

TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

Number 535

November 2005



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TFN MEETING

Sunday, November 6, 2005 at 2:30 pm

Toronto's Ancient River

Bill Snodgrass, City of Toronto
Senior Engineer Responsible for Groundwater Quality Management

VISITORS WELCOME!

SOCIAL HOUR

2:00 - 2:30 pm

Bring your own mug if you wish,
only paper cups provided.

For more information call the TFN office at (416) 593-2656

Room 001, Emmanuel College,
University of Toronto,
75 Queen's Park Crescent East

PLEASE NOTE: Room 001 (Electronic Classroom) is one floor below street level.
ENTRANCE at south end of the building, down a few steps on an outside stairwell.
Wheelchair Entrance: Second Door SOUTH on Queen's Park Crescent E. Door does not have automatic opener. Elevator is inside to the right.



NEXT MEETING: Sunday, December 4, 2005.

Even surrounded by open space, trees can have problems. Repeated trampling (by people, dogs and even squirrels) causes soil compaction, which in turn deprives the roots of air, microorganisms and nutrients. Perhaps the signs in Toronto Parks should say "Please walk on the grass – except under the trees."

From *Toronto Tree Portraits*, a 2005 calendar from the Toronto Parks and Trees Foundation.

TFN OUTINGS

Children and visitors are welcome on all outings but please, NO PETS! To get to outings on time, check TTC routes and schedules by calling 416-393-4636. Check the weather by calling 416-661-0123 so you will know what to wear on outings which go rain or shine.

- Wednesday **SOUTH RUNNYMEDE - Historic walk, lanes, trees, barns, etc.**
 Nov. 2 Leader: Madeleine McDowell
 10:00 am Meet at the northwest corner of Runnymede Rd. and Annette St. We will finish at Jane St. and Annette St. Morning only.
- Saturday **GALLERY HOPPING – Nature Arts**
 Nov. 5 Leader: Mary Cumming
 11.00 am Meet at the Bellair exit of the Bay/Bloor subway station (southeast corner of Bellair St. and Cumberland St.). We will be visiting a number of art galleries in the Yorkville area. Lunch will be in a mall. Bring anything you wish to show the group when we go to lunch.
- Sunday **MONTHLY MEETING**
 Nov. 6 See notice on page 2.
 2:00 pm Social Hour
 2:30 pm Lecture: Toronto's Ancient River
- Tuesday **ROUGE VALLEY – Nature Hike**
 Nov. 8 Leader: Orval White
 11:00 am Meet at the northeast corner of Sheppard Ave. E. and Meadowvale Rd. Bring lunch and binoculars. Terrain is hilly on a 3 ½ hour loop.
- Tuesday **MIMICO CREEK – Historical Walk**
 Nov. 15 Leader: Bob Given
 1:00 pm Meet at the northeast corner of Islington Ave. and Bloor Street W. The walk will end at Montgomery's Inn. Bring money for tour or tea at the Inn if desired.
- Saturday **HUMBER BAY PARK EAST – Birds**
 Nov. 19 Leader: Carol Sellers
 10:30 am Meet at corner of Lake Shore Blvd. W. and Park Lawn Rd. Bring lunch and binoculars. All day.
- Sunday **MIMICO CREEK – Lost Rivers Walk**
 Nov. 20 Leader: Ed Freeman
 2:00 pm Meet at the Bishop Allen Academy parking lot on Royal York Rd. opposite Coney Rd. intersection. We will finish at Royal York Rd. and Portland St. (2 blocks north of the GO station). Afternoon only, about 2 hours on paved surfaces with some park trails. This is a joint outing with North Toronto Green Community.

.....continued.

- TFN events are conducted by unpaid volunteers.
- The club assumes no responsibility for injuries sustained by anyone participating in our activities.
- Children are welcome at all TFN events but must be accompanied by an adult.

...OUTINGS continued from page 3.

Wednesday **FINCH EAST PARK – Birds and Insects**
Nov. 23 Leader: Carol Sellers
10:30 am Meet at the northwest corner of Finch Ave. E. and Leslie St. Bring lunch and binoculars.

Wednesday **COLONEL SAM SMITH PARK – Nature Walk**
Nov. 30 Leader: Valerie Allen
10:30 am Meet at southwest corner of Lake Shore Blvd. W. and Kipling Ave. Bring lunch and binoculars.

THIS MONTH'S COVER

Drawing by Mary Cumming of black oaks in High Park made on a Nature Arts Outing led by Nancy Anderson.

IT'S YOUR NEWSLETTER!

Send us your original writing (up to 500 words) of your thoughts and experiences of nature in and around Toronto.

Do you have a favourite natural area in Toronto? Did a TFN outing introduce you to a new park? Tell us about it! Did you see any plants or animals that particularly interested you? Let us know! Tell us what, where and when, and any field guides or other sources consulted.

If you have a digital camera, we would welcome photos of TFN outings. Remember that they will be reproduced in black and white photocopy.

Also welcome are: reviews (up to 300 words), poems, cartoons, and sketches.

Please include your name, address and telephone number so submissions can be acknowledged. Newspaper clippings should include source and date.

Unsigned letters or emails will not be read. Attachments to unsigned emails will not be opened.

Note the deadline for submissions of time-sensitive material, e.g., notices of meetings or events.

Deadline for December issue:

4 November 2005.

Send to:



or

Toronto Field Naturalists
2 Carlton St., Suite 1519,
Toronto M5B 1J3

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Diana Banville, Jenny Bull (co-editor), Eva Davis, Karin Fawthrop, Nancy Fredenburg, Elisabeth Gladstone, Siobhan Montague (co-editor), Marilyn Murphy, Toshi Oikawa, Wendy Rothwell.
Printing and Mailing: Perkins Mailing Services. Website Manager: Elaine Farragher.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

At the Annual General Meeting in September the new slate of directors for the current year was approved. Subsequently, at the first meeting of the board, the following officers were appointed: Corley Phillips and Linda Stemmler will be Co-Secretary-Treasurer; Wendy Rothwell will serve as Vice-President as well as Recording Secretary; I will no longer be Acting Interim President but will instead be President, which I consider an honour and a privilege.

