

The Arts

Wildlife photographer finds her niche

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Correspondent

While Barbara Simpson did not set out to become a wildlife photographer, photography has proved an ideal outlet for her artistic talent and her concern for environmental preservation.

"I'd always been very enthusiastic about and interested in nature and I think I needed some sort of creative expression of what I was seeing," explained the Claremont resident.

"There's so much beauty around us and I feel many people just don't have the time to notice it."

Simpson's artistic inclinations go back to her childhood when she drew constantly.

"I've done quite a lot of sketching of wildlife but I can't seem to work in color. When I was a child, I read every nature book in the children's section of the library and then begged to read the ones in the adult section." It was in 1983, when she took a Canada Nature Tours Photo Safari to the Everglades, that she began to consider photography as a

means of expressing her feelings about the environment.

Acclaimed nature photographer Wayne Lynch led the tour "and it really had a big influence on me." The following year, Simpson took another tour with Lynch, this time to Africa.

"It was a fabulous, once in a lifetime experience," she recalled. "We had some very close encounters with elephants coming right through the campsite."

"One day, when I was alone, I was encircled by them and I still continued taking pictures, although I was pretty nervous."

It was, she said, "a very positive introduction to photography. I was really pleased with the results and I began to think I could do something with this."

In 1986 she returned to the Everglades, where she met renowned wildlife painter Robert Bateman.

"That year the birds were just amazing - they were practically falling from the sky."

Simpson returned with some wonderful photographs and



Photo/CELIA BRONKHORST

Barbara Simpson of Claremont at work in the field, near her Claremont home. The photographer is now exhibiting at the Herongate Barn Theatre.

decided she wanted to share what she'd seen, "so I approached the Thornhill Library about having an exhibit and they accepted me."

The following summer she had another solo exhibition at Richview Library and she then decided to take night courses in equine studies and photographic techniques at Humber College.

Wayne Lynch had already taught her to operate her camera on manual, "so from the beginning I learned about

exposure. It became almost intuitive."

By 1990, Simpson had obtained her certificate in photographic techniques, and she moved out of the city and into what she describes as her rural 'Mecca.' "Apart from my photography, I feel very committed to this area," she observed.

"So few people seem to appreciate that this is a really unique area of green belt, it's amazing that it exists at all and that it's large enough to sustain wildlife populations."

The 'bread and butter' of her photography is in equine photography, she noted, and her work has been featured on a number of Canadian and American magazine covers.

Whenever she can find the time, Simpson loves to travel around the province, camping and canoeing and enjoying nature.

Her work is currently on exhibit at the Herongate Barn Theatre and she is planning to put together a portfolio and a slide show of her work.

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1. Dracula (new)	★★★	R	Horror	Lots	Mild	Lots
2. Forever Young	★★	PG	Drama	Mild	Mild	Mild
3. Body of Evidence	★★	R	Mystery	Some	Lots	Lots
4. Distinguished Gentleman	★★	R	Comedy	None	Lots	Some
5. A River Runs Through It	★★★★	PG	Drama	Some	Some	Some
6. Jennifer B (new)	★★	R	Thriller	Some	Lots	Some
7. Best of the Best 2 (new)	★	R	Action	Lots	Some	Some
8. Hoffa	★★★	R	Drama	Much	Lots	Some
9. Used People	★★	PG-13	Drama	Mild	Some	Some
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June 25 - July 1	CRITICS AVERAGE	MPIAA RATING	THEME	VIOLENCE	COARSE LANG.	SEX & NUDDITY
1. Jurassic Park	★★★★	PG-13	Adventure	Much	Some	None
2. Last Action Hero (new)	★★	PG-13	Action	Much	Some	Mild
3. Cliffhanger	★★★	R	Action	Lots	Lots	None
4. What's Love Got to Do... (new)	★★★	R	Drama	Much	Lots	Some
5. Made in America	★★★	PG-13	Comedy	None	Much	Some
6. Guilty as Sin	★★	R	Thriller	Much	Lots	Some
7. Dave	★★★★	PG-13	Comedy	None	Some	Some
8. Once Upon a Forest (new)	★★	G	Animation	Mild	None	None
9. Menace II Society	★★★	R	Drama	Lots	Lots	Mild
10. Life with Mikey	★★	PG	Comedy	None	Some	None

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