



Community Profile: Paul O'Hara and *The Faithful Witness*

By Janet Anderson, LEAF volunteer

Paul O'Hara, a Hamilton-based ecologist and native plant gardening expert, was the keynote speaker at LEAF's sold-out Annual Celebration on January 17th at the Gladstone Hotel.

The audience viewed Paul's multi-media presentation *The Faithful Witness*, which tracks the history of the White Pine in Ontario from its indomitable presence in primeval forests to the rampant logging of the 1800's and subsequent state of its recovery in the province today. The timely presentation gives a passionate and educational message in its recounting of the history of Ontario's officially designated provincial tree.

Paul is recognized for his work with species at risk and teaches, writes and speaks widely on plant identification, natural history and native plant gardening. Since 1991 he has worked in a variety of horticultural, botanical consulting and ecological restoration capaci-

ties in both private and public sectors.

He looked to the success of Hollywood movies as a model for getting his message out. Rather than reciting facts, he uses allegorical storytelling to get the viewer's attention and empathy.



By giving human voice to the trees and their plight, the audience is able to better identify with them and other aspects of the landscape.

Paul counts *The Faithful Witness* as one of the most successful outcomes of his work to

date. He has presented it at various venues throughout the Golden Horseshoe since October 2006, including the Royal Botanical Gardens and the Hamilton Library.

As the owner/operator of Blue Oak Native Landscapes, Paul dedicates his business to creating beautiful natural spaces where we live, work and play within the Golden Horseshoe area.

Rather than reciting facts and creating reports documenting the decline of the natural world, he prefers to stay positive by taking jobs where he can reach people who are willing to affect small changes in their own spaces. He calls these small but solid steps essential to his backdoor approach in growing his business.

For more information on Paul O'Hara and *The Faithful Witness*, contact him at 905-540-9963 or visit www.blueoak.ca

"Should I weed the lawn or say it's a garden."

-Unknown

Toronto Tree Tours - LEAF & Toronto Public Space Committee calling on creative volunteers to get involved

Come May 2007, LEAF and the Toronto Public Space Committee will officially launch our Toronto Tree Tours web site. It will be a spiffy, innovative, fun, interactive community web-site, a tree-celebration for our town unlike anything else!

The site will be a community-driven scrapbook and discussion-board of trees. It will feature self-guided versions of tours that we have led in diverse neighbourhoods across Toronto. We would like to include the work of artists, and highlight the efforts of local activists and community residents in stewarding their community's environmental health.

We need volunteers to help research and write content for the tours, photograph the stops on our walks and provide creative content for the web site. The site will have a heavy graphic feel and we will represent the work of the best local culture makers, making up a living database of Toronto's trees.

In addition to tree tours we are involved in throw-

ing tree festivals and parties. We are on the look out for interesting performers, bands, artists and community-builders who want to help us celebrate, especially where a performance or installation might help educate on issues pertaining to our urban forest canopy.

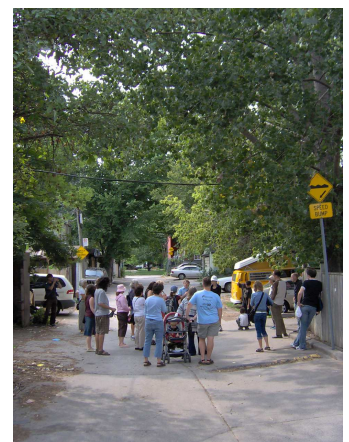
Thus we are seeking energetic, savvy, creative individuals to volunteer their talents: writers, researchers, photo-bloggers, graphic designers, artists, video-makers, clowns, puppeteers, jugglers, magicians, activists, bands, activity-organizers, performers, bush party socialites, movers, shakers and illustrators both amateur and professional to lend their efforts into making this festive community arboreal event a collaboration to-die-for!

Any of you who've been mulling about getting out of the gallery or out from under your desk and into your broader environment this sure would be a grand opportunity! We also would like to hear your ideas.