I would like to recognize those who have served on the board but are no longer continuing: Robin Powell has been President for the last six years and has performed many duties in this role. An avid photographer, Robin has made a lasting and significant contribution to the TFN photographic archives. In an effort to preserve and protect our natural heritage Robin has represented the TFN on numerous environmental issues. He has also been involved with the acquisition and maintenance of the Nature Reserves and, last but not least, we are grateful that Robin continued as an outings leader.

Elaine Farragher launched the TFN into cyberspace when she created our website. Even though Elaine now lives in Kingston and has joined the Kingston Field Naturalists, we are most appreciative that she continues to maintain our website.

Aarne Juhola served on the board as Secretary-Treasurer since 1982. Although this position is not highly visible, it is crucial to the operation of the club. For almost a quarter of a century Aarne diligently and steadfastly performed this role.

Helen Juhola has served on the board since 1976, and as everyone is aware, has made an enormous contribution. For many, Helen's name is synonymous with the Toronto Field Naturalists. Her extensive knowledge as a naturalist and her willingness to share this knowledge in defense of the natural environment are legendary.

The board has been working on a permanent recognition of Helen and Aarne's years of service to the TFN. Watch for news of this in the near future.

Throughout the years there have been many who have made a substantive contribution to the TFN but few would equal that of Diana Banville. Diana joined the TFN in 1975 and has been working tirelessly ever since. If you drop in to the office on a Friday morning, she will be there

....continued.



"Seeing Through Snakes" is the title of an article published by Mr. J. W. West in the Canadian May News letter. It is one of our best home members, who has taken an admirable job in building up interest in nature through his able nature stories, and his own. And is very few words to "more news stories" and is his...

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Complete set of TFN newsletters, 1938 to 2004.

Call the office at 416-593-2656.

without fail, compiling information from the outings reports or extracting material from newspaper clippings for the inventories of Toronto's plants and animals. Diana's contributions include poetry, art and nature observations for the newsletter; the publications *Vascular Plants of Metropolitan Toronto* and *West Don River Valley*; Toronto checklists (birds, butterflies, mosses etc.); and much, much more. Thank you Diana for your many years of service ... we look forward to many more.

Another longtime TFN member needs your help. Margaret Cranmer-Byng is rallying support for the appeal to Cabinet to reject the expansion of the Dufferin Aggregates Quarry on the Niagara Escarpment (see page 8). Our TFN brochure advertises the many benefits of membership as "Anyone interested in nature study, *or wanting to get involved in issues involving the protection of plants, animals, habitats or landforms in our region*, is urged to become a member." Please take a minute to read how you can help to protect and preserve this remarkable landform identified by UNESCO as a World Biosphere Reserve.

One of the most rewarding tasks that I set for myself as Acting President was to go on at least one TFN outing a week. The purpose was to familiarize myself with the leaders, to meet other members and simply to learn more about nature. I enjoyed myself so much that I am now keen to go on *every* outing. Some memorable highlights ... seeing my first black swallowtail butterfly in the wild tangle of the Baselands; witnessing the devastation wreaked by the August 19 flooding in Marita Payne Park and marvelling at a crayfish "chimney"; admiring the tenacity of the gardeners and the fruits of their labour in the Alex Wilson Community Gardens; revelling in the beauty and diversity of the restored areas of the Todmorden Wildflower Reserve and being shocked by the degradation of the areas that have yet to be restored; seeing, really seeing an Eastern Phoebe at close range through a scope which Brian Gray stoically lugged along on a four hour outing so that we could all enjoy the thrill of SEEING the birds. These are but a few of the experiences that await you on a guided TFN outing.

Come. See. Listen. Learn. Enjoy.

Pinky Franklin



Deer crossing creek. Photo by Robin Powell

TORONTO AND FLAP PARTNER TO PROTECT BIRDS

Extracted from an article by Susan Krajnc in *Touching Down*, the newsletter of the Fatal Light Awareness Program, Fall 2005.

The City of Toronto is embarking on a new environmental vision with the prospect of dark, starry nights and bird-friendly buildings. On April 14, Toronto City Council passed the Notice of Motion *Prevention of Needless Deaths of Thousands of Migratory Birds Per Year in the City of Toronto*. The City's goal, in partnership with FLAP, is to "save the lives of 5,000 migratory birds (from building collisions) per year as they pass through our City."

The motion requires City staff to report on ways and means Toronto could reduce bird kills. The report would include a set of bird-friendly policies and conditions that the City could: incorporate into the planning and site plan approvals process for the construction of any new buildings; implement internally to ensure that all city-owned buildings minimize migratory bird kills; encourage and/or require existing building owners to adopt. Other features include a public education campaign that will focus on preventing bird kills and other three R's: Rescue, Rehabilitation, and Release of birds injured from collisions.

Besides FLAP, the City also cites Toronto Hydro, the Better Buildings Partnership, and the cities of Chicago and New York as partners in bird conservation. Special thanks go to Councillors Glenn de Baeremaeker (Ward 38, Scarborough Centre) and Joe Mihevc (Ward 21, St. Paul's) for introducing the Motion to City Council.

The City partnership with FLAP presents several challenges. We need to involve the City in preventing bird mortalities from daytime window collisions (the Motion is largely geared to addressing the night-time collision issue). We hope Toronto will sponsor a conference on birds and buildings in the near future. Breaking news is that the Canadian Wildlife Service of Environment Canada is looking to expand the Motion across the country.

