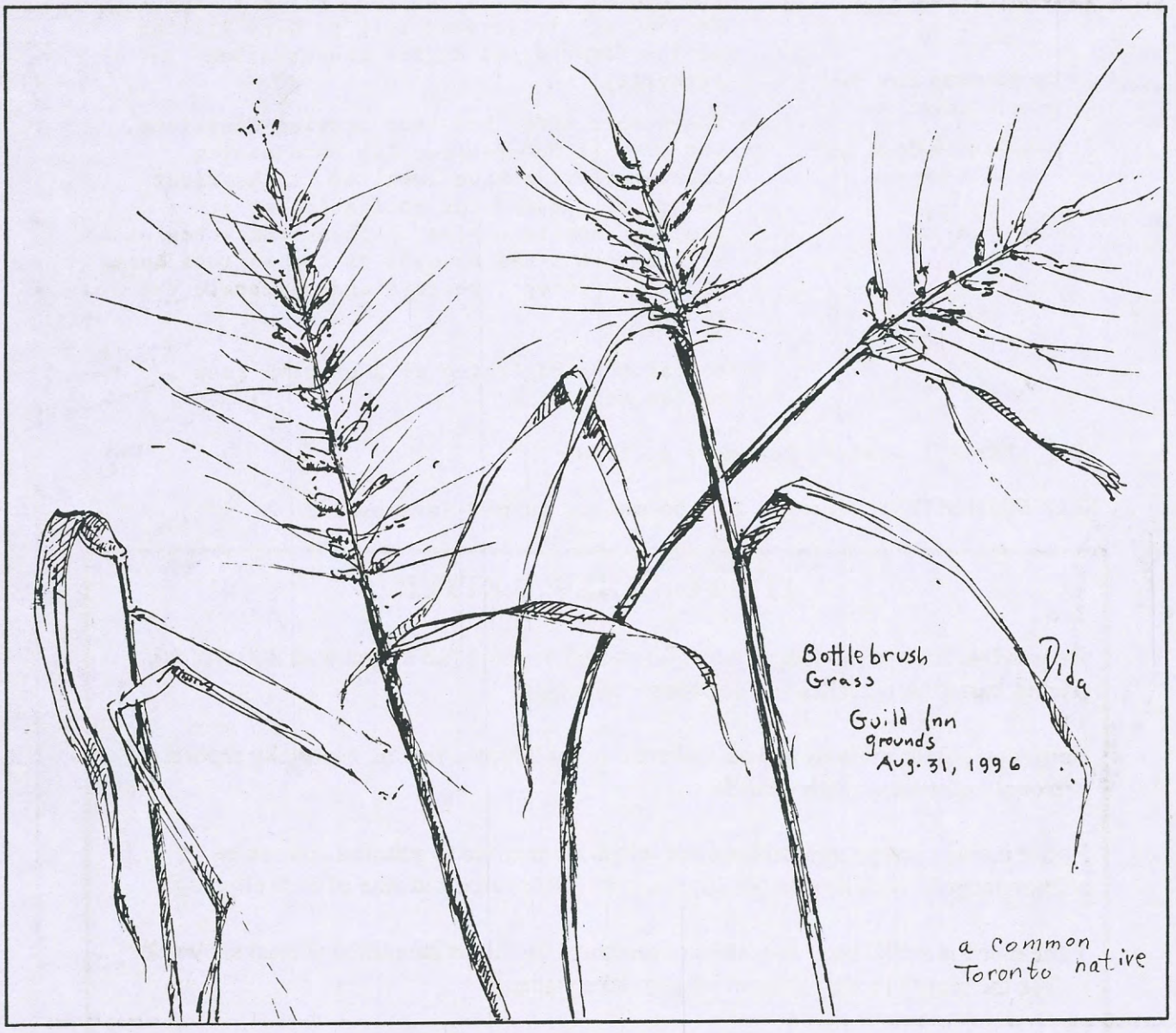
TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

Number 479 November 1998



Inside

TFN MEETINGS

Sunday, November 1, 1998 - THE HUMBER RIVER: A HERITAGE RIVER IN THE MAKING, an illustrated talk by Gary Wilkins of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority

at 2:30 pm

in the Northrop Frye Hall
Victoria University

73 Queen's Park Cres. East

- The Humber River has been serving Canadians for over 12,000 years. Its outstanding characteristics have resulted in the river being recommended for nomination as a Canadian Heritage River. These characteristics will be discussed as well as the actions being taken to protect, restore and celebrate these river.