Interested individuals are invited to attend a community meeting on **Monday, February 26th at 6:00pm at Metro Hall, 55 John St. Room #302.**

To confirm your participation, contact Ryan at LEAF (416-413-9244)

The Toronto Tree Tours is a not-for-profit collaborative led by LEAF (www.leaf.toronto.org) and the Toronto Public Space Committee (www.publicspace.ca)



Take Action: Turn off lights to save birds (and other tips to make windows less dangerous...)

The Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP) is a registered charity that advocates for migratory birds. These birds must face not only predators, inclement weather and habitat loss in their challenging journey to and from their breeding territories but also must negotiate the treacherous urban environment.

Many migrate at night, partially guided by the constellations. In urban centres, they become confused by the artificial lights shining from skyscrapers and other tall urban structures. They may flutter about the light until they drop from exhaustion, or actually collide with the light source. Fog, rain or low cloud can make the problem worse. Collisions with structures are now the leading cause of death to migratory birds. One hundred million to one billion birds die each year due to collisions with human-built structures across North America alone.



Head trauma, broken beaks and feather damage are typical injuries. Approximately half of birds die from their injuries suffered in the collision. Some birds are just stunned and will revive in a couple of hours. However, if they find themselves trapped in a maze of bright office towers, their chances of making it out alive are slim.

FLAP and the City of Toronto launched *Lights Out Toronto!* a public awareness campaign developed out of the policies adopted unanimously by Toronto City Council to control night light emanating from the city's tall buildings. Toronto City Planning and FLAP are currently working with community and industry stakeholders in developing 'bird-friendly' design guidelines that could be voluntarily incorporated into new and existing buildings.

For information and to find out what you can do to be a part of the solution, including the Top 10 Ways to Make Glass Less of a Hazard for Birds, please visit www.flap.org.

Featured Resource: ROM biodiversity website



www.rom.on.ca/ontario/index.php

A great interactive website where you can create your own field guide to some of the common animals in your local area, right on your screen. Obtain regional lists and species profiles of the plant and animal species at risk in Ontario. And take a look at some of the specimens in the ROM research collections. An audio bird song quiz is a fun way to get kids interested in nature.

Dendro Devotion

By Marc Willoughby, M.L.Arch., O.A.L.A.,
I.S.A. Certified Arborist

Match the generic plant name with its original Latin meaning. Answers at the end of the newsletter.

Genera

1. *Thymus*
2. *Abies*
3. *Fragraria*
4. *Panax*
5. *Vinca*
6. *Ribes*
7. *Acer*
8. *Crataegus*
9. *Hypericum*
10. *Picea*

Latin meaning

- a) sharp (leaves, or for use in lances)
- b) strong
- c) pitch
- d) binding (for use in making wreaths)
- e) pictures above (over shrines to repel evil spirits)
- f) rising one (tall trees)
- g) used in making sacrifices
- h) fragrant (the fruit)
- j) from the Persian for acid tasting
- k) healer of all

Answers at the bottom of page 5 of the newsletter.

Science Bite: National Tree Seed Centre – Conserving our native species

The National Tree Seed Centre (NTSC) is a collection, processing, testing and storage facility whose long-term goal is to have representative samples from all of Canada's tree and shrub species. As the NTSC is interested only in native species, this underlines the importance of collecting and storing seed from natural populations that may be unique, endangered or threatened.

Scientists have an ongoing need for seed for a number of diverse projects including species introductions, germination tests, and tissue culture. Most of the seed is collected by the Centre's staff in "good" seed years to ensure high genetic and physiological quality and from individual trees or a number of trees in order to have a representative genetic sample of the population.

Properly stored seed can remain viable for decades. Practically all the seed is stored at -20°C. At this temperature it can be kept for many decades provided the moisture content of the seed is low (5-8%). Some hardwood species, such as oak and silver maple do not store well. These seeds are stored at 4°C and collections are made frequently to maintain a viable supply. Seed from white spruce, black spruce, jack pine, and red pine has germinated between 65% and 85% after more than 40 years in frozen storage. Seed cryo-preserved in liquid nitrogen may have the potential to retain viability for several hundred years. It is important to know that seed will live for a long time, especially when it is collected from unique populations or stands that are threatened, so it can be conserved for the future.

