



The Environmental Advocate

www.conserversociety.ca

Conserver Society Hosts Green Drinks!

**Tue Sept 23 2014 5:30PM
onward**

Coffee, beer or wine, it doesn't matter what you drink. Come out to Green Drinks where you can enjoy a relaxed setting, drop in, meet new people, have lively and fun discussions and moments of serendipity. For anyone interested in the environment or working in the green sector. **This month's Green Drinks features a 15 minute presentation on stormwater management for Hamiltonians** (at 6pm) and is brought to you by Conserver Society!

The venue is small and friendly, with very reasonable prices and a nod to organic/local. The **Artword Artbar, 15 Colbourne St.**, (just off James St. N.), Hamilton is close to bus service on James North and has street parking and parking in the church lot at the corner of McNab & Colbourne.

History of Green Drinks

In 1989, at a pub called the Slug and Lettuce in North London, Edwin Datschefski was sitting with his green design colleagues when he noticed an enviro-minded acquaintance with a group at a nearby table. They pulled some tables together, and a movement was born, evolving into Green Drinks, which is now global in 62 countries.

In 2005, Laurel Harrison who coordinated the Hamilton Area Eco-Network, was looking for a way to network all of the environmental organizations in the region, and at the suggestion of Peter Ormond, created Green Drinks Hamilton, which was the 118th city to join in an event that now happens monthly in 540 cities worldwide! Laurel, and her accomplices Dave Hart Dyke and Peter Ormond still organize the event which has taken the form of Green Drinks Afloat (aboard the Hamilton Harbour Queen), Green Drinks pub crawls, annual Green Drinks Christmases, Green Drinks skating parties and hosted countless mini presentations which have gone on to galvanize action from attendees in doing good for our City's environment.

Jobs have been found, friends made, and most importantly, laughs have been shared, because who needs to laugh more than someone who cares about our environment!

Green Drinks usually meets the 3rd Tuesday of every month.

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/8621336459/>

Website www.greendrinks.org/ON/Hamilton,%20Ontario

Fall 2014

Conserver Society of Hamilton and District

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Adopt-A-Park

Deirdre Connell

Green Venture is located in the Davis Creek Community, defined as the area from the Red Hill Valley to Centennial Parkway and from the escarpment to King Street East. We work closely with the Davis Creek Community Planning Team and are always looking for ways that we can give back to community. Recently Green Venture learned about the City of Hamilton's Adopt-A-Park Program and decided to look into adopting a park of our own.

With the Adopt-A-Park Program a group adopts a City of Hamilton park. The park remains the property of the City but the community group helps maintain it through regular litter cleanups, removing graffiti, weeding and generally keeping an eye on the park.



Veevers Park, named after the Veevers family

**A Conserver
Sponsored Program!**

Just up the street from Green Venture is Veevers Park, located at 688 Greenhill Avenue. A nice park with a playground, small splash pad and large open area. Veevers Park was actually donated to the City of Hamilton by the Veevers brothers, Bertram and Ronald, the same men who donated Green Venture's EcoHouse to the City. The location, name and history of the park was a great fit for Green Venture, so we decided to adopt it!

Becoming involved in the Adopt-A-Park Program was incredibly easy and before we knew it we were hosting our first park volunteer event as part of the annual Davis Creek Community Cleanup event this past spring. Early in June we hosted our next event, a park beautification day where volunteers and staff worked together to pick-up litter, clean graffiti, pull invasive weeds and put wood chips around the park trees.

