









THE

Green Web

- Newsletter of The Arboretum • Fall 2003 -

- Farewell from Acting Director Gard Otis -



Gard leads the June 17 Butterfly Workshop.

by Gard Otis

One of my first tasks as Acting Director was to write an article for the Green Web. At that time I didn't know what I was getting myself into. With only one month remaining before my appointment ends, one of my last tasks is writing an article for the Green Web. This seems a good time to reflect on what I have learned and observed.

I have truly enjoyed my association with The Arboretum, largely because of the people I have worked with. I can honestly say that I cannot imagine working with a finer group of people than the staff of The Arboretum. I have relied on them for everything: advice on tree identification and growing, lending of GPS equipment and training my student to use it, resettling baby

Long-eared Owls, interior design advice for our boardroom renovations, etc. No one ever failed to do what was required. When circumstances demanded extra effort, people responded without hesitation. For example, both Lenore and Ric came in to work on Saturday of Alumni weekend to meet with donors Gordon and Ruth Wright. The collective wisdom of the staff, about plants and nature and the operation of The Arboretum, helped me to smoothly navigate my term as Acting Director.

One disappointment is that I did not get to know as many of the people more distantly associated with the operation of The Arboretum - the Auxiliary. The number of hours in a day is fixed, and with my other duties as a teacher and researcher I was not able to interact with them as much as I would have liked. Nevertheless, I became acutely aware of the enormous contributions they make - we would not exist as we do today without their efforts.

I have been overwhelmed by the enormous potential of The Arboretum. Combine a world-class staff with a beautiful site and one has a winning combination - but you already

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know that. During our staff study tour to The Plantations and Laboratory of Ornithology of Cornell University in early spring, we realized how incredibly effective we are in delivering our programs, gardens, and natural areas to the public for their enjoyment, all within a relatively low budget. But we also saw some of what we could dream for in the future, if we only had the resources.

A frustration has been the realization of how much The Arboretum's progress is impeded by lack of funding. Most of you are not aware that The Arboretum is responsible for generating the monies to repair our facilities and pay the salaries of five of our full-time staff, as well as our summer staff. Much of our infrastructure is showing serious signs of disrepair. Most of you will have noticed that the carpets, curtains and chairs throughout The Arboretum Centre are in desperate need of replacement. Our greenhouses are ancient and failed to keep some plants alive last winter that should be contributing to the annual Plant Sale. The Italian Garden remains an empty fountain with surrounding stonework (although some plants should go in later this fall). Exciting plans for the expansion of the Gosling Wildlife Gardens have ground to a halt. The

Elm Recovery Project is effectively generating young elms for evaluation of resistance to Dutch Elm Disease, but there are no funds to explore the genetic basis for resistance.

We have had many notable successes over the last 8 months. Two sizeable donations have enabled us to improve our gardens. Phyllis Oughton's Estate and family donations are transforming the Prairie Garden of the Gosling Wildlife Gardens into a Native Ontario Plants garden. Gordon Wright (OAC '33) and Ruth Baker Wright (MAC '37) provided funding for plantings that will enhance the visual appearance of the main entry to the Arboretum Centre. A donation from Dr. Ann Gibbins in memory of her husband Norm is enabling the current reconstruction of the boardwalk through Wild Goose Woods. We continue to receive donations for the Elm Recovery Fund and other gardens. After ten years, Chris Earley, Naturalist, is finally a permanent employee! Barb Watson Ash, our Bookings and Marketing Coordinator, successfully gave birth to Stephanie, and we are blessed to have hired the extremely competent Dawn Ann Webster as her maternity leave replacement. Zoë Fitzgerald has competently taken over from Laura Keegstra as our Naturalist Intern. The

Boardroom is undergoing renovation, and should be ready for expanded usage by September. I personally did my small bit by offering a workshop on butterfly biology, and all of our programs continue to be extremely popular. And partly by chance and partly through contacts, The Arboretum is being utilized by campus courses much more than in the recent past.

I can imagine so many opportunities for the further development of The Arboretum. I dream of someday wandering through arched lindens to sit by the fountain in the heart of the tranquil Italian Garden; of having a centre of training for naturalists throughout Canada; of seeing forests of mature American Elms derived from the Elm Recovery Project; of watching visitors from near and far learning how they can make their yards more wildlife-friendly as they explore the Suburban and Estate Garden Project; and of even establishing a Centre for Bird Study in Ontario. Some developments we can accomplish over time within the current staffing and budget, but most of the exciting new directions we could embark on are dependant on contributions, however small (or large!) from our friends. Thank you all for your appreciation of The Arboretum.