For more info on this important resource centre, visit www.atl.cfs.nrcan.gc.ca/seedcentre/overview-e.htm

New Ontario-based Tree Planting Search Engine

The Trees Ontario Foundation (TOF) is pleased to announce the launch of its web-based search engine to assist landowners seeking tree planting services in their area. This search engine is posted on the TOF website under "Planting Agencies" and allows users to search for local agencies that provide tree seedlings, planting information and planting services by using key words and interactive maps.

TOF partnered with the Eastern Ontario Model Forest and their expert web designer Greg Moffat, to produce this valuable tool. The direct link to the site is <http://209.87.224.230/tofplanters/>

Events and Announcements

VSP Member Gardens Virtual Tour

Sunday, February 25, 2007

Howard Park Tennis Club, 430 Parkside Dr, High Park, Toronto, 10:30 am to 1:00 pm

Join the High Park Volunteer Stewardship Program for a photographic tour of the gardens of several of their dedicated volunteers. A special emphasis will be placed on native plants. Visit www.highpark.org for more information.

Toronto Tree Tours—Community Arts Meeting

Monday, February 26, 6:00-8:00pm

Metro Hall, Room 302, 55 John St, Toronto

A community meeting to introduce the Toronto Tree Tours project to community artists, photobloggers and other creative people who may be interested in volunteering. For more information visit www.leafortoronto.org/events

Winter Tree Identification in High Park

Sunday, March 4, 2007

Led by City of Toronto Urban Forestry staff

Participants will learn to identify many of the common native and non-native trees in High Park by their bark, buds and silhouette and learn other tricks to ID that are evident in the winter. Bring binoculars. Suggested \$2 donation. For information call 416-392-1748 x 5 or visit www.highpark.org.

Green Roofs in Toronto

Sunday, March 5, 2007

Howard Park Tennis Club, 430 Parkside Dr, High Park 10:30 am to 1:00 pm

Join the High Park Volunteer Stewardship Program for a talk on green roofs. David Lieberman, Architect and Terry McGlade, Horticulturalist who have worked together on roof garden projects including Merchandise Lofts, will speak. Visit www.highpark.org for more information.

What Trees Give Back: How Urban Forests Fight Climate Change and Save us Money

Wednesday, March 7, 2006, 7:00-9:00pm

Metro Hall, Room 304, 55 John St, Toronto

Hosted by LEAF and Ryerson University, Geography Join us for an evening of discussion with esteemed U.S. scientist Dr David Nowak about the impacts of climate change on our cities and how urban forests can help mitigate these threats. Canada needs to follow the U.S. example of gaining federal and state/provincial support for urban forests. Suggested \$5 donation. For more information visit www.leafortoronto.org/events

Shades of Green: Exploring Biodiversity, Human Values and Urban Planning

Thursday, March 8, 2007

Royal Botanical Garden Centre
680 Plains Road West, Burlington

A special joint symposium of the University of Guelph and the Royal Botanical Gardens on the importance of green space, nature and plant diversity for the human experience. For more information and to register, visit www.rbg.ca/greenspace.

Ontario Woodlot Association Conference: Our Forests – Woodlot Owners Engaged in Stewardship

Saturday, March 17, 2007 8:30 am to 4:00 pm

Royal Canadian Legion, 15 Wright Ave, Acton
\$25 non-members (includes lunch)

Invited presenters will capture your imagination and provide you with a range of information about managing your woodlot. For more information, visit www.ont-woodlot-assoc.org.

Get Involved with the UFN!

We want to hear from you! Email your stories, suggestions, announcements, photos, and ideas to info@leafortoronto.org

Dendro Devotion Answers:
1g) 2f) 3h) 4k) 5d) 6j) 7a) 8b) 9e) 10c)