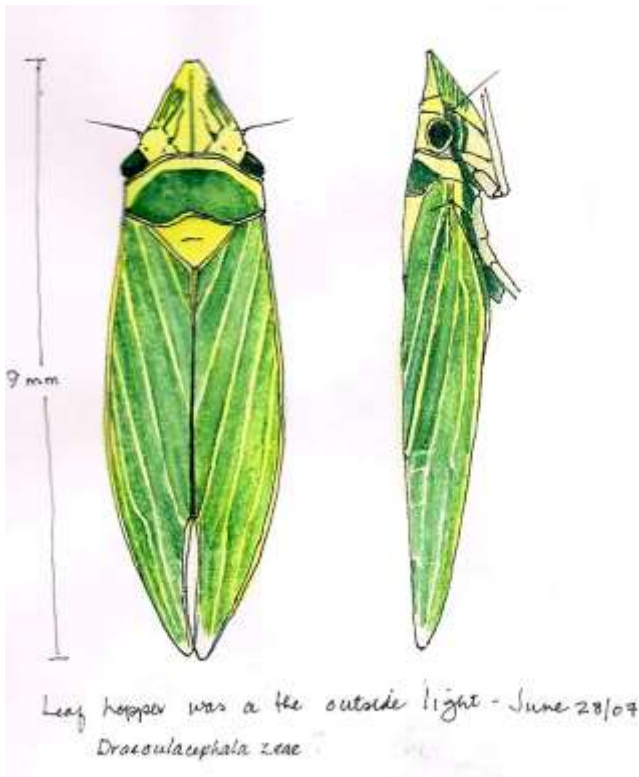
Field Horsetail, *Equisetum arvense*

## President's Message

The larva of a tortoise beetle with the tongue-twisting scientific name of *Charidotella sexpunctata bicolor* wears its feces on its back. So adorned, it presumably enjoys a measure of protection from predators.

It was Irene McIlveen who introduced me and other club members to this tiny but fascinating insect. Irene, a long-time club member who passed away in July, was smitten by life in miniature. While she appreciated all the macro-biota that interests other naturalists -- birds, herptiles, trees and wildflowers -- Irene cast a wide net to bring tiny, overlooked things like the tortoiseshell beetle larvae to light.

Irene embodied what it is to be a naturalist: A love of the world's glorious life and a deep concern for its welfare. Nature was her muse, informing her talented artistic hand. Her paintings and ink sketches often included both plants and animals in realistic conjunction -- masterful art that revealed functional ecology (look for the snail and the toad in her Field Horsetail painting on the previous page).



And though a talented artist, Irene was very modest. Even some who knew her weren't aware of her impressive body of work. I always thought her art deserved a wider audience and this newsletter, dedicated to Irene, will expand that audience a little.

Like many of us Irene was happiest outdoors. Intensely aware of her surroundings she wandered slowly, learning about nature and sharing that knowledge. We would do well to follow her footsteps: To slow down, to look carefully -- even at the little things -- to ponder, to be inspired, and to quietly share discoveries with others.

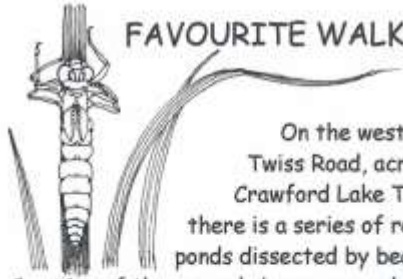
Irene was a gentle soul, intimately connected to the natural world. She will be greatly missed.

Don Scallen

*Every day I see or I hear something that more or less kills me with delight, that leaves me like a needle in the haystack of light. It is what I was born for -- to look, to listen, to lose myself inside this soft world.*

From the poem "Mindful" by Mary Oliver

## FAVOURITE WALKS: Yaremko-Ridley Tract (Calcium Pits)



On the west side of Twiss Road, across from Crawford Lake Tract II, there is a series of rectangular ponds dissected by beaver dams.