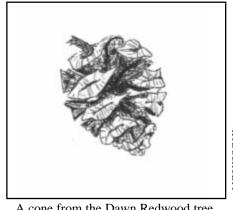
- Tree to See - Dawn Redwood (Metasequoia glyptostroboides) -

by Henry Kock

You can have a lot of fun rolling this elaborate name off your tongue. Meta (similar to) sequoia; glyptostrob (a rare genus of tree in China with alternate leaves); oides (in the likeness of). It is a leaf-losing conifer related to bald cypress, in the family Taxodiaceae but differing from all other members in having an opposite leaf arrangement and a cone that looks like sequoia.

Dawn Redwood carries a most remarkable botanical story. It was thought to have become extinct 5 million years ago due to the pressures of the ice ages. It was known by fossils recorded from throughout the northern hemisphere, including the Canadian Arctic, where it was believed to have originated about 80 million years ago the Arctic land mass has since undergone a dramatic climate change.

It became a "living fossil" in 1945. Hsueh Chi-ju had just graduated from the Forestry Department in the National Central University at Chungking, China. As a specialist in conifers, he was intrigued by a leaf and cone specimen



A cone from the Dawn Redwood tree.

KYE SCHUETT



Note the opposite leaf arrangement.

of an unknown tree that was sent in from Madaoqi (knife grinding) village in Wanxian county. The notes from the regional forester described a colossal tree in a remote village that was actively protected with a shrine because it was believed to be a divine tree. The leaves seemed familiar to Hsueh Chi-ju but were arranged oppositely on the branch, unlike other members of the family Taxodiaceae in which it seemed to fit. The specimen didn't give any indication as to how the cone was placed on the stem and he realized that he must go to the reported tree, to get a better specimen of what the local villagers called "water fir".

Hsueh departed for south central China in February to get the dormant flower bud bearing branches that are characteristic of the family. The trip to Madaoqi was arduous - two days by steamer up the Yangtze River and then a 120 km walk to his destination. There was no road and the trip was made on trails less than one foot wide, threading through the mountains. These conditions made robbery and murder a distinct possibility but he arrived safely after only three days walking. Tired, hungry and thirsty, he wasted no time in looking for the great tree before it was too dark. Finally, he stood under the leafless giant only to realize that the branches were too high to be reached and the tree was far too large to climb. He resorted to throwing stones and sticks up into the branches and finally a few flowers came down. He was overcome with joy that there were both male and female flowers present. The next morning he began the journey back to civilization with his treasure.

At the university, little time passed before the forester realized that the unusual tree in Madaoqi was a species that was thought to be extinct. Later visits confirmed that it was one of only a handful of the trees still alive. Dawn Redwood is now protected from extinction in China by the Forest Service and seeds were sent to several Arboreta and Botanic Gardens in 1948. Seeds from these rapid growing trees are now being exchanged by horticulturists throughout the Northern Hemisphere. A species from the dawn of time was safeguarded by village ritual and with the help of botanists, is redistributed across its historical range - kind of a homecoming.

You can see one of the earlier planted Dawn Redwood trees (perhaps 40-45 years old) at St George's Anglican Church on Woolwich St. Guelph, at the front corner closest to the Speed River pedestrian bridge. You can also find a pair of thirty year-old specimens in the World of Trees collection in The Arboretum by following the self guided brochure for the collection. They stand along the east side of the creek, just north of the Ivey Trail bridge.

- Congratulations and Welcome -



Barb and Geoff with baby Stephanie.

by Bev Healy

Our congratulations to Barb Ash (our Marketing and Bookings Coordinator) and her husband Geoff on the birth of their first child, Stephanie Lynn, born June 6, 2003 weighing 8 lbs 3-1/2 ounces.



Stephanie Lynn Ash.

Welcome to Dawn Ann Webster who has joined us for the year that Barb is on maternity leave. Dawn Ann brings with her progressive experience in marketing, tourism, booking of events and media relations.



Dawn Ann Webster.

ENRY KOCK

by Chris Earley

This is the story of how long-eared owls have been added to our breeding bird list. You may remember the appearance of a long-eared owl in The Arboretum last winter (see photo on right). This owl species isn't seen very often here, so we were happy to have at least one show itself. Imagine our surprise when a dead long-eared owl was found on June 9 during its breeding season. The owl had been hit by a car. We thought it may have had a nest and a search ensued, but Alan Watson, Kevin Kerr and I couldn't find it. But the nest must have been nearby because on June 11 Henry Kock found a long-eared owl chick sitting in an Arboretum lawn chair! We did a search and found two other long-eared owl fledglings perched low in the surrounding trees. Unfortun-ately, we also found a fourth chick that had drowned in the same area.