+ social hour beginning at 2 pm with free coffee and juice

NEXT MEETING: Sunday, December 6, 1998

NEXT NEWSLETTER: December (to be mailed in mid-November)

IT'S YOUR NEWSLETTER

Requested: Essays (no longer than 500 words), reviews (no longer than 300 words), poems, cartoons, sketches and newspaper clippings.

Subjects: plants, animals and natural areas in the Toronto region, especially reports of personal experiences with wildlife.

Please include your name, address and telephone number so submissions can be acknowledged. With newspaper clippings, include source and date of each clipping.

Time dated material such as notices of meetings should be submitted at least six weeks before the month in which the event is to take place.

Send material to: Toronto Field Naturalists
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TFN OUTINGS

REMEMBER: 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 393-4636. Check the weather by calling 661-0123 so you will know what to wear on outings which go rain or shine.

Wednesday
Nov. 4
10:30 am

HUMBER VALLEY - nature walk — Humber, Etobicoke
Leader: Louise Orr
Meet at the Old Mill subway station. Bring lunch.
Some birds will have arrived for the winter and weedy plants will still be flowering in this scenic valley.

Saturday
Nov. 7
10:30 am

RAINBOW CREEK - nature walk — Humber, Vaughan
Leader: Robin Powell
Meet at the northwest corner of Steeles Ave. West and Islington Ave. Bring lunch.
This wild scenic area has recently been disturbed by the construction of Hwy. 407 and storm sewers, but much of interest remains. This outing involves lots of hill climbing.

+

Saturday
Nov. 7
11 am

GALLERY HOPPING - nature arts — Toronto
Leader: Mary Cumming
Meet at the Cumberland St. exit of the Bay subway station.
We will be touring art galleries in Yorkville, then having lunch at a nearby food court, after which we will look at each others "works".

Sunday
Nov. 8
1:30 pm

GARRISON CREEK - discovery walk — Toronto
Leader: Jerry Belan
Meet at the Christie subway station. [See also Nov. 15, Nov. 21.]
This walk traces the path of this long buried creek. We will be exploring parklands, traditional neighbourhoods and vibrant main streets.

Tuesday
Nov. 10
10:30 am

CHESTERTON SHORES - nature walk — lakeshore, Scarborough
Leader: Karin Fawthrop
Meet at the Rouge Hill GO station. Morning only. [See News on page 26.]
Cottages lined the lakeshore in this area until fairly recently. Winter ducks and gulls should have arrived and be visible. Come and learn about the changes made and planned for this section of Lake Ontario shoreline.

Saturday
Nov. 14
1:30 pm

WILKET CREEK - geology — West Don tributary, North York
Leader: Kathleen Kemp
Meet at the southeast corner of York Mills Rd. and Bayview Ave.
We will be walking through Windfields Park. At the south end members have found a sandstone outcropping -- a previously unknown formation in Toronto. Bring your favourite geology questions with you and Kathleen will try to answer them.

▷

NOVEMBER OUTINGS (cont'd)

Sunday
Nov. 15
1 pm

LOST PONDS OF DENTONIA PARK - heritage walk — Taylor Cr., East York
Leader: Ian Wheal
Meet outside the Main St. subway station.
Much of this walk will be on city streets as we look for the lost town of Coleman. We will also visit the former Massey Estate along Taylor Creek.

