

SHERIDAN TIMES

Spring & Summer 2023



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Photo by Lina Tasca

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President's Message

Your neighbours ask good questions!

SHORA members regularly attend all manner of community meetings, and we are always impressed by the questions asked by the attendees.

SHORA volunteers regularly engage with staff and representatives of all levels of government about issues important to us all. Some conversations last an hour, some projects last a decade! **SHORA** volunteers also attend school council meetings; neighbourhood watch; City and Regional council, and this spring we attended redevelopment proposals regarding the Sheridan Centre site.

In this issue of the Sheridan Times, we revisit both the City and Regional budget and we look at the Loyalist Creek rehabilitation - a major project that relied on residents to provide feedback and steer the project.

Are you able to share your time and insights to help improve our community? Join us!

Our board meets on the second Thursday of each month, and we are always looking for volunteers for events and to help communicate via social media.

We will be knocking on your door in the coming months. If we miss you, you can always send us an email at info@shora.ca

See you soon, and keep asking good questions!

Brandon Wiedemann
President@shora.ca

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Calendar of Events

May 27	Community Garage Sale
June 17	Councillor Tedjo's Fun Fest Thornlodge Park 12 pm
June 21	Dufflebag Theatre - Peter Pan Thornlodge Park 7 pm
June 22	SHORA AGM Thornlodge Park, concrete pad 7 pm (weather dependent)
July 14 – 16	Rotary Ribfest Erin Mills Town Centre
Sept. 14 – 17	MSO Book Sale Sherwood Village/Sheridan Centre
Sept. 16	Reclaim Market
Nov. 1	Pumpkin Parade Thornlodge Park

SHERIDAN TIMES

Published By



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DEADLINE for Ads and Articles for the Fall/Winter issue: **September 30, 2023**
Please send articles in **Word Document format** (not pdf).
Send photos in **.jpg or .pdf** format (high resolution).



Alvin Tedjo
Councillor, Ward 2

Dear Neighbours,

It has been an incredible six months since taking office last fall. We hit the ground running with the 2023 Budget, and faced some serious challenges with the Province and Bill 23.

From the budget talks, I was excited to pass a motion to allow kids under 12 to ride for free on MiWay. This is a huge step towards making everyday life more affordable for families, and matches our fares with GO and other systems in the GTA. We also passed all-day \$1 seniors fares, helping everyone get on transit, putting fewer cars on the road, and keeping everyone moving.

Beyond the budget I have been advocating for a green future by joining conservation authorities and environmental initiatives. I am on the board of Credit Valley Conservation, Conservation Halton, Toronto Region Conservation Authority's Project Green, and Mississauga's Environmental Action Committee, as well as being the Mayor's designate at the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative. In the federal budget, we recently secured a \$420-million commitment to preserve and restore the Great Lakes over the next decade.

As we look towards the summer, I look forward to the many events in our community and the chance to meet. I invite you to Councillor Tedjo's Summer Fest at Thornlodge Park on Saturday, June 17. Starting at noon, come on by to enjoy a free swim at the David Ramsey Pool, play in bouncy castles, grab some food, and get to know each other!

It is a pleasure to serve as your Councillor and I invite you to reach out to me and our office any time. My staff, Ryan and Brenda, and I are here to assist you with any issues or concerns. I also invite you to come visit me each month at our Councillor in the Community open hours, where I will be at one of our community centres or city buildings in the ward to take any questions you may have. A full list of events can be found on my website, AlvinTedjo.ca, where you can also sign-up for our biweekly newsletter.

Sincerely,

Alvin Tedjo
Councillor, Ward 2



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A responsible plan for a stronger Ontario

By Rudy Cuzzetto, MPP for Mississauga-Lakeshore

April 1, 2023

Ontario's latest provincial budget is a responsible, targeted approach to help people and businesses today, navigating global economic uncertainty, while laying a strong fiscal foundation for future generations.