The Motion not only flew but soared through Council with a vote of 33 for and 7 against. You can read the Motion by visiting www.flap.org. Please send a letter of thanks to your councillor if s/he voted for the motion or a letter of appeal to him/her if not. For contact information for the Mayor and Councillors, call 416-338-0338 or see <http://app.toronto.ca/im/council/councillors.jsp>.

Extracted from FLAP's Website:

FLAP's Mission Statement is To Preserve The Lives of Migratory Birds in Urban Areas.

.....Guided in part by the constellations, birds are attracted to lights shining from skyscrapers, broadcast towers, lighthouses, monuments and other tall structures. The birds either flutter about the light until they drop from exhaustion, or actually hit the object.....

FLAP needs your help! We need volunteers to patrol Toronto's financial district in the early hours of the morning, and dozens of outlying structures throughout the day during spring and fall migration. Can you give just a few hours a week to help preserve the web of life? An experienced FLAP volunteer will train you in all you need to know to immediately begin improving the survival prospects of these beautiful creatures. If you live outside the GTA we can provide tips on how to rescue birds in your city. Please help us save our songbirds - before it's too late! Call FLAP at (416) 366-FLAP (3527) or e-mail flap@flap.org.

Send donations to FLAP, Royal Bank Plaza, Lower Concourse, PO Box 20, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5J 2J1

PROJECTS

QUARRY EXPANSION ON THE NIAGARA ESCARPMENT OUR HELP IS NEEDED

As we read in the October Newsletter (TFN 534 - 9), two groups have appealed to Cabinet the decision to approve an 83-hectare expansion to Dufferin Aggregates' Milton quarry. This is already the largest active quarry in Canada and is located within the Niagara Escarpment Plan area, a part of the new Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt. CONE (Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment) and POWER (Protect our Water and Environmental Resources) believe the Milton quarry should not be expanded because:

- it would allow short-term economic gain (10-12 years of quarrying) to trump concern for long-term environmental harm to the Escarpment.
- it would promote the use of virgin (new) aggregates from the Escarpment rather than recycled aggregates from other sources.
- it would allow for extraction 50 feet/17 metres below the water table.
- it would authorize major engineering works that must operate forever, to protect the water resources (wetlands, creeks, groundwater tables) of the area. Course water would have to be pumped in perpetuity.
- it would fail to ensure protection of the Jefferson salamander, found in the area, and identified as a threatened species under the federal Species at Risk Act.
- aggregate resources can be readily accessed close to market off the Niagara Escarpment in land that is not protected or at risk.
- it would set a precedent for quarry expansion licenses on the Niagara Escarpment, which is recognized by UNESCO as a World Biosphere Reserve.

HOW CAN WE HELP? - - - BY DOING THE FOLLOWING:

1. Write a letter to Premier Dalton McGuinty and tell him that you support the position of CONE and POWER, and that you want the Niagara Escarpment to be protected and the quarry expansion prohibited. This is his address: The Honourable Dalton McGuinty, Premier of Ontario, Legislative Building, Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1A1
2. Telephone Premier McGuinty at 416-325-1941. Tell his staff briefly that you oppose the Dufferin Aggregates quarry expansion and that Cabinet should refuse it. The volume of phone calls on matters of high public interest is tracked by the Premier's staff. As with letters, numbers do count.

Contributed by Margaret Cranmer-Byng, a long-time member of TFN. Margaret is also on the board of directors of the South Peel Naturalists' Club. She represents South Peel on CONE's board of directors.

MEMORY BOOK FOR HELEN AND AARNE JUHOLA

A Memory Book containing good wishes, brief reminiscences and sketches from members of the Toronto Field Naturalists is being compiled for Helen and Aarne.

Please take a moment to think about your experiences in the TFN and the special moments you have shared with the Juholas, and send written contributions. Please write on one side only on standard size paper or smaller notepaper so your contribution can be pasted into the book.

The book will be a unique manuscript recording moments with the very special couple who have given so much time and energy to the club. Do take this opportunity to say thank you by taking part in the project!

Gail Gregory

TORONTO'S LATE-BLOOMERS

November - leaves have fallen from the trees, birds have migrated south. Most wildflowers, even late summer and fall flowering ones, have gone to seed or died down completely by the end of October. But there are about 60 species which have been found blooming in November in Toronto in one year or another, according to TFN Outing Reports compiled over the past decade. Of these, less than a third are native to Toronto. They include common evening primrose, swamp milkweed, marsh skullcap and several kinds of asters and goldenrods. The only shrub on the list, fall-flowering witch-hazel, normally flowers in September and October, but has been recorded in flower in Toronto in November, December and even January.

The aster (composite) family dominates the late-blooming list with over 20 species seen in November. Some of these late bloomers, particularly the native asters and goldenrods, flower *only* in late summer and fall. Botanists and horticulturalists call these *short-day* plants as they will never flower until the amount of daylight drops below a particular number of hours. For instance, cocklebur, which grows on moist sandy soil such as beaches in Toronto, flowers only when days have 16 hours of light or less, while common ragweed flowers only when day length drops to 14.5 hours. Because of this, ragweed is never found in areas where the first frost comes early as there aren't enough frost-free days between flowering and seed set.

Most of the non-native species in the aster family that have been reported flowering in November start blooming in May, June or July and are both *day neutral* and very common. These include common tansy, common yarrow, and common dandelion (which has been recorded in every month of the year except March). The same is true of several mints, such as catnip and self-heal; pinks such as bladder campion and bouncing Bet; legumes such as clovers, sweet clovers, and vetches; common St. Johnswort; and mustards such as common charlock, wormseed mustard and creeping yellow cress.

So, when you're out in November searching the sky for flocks of winter ducks, remember to look down occasionally. There are still some plants ignoring the possibility of imminent frigid temperatures and attempting to produce another batch of seeds. Send us your reports of the late bloomers that you see, and where and when.