+
Sunday
Nov. 15
2 pm

UPPER GARRISON CREEK - nature walk — Toronto
Leader: Dick Watts
Meet at Humewood Park which is one block north of St. Clair Ave. West on Humewood Dr. (west of Bathurst St.) [See Nov. 8, 21.]
On this walk we will be looking at the area where Garrison Creek began.

Wednesday
Nov. 18
10:30 am
$ ferry tickets

TORONTO ISLANDS - nature walk — lakeshore, Toronto
Leader: George Bryant
Meet at the ferry docks at the foot of Bay St. Bring lunch.
Bring binoculars and notebook and warm clothing -- the Island can be cool and windy. Late migrants such as saw-whet owls may be hiding in the shrubs in the nature reserve. [See page 12.]

Saturday
Nov. 21
11 am

GARRISON CREEK - nature walk — Toronto
Leader: Joanne Doucette
Meet at the Christie St. subway station. Bring lunch.
We will be following the route of this long-buried creek through city streets to Fort York. This lower section of the creek retains many small parks for us to visit. [See also Nov. 8 and Nov. 15.]

Thursday
Nov. 26
10:30 am

YELLOW CREEK RAVINE - nature walk — Don tributary, Toronto
Leader: Jo Butler
Meet at the northeast corner of St. Clair Ave. and Yonge St.
Morning only.
The ravine through which Yellow Creek (sometimes called Mt. Pleasant Creek) still runs has several names: Vale of Avoca (north of St. Clair Ave. East), David Balfour (south of St. Clair Ave. East), and Park Drive (east of Mt. Pleasant Rd.).

Saturday
Nov. 28
10 am

L'AMOREAUX PARK - nature walk — Highland Cr., Scarborough
Leader: Leslie Burns
Meet at the northwest corner of Birchmount Rd. and Silver Springs Blvd. (one block north of Finch Ave. East). Morning only.
Late fall flowers may still be blooming and late migrants and wintering birds may be present in the park at the source of Highland Creek.

Sunday
Nov. 29
1:30 pm

LAMBTON MILLS & THE HUMBER - heritage walk — Humber, York
Leader: Madeleine McDowell
Meet at the Jane Library, the southwest corner of Jane St. and Dundas St. West.
We will be walking on streets and in the valley so good walking shoes are needed. The walk will end at Lambton House where participants may buy tea or coffee in this historic building.

□

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As I write this report, Starr and I have just returned from a week's vacation in Moosonee, on the tidewaters of James Bay. Highlights of the trip included Moose Factory Island, established as a trading post by the Hudson Bay Company in 1673, making it Ontario's oldest English settlement as well as the homeland of the Moose Cree native people (if you go you must see the old cemetery where the chief factors and other fur traders are buried and the 1850s Anglican church) and Tidewater provincial park with its interesting mixture of boreal and subarctic vegetation.

Getting up there in the off season is half the fun as the Polar Bear Express ceases operations on Labour Day weekend and one has to take the Little Bear, a mixed freight and passenger train which brings fresh groceries, mail, frozen foods and most of what we take for granted up to Moosonee which lies well north of the roads. Some of these goods will be shipped up the James and Hudson Bay coasts on barges pulled by tug boats to even more remote coastal communities.

Interesting nature sightings during our visit included great flocks of horned larks and water pipits, an osprey and northern specialities such as boreal chickadees and whiskey-jacks. The latter are sometimes called Canada jays, but no self-respecting northerner (and I still consider myself a northerner) would ever call them gray jays as they are listed in most bird guides. The fall was well advanced in late September and few plants were still blooming, one of the most interesting being the lovely grass-of-parnassus which superficially resembles spring beauty. Fungi and wild fruit including mooseberry and bunchberry were found in abundance. Bear droppings indicated that they enjoyed the crop. Needless to say we kept a watchful eye out for them. Fungi were everywhere in the forest sections and the railway tracks and other disturbed areas were lined with fireweed gone to seed.