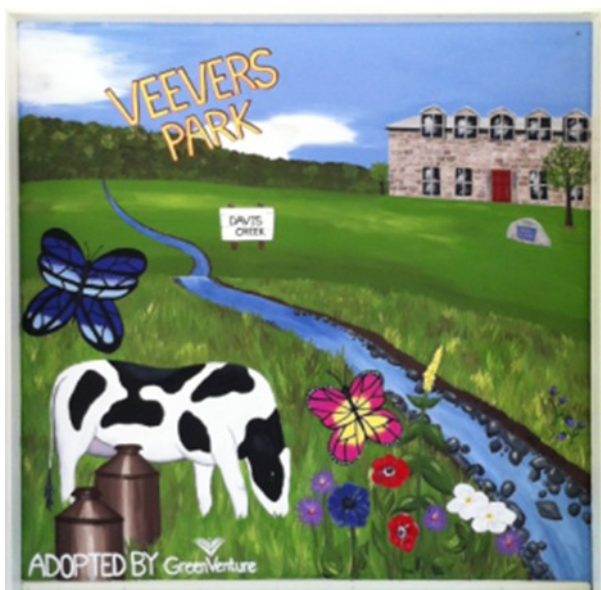


Mulching trees in Veevers Park

**We need your
membership more
than ever, please
join the Conserver
Society of
Hamilton & District
today!**

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Another park beautification project Green Venture recently completed was painting a new mural in the park. This mural, found under the picnic shelter, is a way to brighten up the park while highlighting some of Davis Creek's historical routes.



**Completed Veevers Park mural,
painted by Jotthi Bansal**

IS OUR COOTES TO ESCARP- MENT ECOPARK SYSTEM ONE OF THE GREAT PLACES IN CANADA? VOTE!

Hamilton region now possesses one of the largest urban parks in Canada. The Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark system needs your vote to make it the Best Place In Canada (contest). Its' 4,600 acres include Lake Jojo and Cootes and it has 9 partner-organization/city landowners. It contains 50+ species at risk and has a crucial spawning ground for Lake Ontario fish. When completed it will feature a vast network of trails and viewing and resting areas. On Sept 20 the remediation of a brownfield site kicks off the creation of a beautiful gateway to the park by the Desjardins Canal.

You can vote for it at [http://
www.greatplacesincanada.ca/en](http://www.greatplacesincanada.ca/en)

Voting is finished on September 25.

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Volunteering in Davis Creek

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Kim Dunlop

The Conserver Society recently provided sponsorship to Green Venture for a grant from the Hamilton Community Foundation. The focus of the grant was to increase volunteer opportunities in the Davis Creek community. Green Venture has been working with the Davis Creek Planning Team to increase volunteerism and has had a great summer so far.

In the spring Green Venture adopted Veevers Park, through the City of Hamilton Adopt-A-Park Program. Adopting Veevers Park is a way for Green Venture to give back to the Davis Creek community but it is also a way for volunteers to become more involved in their community.

On June 7th Green Venture hosted a Park Beautification morning where 13 volunteers and Green Venture staff worked together to get Veevers Park ready for the summer. Everyone worked together to pick up litter, clean graffiti, pull invasive weeds and put mulch around the trees in the park.

This summer Green Venture has also had many volunteers joining us at our EcoHouse, helping with weeding, painting, building new gardens and attending workshops. We are excited to be hosting a volunteer appreciation BBQ on Saturday, October 4th after a fall cleanup of Davis Creek. It's just one way for us to say thank you to all our volunteers that help out around Green Venture and in the Davis Creek Community.

For more information please contact Kim Dunlop: volunteer@greenventure.ca, 905-540-8787 x157



Photo: Volunteers and Green Venture staff after cleaning up Veevers Park

Climate Change Film

Don McLean

On Saturday, September 20 the Hamilton 350 Committee is offering a free public screening of a brand new film from 350.org. The showing is part of Hamilton's solidarity with people converging on New York City for the historic People's Climate March, and with climate actions this weekend around the world.

The documentary *Disruption* unpacks the question 'why have we done so little, when we know so much?' by weaving together commentary and insight from some of the most renowned voices on climate change today including James Hansen, Bill McKibben, Naomi Klein, Elizabeth Kolbert, Rajendra Pachauri, Justin Gillis, Michael Mann, among others.

The film takes an unflinching look at our unique moment in history - of tipping points and thresholds - as the first generation to feel the impacts of climate change and the last generation that can do anything about it. Taking the message of meaningful action beyond the climate choir, *Disruption* expands the understanding of climate change to encompass a broad range of social justice issues including equality, resource scarcity, independence and autonomy.

Ultimately, *Disruption* forces us to confront the greatest challenge of our time - whether we will be able to collectively learn from our past to save our future.

The Hamilton showing will take place at the Tower at 281 Cannon Street, a new space at the intersection of Cannon and Victoria. The film will start at 7 pm.



