



Sources of Knowledge Newsletter

Sharing Perspectives on the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Bruce Peninsula

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Peoples of the Great Arc: Two Ways of Knowing

Are you ready for Forum 2016? It takes place April 29th to May 1st. This year's event is almost ready to go, with only a few details yet to be finalized. As always, the Forum will be three days of exciting field excursions, interesting presentations, a great keynote speaker, a delicious dinner, and more. Register through the Forum page on the Sources of Knowledge website at <http://www.sourcesofknowledge.ca/peoples-of-the-great-arc-two-ways-of-knowing/>. The registration fee for the whole event remains \$99.00, with an **early bird fee of \$90.00 in effect until April 8th**.

This year's Forum builds on ideas we started to explore in Forum 2015. The Great Arc refers to the limestone escarpment that sweeps across southern Ontario, northern Michigan and eastern Wisconsin. Last year's activities led participants to understand the physical forces and processes that shaped this landform feature that is the Niagara Escarpment and our home. Forum 2016 focuses on how this physical feature helped to shape the lives of early humans in the area, and how the land was affected by the human use of it. Our time frame begins with the end of the last glaciers – about 10,000 years ago – and ends with European settlement of the area.

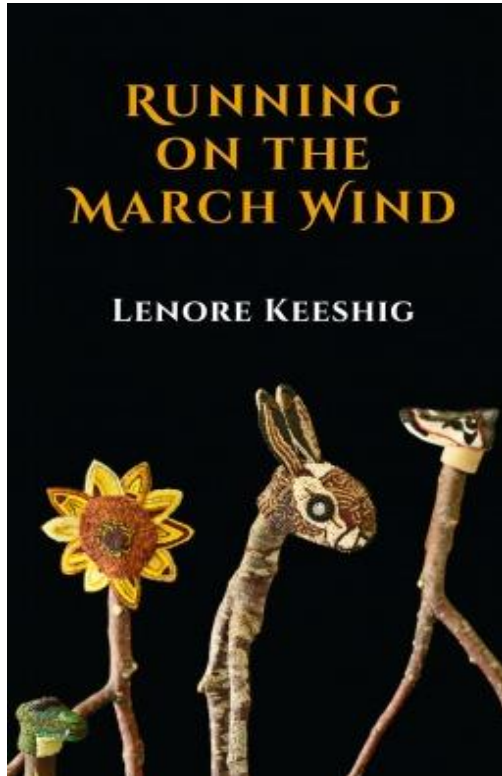


The Forum logo includes a map that traces the Niagara Escarpment across Ontario, Michigan and Wisconsin. The four colours come from the traditional First Nations' medicine or prayer wheel.

“Two Ways of Knowing” in the Forum’s theme refers to the two sources of knowledge that we have about early peoples and their activities. The first is ongoing archaeological research that is providing evidence about Aboriginal ways of life and activities on both sides of the border, and our presenters will be sharing some of the conclusions that have been drawn from these findings. The other rich source of information is traditional knowledge held by the area’s First Nations. Presenters – such as SOK Director Lenore Keeshig-Tobias - and field trips will explore this source of knowledge.

Two recurring features of the Forum also help to develop the overall theme. Stephen Scharper’s mini-film festival on Friday evening will screen recent videos on the topic, and the annual art show and sale titled

“Different Ways of Seeing” will feature works of art by local people.



Lenore Keeshig's acclaimed debut collection of poetry was published in September 2015. Many of the poems focus on First Nations' experiences in our area. (Quattro Books)

Dr. John Riley Keynote Speaker

Our keynote speaker following Saturday's dinner is Dr. John Riley, science advisor emeritus for Nature Conservancy Canada. Drawing on a career that included work in biology, geology and ecology, Dr. Riley will consider "The Once and Future Great Lakes Country". He will describe what the land was like before European settlement when the First Peoples lived in harmony with the land, remind us what has happened to the land in the last 400 years, and predict what will happen over the next 100 years. As he notes, "Great Lakes country is nothing like it

was 400 years ago, when its superabundant fish and wildlife, and its forests and prairies, astonished its first European visitors...Great Lakes country is an endowment of immense geopolitical importance, and its natural capital will continue to be a magnet for human endeavour."



Dr. John Riley (inthehills.ca)

Public Discussion on the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Sunday morning's session will focus on the recently released Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Aboriginal issues in Canada. Open to all members of the community, this session will explore the implications of the Report for the people of the Bruce Peninsula.

Forum Special Features

- Culinary Delights Vendors' Market
- Different Ways of Seeing Art Show & Sale
- Special performance by the Tragically Hip Replacements musical group
- Field excursion to Cape Croker Maadookii Seniors Centre
- Choice of field trips on Saturday afternoon
- Great dinner catered by The Green Door
- Presentation of SOK Award of Excellence
- Cash bar at social events
- Early morning birding excursion
- Poster session and exhibits

A Note on Geomythology

Aboriginal traditional knowledge is a key source of understanding of physical conditions prior to recorded history. The term “geomythology” has been coined to describe the various ways in which traditional knowledge and myths appear around the world. In simple terms, geomythology is the study of myths or legends created by pre-scientific cultures to explain physical events and processes, such as earthquakes, floods, fossils and natural features.

There are two general categories of geomythology inquiry. Explanations for geological features and phenomenon make up the first category. For example, the grooves on the sides of Devil's Tower in Wyoming are explained by Lakota (Sioux) legends as the claw marks left by a giant bear that was attacking people taking shelter on the top of the tower. A scientific explanation is that the tower is the eroded remnant of a volcanic laccolith; the columns

of rock were created as the volcanic material cooled and hardened.

The second category of geomythology deals with physical events, usually of a catastrophic nature. Noah's flood in the Judeo-Christian culture is such an example. Recent scientific evidence suggests that post-glacial melting caused sea levels to rise and the waters of the Mediterranean Sea inundated the Black Sea depression, leading to the myth about global flooding.



The Devil's Tower, Wyoming (credit: us-pictures.com)

Some myths, legends and stories are being evaluated to see if they offer insight for scientific explanations. While much geomythology will not lead to scientific understandings of events or processes, there are those that have potential to support or lead scientific inquiry.

Lenore Keeshig's session at Forum 2016 will provide a First Nations view of geomythology, linking myths and legends to the physical environment and cultures of the Great Arc.

[DON'T FORGET TO REGISTER NOW!](#)