Turning to matters closer to home, just a reminder that our December 6th 75th anniversary meeting is not far away. Please make plans to attend and remember to send in your own favourite TFN memories. Here are some chronological highlights of the TFN 1923-1945 taken from the TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS—(ITS HISTORY AND CONSTITUTION) by R.M. Saunders (1965):

June 1st, 1923: Will F. Gregory and Dr. Lyman B. Jackes discuss the formation of a Natural History Society in Toronto.

June 12, 1923: First organizational meeting is held at Central YMCA. It is decided at once to establish a natural history society to be called the Toronto Field Naturalists' Club.

Oct. 29, 1923: First meeting of the new club is held at Foresters Hall, 22 College St.

April 26th, 1924: First field trip is held. Group walks from end of College streetcar line in High park to the lakeshore and thence up the Humber to Old Mill.

1930: Founding of nature trail in Sunnybrook Park.

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT (cont'd)

1930-1939: Club becomes deeply involved in education and conservation concerns including protection of hawks, owls and eagles and in protecting a section of Point Pelee in a natural state, as a wildlife sanctuary. Essay contests for children encouraged conservation of wildflowers.

1931: Junior Nature Club is formed. Federation of Ontario Naturalists is formed with the help of Toronto Field Naturalists and other clubs.

1938: Publication of newsletter begins.

1939-45: Naturalists were intercepted and questioned by police while observing birds. Members were urged to keep away from sensitive areas such as hydro stations. Meanwhile the newsletter helped members serving overseas to keep in touch with club activities.

These are only a few highlights of club activities during the early years but I hope you have enjoyed this retrospective.

President's Field Notes #10, November 1998

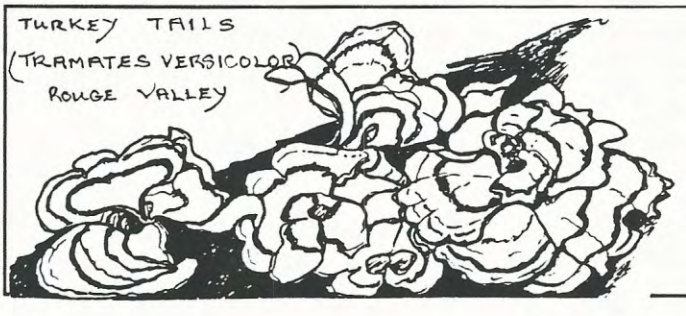
November is a transitional month as fall advances towards winter. Here are some highlights from my November 1997 nature diary.

Nov. 5th: TFN outing to Toronto Islands with George Bryant. Birds seen included Bonaparte's gull, swamp sparrow, golden-crowned kinglet, bufflehead, a flock of cedar waxwings and even a late hermit thrush. We also saw a melanistic gartersnake.

Nov. 28: Pre-walk with Starr at Taylor Creek park for TFN walk the next day. Temperature was very mild (+8°C). Highlights included a bright red male cardinal in a brier patch, a small flock of robins, 2 oriole nests and some beautiful golden coloured larch trees.

In closing I would like to thank (on behalf of TFN) long-time member Arnold Meyers for his thoughtful and useful donation of several thousand slides to our photo archives. These will be used for research, displays and educational purposes.

Morris Sorensen



On dying wood, overlapping brackets — 1-4 inches across, concentrically zoned, variously coloured. These were a velvety fawn with nut-brown striations and creamy margins.

Eva Davis

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Sept. 1998

Presqu'ile Provincial Park is Ontario's 5th oldest and 6th most heavily used provincial park. It is an ecological gem -- a 920 hectare peninsula renowned for its biodiversity. Since 1979 the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources has been trying to finalize a management plan that would preserve and protect the park and establish what activities are appropriate. However, the plan has started and stopped over many years because politicians are reluctant about making a decision about the annual waterfowl hunt -- a politically-sensitive issue. At the moment, international designations pending for the park include Reserve Site (International Network of Monarch Butterfly Reserves), Important Bird Area, Ramsar Site (internationally important for waterfowl), and Regional Site (Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network). Please write a letter -- no matter how long or short -- urging the completion of the park management plan for Presqu'ile Provincial Park. Describe your experiences in the park and what this remarkable ecosystem means to you. Your letter will make a difference!