Now a decision had to be made. These chicks were not old enough to fly very well and certainly couldn't hunt for themselves. Normally this



Long-eared owl chick found on lawn chair.

would not be a problem since the parents feed the chicks for several weeks after they leave the nest. So, if you ever find a young owl perched out of its nest, you should leave it there as the parents are likely still feeding it. In our case, however, we already knew that one parent was dead. I called Kay McKeever at the Owl Foundation in Vineland. Kay knows owls. Her first question was whether the dead owl was male or female. I thought it was male because it didn't appear to have a brood patch, which is a bare area of skin on the belly of some birds that allows the parent's body warmth to directly contact the eggs. It was important to know which parent was dead because it appears that the main food provider for owl chicks is the male. Kay was quite positive that one parent would not be able to raise all 3 chicks, especially if it was only the female. The fact that the chicks were found away from the nest two to three days after one parent was killed may have indicated that they were hungry. And since they were all near a busy road, it was decided to capture them and take them to Kay's for rehabilitation.

This is when it got really exciting. Catching the chicks would not be easy. They could fly, albeit not very well. And our only method of catching them was....a butterfly net! So, Liz Hood, Henry Kock and I signed up for the challenge. While Liz and Henry held each owl's attention, I snuck up behind them and tried to gently catch them with the net. After a few false scoops, we did manage to catch two of the chicks. One chick, however, went very high in a tree and was unreachable. Kay was confident that if the other parent was



Adult Long-eared Owl spotted on cedars in The Arboretum last winter.

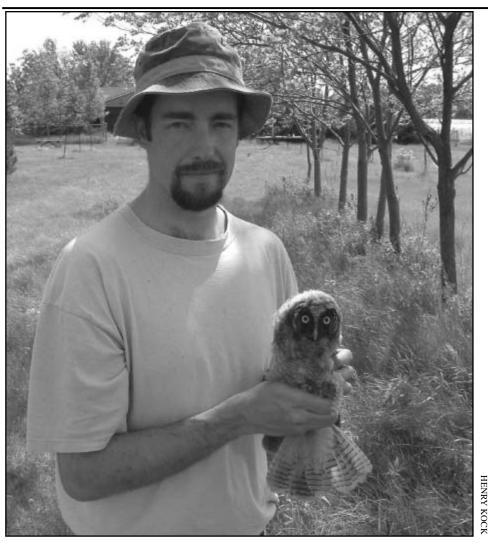
alive, it could manage to feed one chick on its own, so we hope the story ended happily for that elusive youngster.

On examination, the two captured chicks were healthy, but thin. They were taken to Kay's and she tried to foster them with an adult long-eared owl that had raised chicks in the past.



Owl chick perched on fence.

HENRY KOCI



Chris Earley poses with one of the captured owl chicks.

But, he wasn't interested in The Arboretum chicks, so they had to be put inside and fed for a while before going out to their own enclosure. They are now doing fine and being trained to catch mice on their own. If everything goes well, they will be returned to The Arboretum next spring to be released.

And so ends our Arboretum longeared owl tale. Life, death, captures against incredible odds, cute baby animals... it all happens here. And it's pretty cool that what used to be cultivated fields now supports these forest-loving owls. Habitat restoration works! We will try to give you an update on the chicks in the next Green Web. If you are interested in making a donation to the Owl Foundation, they can be contacted by mail at:

The Owl Foundation R.R.1 Vineland Ontario, Canada L0R 2E0

- Creature Feature - Crab Spiders -

by Chris Earley

Now here's a creature that jumps out and grabs you - or it would if you were a small insect. Crab spiders are common creatures in many habitats, but a good place to search for them at this time of the year is among the asters and goldenrods of old fields. Crab spiders like flowers, not necessarily for their aesthetic beauty, but because they act as their dining tables. The spider sits on a flower and waits for a nectar-seeking insect such as a fly or bee to come by. Then it uses its long forelegs (which are held out to the sides of its body like a crab - thus its name) to catch the visitor. It delivers a toxic bite that can quickly immobilize insects much larger than itself, allowing it to hold onto its prey. It then injects digestive juices into its

dinner and sucks out the resulting "soup" (yum!).

