

The Environmental Advocate

www.conserversociety.ca



Annual General Meeting

State of the Air report

Join the Conserver Society at our Annual General Meeting. Learn about air quality, enjoy free refreshments and snacks, and stay for the Irish music jam!

Guest speaker Denis Corr will be presenting about the history and present state of air quality in Hamilton, and where we are heading in the future. Denis will touch on topics such as school outreach, mapping, and electric cars.

Tuesday March 31, 2015
The Corktown Pub, 175 Young St, Hamilton

Agenda:

6:30pm - Doors open, complimentary snacks and beverages
7:00pm - Conserver Society AGM: Activities and financial reports
7:30 - Guest speaker Denis Corr
8:30 - Entertainment, Irish music jam

Bring a friend! Non-members welcome.

Visit <http://www.corr-research.com/about-us.html> to learn more about Denis Corr.

Call for Nominations

The Conserver Society Board is seeking members for its Board of Directors.

If you are interested and able to contribute, please contact our Nomination Committee at contact@conserversociety.ca.

Being a board member involves spending between 5-6 hours a month to prepare for and attend meetings in the Hamilton area and contribute to projects that the Society plans and implements.

Winter 2015

Conserver Society of Hamilton and District

Inside this issue:

The Board Welcomes **2**
Kerry

What do astronaut
Chris Hatfield, Eliza-
beth May, and David
Suzuki have in com-
mon? **3**

Small Bites, Big
Change **4**

Green Venture Pro-
jects **5**

AGM Poster **7**

The board welcomes Kerry

The Conserver Society welcomes our newest board member. Kerry was recently appointed to the Board on January 15, 2015. Interestingly enough, Kerry has come to the board already having some familiarity and experience with the Conserver Society. In 1983, Kerry had worked for the Conserver Society as a researcher in assessing the extent of air pollution from all emission sources, taking into consideration climatic and economic factors. The comprehensive study involved analyzing control and abatement measures, examining legislation and enforcement procedures, and assessing the effectiveness of monitoring practices. The results of the study identified gaps in information for that year, such as the lack of monitoring stations at various locations, deficiencies in emissions inventories and controls and an insufficient amount of research on the climatic, economic and long-term environmental consequences of air pollution. Kerry has come full circle and has returned once again to the Conserver Society as a volunteer on the Board.

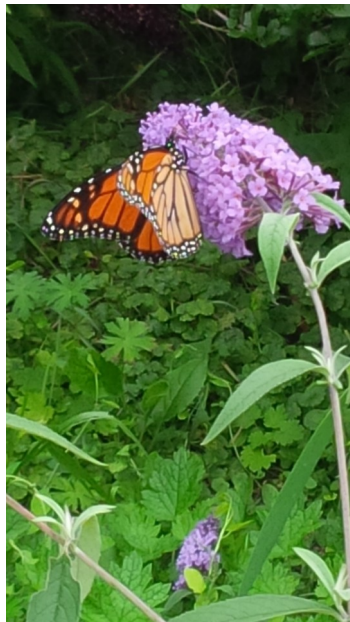


Photo by Laurel Harrison

Photos by Bonnie Kinder



Matt Mills doing an introduction before an interpretive walk at Urquhart Butterfly Garden



Brenda van Ryswyk speaking at Urquhart Butterfly Garden



Joanne Tunnicliffe speaks at the Urquhart Butterfly Garden during one of their 2014 Educational Program sessions.

What do astronaut Chris Hadfield, Elizabeth May, and David Suzuki have in common?

Laurel Harrison

Read on to find out – but be warned, this is a sad story.

Eighteen years ago, one man decided that if the environment was ever to be saved, children will be the answer, so he created the Earth Day Ecofestival. Busloads of students of all ages converged in the centre of Hamilton for the next four years, participating in a huge Earth Day Walk in April which culminated with a well-known speaker.