Diana Banville and Jenny Bull

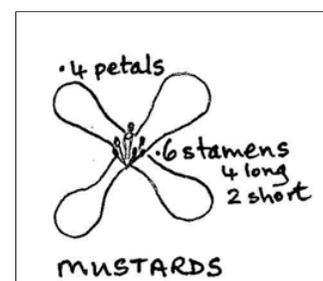
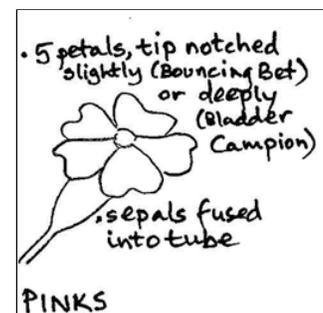
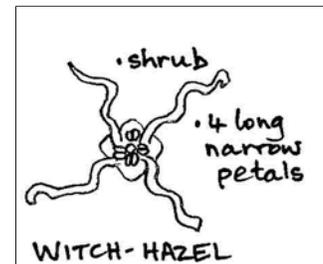
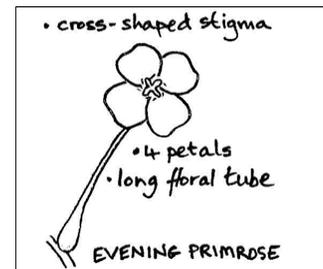
References:

Banville, Diana. 1994. Vascular Plants of Metropolitan Toronto, second edition. Toronto Field Naturalists.
Dickinson, T. et al. 2004. The ROM Field Guide to Wildflowers of Ontario. McClelland & Stewart/ROM.

Plants mentioned above (* = not native):

ASTER FAMILY			
common yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i> *	tall white aster	<i>S. lanceolatum</i>
common ragweed	<i>Ambrosia artemisiifolia</i>	heath aster	<i>S. ericoides</i>
late goldenrod	<i>Solidago altissima</i>	New England aster	<i>S. novae-angliae</i>
Canada goldenrod	<i>Solidago canadensis</i>	common tansy	<i>Tanacetum vulgare</i> *
heart-leaved aster	<i>Symphyotrichum (Aster) cordifolius</i>	common dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>
calico aster	<i>S. lateriflorum</i>	cocklebur	<i>Xanthium strumarium</i>

.... continued on p. 10



CORNUCOPIA

Fall is mushroom time. These are two of the many finds on a short trip to Rattlesnake Point.



1. THE HORSE MUSHROOM (*Agaricus arvensis*)

We found a huge patch of these splendid creatures. A specimen can grow 6” – 7” tall, with a creamy white cap reaching 8” in diameter. Gills are free, crowded, pink to gray, rapidly turning brown. Thin, white, membranous veil. Odour of anise. Flesh bruises yellow. Spore print purplish-brown. “It is indeed a delicious edible fungus” (Orson Miller, “Mushrooms of North America”).*

2. GIANT PUFFBALL (*Calvatia gigantea*)



This fungus fruits in summer and fall. Usually globose, it can reach 30” or more across. Outer skin is white with the smoothness of felt. Miller rates it “Edible, choice.” Size record was set in an American state.

Unimpeded, this specimen had so flourished that from a distance it looked like a sheep!

Eva Davis

Remember! Don’t eat any mushrooms unless you’re an expert in identification! Eds.

TORONTO’S LATE BLOOMERS continued from page 8.

MINT FAMILY		MUSTARD FAMILY	
catnip	<i>Nepeta cataria</i> *	wormseed mustard	<i>Erysimum cheiranthoides</i> *
self-heal, heal-all	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i> *	creeping yellow cress	<i>Rorippa sylvestris</i> *
marsh skullcap	<i>Scutellaria galericulata</i>	common charlock	<i>Sinapis arvensis</i> (<i>Brassica kaber</i>)*
PINK FAMILY		OTHER FAMILIES	
soapwort, bouncing Bet	<i>Saponaria officinalis</i> *	witch hazel	<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>
bladder campion	<i>Silene vulgaris</i> *	vipers bugloss	<i>Echium vulgare</i> *
LEGUME FAMILY		common St. Johnswort	<i>Hypericum perforatum</i> *
crown vetch	<i>Coronilla varia</i> *	common evening primrose	<i>Oenothera biennis</i>
white sweet clover	<i>Melilotus alba</i> *	swamp milkweed	<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>
yellow sweet clover	<i>Melilotus officinalis</i> *		
red clover	<i>Trifolium pratense</i> *		
white clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i> *		
cow vetch	<i>Vicia cracca</i> *		

KEEPING IN TOUCH

FALL TRANSITION IN THE ROSEDALE RAVINE

A Labour Day walk through the Rosedale Ravine reminded us again that, since we moved into a home with a view over this woodland, we have become less attuned to the urban events that ease Torontonians from summer to fall and more interested in letting the natural events in the ravine manoeuvre us through these days.

The change of season begins in mid-August, noticeable by a sharp increase in ravine visitors and activity. The vibrant and melodic American goldfinches are the first to mark the change as they work their way through the wildflower seeds found in the meadows along the ravine system. They are friendly enough to move into adjacent residential areas as well, hoping to find an obliging shortcut of niger seeds in a feeder. Shortly



Ruby-throated
Hummingbird
Nov. 4/92
J. Donette

after their arrival, the humming-birds and monarchs appear, using this ravine as one of many protective habitat corridors that allow safer passage to their over-wintering sites. They arrive

in waves lasting until mid- to late September. The hummingbirds remember where they found feeder help on their way here, and use them along the way back. The monarchs will take a moment for a quick sip as well, if they come across asters and the like. Both use the bursts of northerly winds that begin in September to move themselves faster and more easily across the vast

distances of land and water they must cross to reach the States.