Shrike Recovery Project

Lisa Turza

Thank you to the Ed Smee Fund at the Hamilton Community Foundation for generously committing funding to the Mountsberg Shrike Recovery Project at Conservation Halton.

This project is working to save the Eastern Loggerhead Shrike from extinction. Thanks to donors like the Ed Smee Fund, twenty-six shrikes have been released since the start of the program in 2012. Conservation Halton also has a commitment to public education, and is home to the only Eastern Loggerhead Shrike available for education in the world. So far in 2014, five of the six breeding pairs have laid their first nest, of a typical two per breeding season. The hatchlings are starting to learn to fly around the enclosure, and are preparing for release in late 2014.

This is shaping up to be the strongest results yet for captive releases of the Eastern Loggerhead Shrike from the Mountsberg facility. Thank you to the Ed Smee Fund for their support!

For more information, go to:

www.conservationhalton.ca/current-projects

If you would like to support the Shrike Recovery Project, go to: <https://www.canadahelps.org/services/wa/dnm/en/#/page/5956>



Photo: A mature shrike bred at the Mountsberg facility.



Photo: Eastern Loggerhead Shrike eggs laid in May 2013.



Photo: The Mountsberg Recovery Project breeding facility that was completed in 2011

**A Conserver
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Fossil Fuel Divestment

Don McLean

The Conserver Society has joined a rapidly growing world-wide movement to stop investing in fossil fuel companies and their financiers. Investments in the fossil fuel sector increase the extraction and use of these fuels which are the main cause of global climate change. We believe that it's wrong to profit from wrecking the climate.

Dozens of cities, colleges, universities, religious institutions and foundations are already committed to divesting. You can check out the rapidly growing list at <http://gofossilfree.org/commitments/>. Recently they have been joined by the World Council of Churches, a body representing over half a billion Christians including most large Canadian denominations. They are acting morally in defence of a liveable climate.

Not investing in the fossil fuel sector is also a financially prudent one. The most recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has made clear that at least two-thirds of the proven fossil fuel reserves can NOT be burned if average global temperature increases are to stand a good chance of staying below the 2C threshold that virtually all governments in the world have accepted as the maximum safe level.

These unburnable reserves are a stranded asset of the fossil fuel sector. Major economic institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the International Energy Agency have all recognized that these stranded assets represent a very large problem for the fossil fuel sector and indicate that the stock prices of these companies are likely heavily overvalued. This constitutes a huge carbon bubble.

Canada's large banks are heavy investors in the fossil fuel sector. Consequently the Conserver Society has moved the principal invested to support the annual Betty Blashill Award investments to a credit union.

On Saturday, September 20, the Hamilton 350 Committee is holding a public screening of a new film about the climate movement. The meeting is taking place at 7 pm at The Tower, 281 Cannon Street East.

A public forum on divestment is being organized by Greening Sacred Spaces on Tuesday, October 21st, at Westdale United Church, 99 North Oval starting at 6:30 pm. It will explain how individuals and their organizations such as faith groups can join this important effort to protect the global climate.

Urquhart Butterfly Garden

Peter Hopperton

2014 has been a big year at the Urquhart Butterfly Garden. The UBG is Canada's oldest municipal butterfly garden, founded in 1992 in Dundas' Centennial Park. This summer and fall, with the support of the Conservers' Society, we have taken on four major projects.

The first is a continuation of our popular Summer Series. Starting in mid-July, we offered weekly workshops and guided walks in the garden. The topics included insects, pollinator gardening, bees, and bird calling. The series was anchored by four guided butterfly and bird identification walks with naturalist Matt Mills. The events have brought more than 500 participants to the garden over the course of the summer, in addition to regular visitors.

The second project is the UBG Photo Contest. During the months of July and August, we invited nature lovers to send us photos taken in the garden that fit into one of four categories: Butterflies and Moths; Birds and Wildlife; Insects, Spiders, and Bugs; and Plants and Flowers. We will be awarding two prizes in each category in both youth and adult divisions, as decided by a panel judges. On September 20th, we will reveal 1st and 2nd place winners in those categories during a ceremony at the Air Force Club adjacent to the UBG. Although we did not receive any grant funding for this contest, we were able to secure private donations from businesses and individuals in the community.