Note: Send your letter about the park to the Hon. John C. Snobelen, Minister of Natural Resources, Queen's Park, Toronto, Ont. M7A 1W3 or call 314-2301.

extracted from a letter from Don Davis of Toronto in the PENINSULA NATURALIST (St. Catharines), Vol. 190, Sept. 1998

Sept. 15, 1998

Last year there were far more sprayed lawns in our neighbourhood than ever before. Two concerned residents spoke to some owners and distributed literature about the dangers of pesticides. This year the practice has dwindled considerably.

During a recent trip to Ireland a participant noticed a sign in front of a farm that said LAND POISONED. A guidebook explained that anyone who used chemical spray is required to post that horrifying sign.

Now in Toronto there is a positive approach to the problem. The Toronto Environmental Alliance (596-0660) has produced yellow signs that state: CHEMICAL-FREE LAWN SAFE FOR ALL LIVING THINGS.

These are available free from Metro Works.

Joan O'Donnell

At backyard feeder
early and late, a redbird
glowing all alone.

haiku by Harold Taylor

KEEPING IN TOUCH (cont'd)

October 1, 1998

New Co-op Plans Green Energy for Waterfront

The Toronto Renewable Energy Co-op has plans to build a member-owned 'wind mill' on a windy spot of Lake Ontario's urban waterfront. The 'wind turbine' would generate renewable emissions-free energy and help improve local air quality.

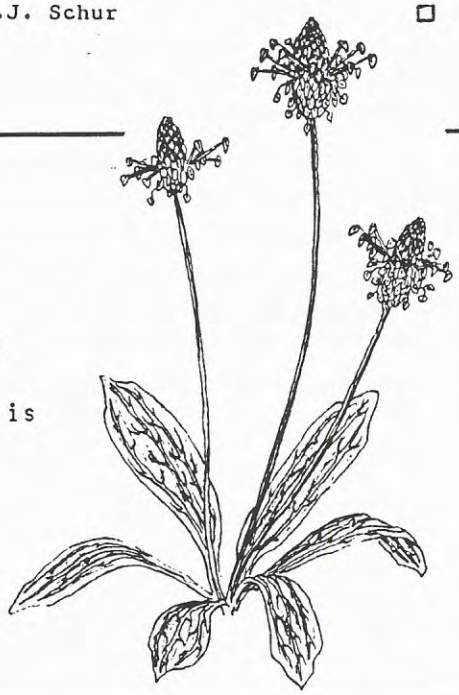
Organizers estimate that their co-operatively-owned 'wind turbine' will displace 1,400,000 kilograms of CO2 per year that would have a negative impact on our local environmental and human health. Thousands of kilograms of other pollutants that cause acid rain and smog, killing insects, fish and other wildlife, will be avoided with TREC's new initiative.

TREC staff is continuing to reach out to environmental and conservation groups who have an interest in the Toronto waterfront. Local individuals, organizations, and institutions are participating in the formulation of environmental siting criteria and a migratory bird protocol borrowing from new comprehensive multi-stakeholder efforts in the United States, a country where wind energy is growing at a rate of 25% a year.

The Co-op is likely to site its turbine on an industrial fill site and has a mandate for possible habitat creation and revitalization projects which could take place in conjunction with onsite renaturalization that will occur at the turbine site. Organizations that have begun discussions with TREC regarding its vision and Wind Power Project are the Waterfront Regeneration Trust, Toronto Bay Initiative, Metro Zoo, Fatal Light Awareness Program, Toronto Bird Observatory, and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, to name a few.