We also notice summer's end by the presence of dragonflies, which have now moved further afield from the Brickwork's ponds to glean their favourite insects from the hot afternoon air in and around the ravine's meadows and trees. And the air now pulses with the last-minute efforts of solitary bees as they dart amidst the remaining wildflower and adjacent window-box blossoms.

Near Glen Bridge there is a tall mature black cherry tree in the woodland. Its berries begin to ripen in mid-August and are bright red, ready for harvest by migrating flocks of cedar waxwings, in mid-to late September. Once they and the robins have stripped them and moved on, it's our signal that summer is almost over. What makes it official is the migration of the turkey vultures, which seemingly usher out the last remaining winged summer residents and migrants. Sometime in October there is a lovely hot windy day or two that provides them with the perfect conditions. Look up at the right moment, and you can see them slowly and elegantly gliding from east to west in the mid-day sky in groups of six or eight. They use the thermals created by this U-shaped ravine as one of many aerial stepping stones to manoeuvre out of Ontario. With the last participants out, Mother Nature's summer fest is done and the fall crew takes over.

Marita Dreger

NEWS FROM SHERWOOD PARK

While hiking through the Sherwood Park stretch of Burke Brook, we noted the abundance of coltsfoot growing along the ravine banks and pathways. The leaves in some of these stands were larger than dinner plates and virtually flawless.

The Parks staff were kind enough to put up signs and barriers around some stands of poison ivy along the path. However, these stands are located in an off-leash area, so don't pat the friendly dogs that plough through the stuff with impunity. As well, a few sections of the path were washed away and extremely slippery, so a sturdy walking stick and good treads are recommended.



Coltsfoot

Diane Shears

“DEER” EDITORS,

On Sunday, July 3, 2005 around 2:30 p.m. a deer was seen at the south end of David Balfour Park, midway between the park's Mount Pleasant entry and the Summerhill train bridge. It was feeding on leaves on the wooded slope several metres from the east side of the path.

Around half a dozen people stopped to watch. The deer stared back briefly, then went on pulling off leaves and chewing them. Two people agreed that it must be around 2 years old, and speculated a mate must be somewhere. A couple who have regularly strolled through the park since the Sixties said it was the first time they had ever seen a deer here. Two people took photos with their digital camera and cell phone.

AND MORE...

Roger Powley's October article on deer in Mount Pleasant reminded me that I have had similar close encounters in Brampton at Meadowvale Cemetery. On one of the occasions I rounded a bush to find a

TORONTO NATIVE
WHITE-TAILED DEER FAWN



large doe standing transfixed. We stared at each other for long minutes, I hardly daring to breathe, when she suddenly bounded off and stopped a distance away to contemplate me further. This performance was repeated a third time at the edge of the property which is limited by an old rail line. She appeared to find it hard to work out what I was.

Where did it come from? Balfour Park leads directly into Mount Pleasant Cemetery on the north. At the south, if the deer could cross Mount Pleasant, it would be in the Rosedale ravine, heading east to the Don River valley.

The very next day, the deer was seen around 1:30 p.m., this time a few metres north of the Summerhill bridge, again leisurely feeding on foliage in the area bordered by the path on the west and Mount Pleasant Road on the east. The deer had two nubs on its head, which were not noted yesterday, so perhaps this was the male of a pair, though I cannot be sure if it was a different deer. To my knowledge the deer was not seen after that.

J. Moore

A similar enchanting experience had occurred years earlier in the Rouge. I had sought the river's edge and lain down for a nap. Coming to far from quietly, I turned to find an incredible little fawn a mere couple of yards away. Again, it appeared to be as fascinated by me as I by it and something like a breathless five minutes elapsed, I not daring to break the spell. A breeze blew. And the fawn was instantly and mercurially gone into the bushes. I, like Mr Powley, have never understood how deer appear at all. We were within yards of a public footpath, loud with children, teenagers on bicycles, people with dogs, conversation, shouts and barks everywhere.

Re Mr Powley's elucidation of what constitutes an environmental burial: what a brilliant idea! How better to pay back one's debt to nature, to the cradle of our being, than to contribute to an area where the earth can continue to perform its miracles of growth.

Eva Davis

AND MORE!

I finally got a look at the white-tailed deer that has been frequenting the cemetery. I spotted fresh scats yesterday, so I knew the animal was still around. It was a beautiful buck with antlers. He was lying down on one of the bushier slopes where there is not a lot of traffic.

The giant red oak that was across from the Eaton tomb has been cut down. Judging by the rings I counted, I think it was around 100 years old. It was one of the greatest trees for climbing, as the branches came right down to the ground. You could literally walk up the tree. The youngsters in my family always enjoyed sitting on its branches. Concerns over law suits, if a branch were to fall on someone's head, make it impossible to salvage these old trees.

The papaw tree in the cemetery has produced some fruit. I was always curious about the taste.

I have read it tastes like custard. Patiently I waited until it became soft and hoped the squirrels would not discover it. When it reached perfection I brought one home. Cutting it open I discovered it has large black seeds imbedded in pulp. I sampled the soft creamy interior and it *is* like custard, not bitter or tart. It has the consistency of banana but is much blander. I wonder how many Canadians have actually tasted papaw.

Other exotic fruit available at this time of year are Osage oranges, but don't try to eat them, they are filled with sticky latex. Large trees are located on Lakeshore Rd. north of Humber Bay Park. The black walnut behind our condo has produced more fruit this year than I have ever seen in the past. Ginkgos are also loaded.

Roger Powley

THE FOUR RACCOONS THAT INVITED THEMSELVES TO DINNER

We had just returned from a weekend in the country, arriving just as the sun was starting to go down. I went ahead into the house and placed a cardboard carton of farm produce on the kitchen table. Yet the minute I entered the kitchen, I felt that I was not alone. Down at floor level, I saw, not one, but four pairs of eyes glowing in the dark. The light spilling through the door revealed a raccoon not far from my feet, which bared her teeth and hissed. I did my best to quell the panic-stricken thoughts: "What if they have rabies?!"—and—"I never knew they grew so big!" ("Momma" looked about the size of a giant cat, while one of her offspring—most likely a male—looked as if he weighed about 60 lbs.) I backed out as quickly and stealthily as possible.