Many of the educational signs in the UBG date back to the garden's earliest days, and updating them has been a long term project for the garden's staff. Our third project is thus to complete the renovation of the educational kiosk within the next year. The new panels will be designed by local graphics designer Michelle Sharp to be continuous with the signage and promotional material she has produced for us over the past two years. The content of the boards will be updated to include new information in butterfly conservation, including details of the troubling drop in Monarch population.

In early October, we will begin work on renaturalizing the bank of the Desjardins Canal between the UBG and the Conservation Authority's Veldhuis site. This is the largest and most exciting of our projects this summer, and is the first expansion of the garden in almost twenty years. We will reinforce the canal bank with coir logs, adjust its grade, and plant it with native trees and shrubs to guard against erosion. The area will act as a recreational and ecological link between the UBG and the Veldhuis areas, and it will also restore to nature one of the few remaining sections of the Cootes Paradise shoreline that is not currently naturalized.

We hope that these projects will build an appreciation of the garden in the community that will help the project to thrive for many more years, and allow it to be of service as an educational tool for new generations of conservationists. For more information about the Urquhart Butterfly Garden, please visit <http://urquhartbutterfly.com>

Sat Sept 20th You Can Help Bring the Dream to Life

Restoring the Desjardins Canal Parklands

Conservator Society has worked hard over the years to help keep the natural lands in the midst of what is now called the **Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System** from being bulldozed into surveys. Likewise, people in Conservators also worked to keep the land across from the Desjardins Canal in Dundas from becoming an industrial storage place.

Now the Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System is getting closer to the goals of those who are helping make the dream come alive. With the Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA) acquiring the old Veldhuis Cactus Greenhouses property, a “gateway” to the EcoPark was born.

Since then, concept drawings were commissioned, the contaminated soil trucked out and clean soil brought in to cap the site, and grading and seeding has taken place to anchor the soil. The HCA kept a chimney of one of the old buildings intact so that nesting Chimney Swifts remain and can be observed. A couple of islands were built in the canal to provide nesting habitat for ducks, turtles and other creatures, and work was done to make conditions less favourable for algae in the water.

Now the fun part begins. The 1st of a series of plantings to start turning the land back to nature will take place on Saturday September 20, 9:30am-12:30. You can help out! With generous funding from TD Bank and Hamilton Conservation Foundation, the TD Community Tree Planting Fest will take place. This 1st stage involved planting a native woodland forest. People coming out will have the opportunity to participate in the following activities:

- Planting a woodland forest
- Guided hikes to Lake Jojo
- Butterfly garden walks & talks
- Live Birds of Prey presentations
- Organized cleanups around canal and lake
- Historical stroll of canal lands and Centennial Park
- Kids Korner with Hamilton Children’s Museum
- Exhibits, booths

TD Community Tree Planting Fest **Saturday April 20 9:30am-12:30pm**

Address: 201 King St. E., Dundas (former Veldhuis Cactus property on Desjardins Canal)

Free shuttles running from Westdale’s Churchill Park, McMaster and downtown Dundas.

Free parking available as well.

All activities start/take place at the adjacent Centennial Park (beside Urquhart Garden).

Wear sturdy shoes & bring re-usable beverage containers.

Check www.earthdayhamilton.ca website or the event’s Facebook site https://www.facebook.com/events/538410989638094/?ref=br_tf for further information. In the case of severe weather, the site will be updated on Friday evening to let you know whether the event will be rescheduled (raindate is Sat Sept 27).

There are 9 partners in the EcoPark System: Hamilton Conservation Authority, Royal Botanical Gardens, City of Hamilton, McMaster University, Hamilton Naturalists Club, Bruce Trail Conservancy, City of Burlington, Halton Conservation Authority, and Halton Region. This System contains 4,600 acres of some of Canada’s most bio-diverse land with 50 species at risk and crucial fish spawning ground..

The Hamilton Conservation Foundation continues to lead fundraising to achieve both this and the grander vision of Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark by seeking financial and in-kind support, not only for this project, but to acquire other environmentally significant lands in the area.