That was good for a start, but the organizer wanted youth to learn more about their environment, so he invited local environmental organizations to station themselves along the Walk route at Bayfront Park. One year bad weather forced a change of plans and the next year 6000 students of all ages attended the Ecofestival at Copps Coliseum. The exhibitors complained that Copps was the wrong venue for capturing the attention of these young people, so they were invited to meet with the organizer to talk, and from this a committee was struck and a new type of EcoFestival evolved. It became a day of organized workshops and exhibits for elementary students, held at the Hamilton Convention Centre with a keynote speaker hosted at Hamilton Place next door

This was much more impressive, but Eco-festival would reach its zenith only after the event moved out to Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG). The festival now had a title sponsor and great in-kind support from RBG staff and an epiphany. The committee realized that the ONE THING that had always been missing from the Ecofestival was nature! How do you expect people to care about the environment, when in fact, some of them never get to experience nature? So the focus of the Eco-Festival became “bringing nature to city kids” and keynote speakers were replaced with live wildlife presenters with their birds of prey and reptiles, to introduce these youngsters to them in an intimate setting. Volunteers with natu-

ralist backgrounds were corralled to lead classes on a world of discovery into the forest trails, meadows and wetlands. All workshops would be informative, hands-on and inspiring.

The Ecofestival became a roaring success. It grew to become a 3-day event after partnering with the Conserver Society to get additional funding. When registration would open, all 2,500 slots would be filled in a half a day. The event, though costly to deliver, was kept free – because so many students had never been in a forest, nor seen a wild creature – and many of them, from inner city schools, would never be able to attend otherwise.

Then the bottom fell out. The title sponsor was pulling out.

The search continues for sponsorships to make up this shortfall, but what does the future hold? If this event disappears it will be a great loss.

So, hopefully there are more chapters in this story, but as this goes to press, the search for support continues.

Oh, and to answer the question posed at the beginning of this article, the very first speaker at the Ecofestival was Chris Hadfield. David Suzuki and Elizabeth May were keynotes in 2003 and 2004.



Laurel Harrison, Earth Day Hamilton-Burlington. laurel@earthdayhamilton.ca

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A Conserver
Sponsored Program!

Small Bites, Big Change: Riverdale Food Project

Sapphire Singh & Virginia Stonehouse

'Empowering Riverdale's Food Security' was Green Venture's latest project to integrate education, health, recreation and the environment.

Funded by the Hamilton Community Foundation, this project included a series of nine cooking classes delivered over six weeks that paired local food, agriculture and gardening themed recipes and activities.

Green Venture staff initially experienced frustration locating a suitable space for holding these classes. This challenge ended up leading Green Venture to a fantastic opportunity: a first-time collaboration with the City of Hamilton's Riverdale Community Centre afterschool program.

The after school program and cooking classes were open to children ages five to twelve living in the Riverdale Community. Thirty children, representing the neighbourhood's rich cultural diversity (including newcomers), registered for the hands on program.

Through handling, preparing and tasting fresh whole foods, the children explored and learned about the food system and how their choices can make positive or negative impacts. They explored how and where their favorite fruits and vegetables grow (local vs. imports), identifying processed or un/less processed foods, food packaging and waste reduction, vegetarian "superfoods" (i.e.: Meatless Mondays), and the power of food celebrations.

These children learned that making simple delicious fun recipes at home with their families really could strengthen food security in their community while improving

the health of their environment and their growing bodies. At the end of the six weeks, each child participated in a mock farmers' market where they picked out all the fresh ingredients needed to make one of their favourite recipes, cheese and veggie quesadillas. The children were all challenged to apply what they learned by taking the ingredients home and preparing a meal with their families.

It was inspiring to see children build confidence, work as a team and even demonstrate leadership through food. Equally as impressive was seeing them make proactive choices about the types of recipes they wanted to make and eat.

We asked the participants to tell us about what they learned from the program. Here is what a few of them had to say.

The best ingredients Green Venture used was:
 "orange pepper" – Shyanne, 6
 "tortilla bread" – Nora, 10
 "tomatoes" – Shenika, 11
 "peanut butter" – Justin, 9 (we used natural PB; no additives)

I learned this about food and the environment:
 "you should eat healthy and fresh" – Nora, 10
 "[not to eat] processed foods" – Shenika, 11
 "unprocessed food isn't always healthier [for the environment]" in reference to local vs. imported fresh foods – Ronald, 10

The recipe I will try to make at home:
 "Kale chips" – Nora, 10
 "Fresh Fruit Salsa" – Rami, 11
 "Peanut butter-banana spirals" – Shyanne, 6
 "Lemonade" - Hailina, 10 (freshly squeezed)

Green Venture would like to thank the Conserver Society, our sponsoring partner, for helping to bring this project to life. And we would also like to recognize the dedication of two high school volunteers from the Riverdale Community that demonstrated a special level of care and dedication to every cooking class.