To be an effective predator, the spider must be as cryptic as possible so it can avoid detection. Some of these spiders resemble bird droppings, leaf buds or seeds. Our flower-sitter, however, is able to change its colour to the petals of its blooming home. It may take up to 20 days, but a white spider can change yellow if it decides that a goldenrod is a great place to grab a snack. And it can change back again if its daisy home was a better provider. Because of this disappearing act, the spiders can be very hard to see. The best way find one is to look for a bee or fly that is not moving - quite often the lack of movement relates to the insect's lack of

life. It may seem to be just resting, but a close examination may show a crab spider having a leisurely meal.



A Crab Spider sits on Queen Anne's Lace, waiting for potential prey.

RIN HARKINS

- Summer in The Arboretum -







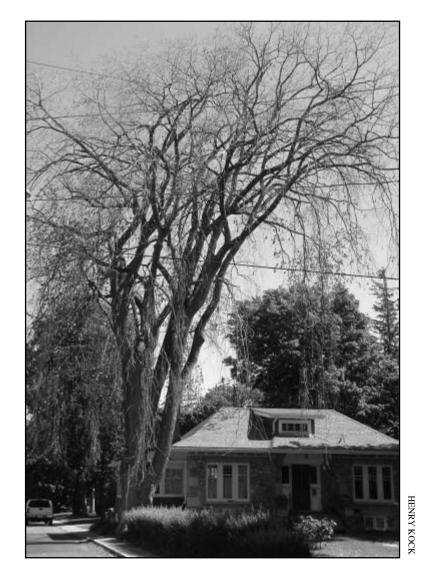


Top Left: A Cedar Waxwing (Bombycilla cedrorum) sits in the Gosling Gardens.

Top Right: Dr. Donald Rakow leads a tour of the Cornell Plantations on The Arboretum's staff study tour to Ithaca, NY.

Centre Right: Liz Hood poses beside Fringed Polygala (Polygala paucifolia).

Bottom: A Ruby-Throated Hummingbird (Archilochus colubris) feeds on nectar from an Iris (Iris versicolor) in the Gosling Gardens.







CHRIS EARLEY



Top Left: This huge elm on Grange St. in Guelph has died of Dutch Elm Disease, brought on by age-related complications. The Elm Recovery Project has currently propagated 180 of the large elms in Ontario.

Top Right: A Question Mark caterpillar (*Polygonia interrogationis*) munches hop vine (*Humulus lupulus*) outside of the J.C. Taylor Nature Centre.

Centre Right: A pair of Gray Treefrogs (*Hyla versicolor*) rest in a Flowering Dogwood tree (*Cornus florida*) by the O.A.C. Centennial Arboretum Centre.

Bottom: Lenore Ross and Henry Kock lead a docent training walk in The Garden.

CHRIS EARLEY

8 - The Gosling Wildlife Gardens: The Native Plants Garden -

by Lenore Ross

The Gosling Wildlife Gardens is a neighbourhood of five gardens that are on the scale of urban and suburban backyards. Each is planted with trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants that provide food, cover and nesting sites for wildlife.

Garden #3 within the Gosling Wildlife Gardens was originally developed as a Prairie Garden and included communities of both long grass prairie plants and short grass prairie plants. The diversity of plant material found in this garden afforded many wildlife species a great range of food, cover and nesting alternatives and demonstrated the feasibility of establishing prairie habitats as a home landscape feature.

Over time several invasive and alien perennial weeds became established amongst the prairie grasses. Despite manual weeding and management techniques such as controlled burning, crown vetch, various thistles and Canada goldenrod became increasingly common. Late in the summer of 2001, many plants were salvaged from the garden and replanted in The Arboretum nursery at the R.J. Hilton Centre for later use. The remaining vegetation was

then cut and raked. Landscape fabric was spread and staked to cover the garden surface and this barrier remained in place (except for occasional disturbances by wind) through 2002. During this time plans and plants were discussed and sources of funding investigated.

Generous financial support came to The Arboretum through a bequest from Phyllis Oughton and was enhanced with additional donations by family and friends. Through discussions with staff and Phyllis' family a preliminary plan for a new garden to honour Phyllis' life and memory began to evolve. The concept that emerged from these discussions was a Native Plants Garden. This garden will differ from the other gardens within the Gosling Wildlife Gardens in that it will be developed using only plant species that are native to Southern Ontario; horticultural varieties, garden hybrids and exotic or naturalized species will not be used. As with all gardens within the Gosling Wildlife Gardens, the new Native Plants Garden will display woody plants and perennials that are attractive to wildlife; motivate visitors to do similar plantings in their own backyards; promote positive people/wildlife interactions;

give examples of how to increase the diversity of habitats and wildlife species in backyards, and complement Arboretum interpretive programmes. The Native Plants Garden will include many features commonly found in a backyard; a patio, picnic table, composters, informal seating for gatherings, trellis and screening alternatives, shade trees, a water feature, floral and decorative plantings and fruit bearing vines and shrubs - all showcasing native plants.