We like to believe that we got rid of the masked invaders by shouting and banging metal implements together at the back of the house. But it is entirely possibly the raccoons left of their own

accord. As we witnessed the stately departure - four plump raccoons descending the steps and waddling single-file along the neighbour's driveway until they disappeared through a hole in the hedge - we were reminded of a family leaving a restaurant after an all-you-can-eat Sunday buffet.



Back in the kitchen we gazed with dismay at the ruins of what was to have been Thanksgiving dinner: gnawed ears of corn, half-eaten apples, squashed tomatoes, new potatoes and blueberries rolling about like marbles on the table and dropping onto the floor.

A half-open window with a torn screen in the basement revealed how the family had got in. We later discovered from the fruit and vegetable peelings under the verandah next door that the neighbours were in the habit of leaving the lids off their trash cans.

While it is good to know that nature is thriving, we need to remember that by leaving our kitchen refuse in easy-to-open containers, we are encouraging wild animals to become a nuisance. Raccoons are now over-populating our cities, and many no longer “hibernate” or nest in ravines, but have turned our attics and crawl-spaces into year-round condos!

Siobhan Montague

A YOUNG DOWNY IN MY GARDEN

One early morning in August, while sitting on my back porch enjoying the silence and occasional bird song, I heard a fluttering sound. Looking up, I saw a young downy woodpecker climbing up the brick wall of my house. He stayed for about two minutes, climbing and pecking. He then flew into my garden looking for a more friendly “tree”.

Doris Tatay



THE LIFESPAN OF TRASH

As I read “The Lifespan of Trash” in the September issue, with distaste and something approaching despair, I wondered how many of the people reading the same information live near a child care facility. “What has this to do with the infinite endurance of a plastic soda-bottle?” you may well ask. To my mind, the people who work with the children who spend the day in these facilities are absolute miracle workers. They use everything! That plastic soda-bottle, with its eternal lifespan, is filled with marbles and rattled and played with until the marbles inside wear it out and it must really be discarded. Milk cartons turn into bird-feeders and all kinds of other fascinating toys; big ones turn up stuffed with plastic bags at various points on the paths where I walk my dogs! Plastic bags of all sizes are used to return the clothes which have become soiled in the course of an average day at day care. Once returned (with

the child) who knows what becomes of them? All plastic pots, with or without lids, are used; I send only the ones that held spreads and so on – the plain ones I use for my own leftovers. (Who bothers to buy such things??) Egg cartons are always in demand, especially at Easter. Any illustrated magazine, flyer or bulletin, particularly with coloured photography, is used for cutting out, for making cards or for pasting on sheets of paper as artwork. It never ceases to astonish me that all the extraordinary things I take to our local child-care are received with thanks and used. I know they are because, when I deposit a bag with strange and unusual contents, I ask in unconcealed admiration, “Do you really want all these things?” “Oh yes”, they say, “and if we really, really can’t use them, then we put them into the recycling bin and save you the trouble!”

...continued on page 15.

IN THE NEWS

TURKEY POPULATION CATAPULTING

Extracted from an article by Ron Pittaway in OFO News (newsletter of the Ontario Field Ornithologists), June 2005

The eastern wild turkey was extirpated from southern Ontario about 1902. The current successful reintroduction program began in 1984 and is catapulting beyond all expectations. In 2000 there were 35,000 wild turkeys in Ontario, by 2005 over 80,000, despite an estimated hunter kill of 8,245 in 2004. Turkeys continue to increase and spread. What might be the effects?

Historically turkeys occurred mainly in southwestern Ontario. They are now common well north of their former range in parts of central and eastern Ontario with records north to Algonquin Park and an isolated population near Sudbury.

Turkeys are omnivores and opportunists. I recently watched a flock of turkeys, lined up side-by-side, advancing across a field. They scratched the ground like chickens, pecking and eating plants, invertebrates, and probably small vertebrates. Declining ground nesting birds are vulnerable to cats, foxes, raccoons, skunks, squirrels, crows, and possibly to increasing numbers of turkeys. One reason for the increasing populations of turkeys is agricultural crops. Some farmers are complaining that turkeys are eating and damaging crops.

Turkeys are spreading into conservation areas and large urban

green spaces as in Ottawa. They may even spread to Toronto's ravines, High Park and the Toronto Islands. Turkeys will wander into neighbourhoods, particularly in winter, looking for bird feeders. A few years ago my car almost hit a low flying adult male turkey and I have seen several road-killed turkeys. Because of a turkey's large size and weight, collisions could cause serious accidents.

In sensitive areas such as Pelee Island in Lake Erie, naturalists fear that large turkey populations could affect salamanders, a regular food item of turkeys.

KEEPING IN TOUCH continued from page 14.

The only things they cannot accept are glass and any form of Styrofoam (and, I imagine, batteries or orange peel!) for obvious reasons. But then, what

goes into the recycling bins or the composter? We really put out very little for the garbage collectors.

Anne R. Thompson

THE NEWSLETTER...

Please accept my congratulations on computerizing your excellent newsletter and for creating a webpage and e-mail account. My sister, Diana, makes me an annual gift of membership in your group. I find the newsletter informative and enjoy reading it from cover to cover. It also provides a valued connection with my home town. I hope you are able to recruit the leadership you are looking for and that computer-literate members will come forward to put the newsletter on line. E-mailing the newsletter could save you money you now spend for paper and postage. Thanks again, and God bless your work.