Canadians Have the Heart to Save Our Future

How unicycling across Canada ranting about climate change has restored my hope in humanity

Joseph Boutilier

What can I possibly hope to achieve? In as many words, that's the question I get asked by the most people; supporters and skeptics alike. And I don't blame people for laughing off the idea of using a unicycle to spur political action on climate change, even though I've used the 'gimmicky' device as the basis for a 5,000km cross-country ride that has brought me in contact with dozens of reporters, scientists, politicians and thousands of concerned Canadians. The truth is, while I'm confident I've helped surface, in some small way, the urgency we should all be feeling about the climate crisis, I have no idea whether or not I'll be able to reach our elected leaders, much less contribute to a movement to force them to address our climate concerns. But still, when you ask me what I hope to achieve, that will always be my first answer. My first answer, but not my only one.

Selfishly, I was also hoping such a trip might bring me in contact with other advocates who have embraced the broad scientific consensus that we're on track for absolutely devastating global warming within our lifetime. I was hoping that I wouldn't feel alone. I was hoping to see my passion for political action to address the issue mirrored in others; to quell that anxious sensation that motivation and awareness for our own sustainability is simply too sparse in the everyday bustle of the great majority. I hoped to see environmental wisdom begin to take its place; climbing the ranks of more common concerns like career succession, family life, personal health, and material gain. Simply put, I suppose you could say I was hoping a shaky faith in humanity would be restored. And with more than 1,000km still to go, I can gratefully say my outlook on our society and culture has never been more positive.

But wait a second, you say, are we really any closer to achieving an undeniable, overwhelming public consensus on the true severity of our predicament, much less the widespread political willpower to improve our fortunes? A little bit. More and more people believe in climate change as it hurtles brutally into their personal lives, and I've spoken to many of them first hand. Families whose homes have been battered by ice storms, hurricanes or shoreline erosion. Hardworking Canadians who find themselves suddenly jobless, like farmers who can't cope with harsh cycles of droughts and 'hundred year floods' that occur mere months apart, or fisherman whose operations are compromised by ocean acidification and rapid mollusk die off, or loggers who find timber supplies sacrificed to pine beetle invasion.

People are beginning to see how drastically unprepared we are for the relatively limited changes in our atmosphere, let alone the radical 6-degrees Celsius of warming forecasted for the next century or the 3-5 meters of sea-level rise that could swallow thousands of coastal communities in the following centuries or less. But the suffering of others, even if it's necessary to generate adequate concern, is not the source of my optimism. Instead, my faith has been restored not as a result of any surprising evidence of environmental awareness, but through a constant demonstration of kindness, compassion, resilience and hope.

These traits surfaced in every imaginable nook, cranny and corner of the country. From the wealthy suburbs of Vancouver and the hustling energy of its vast downtown, to the sleepy tourist towns and isolated mining communities scattered between the towering, snow-swept Cascade and Rocky mountains. Through the booming oil communities of southern Alberta and Saskatchewan and the remote ranchland in between; From the pristine urban core of Regina through the rolling hills of Manitoba, down the rustic old streets of Winnipeg and along the rocky shores of sparkling Lake Superior in Northern Ontario. When my daily stops were separated by 80km over dozens of hillcrests and hairpin turns during frigid rain storms, or a mere 20km of flat straightaway forcing though hot prairie headwinds while staring down the grain elevators dotted on the horizon that never seemed to get closer. Whether on a quiet trail among fellow cyclists and hikers, or struggling to hold my line on the razor-thin shoulders of Highway 17 while fighting off gusts of smoky air pushed through the underbellies of looming 18-wheelers as they raced by.

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In all these places, on all these days, I quickly learned – out of necessity you might say – to trust my life with thousands of strangers. The ones I asked for directions, the ones I asked for help, and the many more who offered it voluntarily. The people I stayed with, ate with and entrusted my unicycle and backpack with. And, of course, the thousands of drivers from whom I requested by my very presence a portion of the roads they were used to owning alone. And I have been rewarded not just by surprisingly few negative encounters and close calls, but a long series of small, simple encounters that have brought me unexpected joy, and a few unforgettable conversations that have changed my outlook on life forever. Through the stress and anxiety of the narrow roads, the headaches and heartaches of fighting for climate justice and through the months of separation from the people and places and events I most cherish, I have been reassured by the welcoming charity of communities big and small. I feel at home wherever I go. As much as I'm a complete oddball, an 'activist' on a unicycle with sometimes controversial proposals, the common values and experiences that connect me with my fellow Canadians remain stronger than any of the quirky characteristics that set me apart.