Our 2023 Budget includes \$48 billion for the most ambitious plan for hospital expansion in Ontario's history, including an historic multi-billion dollar investment in the complete reconstruction of the Mississauga Hospital. The new Hospital will be almost triple the size: 24 storeys and 3 million square feet, with almost a thousand beds, and 80% in private rooms. This will be the largest, and the most advanced hospital in the history of Canada.

It includes \$71 billion to build a modern and reliable transit network across the GTA, including the completion of the Hazel McCallion Light Rail Transit (LRT) Line on Hurontario. This project is on budget, and on schedule, to open in the fall of 2024, with connections to 15-minute service (or better) at the Port Credit GO Transit station.

It includes \$28 billion for highway infrastructure, including the completion of QEW upgrades at Mississauga Road, and the construction of Highway 413, a new 400-series highway and transportation corridor across Peel, Halton, and York regions.

And it includes \$6.4 billion for the largest long-term-care building program in Canadian history, to add 31,000 new beds, and upgrade 28,000 beds. Later this year, Wellbrook Place – two new state-of-the-art long-term care homes on Speakman Drive – will open for 632 residents.

The 2023-24 health budget is \$81 billion, including an increase of 8% since last year. The education budget is \$35 billion, including an increase of 7%. This includes the addition of at least 86,000 new, high-quality child care spaces, like the 93 that recently opened at Alpha's Discovery Kids Preschool in Sheridan Park.

The 2023 Budget will also provide more financial support for seniors, by expanding the Guaranteed Annual Income System (GAINS) program, starting next year. Another 100,000 seniors will become eligible, and the benefits will be adjusted annually based on inflation.

We are able to make these investments because Ontario is open for business again. In the last five years, the Province has cut taxes and energy costs, and reduced the burden of red tape. We're working to build a world-class, skilled workforce. These policies have produced an economic recovery that leads the country, and it's given us the revenue we need.

In 2018, companies were leaving Ontario. We had lost over 300,000 manufacturing jobs. Sergio Marchionne, the Chairman of Fiat Chrysler, said that Ontario was the most expensive place to do business in North America.

But since 2018, Ontario has added over 600,000 new jobs. In the last two years, Ontario has been able to attract over \$17 billion of investments from global auto manufacturers, not including Volkswagen's first electric-vehicle battery gigafactory outside of Europe, which will be the single largest investment in the auto sector in the history of Canada.

This is a major vote of confidence in all the work we're doing together, to position Ontario as a leader in the green, sustainable economy of the future.

Rudy Cuzzetto is the MPP for Mississauga-Lakeshore, and Parliamentary Assistant to the President of the Treasury Board of Ontario.



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Construction Update on Long-term care homes on Speakman Dr.

By Jani Anandh

Construction Progress and Upcoming Work

The construction of the two long-term care (LTC) homes at 2180 Speakman Drive in Sheridan Homelands has seen significant progress. The majority of the homes are now fully enclosed. Some of the progress includes:

- On the interior of the building, work on finishes (incl. painting, flooring, millwork, fixture, ceiling, and doors) continues.
- On the exterior, the West Tower insulation has been completed and the metal panel installation (finish look) of the West Tower has started. Works on both roofs are in progress, which includes final roofing and ongoing work on mechanical connections.
- The East Crane and the West Crane are scheduled for removal in the spring.
- Hardscaping (e.g. grading and concrete work for paths/ planters) of the courtyards is ongoing.
- Softscaping (e.g. landscaping and planting) is scheduled to start once spring weather arrives.
- Commissioning of building equipment/systems (i.e. 'starting up' of systems including the air handlers and sprinkler loops) is ongoing, while generator testing started earlier this year in January.

Health Centre on Speakman Drive

Under the Accelerated Build Pilot Project, and in partnership with Infrastructure Ontario, Trillium Health Partners (THP) is leading the build of a new health centre on Speakman Drive in Mississauga that will function as an interconnected community for seniors and caregivers, providing a broad range of services and programs that meet the needs of those it serves.

The first phase of the new health centre includes the two LTC homes that are currently under construction. The homes, which will be operated by the independent, not-for-profit charitable organization Partners Community Health, will have a total of 632 beds designed to address the current lack of access to long-term care in this community and create capacity in hospitals where many patients wait for long-term care placement.