Sr. Margaret Banville

The plantings in every subdivision, shopping centre and industrial "park" are selected from a nursery catalogue of best-sellers, mainly exotic species and genetically uniform cultivars and hybrids. The designs have even spread to the countryside. Incredibly, they can be seen at the entrances to provincial parks and conservation areas.

From TREES OF THE CAROLINIAN FOREST by G. Waldron, The Boston Mills Press, 2003

THE STING

Extracted from an article by Alexandra Shimo in the Globe and Mail, September 10, 2005.

Something very small, hairy and European is disrupting the city's attempts to savour the last of the summer sunshine. Although no official studies have been done, pest-control companies and some entomologists say this is a bad year for yellow jackets.



Even in a normal year, late August and early September is the worst for wasps (along with bees and hornets). The queen has been laying eggs all summer, which have grown into adult worker wasps. The nest is at its largest, and the workers, which are sterile females, are more aggressive as they try to defend it at all costs.

All wasps sting, but yellow jackets, which survive by scavenging food,

are the most troublesome. In Toronto, the European species tends to dominate native wasps because they are better adapted to human habitation, are smaller and breed more quickly. When a wasp stings or is squashed, it releases a chemical attracting other wasps and makes them more aggressive.

The wasp's stinger is likely covered in bacteria that can cause an infection, as Mississauga resident Cathy Berry discovered when she was stung last month. "I regret I did not clean the sting now because the following afternoon my leg started to swell. I took an antihistamine and iced it. But the infection still grew to the size of a grapefruit and continued to spread all over the whole leg." Ms. Berry was admitted to hospital and treated with antibiotics and has fully recovered. However, she tries to avoid areas where there are wasps, never goes outside barefoot, and keeps still when wasps are in the vicinity.

Other tips to steer clear of wasps include avoiding bright colours, floral patterns and perfume - especially anything with a sweet smell, since wasps love sugar. Also be aware that wasps will keep coming back to areas with food, even after it's put away.

So what is causing this wasp population boom? Most likely, it's just the weather, says David Gibo, a forensic entomologist at the University of Toronto. Heavy snowfall last winter insulated the hibernating queens, so more survived the winter. A warm spring meant the eggs hatched early. The hottest summer on record provided more food and helped them grow more quickly, Mr Gibo says. Those wasps will start dying off, as soon as the first frost arrives.

However, if global warming occurs, we will probably see more years like this one, Mr Gibo says. "There may be more species than we have now, and the wasps would probably be bigger."

OUTINGS COMMITTEE NEWS

Board member Ruth Munson has taken over phoning leaders for the Midweek - East of Yonge area walks.

Discussions are underway to hold a workshop for outings leaders and potential leaders this winter. We want to thank our current band as well as introduce new people into this vital role. Watch for more details.

Share Your Favourite Walk!

We know you are out there enjoying a local park or ravine almost every day. You are showing all the signs of being a dedicated amateur naturalist. So why not share your favourite walk with others?

From time to time we need to update our list of outings leaders. We try to offer over 100 walks per year. To achieve that goal we need members to take an active part - so how about offering to take us down your trail?

Attention, Current Outings Leaders! Would you be willing to be paired with a beginner to show how it's done? Having the opportunity to co-lead a walk would encourage more members to take on the leadership role.

THE WAR ON PLASTIC BAGS

Extracted from an article by Leslie Scrivener in the Toronto Star, May 29, 2005.

It is estimated that Canadians use 10 billion plastic bags a year: they buy four litres of milk and walk out with five plastic bags. Plastic bags have become a serious litter problem, clogging streets and waterways. The oceans are full of them, causing marine animals to choke on them. Now countries around the world are declaring war on plastic bags.

In Dhaka, Bangladesh they were banned when it was revealed they clogged drains, causing widespread flooding. In Kenya, the government has proposed a ban after Nobel laureate Wangari Maathai, assistant environment minister, observed that water pooling in discarded plastic bags can be a breeding ground for mosquitoes and contribute to the spread of malaria. Ireland introduced a 15-pence (about 24 cent) tax on plastic bags in 2002, which led to a 90 percent reduction in bags used. The tax generated (about \$59 million) has gone to an environmental fund. San Francisco is considering a 17-cent fee on plastic and paper bags. The proposed resolution reads in part: "In the US alone, an estimated 12 million barrels of oil are required to produce the 100 billion bags used annually." Australia's department of the environment and heritage reported a 25 percent reduction after a nationwide "say no to plastic bags campaign." Where retailers charged for plastic bags, reduction was as high as 80 percent.

Unfortunately, Canada is lagging behind these other countries. Barry Friesen of Nova Scotia's department of environment and labour, says for most of us there is no incentive to stop using plastic bags. The plastics industry is a \$37

billion business in Canada, one which has doubled in the last decade. "We can't control the preferences of the public and use of plastic bags," says Gabriel Mederos, spokesperson for EPIC, the Environment and Plastics Industry Council. He added that EPIC supports the three r's (reduce, reuse and recycle). While bags have become lighter, Canadians are using more of them: \$1.8 billion's worth last year, as opposed to \$1 billion in 1995. What are the chances of the City of Toronto launching a war on plastic bags? Slim. The City claims it is a federal responsibility. But Duncan Bury, head of product policy of Environment Canada's office of pollution prevention, says issues relating to packaging are a provincial responsibility. But there is little pressure on Ontario's

government to take a stand on plastic bags, as environmental groups have their hands full dealing with other issues.

Gord Perks of the Toronto Environmental Alliance is not convinced a tax on consumers is the way to reduce use. He points to Germany where manufacturers are required to dispose of their packaging materials. Jan Lundberg, a California environmental activist, says a war on plastic bags is a start to an all-out war on plastic. "It gets people away from consumerism People need to question, in general, petroleum products... The real goal of this is sustainable living."

More News on page 18.

Drawing by Eric Lin.



THE WEATHER (THIS TIME LAST YEAR...)

