

OHA Convention in Windsor July 19 – 21, 2019

What a pleasant introduction to an OHA Annual CONVENTION. Windsor was a second home to us. We were the first graduates of the University of Windsor in 1964. He went on to get his Masters in 1965. Returning to discover 50 plus years of changes was very interesting. The University has grown, the residence I stayed in has been demolished, as was the house Tom rented. Modern buildings now grace the area around Assumption Church. This Church was once an active place of worship, but entry has been closed off as the aged building has been declared unsafe. I don't know when the services ceased.

After spending Thursday night in Chatham, the drive to Windsor was a short one. We arrived early Friday morning and attended the plenary session given by Kim Cooper. Mr. Cooper worked in the agriculture sector for over 45 years. He is presently working for the Municipality of Chatham-Kent's Economic Development Services as their Agricultural Specialist. His weekly agriculture column for the media is widely read in the area. Kim is also an ordained Minister and the former pastor at Dover Centre Church. His talk gave us a view of the agriculture in Southwest Ontario.

Later that day, Tammy Dobbie, the Park Ecologist for Point Pelee National Park since 2005, and with Parks Canada for over 25 years, spoke on the Rare Plants found in the Park. The Carolinian Area in Southern Ontario allows these plants to grow and flourish, but many need protection. The three areas of concern 1. Endangered, 2. Threatened, and 3. Special "Concern" issues, identify areas of fragility, so that species at risk may be cared for and protected. She is a "fireball" of energy, and her slides certainly tweaked our interest, and gave us

the spark we needed to re-visit the Park on Sunday, after the Convention. Her talk included Wetland plants, such as the American Water Willow, and Swamp Rose Mallow, Forest plants, such as Red Mulberry, Black Ash, Blue Ash, and Butternut, and Savannah Species at Risk, such as Indian Grass, Wild Potato Vine, Butterfly Milkweed, and Blazing Star. She mentioned the Eastern Prickly Pear Cactus and Climbing Prairie Rose. She was going to Middle Island to check out several reported citings of an invasive species, the Japanese Cliff Flower, right after her lecture. She gave us her contact information should we have more questions.

The afternoon speaker, Darin Willder, a certified arborist for 5 years, and a professional tree climber for 8 years, used slides to show correct and incorrect “tree care”. His message was to plan where you plant your tree, and showed pictures of how to plant a tree correctly. He spoke about trees in stress, and gave suggestions of how to correct the problem(s). He stressed the “right tree for the right location”, by giving examples of ‘things’ to consider, such as a suitable site, soil conditions, sun, water, and environmental issues. He mentioned the “Oak Wilt” Disease, and the “Maple Leaf Tat Spot”. He had useful suggestions and encouraged us to call him if we had further questions.

Saturday morning’s plenary speaker, Matt Korpan, was a highlight of our listening pleasure. The informative talk about the evolution of the Green House Industry, was an eye-opener. We took Highway #3 on our way home, and viewed the extensive Green House Operations for ourselves. For instance, one remark that has stuck with us, was that these new operations have increased the tomato yield by 30%. Tomatoes can now grow over 50 feet long, and by rolling them, after taking off the ripe produce, you can get a greater amount of produce in a prolonged time frame. The yield per acre of greenhouse tomatoes is 20 times that of open field planting. Peppers and Cucumbers enjoy a

greater crop also. It is very expensive to begin this way of farming (500k to 1M/acre), but the end result is a greater yield of product over a longer time. The whole operation is computerized.

Our morning speaker, Margaret Dudley, spoke on Hostas. Her 200 X 75 foot garden with a collection of 400 types of hostas under mature trees sure made her an expert in our opinion. Margaret was an OHA Judge of the Convention Flower Show. She suggested several books to read by such authors as: Mark Zilis, Paul Aden, George Schmid, and Michael Shadeaca. There are over 12,000 named Hostas, and 5,859 are registered as of 2017. She talked about the History of Hostas, and some of their names. She explained the term “species” with reference to Hostas. She showed us how to look at the VP (vein pairs) of Hostas: 3-4 are “sieboldei”, 7-10 “undulata”, 9-11 “fortunei”, 11-12 “halcyon”, and 14-16 “montana” are very tall.

The afternoon session saw Carl Pascoe, a Master Bander and Scientific Director of NTARP (Native Territories Avion Research Project) and Rachel Powless, a permitted Bander and President of NTARP discuss development of bird lists, butterfly species locations, wildflowers and other flora identifications, and hummingbird banding and Monarch butterfly tagging through a power point presentation. This pair currently work with Six Nations of the Grand River, Chippewas on the Thames, and the City of Sarnia. They have banded over 100,000 birds, of 110 species including over 1000 hummingbirds. They passed around a sample of the hummingbird bands...they fit on a diaper pin! They have made a cage to capture their little birds, and demonstrated how they lure the hummingbird into the round cage, and close the “door’ by a remote control device!

The Convention experience was rewarding. Our visit to the Southwest continued after the close of the Sunday morning session. We drove to

Leamington, and toured Point Pelee National Park. Monday morning saw us on the 10am Point Pelee II ferry to Point Pelee Island. We spent the day touring the island. In 1982 there was high water in Ontario, and Tom was on the Island building dykes to protect the shore line. Interesting to see high water again this year, and how the cottagers have coped over the years by building on stilts!

Our trip home along Highway #3, gave us interesting views of Lake Erie, and how Southern Ontario is converting to Green House Gardening. Naturally we purchased some Southern Ontario corn to share with our neighbours. It was delicious!