Future phases of the new health centre will include a residential hospice that will be built and operated by Heart House Hospice, as well as a health services building that will offer a wide range of medical services to the community.

In July 2021, the Accelerated Build Pilot Project was launched by the Ontario government as part of its plan to create new long-term care beds in cities and towns across the province, including Mississauga. Designed to address the current lack of access to long-term care, this project plays a key role in helping seniors get off waitlists and provide them with the care they deserve.

THP wants to hear from you:

Trillium Health Partners would like to thank the community for its continued patience and understanding as they have been working on the construction of the two long-term care homes on Speakman Drive. They remain committed to working alongside the community and minimizing disruption and inconveniences in the area, as much as possible.

As always, THP welcomes your questions and comments, and will continue to share information with you as it becomes available.

For more information on the build of the new health centre, please visit the Trillium HealthWorks website. For more information about the long-term care homes, please visit the Partners Community Health website. If you have questions or comments or want to sign up for our mailing list, please send an email to public.affairs@thp.ca.



Wellbrook Place:

More than a Name - a New Vision for Long-Term Care

By Christopher Trotman

In March, Partners Community Health (PCH) announced the name of the two new long-term care homes (LTC) at 2180 Speakman Drive as Wellbrook Place.

The process of naming these homes began in 2021. In keeping with PCH's commitment to partnership and deep community collaboration, the naming process involved several rounds of public consultation that included existing PCH residents, their families, staff, partner organizations and community members. Diversity groups, including service providers in the region, were also consulted to ensure the name selected was reflective of the organization's values and the many populations it serves.

The new name, Wellbrook Place, reflects PCH's commitment to the homes' residents, families and staff, as well as the physical environment they are a part of.

The word 'Well' is synonymous with feeling good, living better and healthy outcomes--all of which are sentiments the new homes will work to promote and support people to achieve. The word "brook" creates a connection to nature and the location where the homes are designed to be part of the greater community.

Wellbrook Place, demonstrates that wellness is connected to a sense of environment and place, embodying PCH's holistic approach to caring for the physical, social and spiritual wellbeing of residents and visitors. This approach is also aligned with the homes' innovative Philosophy of Care.

Philosophy of Care for the New Homes

Much like the process of naming the new homes, PCH's Philosophy of Care was finalized after extensive engagement and feedback from local partners. The Philosophy of Care helps establish leadership and staff's approach to care while painting a picture of what residents and families can expect when visiting or living at Wellbrook Place.



As PCH prepares for the opening of Wellbrook Place later this year, the team is actively embedding the Philosophy of Care through all pieces of the homes' operations, including its delivery of programs and services, recruitment strategies and resident and family experience. Stay tuned for more updates and opportunities to engage on this important work.

Once complete, Wellbrook Place will have:

- A combined 632-beds and be part of PCH's larger strategy that will introduce innovative and inclusive programs and services and new models of care delivery.
- Two units specially designed to safely care for people who live with advanced dementia
- Day programs to meet the broader needs of seniors who require regular enrolment in activities and services focused on maintaining their independence in order to prevent or delay the need for hospital or long-term care.
- A dialysis program for long-term care residents and members of the community living with chronic kidney disease, operated by Trillium Health Partners.
- Virtual LTC hub to connect the homes' primary care model to hospital specialists, increasing the quality of resident care and avoiding unnecessary visits to the emergency room.

To learn more about Wellbrook Place, visit our website at:
www.partnerscommunityhealth.ca/wellbrook-place

To join PCH's community newsletter or submit any questions about Wellbrook Place, contact us at:
info@partnerscommunityhealth.ca



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Remembering Our Hazel

By Matthew Wilkinson, Heritage Mississauga • www.heritagemississauga.com • history@heritagemississauga.org



Thank you, Hazel
(1921-2023)

Hazel McCallion (1921-2023) has left her mark on Mississauga. She will forever be linked to our city and her name is imprinted on the landscape like no other. Arguably no other person in our long history has shaped Mississauga – politically, socially and physically – quite like Hazel. Her image and voice were the recognizable face of Mississauga for decades, and our city grew exponentially and came of age under her guiding hand as mayor – a position she served in for 36 years.