This summer the landscape fabric was finally removed from the garden, the soil tilled and the few remaining unwanted plants removed. The hard or structural portion of the new garden will be installed first; electrical service to provide power to a pump for a small decorative water feature, a brick and stone path and patio area, large rocks for seating and a long wooden trellis. Following this phase of construction, we will begin to install plant material starting with a few larger trees that will be moved with our tree scoop and tractor, then the smaller shrubs and herbaceous material. Finally, features such as an accessible picnic table and a commemorative plaque to honour the life of Phyllis Oughton will be installed.

- Valuable Volunteers: The Arboretum Auxilliary -

by Rob Guthrie

I bet most of us simply don't realize how important volunteers are to our society. Not only are volunteers vital to almost all of the activities that take place here at The Arboretum, but these same volunteers also play a critically important role in Canadian society. It's true! Just take a moment to read the following quotes, and you'll get a sense of the value of volunteerism in Canada.

"The contributions volunteers make to society are endless. They are not only the lifeblood of many organizations and institutions, but also the lifeblood of Ontario and Canada itself. I am proud of this tradition of giving and very thankful for the many people whose selfless service has enriched and enhanced the quality of our life."

-- The Honourable Lincoln M. Alexander

"Volunteers are an integral part of any organization. We could not accomplish what we do without the efforts of hundreds of dedicated individuals who volunteer their time to make a difference.

Now, a few people taking a few simple steps might not sound like much, but

imagine if thousands and thousands of people took those steps - it really adds up! And, when large numbers of people do anything, our leaders take notice. That's why signing up is so important."

-- Dr. David Suzuki

David Suzuki and former Ontario Lieutenant-Governor Lincoln Alexander (who is currently Chancellor of the University of Guelph) are both members of the Canadian Patron Council for Volunteering. The Patron Council is comprised of 12 prominent Canadians who have agreed to lend their name, profile and endorsement to the cause of volunteerism. The council was established by Volunteer Canada, which acts as a national voice for volunteerism

The members of The Arboretum Auxiliary should be extremely proud of their volunteer efforts. As I indicated earlier, our volunteers play a vital role in the activities of The Arboretum; in fact I would go so far to say that The Arboretum simply wouldn't function at its present level without our group of dedicated volunteers. So, once again, the staff of The Arboretum would like to say "thank you" for all you do to make The Arboretum, and society, a better place.

Did you know?

Here are some additional facts and figures about volunteerism in Canada

(taken from the 2000 Canadian Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating).

Women are more likely than men to volunteer, but don't worry, guys, men contribute more total volunteer hours per year.

The amount of time spent volunteering increases with age, but volunteer participation is highest for those aged 35 to 54.

One quarter of volunteers contribute 188 hours or more every year.

In 2000, the average annual number of hours contributed per volunteer increased to 162 hours, from 149 hours in 1997.

In the words of comedienne Luba Goy, co-chair of the Patron Council, "As good Canadians, we volunteer, eh?!"



Marjatta Downie, Barb Watson-Ash, and Valerie Jackson pose at this spring's Volunteer Appreciation Pancake Breakfast.

- Sensational Summer Staff -

by Ric Jordan

Hard to believe the summer of 2003 is over. The summer crew was a delight to have. Only one was a returnee from 2002 so the training period was a bit extended, but The Arboretum survived. Here are some of their thoughts on their experiences over the summer.

Marc (*Landscape Architecture*) - I enjoyed working with the wonderful staff at The Arboretum.

Kate (*Landscape Architecture*) - I like watching people enjoy The Arboretum - especially when they converse with me on a regular basis.

Elisa (Sociology and Psychology) - I love species of all sorts and this summer I actually witnessed a Monarch butterfly emerge from a cocoon - a truly tender moment.

Heather (*Biological Science*) - I loved working in the shade house and hearing summer rain on a quiet day.

Beau (*Music*) - I'm looking forward to a return in another 50 years to see how we've helped to protect the future of our environment.

Annie (*Environmental Science*) -There's one groundhog - we've become very close. I loved GPSing in the Rosaceae collection - so fragrant.