2015 Green Venture Projects

Deirdre Connell

This year, Green Venture in partnership with the Conserver Society of Hamilton and District will be completing three neighbourhood projects across Hamilton.

Davis Creek Awareness Project

In 2015, Green Venture will support the Davis Creek Community Planning Team to increase the awareness of the Davis Creek community and the assets in the community. This will be accomplished through increased signage to define the Davis Creek neighbourhood and highlight the community's natural assets as well as guided tours and activities that will also feature the many things the community has to offer. For more information about the Davis Creek Community Planning Team visit

www.daviscreekteam.wordpress.com

GALA Alleyway Revitalization Project

Alleyways are a defining feature of older urban neighbourhoods. Such extensive networks of passageways and open spaces offer easy access to homes and businesses with minimal car interference. Rather than developing alleys for the benefit of the community, they have become forgotten, underused and abused public spaces. If an alley is cleaner, designed to be more visible to the public, and pedestrian and bicycle friendly, it is likely to draw an enhanced public presence and activity.

"It is important to reclaim our parks, green-spaces and alleys to ensure that they become tools that successfully engage our neighbours; places where we can meet and get to know each other" – Brenda Duke, GALA Neighbourhood Planning Team and Alleyway Action Team.

This project is community-led involving ripping up unnecessary pavement from urban alleyways and installing permeable pave-

ment and/or creating beautiful community green space while providing storm-water management benefits. During this process, we will be revitalizing the chosen alley through a makeover that could include fresh coats of paint, playground games (like hopscotch) and solar lighting. Together with the community, Green Venture will reclaim underused and misused public space to enhance community and pedestrian connections in the neighbourhood, by reclaiming alleys as public places and creating a new outdoor space for their use and enjoyment.

A Food Secure Future in Riverdale

This program will allow Green Venture to remain active in the Riverdale community, and address a main element identified in the food security sub-plan: implementing a community garden. The food security sub-plan will be completed by the end of 2015, and will address needs related to food access in the Riverdale community, as indicated by Riverdale residents. This project will have been chosen based on what residents have identified as a need for in their neighbourhood. This project will take place over twelve months, with staff time dedicated to empowering residents to implement a long-desired community garden, as well as a full year commitment to the planning team.



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and District**

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**Conserving the
environment since 1983**

**The Environmental
Advocate** is published by
the **Conserver Society of
Hamilton and District Inc.**, a
non-profit, non-partisan
citizen organization
concerned with the
environment in the region
at the western end of Lake
Ontario.

Editor: Elley Newman

Submissions for the
Newsletter are invited and
should be sent to the
mailing address or to the
editor at
contact@conserver society.ca (*Email submissions
preferred, please*)



Black Swallowtail depositing an egg on her host plant, Queen Anne's
Lace at Urquhart Butterfly Garden. Photo by Bonnie Kinder.



Sam Cooper and Calvin Melanson taking pictures at Urquhart Butterfly
Garden. Photo by Joanna Chapman.



CONSERVER SOCIETY
OF HAMILTON & DISTRICT

JOIN US AT OUR
🍀 **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** 🍀

TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 2015

7:00 PM (Doors open at 6:30)

8:30 PM (Irish Music Jam)

The Corktown Pub
175 Young Street
Hamilton, ON L8N 1V7

Topic: "State of the Air Report"

Speaker: Denis J. Corr Ph.D.

Who is Dr. Denis Corr:

"Dr. Denis of Corr Research and Rotek Environmental, Inc. has over 35 years of experience in monitoring and solving air quality problems, as well as co-ordinating major responses to other public health issues. His experience ranges from laboratory and field-based technical science to Senior Management work. His diverse professional experiences include leading Emergency Response teams and resolving contentious multi-stakeholder issues." (To read more about Dr. Dennis Corr, please visit www.corr-research.com.)

Looking forward to seeing you!
Please RSVP to contact@conserversociety.ca