For generations to come, residents of Mississauga will read Hazel's name across the city: the University of Toronto Mississauga's Hazel McCallion Academic Learning Centre, "Hazel's Walk" at Square One, the Hazel McCallion Campus of Sheridan College, the Hazel McCallion Centre for Heart Health at the Mississauga Hospital, the Hazel McCallion Senior Public School, the recently renamed Hazel McCallion Central Library, and the Hazel McCallion Line LRT system currently under construction, to name but a few. Those are the tangible, physical markers in our city that remember Hazel. Hazel was also appointed a member of the Order of Canada in 2005, of the Order of Ontario in 2021, and was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from the University of Toronto in 2010, amongst countless other honours.

But the intangible is perhaps more powerful and lasting. Hazel was, of course, a politician and community leader, but also a businesswoman, athlete and inspirational trailblazer and role model for women in politics and as community leaders.

Hazel Journeaux was born in Port Daniel, Gaspé, Quebec. Her working career began in Montreal before being transferred to Toronto. She was also a professional hockey player while in Montreal. Hazel met her future husband, Sam McCallion (1923-1997) through the Anglican Young People's Association in 1945 in Toronto. They were married and moved to Streetsville in 1951, where they would raise their three children and become very active in their community.

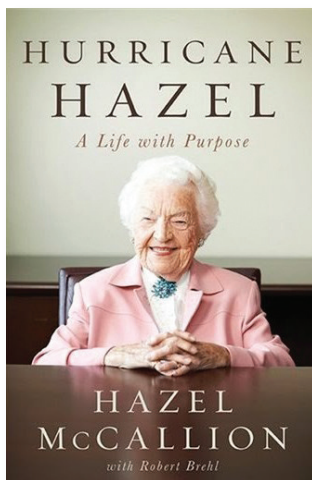
Hazel entered politics by joining the Planning Board for the Town of Streetsville in 1964 and chairing the Board in 1966 and 1968. She also served as the president of the Chamber of Commerce in 1964. Hazel became Deputy Reeve for Streetsville in 1968, Reeve in 1969, and served as Mayor of Streetsville from 1970 to 1973. She was a Councillor in the newly formed City of Mississauga from 1974 until 1978, and then served as Mayor of Mississauga from 1978 to 2014 - she was the longest-serving mayor in Mississauga's history and one of Canada's longest-serving mayors. McCallion led her city for 12 consecutive terms, retiring in 2014. Nicknamed "Hurricane Hazel" for her brash political style, she oversaw the development of Mississauga from a semi-rural community into a vibrant multicultural centre and the seventh-largest city in Canada. Many civic leaders of today have commented on how they were inspired by Hazel. Undoubtedly her influence will be felt for generations to come. Hazel was an ever-present and tireless champion of the City of Mississauga.



There are many avenues for exploring her life and times, but foremost we would recommend *Her Worship: Hazel McCallion and the Development of Mississauga* (2009) by Tom Urbaniak. The book chronicles the path, personality and policies of Mayor McCallion in the development of the City of Mississauga and offers the first study of Hazel McCallion's politics, her shrewd pragmatism, and calculated populism.



And, of course, her official biography, entitled *Hurricane Hazel: A Life with Purpose* (2018) by Hazel McCallion with Robert Brehl, is a must. The book follows Hazel's life from Port Daniel-Gascon on the Gaspé to Streetsville and Mississauga. In this memoir, McCallion recounts her early years as the mayor of a rapidly growing city; battles with politicians and business leaders; her love of hockey; her personal life and her beloved late husband, Sam McCallion.