When my tire slipped on a gravel incline and my ankle got caught in the fork of my unicycle, it was like an anchor trapping me clumsily on the middle of the Crowsnest highway. Would the approaching truck driver even stop? Yes and he would make sure that myself and my unicycle were okay. I was hardly in a position to argue if he'd faulted me for riding a unicycle there in the first place; instead he wanted to make sure I could continue.

When I got lost in a small town and had to interrupt a single mother juggling a household of children, she didn't just give me directions. Chilled water and fresh baking were also provided. When people invited me into their homes to stay the night and spent the entire time apologizing for the temperature, the food, the mess; when they insisted I rest and wouldn't accept help with anything. When a man on the Downtown Eastside insisted on giving me all his change so I could buy a coffee, because I was tired.

When David and Helen found me with a flat tire and drove me an hour back to Regina and all over town on a Sunday evening to find a new tube. Then drove me back to dine with them. A few weeks later David and Helen were among thousands caught in the state-of-emergency flash floods that swept through southern Saskatchewan and Manitoba; the second such devastating floods to hit the region in four years. The recovery, I was relieved to hear, was swift and effective, as neighbours came together like neighbours do.



Joseph Boutilier in BC

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When I met Derek (www.dereksbiketrip.com) who was cycling around the world with terminal cancer to raise funds for other survivors, and dozens of other cyclists who had taken months out of their busy lives to raise funds for loved ones. When I met Ted Musson who has returned for his second year of walking and re-walking the distance of Victoria to Ottawa to call attention to democratic injustices like the robocall scandal. When I marched with Idle No More protestors in Winnipeg to promote respect and action for future generations, and met people like Michael Champagne who have helped transform a city plagued with discrimination and crime into a place of hope and pride for young First Nations.

When Shane in Maple Creek heard I wanted to see the Cypress Hills but couldn't afford the time and gave me a personalized tour. When a woman found me on a muddy construction zone in the pouring rain outside Brandon and insisted on driving me into town because lightning was forecast and she feared for my safety. When the two times I had to hitch-hike I was picked up in less than 2 minutes by people who offered to go out of their way to get me back to my route. Everytime I pulled over for rest and someone inevitably stopped just to make sure I was okay. When that border guard spent more time giving me directions and local advice and encouragement than questioning me or searching my gear.

When hundreds of school kids sat quietly and patiently and listened to everything I had to say about climate change, and asked brilliant questions I'd never thought of. When reporters changed their plans and went out of their way to tell my story, and thanked me for the opportunity to write about global warming. When government employees pulled me aside to offer me their kudos and tell me environmental concerns despite the possibility of backlash from employers. When they expressed regret that they weren't brave enough to cut their ties and speak out.

When all of these small, wonderful things happened and many, many, more, I was reminded why I remain optimistic. These acts of kindness, compassion, resilience and hope illustrate qualities far more valuable for human civilization and the environment than any amount of acute logic,

political persuasion or scientific certainty. With these ingredients in place, it only takes ambition to achieve rapid transformations of our society, culture and indeed our political landscape. Meanwhile, knowledge of the terrifying scope of global warming without this generosity and hope could crush the very spirit that makes us human.



What can I possibly hope to achieve? I can't hope to achieve 'global radiative equilibrium;' an end to climate change. I'm scared even to hope that Canada might regain its rightful position as a leader on environmental issues because I've been let down so many times already. Next time, that disappointment could be marked by the stinging ineffectiveness of my own campaign. But I don't hesitate to hope that the strength, courage and kindness of Canadians will ultimately triumph over our recent plague of uncomfortable compliance and dangerous inaction. I don't hesitate to hope that my 5-months on one wheel will inspire others, perhaps even as much as they have inspired me.

Joseph Boutilier is riding 5,000km on one wheel across Canada to call a heightened political response to the global warming crisis. He hopes others will join him to demonstrate their support for climate action when he arrives at Parliament Hill at noon on September 15, 2014. More info is at www.unityfortheclimate.ca and Joseph is on Twitter as @josephboutilier.



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