Creation of these ponds began around 1915 when the owner stated to remove the marl underlying the wetland to use as filler in insecticidal dust. Marl is a soft white to greyish substance, usually a combination of clay and calcium carbonate, that settles out on the bottom of lakes and ponds. In this case the marl in this wetland went down to a depth of eight feet.

The first pit was dug at the roadside with the water pumped out into the creek that ran alongside. The marl was extracted and burned in a kiln on site and then delivered to Campbellville. As each pit was depleted of marl, a new pit was opened and the water was then pumped into the empty pit. There were four pits in all.

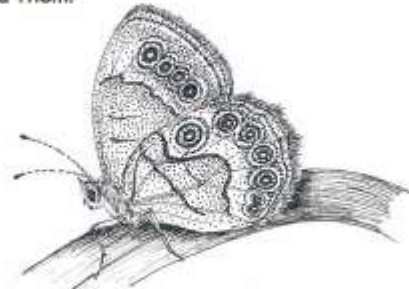
Later, the Climax Bug Killer plant was located on site and the dust was manufactured right there and then delivered to outlets as far away as Windsor and Montreal. Around 1946, the production equipment was removed to Milton where the operation continued. The business declined with the increase in the use of the insecticide DDT.

The ponds are now left to nature and an occasional fisherman. Painted Turtles and a few frog species can be seen in the pond.



Once, in September, we moved a number of newly hatched snapping turtles off the road and released them in the pond. The female snapper had dug her nest in the gravel on the shoulder of

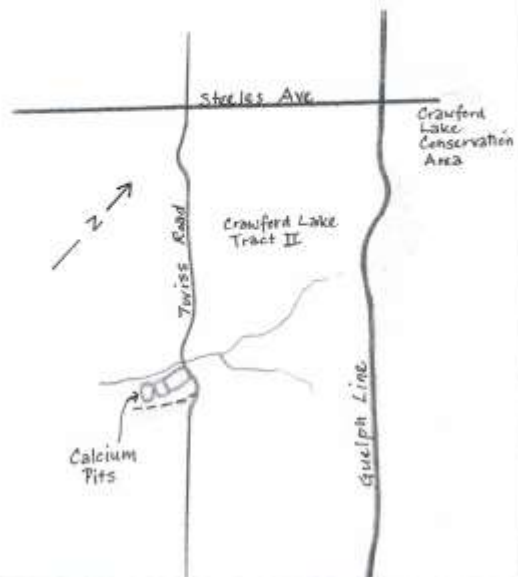
the road and, unfortunately, the babies had to run the gamut of road traffic to reach home. A few had been run over before we found them.



There is a trail here that goes alongside the pond on the south side. A variety of butterflies and skippers such as Banded Hairstreak, Mustard White, Appalachian Brown, Long Dash and Broad-winged skippers may be encountered along this path. Many of the butterflies, especially the skippers, can be seen nectaring on Swamp milkweed flowers beside the pond. Late June to mid July is the best time to see the butterflies.

IM

[historical information: Nassagaweya News, January, 1984]



Irene McIlveen



**Selected comments about Irene included in messages and cards.....**

A tremendous loss for you and the natural world we love so much. - R.B.

I will treasure the paintings she has sent me over the years. I always have a few of them on my walls! They are exquisite. Also....I remember her daily as I observe the birds in my yard and on my walks. - J.P.

Irene was a real fighter though, wasn't she? - R.A.

She was always very nice to me in my rookie botanist phase, and she always encouraged me on the FBO hikes. A.G.

She was such a nice, gentle person, unassuming and so talented in her drawing. M. & N. vdP.

Her intangible legacy and passion for nature will long be remembered by all of us who knew her. - A.P

Some years ago, she gave me a small painting of *Carex pensylvanica*, which I have always treasured. It is not only elegantly done and technically accurate, but captures the essence of the plant so beautifully, in the same fashion that someone intimately familiar with it would recognize it at a distance. – A.R.