For more on the life and times of Hazel McCallion, please see:

"Hurricane Warning! The Life & Times of Hazel McCallion"
from PAMA:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORgTV2eh8Xc>

"Hazel McCallion: The Hurricane that changed Mississauga"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uMNnaPmk2fs>

"Do Your Homework" from the Museums of Mississauga
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=53vqSjDBic0>

Ask A Historian - **"Life & Times of Hazel McCallion"**
with Professor Tom Urbaniak:

Part One: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=89hgRHZpzsE>

Part Two: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nBWmvsINL64>

Hazel A Celebration: 100 Years in the Making from MAC
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oMSBtM5GPQs>



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CITY BUDGET PROCESS AND PROPERTY TAXES

Chris Mackie, MIRANET Municipal Finance Committee

Do you know how your property taxes are determined? Do they differ from your neighbours' in Sheridan Homelands? What do your taxes provide?

Mississauga's 2023 operating budget is \$1.05 billion and the Region of Peel \$5.0 billion. For both municipalities the largest revenue source comes from property taxes. The City's 2023 budget will increase residential property taxes by an average of 3.0 percent. The Region's budget will add a further 3.1 percent to Mississauga's residential tax bill.

You might not be thrilled by a tax increase of 6.1 percent. Bear in mind the City's revenues are still recovering from COVID. This is particularly true for MiWay, now operating a full schedule, and for Recreation fees. The City's revenue received from the GTAA in lieu of property taxes has dropped by \$22.0 million. This payment is based on a formula of passenger departures/arrivals from the airport two years previously.

It is unlikely that your exact tax increase will be 6.1 percent. The Municipal Property Assessment Commission (MPAC) establishes property assessments throughout the City. Assessments vary depending upon the type of building, e.g. condominiums, rental apartments, townhouses, or single family. Assessments for similar buildings vary according to location throughout the City and supposedly reflect market value. Assessments remain unchanged for 2023. Individual property taxes are based on the property assessment compared to the City-wide assessment for the type of property. The result could be a tax increase greater or less than the average 6.1 percent.

The 2023 budget was adopted not knowing whether municipalities will be made whole for the lost revenue resulting from Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster. This legislation reduced development charges for most types of residential construction and cancelled the requirement for developers to pay a contribution in lieu of parkland development. City staff estimate these changes will result in a loss of \$850 million over the next ten years. The Region estimates it will lose \$2.0 billion over the same period. The provincial government has stated that municipalities will be compensated for the lost revenue. That remains to be seen.

MIRANET estimates that without full compensation from the province, the combined City and Region's property tax in 2023 could increase to 17.4 percent. Such an increase is unthinkable.

After numerous meetings, Budget Committee adopted the 2023 operating and capital budgets on February 1, 2023. The operating budget is identical to that proposed by City staff except for the addition of \$690,000 to fund ten additional bylaw enforcement officers. They are required to provide overnight response to complaints, for example firework noise in the summer months. Welcome to the latest noise complaint.



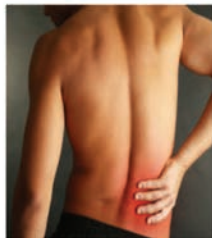
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UTM scholar examines snow and ice data in a changing Arctic environment

By Tina Adamopoulos

Since 1979, the Arctic has warmed almost four times faster than the rest of the globe, attributed to oceanic heating, melting sea ice and rising global temperatures.



*UofT Mississauga geography student Brianna Lane.
Photo courtesy of Brianna Lane.*

Brianna Lane, a second-year University of Toronto Mississauga master's student studying physical geography, is developing an accessible method for snow and ice data quantification using ground-based trail cameras in the Central Canadian High Arctic – making vital research underway easier for experts to assess.

Along with Laura Brown, an associate professor in U of T Mississauga's department of geography, geomatics and environment, Lane is monitoring lake ice and snow in the Central Canadian High Arctic in Nunavut. Her research will provide insight into the historical changes in the region with climate data from 1953 to the present day.

"If the air temperatures are getting warmer, then we will expect that the lake ice duration is shrinking, so less time that the lakes are staying frozen. If it's staying the same that may just be an indication that nothing has changed in the area."