November 2004

November continued to run a little on the mild side, mostly because of a spell of tranquil weather at mid-month. The mean temperature of 5.4° C at Pearson Airport was 2.2° C above the 30-year average, and downtown's 6.3° C was 1.5° C above normal. The month was also relatively sunny with 102.9 hours recorded at Pearson. These figures are not unusual for November in recent years, as 3 of the past 6 years had more than 100 hours of sunshine during the month. The period from the 6th-16th

was particularly fair – an unusual stretch for late fall but in continuity with most of the pattern for autumn 2004.

Precipitation ran just slightly below normal, mostly because of a shortfall of snow: a trace to about 3 cm across the Toronto area all month. Total precipitation was 59.4 mm downtown and 64.8 mm at Pearson Airport.

Gavin Miller

IN THE NEWS continued from p. 17.

THE FIXER: ONE YEAR LATER WE STILL HAVE TROUBLE WITH TRASH

Extracted from an article by Jack Lakey in the Toronto Star, June 15, 2005.

“The Fixer” provides readers with a forum of last resort to complain about things that are broken and that are the responsibility of government or a taxpayer-funded agency. Last year this column received 5,000 complaints. Trash is what really annoys people about the Greater Toronto Area: Windblown trash in curbs, parks and along fences; discarded coffee cups, pop cans and plastic water bottles underfoot; illegally dumped garbage in ravines, streams, vacant lots, parks and along the side of the road by persons who refuse to pay properly to dispose of it, or simply don't care: e.g. thousands of old tires and old car seats dumped in a ravine,

cars and shopping carts in creeks, bags of garbage; “Doggy-do” in parks.

Most readers complained the city is not doing enough to keep up with the litter and that more employees should be hired. But as “The Fixer” points out we are the sole-source providers of trash. We need to understand that this is our city, to keep clean and protect, and not ravage with our greed and garbage. As Mayor David Miller pointed out, in the last two (city) budgets, more cleaners were hired as well as inspectors to catch illegal dumping. Nevertheless, he advises that we Torontonians play our part by not

creating problems in the first place and saying something if we see someone else littering. “If every single Torontonian picked up a piece of litter everyday, the city would be spotless.”

Miller also stated that we need to work harder to educate our children about the careless attitude that accompanies littering. A few years ago, the children at one secondary school would thoughtlessly toss trash on lawns. Then a teacher set up an environmentally aware group. He marshaled the kids and they now take shovels and garbage bags on regular forays down to Black Creek to clean it up.

The greengrocer's door
Is opened and closed by hand.
How quaint it seems now!

Haiku by Diana Banville

COMING EVENTS

Friends of Don East (FODE) – Explore the Mouth of the Don

Sunday, November 13, 2005, 10:30 am to 1:00 pm Meet at the corner of Villiers St. and the Don Roadway.
Learn about the history, current state and plans for redevelopment of this area.

Todmorden Mills Wildflower Preserve – Reconnecting with the Don: Balancing the Valley

Photographic exhibit, August 16 to December 31, 2005 at Brewery Gallery. For details, phone 416-423-1504.

Toronto Reference Library – Animals are allowed in the Gallery

An exhibition of our furry, feathered, slimy and mischievous friends; selected from the Special Collections of TPL. At TD Canada Trust Gallery, Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge St. (one block north of Bloor St.). Opening tour Saturday, November 12 at 2:00 pm, continuing to January 15th.

Toronto Entomologists Association – Bringing Insects to the Public: Wings of Paradise Butterfly Conservatory

Speaker Adrienne Brewster, University of Guelph. Saturday, November 26 at 1 pm, Room 113, Northrop Frye Hall, 73 Queen's Park Crescent. For further information, visit www.ontarioinsects.org.

High Park Walking Tours

Walks begin just south of the Grenadier Restaurant. Call 416-392-1748 or 416-392-6916 for information. Donations of \$2.00 accepted.

Rouge Valley Conservation Centre – Nature Hikes

Guided hikes through the Rouge, suitable for adults and families, covering various topics, held the second Sunday of every month, rain or shine. Walks depart from the Rouge Valley Conservation Centre (Pearse House) at 1:30 pm and last approximately 2 hours. Free but donations gratefully accepted. For information, call 416-282-8265 or 416-282-0453.

Royal Canadian Institute – Science on Sundays Lecture Series

Lectures are held at 3 pm at the J.J.R. Macleod Auditorium, Medical Sciences Building, University of Toronto, 1 King's College Circle, Toronto. For information call 416-977-2983.

- November 6 Avian Influenza – Not Just for the Birds! Andrew E. Simor
- November 13 The Human Genome, Industry, and the Public Good. Aled Edwards
- November 20 From Soap Bubbles to Crystal Growth. Jean E. Taylor
- November 27 FOR KIDS 7-12 It's Fun but is it Science? Russell Zeid

Royal Botanical Gardens – Fall Wildflowers at the Arboretum

Dean Gugler and Fleur-Ange Lamothe are keen to share their extensive knowledge of local wildflowers. This hike will examine the very late flowering flora in our area. Starts at 1:00 pm at the traffic circle at the RBG Arboretum. For further details call 519-647-9957.

Ian Wheal – Heritage Walks

Free. For more information call 416-781-7663.

- Saturday, November 5. Workhorses of Toronto. Meet at the southwest corner of Front St. W. and Spadina Ave. at 1:30 pm
- Saturday, November 12. Silent Sentinels – Liberty Village's Military Heritage. Meet at the southeast corner of King St. W. and Dufferin St. at 1:30 pm

The Market Gallery – Abe Bayefsky (1923-2001)

October 8, 2005 to February 5, 2006. 95 Front St. E. Free. This exhibit will feature drawings and paintings spanning 50 years of Bayefsky's career, including Toronto scenes, portraits and legends. For further information call 416-392-7604.

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