

The Giant's Rib

Dedicated to increasing awareness and protection of the
Niagara Escarpment World Biosphere Reserve

Stan Nowak, Editor
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Happy New Year!



**Happy New Year from all of us at the
Giant's Rib Discovery Centre!
May all the blessings and good fortunes this
New Year may hold be realized by all of you
and yours in 2014!**

The Bruce Duncan Memorial Lecture Series

This Series, proudly sponsored by the Giant's Rib Discovery Centre, is named in memory of the former General Manager of the Hamilton Conservation Authority and is dedicated to promoting our Niagara Escarpment as an internationally-recognized World Biosphere Reserve and a truly unique topographic element of our natural and cultural heritage.

Upcoming Presentation of the Season: Sunday, February 9th, 2014

The House with the Parapet Wall

With John Terpstra, Celebrated Local Author



John Terpstra is the author of *Falling into Place*, a non-fiction work about Hamilton's geography, and in particular the Iroquois Bar, and on the city as *place*. A poem from that book, called *Giants*, is installed as a plaque at the top edge of the escarpment in Sam Lawrence Park by Project Bookmarks.

He has published two other works of creative non-fiction. One of them, *The Boys, or Waiting for the Electrician's Daughter*, was short-listed for both the Charles Taylor Prize and the BC Award for Canadian Non-Fiction. But he is primarily known as a poet, winning the CBC Radio Literary Prize, the Bressani Prize, several Arts Hamilton Literary Awards, and being short-listed for the Governor-General's Award. The latest of his nine books of poetry, called *Brilliant Falls*, was published in 2013.

John lives in Hamilton, where he is self-employed as a cabinetmaker and carpenter.

John's presentation will be based on his upcoming book, coming out this Fall 2014.

This presentation will take place from 2:00 – 3:00 PM at the former Parks Canada Parks Discovery Centre, on 57 Discovery Drive, and now administered by The Hamilton Waterfront Trust.

Parking is free, but there is an admission fee of \$5.00 for this presentation. Refreshments will be provided after the presentation along with an opportunity to talk with our guest speaker.

Copies of *Falling into Place* and *Brilliant Falls* will be available as door prizes!

For further information: Sylvia Zsidi sylviaz@cogeco.com

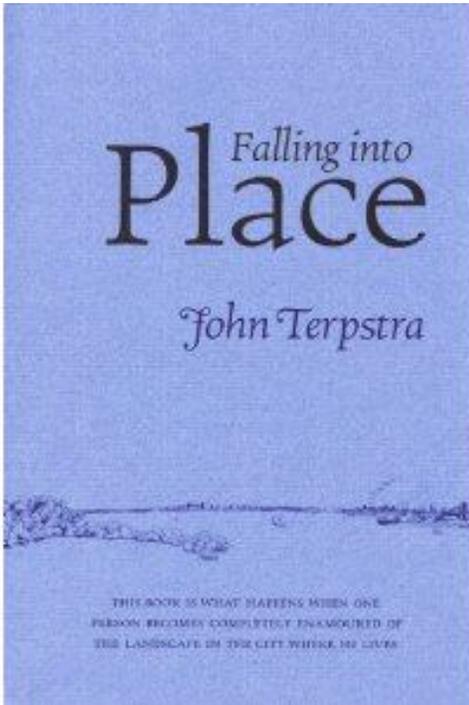
The Literal Rib

By Stan Nowak

“Falling into Place” by John Terpstra

Listed as one of the Hamilton Spectator's "Best books of the year" in 2002 for its appeal to "aficionados of history, geography, geology, poetic language, fine prose and the landscape around us."

Available at most local book stores and also a copy will be available as a door prize at the next Bruce Duncan Memorial Lecture Series presentation on Sunday, February 9th (see previous page above)!



I met John Terpstra when I booked him for a presentation for our Dundas Valley Historical Society, of which I was then President! The presentation was based on this book about the Iroquois Bar, the geological feature that supports York Road between the cities of Hamilton and Burlington.

The back of the book jacket describes this book perfectly!

“This book is what happens when one person becomes completely enamoured of the landscape in the city where he lives – especially if this person, like John Terpstra, engages the world with the imagination and curiosity of a poet. Terpstra's investigations centre around the Iroquois Bar, a giant glacial sandbar which lies beneath one of Hamilton's busiest transportation corridors. Combining history and geology with gumshoe work and poetic intuition, Terpstra puzzles out just how much the physical and social geography of the area has changed since the sandbar was formed. This close study is nested inside a broader consideration of modern society's constant and often ill-considered alteration of landscape. Terpstra's acute focus on his neighbourhood offers insights of global value in a book that is both provocative and entertaining.”

This book is both an historical and personal narrative, discussing in a factual and sometimes spiritual and romantic way the natural, geological and cultural heritage of the ancient sandbar between Hamilton and Burlington that today supports the York Road linking the two cities and known as the ‘Iroquois Bar’.

This book reminds me very strongly of Henry David Thoreau's ‘Walden’ in its tone, its passion and its satisfaction upon finishing reading it that you've just finished a virtual field trip that educated you, made you appreciate, made you *feel*, made you *care* and *give a damn* about something precious and doing something – anything – to ‘spread the word’ that this landmark is not just something worth protecting and preserving, but worth *experiencing* - even to this day!

This book has had a most profound impact on me! I've lived in the Hamilton area for most of my life, travelled across this ‘Iroquois Bar’ more than a gazillion times, most times well over the speed limit, and even worked nearby it as an employee of the Royal Botanical Gardens – and never gave it a second thought!

One thing this book has done for me is to raise my level of appreciation of this very special landmark, to stop and take a look every now and again, and to stay at – or even below - the speed limit, when passing through from Hamilton to Burlington along York Road.

I dare you to read this book and not profoundly understand and fully appreciate what we have right here in ‘our backyard!’