## Irene – a memoir

When I attended my first meeting at our club in November 1991, I would never have guessed that I would be so involved in such a short time. By the end of December I had gone with Bill McIlveen on a day trip to the Niagara River and been involved with the club's first Christmas Bird Count which Bill had organized.



It was probably years before I had as many interactions with Irene McIlveen as I had had with Bill in the first two months. The two of them were involved in almost everything that was happening with the club. Of course Irene was a very friendly and approachable person as well as being an amazing naturalist. On the club nature walks I often ended up with Irene's group of followers, proceeding at a more leisurely pace than Bill's; Irene often searching for, capturing or photographing the small, hidden treasures of nature.

As the years went by Irene and I got to know each other much better. I always thought of her as a lovely person and admired the way that she dealt with the world. It was probably in the late 90's that Irene and I were carpooling for a club day trip. It was a great opportunity for conversation on many topics and the experience strengthened our friendship.



In the past few years I got a ride several times with the McIlveens to the southern week-night walks. On occasions, when the mood was right, Irene and I would try to have some fun at Bill's expense. If an opportunity arose one of us would suggest how Bill might improve himself and the other would agree and maybe add their two cents worth too. Fortunately, Bill always escaped unscathed and we all had a good chuckle.

Irene was a pretty serene person but she was not free of frustration. While I was visiting once, Bill was showing me some watercolour landscapes that he had done. Irene was there and she was telling me how Bill, in a matter of minutes, would produce these lovely paintings and how is that fair, etc. I sympathized with Irene and she and I agreed that it would be more considerate if Bill took more time to finish each painting.

Irene was a beautiful person. I will remember her often and with great affection.

## More Memories of Irene

Personally, Irene made me appreciate those little creatures and take greater note of them in my nature activities. She always showed interest and enthusiasm when asked about insects no matter how insignificant they seemed. I always looked forward to her "show and tell" item brought to our Monday Evening Walks; especially my first pseudoscorpion....who knew they existed?

*Donna Shepherd, South Peel Naturalist Club*

I remember Irene as a quiet, kind, happy person. I was impressed by her photos of spiders that she shared with the Toronto Entomologists' one year. She had a great eye and appreciation for the little critters that rule the world!

*Antonia Guidotti, Department of Natural History Royal Ontario Museum*

Irene was a lovely lady, sweetly modest in spite of her amazingly varied talents. Irene's beautiful watercolour painting of a Jack in the Pulpit plant in front of an escarpment rock face says goodnight to me every evening since it hangs on our bedroom wall just to the right of my pillow--and brings me such pleasure!