Lane is one of five recipients of the 2022 Black Graduate Scholar Award in Geography and Planning. The initiative, a partnership between the Black Research Network and the university's tri-campus Graduate Geography and Planning, recognizes the exceptional academic and professional achievements of Black graduate students.

Lane is conducting research on five lakes: Hunting Camp Lake in the Nanuit Itillinga National Wildlife Area, Resolute Lake, Small Lake, Plateau Lake, and North Lake near the community of Resolute/Qausuittuq, Nunavut.

The lakes – each about one square kilometre – are located near the town of Resolute, one of Canada's northernmost communities. Typically, the lakes are used by local communities for fishing and transportation, when frozen.

In the Central Canadian High Arctic, lakes stay frozen for up to a 10-month period, starting in September and melting in June.

The ground-based cameras Lane is utilizing allows for image classification, based on how much of the lake is snow, ice or water. The cameras take pictures twice daily, which allows Lane to time when lake ice forms and melts, including the spatial distribution of the snow and the ice. Rather than manually reviewing images from the trail cameras, the method digitizes data. A Shallow Water Ice Profiler (SWIP) is also used to measure lake ice. "Ground-based cameras provide a way for us to consistently monitor the lakes," Lane says.

"The field sites we are looking at are inaccessible and hard to get to. A lot of recent research is using satellite imagery, but the lakes that I'm looking at are small and it's hard to distinguish what is happening on the lakes because the resolution isn't great."



*Fieldwork on Cornwallis Island, Nunavut.
Photo courtesy of Brianna Lane.*

With a surface area of 540 square kilometres, Lake Hazen, the High Arctic's largest freshwater ecosystem and the world's biggest High Arctic lake, is rapidly responding to climate changes – experiencing warming and shorter lake ice cover over the last 10 years.

While Lane says there hasn't been much dramatic change in her research sites so far, she is currently sorting through data to defend her thesis in August.

CLIMATE ACTION AT RIVERWOOD

By Rasheed Clarke, Marketing Specialist, The Riverwood Conservancy

The Riverwood Conservancy will be hosting a series of events this spring that will let you take on climate change while connecting to nature.

Through the support of **Climate Impact**, the Riverwood Climate Club gives you and your family the opportunity to take part in educational walks and hands-on activities that protect Riverwood's biodiversity and supplement wildlife habitat lost to development.

In our tree planting events, you'll learn how to identify native trees by leaves, bark, stems, and buds, and better understand the role native trees play in our local ecosystems and how carbon sequestering combats climate change.

For wildflower planting events, you'll learn about the importance of incorporating native plants in your own garden, and how supporting pollinators like bees and butterflies can strengthen biodiversity. We'll also make seed balls that you can use in your own backyard.

Then in our wetland restoration sessions, we'll show you how to conduct frog monitoring and identify all of Ontario's frog species by appearance and sound. In doing so, you'll learn how frogs support healthy ecosystems and why wetlands are vital to reducing the impacts of climate change. You'll help us restore Riverwood's wetland areas by removing invasive species and planting native vegetation.

In addition to our Riverwood Climate Club events, we'll still be hosting our usual variety of Discovery programs this spring and summer, including our popular guided bird walks, nighttime nature hikes, and astronomy nights. Hope to see you at Riverwood soon!

Register for The Riverwood Conservancy's events at
theriverwoodconservancy.org/events





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The Loyalist Creek Erosion Control Project Update



By Graeme Lake

The shoreline repair portion of the project is complete. The old gabion basket retaining walls began failing (leaning and falling down) in various sections beginning in 2019. After several public consultations a solution using an armour stone retaining wall design was chosen. The new design will mitigate the existing erosion problems and ensure long-term stability of the creek while also protecting or enhancing the existing environmental resources within the study area per the City of Mississauga. This new design was installed along the previous shoreline.

The retaining wall work began the beginning of January this year and finished on March 15th. The work consisted of removing the old gabion basket retaining wall system and replacing it with the armour stone retaining wall from the bridge at the south end of Liruma Road to the bridge beside Sheridan Park Public School.