Nathan Rogers (*Environmental Science*) - I made some great friends while working at The Arboretum. I have also developed an even greater appreciation for nature.

Stephanie Jarvis (*Landscape Architecture*) - "Everything is edible - once." Words of wisdom learned from Henry.



The Arboretum Grounds Staff (Clockwise from top left): Marc Paquin, Beau Stasiuk, Sean Fox, Heather Bettger, Elisa Caruso, Annie Benko, and Kate MacKay.

- The Arboretum Gratefully Acknowledges -

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Martin Buis



Kevin Kerr, Arboretum Summer Naturalist and great nephew of Lawrence Kerr, sits on the Dixon-Kerr bench.

HENRY KOCK

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The Gosling Foundation

GOSLING WILDLIFE GARDENS
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WILD GOOSE WOODS Ann Gibbins

Thank you to all of our Wall-Custance Memorial Forest donors.

Every effort has been made to acknowledge each donation. If you find that your name is missing, kindly inform us and the oversight will be corrected in the next issue of *The Green Web*. Thanks for your support.



Acting Director Gard Otis and Interpretive Gardener Lenore Ross pose with Ruth Baker Wright and Gordon Wright. The Wrights have funded the new plantings along the entrance pathway to the O.A.C. Centennial Arboretum Centre.

RIC JORDA

by Zoe Fitzgerald

We've had a busy summer at the J.C. Taylor Nature Centre. As I write this, the goldenrod is almost ready to bloom; for me, it's a sign that the last days of summer are upon us (a friend once begrudgingly described their colour as 'school bus yellow'). I arrived at The Arboretum at the end of April, just in time to see some of the first spring ephemerals poke their heads above the leaf litter. Since that time, the Nature Centre has certainly grown and changed.

Kevin Kerr, our Summer Naturalist, started with us at the beginning of May, bringing with him a wonderful sense of humour and some great ideas. In mid-May, we were sad to say goodbye to Interpretive Naturalist Laura Keegstra, as she left The



The J.C. Taylor Nature Centre sign, surrounded by hop vine.

- Nature Centre Notes -

Arboretum to pursue a position with Daniel's Ark Fish and Wildlife Preserve. Laura's energy and cheerful spirit will guarantee her success at all her future endeavors.

The summer has been rewarding and fun. As an aspiring botanist, I found it really interesting to walk through Victoria Woods or the Gosling Wildlife Gardens, and to see the plants changing with the passing days and weeks. I've also had the opportunity to become acquainted with The Arboretum docents, a wonderful group of people who contribute their time, energy and knowledge on a regular basis, helping to enrich all of our educational activities. Our docents represent a remarkable diversity of backgrounds and interests, which enables them to bring a variety of talents to the Nature Centre and to Arboretum tours.

At the Nature Centre, Kevin and I created a myriad of new interpretive displays, including live caterpillars, praying mantids, and an aquarium full of pond flora and fauna. In July, we opened the Nature Centre on weekdays, welcoming afternoon Arboretum visitors. I was also happy to represent The Arboretum at the Art

on the Street festival in downtown Guelph, where passing children and adults planted elm seeds, practiced their tree identification skills, and handled various natural items brought from the Nature Centre's touch table.

Reflecting on the passing summer, I think about the learning opportunities my experience as an Arboretum naturalist has given me. As the season draws to a close, I look forward immensely to spending my fall and winter here, too.



Interpretive Naturalist Zoe Fitzgerald, the new face at the J.C. Taylor Nature Centre.

University of Guelph Arboretum Staff

Chris Earley - Interpretive Biologist

Sean Fox - Grounds Keeper

Rob Guthrie - Manager of

Computing Services and Volunteer Co-ordinator

Bev Healy - Administrative Assistant

Ric Jordan - Grounds Supervisor

Zoe Fitzgerald - Interpretive Naturalist

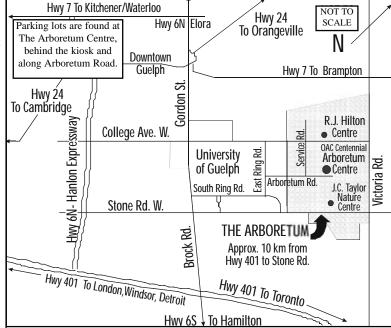
Henry Kock - Interpretive Horticulturist

Gard Otis - Acting Director

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Dawn Ann Webster - Marketing and Bookings Co-ordinator

Alan Watson - Director



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Ric Jordan, Zoe Fitzgerald
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