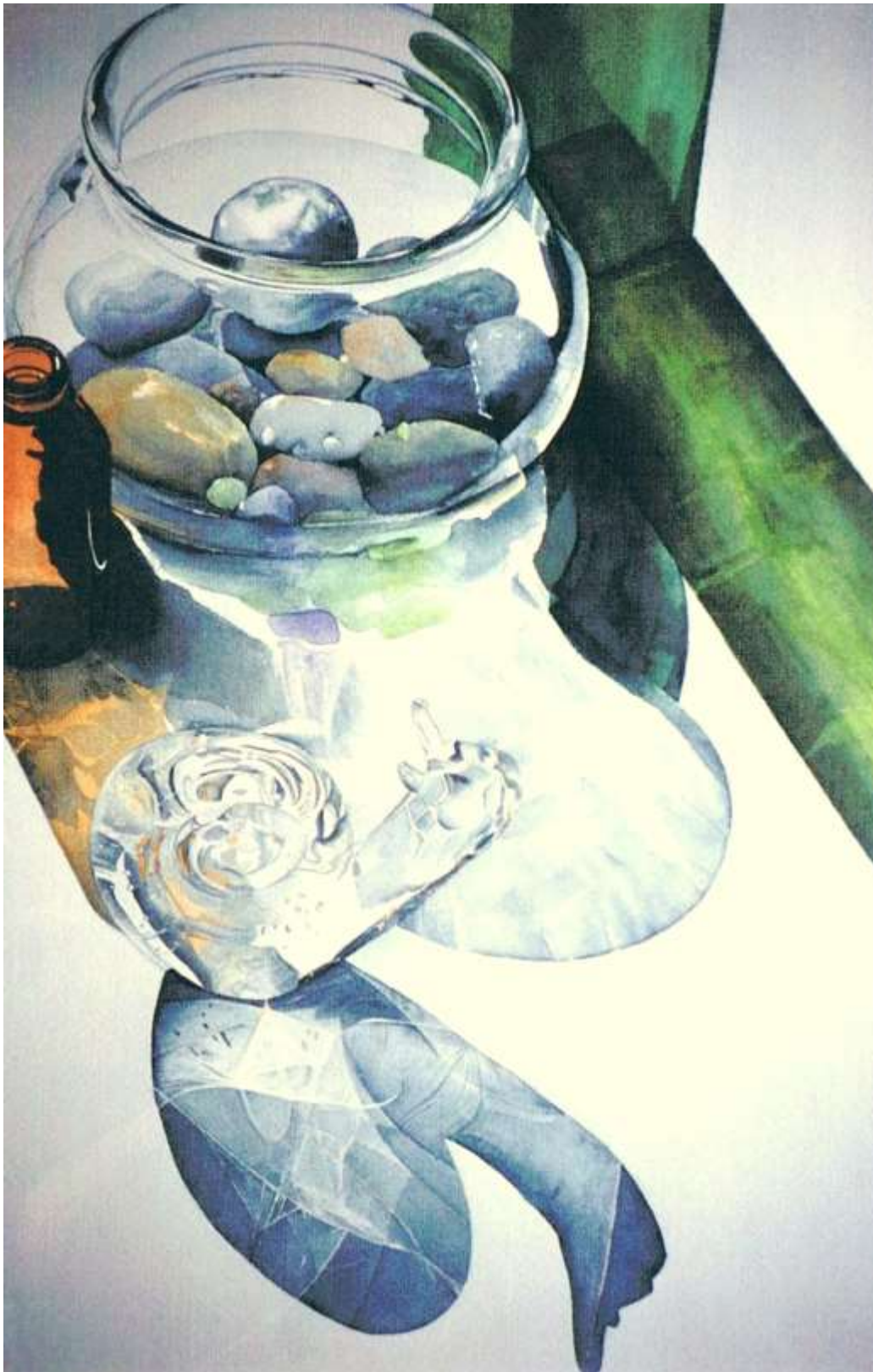
*Sandy Symmes, former President of the Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club*

My small token of appreciation for Irene is in compiling this newsletter to feature her remarkable work in its variety. Thank you, Irene, for your great gift.

*Fiona Reid, former President of the Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club*



*The snake slides away; the fish jumps, like a little lily, out of the water and back in;  
The goldfinches sing from the unreachable top of the tree.  
I look; morning to night I am never done with looking*  
From the poem "Where Does the Temple Begin, Where Does It End?" by Mary Oliver





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

Charity Registration number 869778761RR0001

**Executive**

President: Don Scallen  
Past President: Fiona Reid  
Vice President: Ian Jarvie  
Secretary: Ann Fraser  
Treasurer: Janice Sukhiani

(905) 876-6180  
(905) 693-9719  
(905) 877-1441  
  
(647) 408-9515

**Appointments**

Membership:  
Newsletter:  
Ontario Nature Representative:  
Webmaster:

Lorysa Cornish  
Laura Weihs  
Don Scallen  
John Beaudette

Crozier Property Steward  
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/North Peel Naturalist Club Membership Form

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

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

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

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

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

New membership fee for the period:

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

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

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

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

Would you like to make a donation to help send a youth to the **Ontario Nature Youth Summit for Biodiversity and Environmental Leadership**? If yes, amount of donation: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any suggestions for programs or field trips?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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### 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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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

Meetings are at St Alban's Church in Glen Williams starting at 7:30 p.m.