The old retaining wall was demolished with an excavator and the metal wire was collected and removed, while the rocks were used to backfill the retaining wall and line the creek bed. A small dump truck was used to drive back and forth along the creek bed to remove plant debris and fill, and to then deliver the large armour stones and creek bed rock. The excavator used a set of jaws to pickup and install the armour stones following the drawings with the help of GPS positioning equipment. The new armour stone retaining wall will prevent future erosion issues. It also has a nicer visual appearance than the old retaining wall and it will last for many years to come.

The next stage of the project will be to plant new trees and plants and re-establish the trail. The new trees will be planted at a ratio of at least 3:1 for every tree that was removed.

The walking path along the creek is scheduled to re-open at the end of June.



FRIENDS FOUND IN UNLIKELY PLACES

By Janice Hutchinson

I have worn glasses since I was nine; contacts since I was sixteen. My vision is not terrific. My morning routine has me hopping in the shower without visual aid. This is generally not a problem, nothing to see, shampoo and lather keeping the eyes shut most of the time. One morning a couple weeks ago was an exception. They happen! An unidentified black spot was moving along the wall. This often causes a shot of adrenaline coursing through my body which can be dangerous in a shower situation and calls for a cool head and a clearly thought out escape plan. Is it a dust mite moving through the air? A soap sud magnifying a little grout mildew? Or.... a spider?

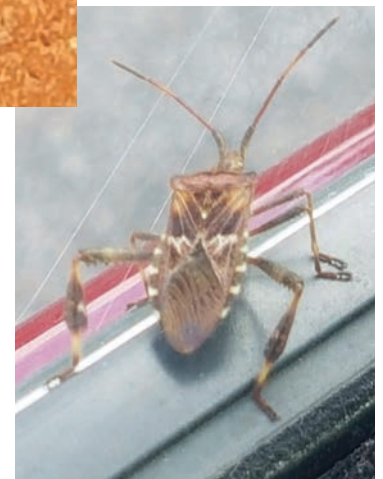
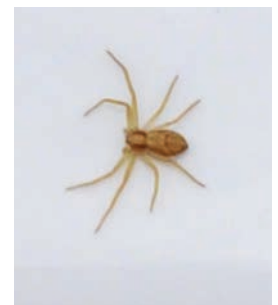
Normally spiders don't set off alarm bells for me; in fact, we have a non-aggression pact while I am dry and with vision, but in the shower the fear can be mythic in proportion. The non-aggression pact is a simple one with few exceptions or rules. Spiders (insects in general) are free to exist and share my space with the exception of the shower and the bed. Insects that willfully search flesh to bite or sting are excluded from this agreement, as are many footed large orange squiggly centipedes. Oh, and in full disclosure, I did declare war on a multitude of ants last spring that were establishing new picnic routes throughout my kitchen. On the whole though we exist peacefully and together, larger creatures shooed out of doors in nice weather and ignored in winter.

These days we are losing far too many insects. Over 16 different studies of insect populations have been seen to have decreased 45% in the last four decades. We have lost 5% to 10% of all insect species in the last 150 years — or between 250,000 and 500,000 species. This makes me rethink every insect interaction I have. This loss has occurred primarily through deforestation, intensive agriculture, pesticide use, artificial light pollution, urbanization and climate change. Insects are the lowest food chain which birds, fish, reptiles and even mammals depend upon. They also pollinate our crops, fruit trees and flowers. They break down soil and dung, churning up the land, keeping it healthy.

Some interesting Insect facts: There are more longhorn beetle species than bird species. There are about the same number of ladybug species as mammal species. There are more weevil species than fish species. What about spiders?

At a rough estimate there are 12 quadrillion spiders on earth, 43,000 recorded species. A life without spiders might suit some but it would mean a life infested with other pests, pests that eat our crops and those that like nipping humans.

The spider in the shower? Watched carefully, no turning during the rinse cycle so it could be fuzzily seen if it started to move. I have learned that bolting quickly in a slippery condition can have hazardous results. Slow and cautious reconnaissance. Once out and glasses applied, the spider turned out, this time, to just be a fuzz ball.





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- Silvia Samsa

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