TREC is looking for people with local knowledge and expertise regarding habitat, wildlife and the waterfront to participate and ensure its process is ecologically sound and sustainably achieved. If you are interested in learning more about TREC, participating or becoming a volunteer, or would just like more information on the Co-op, call TJ Schur or Bryan Young at 489-WIND (9463) or by e-mail at trec@istar.ca.

T.J. Schur



NARROW-LEAVED or ENGLISH PLANTAIN was in bloom at the beginning of summer, June 21, 1998, on a West Hill lawn when D. Andrew White made this drawing. Originating in Eurasia, it is now well-established as part of our Toronto flora.

ref. VASCULAR PLANTS OF METRO. TORONTO, TFN

FOR READING

LILY POND: FOUR YEARS WITH A FAMILY OF BEAVERS by Hope Ryden, Preface by Dr. Jane Goodall, published by William Morrow & Co., Inc., New York, 1989, 256 pages, $6.99 Canadian

This is an enchanting book and an eye-opener for anyone intrigued by the mysterious family of Castor canadensis whose works are so evident in the wild but who are so adept at keeping out of human sight. And wisely. Human predation nearly lost us the beaver, the species all but exterminated in the 17th century to accommodate the fashion craze in Europe for beaver fur. By the 1800s the Adirondack population had been reduced to some 5,000 animals. In the 1840s there was the obscene invention of the steel-jawed leghold trap, and by 1895 only five beavers were known to exist in the whole of New York State, their whereabouts of dire necessity kept secret.

One of the author's most interesting suppositions is that the beaver was once a diurnal animal and survived human onslaught by becoming nocturnal. She bases this upon early trapper records which commented that the animal liked to sun itself on top of its lodge, and this has been supported by a contemporary report, from the Adirondacks, of similar behaviour in a protected population.

The beaver has long been proclaimed nature's foremost conservationist, "our best agent for renewal". From her four-year vigil, undertaken mostly at night, Hope Ryden came to know and love her beaver family. Contrary to accepted mythology, her pair produced two litters in the first year, the second in the fall. The thing that becomes most evident is the family's individual and collective intelligence (as opposed to instinct with which humans are fond of labelling the thinking of species not their own). This is backed by P. Bernard Richard, French researcher at the 1982 World Symposium on beavers, who "reported many examples of the animal's extraordinary capacity for adaptation, the signature of real intelligence". Then there is their capacity for enjoyment. The author describes how on one occasion she arrived at the lily pond in March to find the pond ice gone. The beavers surfaced, one after the other, from their winter quarters and disported themselves with all the joy of spring: rolling, porpoising, somersaulting.

They are still at risk from humans, of course, with trapping, road kills, and at least two incidents, which the author encountered, of sheer malice.

Beaver teeth are scissor-sharp and they have to be kept in working condition by gnawing. Without this, their incisors, which never stop growing, would become so long they would prevent an animal from closing its mouth. Possibly the most astonishing thing about Castor canadensis is that, with weapons like these, this animal has mastered the ultimate art of living, literally cheek by jowl, throughout the winter months in dark, confined quarters without family bloodletting. Somehow this evolved social species has acquired the technique of "displacement behaviour" -- the directing of hostile impulses towards inanimate objects or even towards the individual self.

But I could go on, and the obvious course is for members to read this book for themselves. To be acquired by whatever means!

Eva Davis

FOR READING (cont'd)

THE BUTTERFLIES OF POINT PELEE NATIONAL PARK by Alan Wormington, the Ontario Natural History Press, 1998, $3.50 from R.R. #1, Leamington, Ont. N8H 3V4.

This 12-page booklet includes extreme occurrence dates, maximum counts for a single day, flight season, recommended areas to find butterflies and a place to record your observations.

from THE WOOD DUCK (Hamilton), Vol. 52, No. 1, Sept. 1998

PROTECTING THE NIAGARA ESCARPMENT: A CITIZEN'S GUIDE, published by the Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment (CONE), 1998, $10 (cost includes $3 to cover tax, postage and handling), from CONE, 517 College St., Suite 204, Toronto, Ont. M6G 4A2.

This is a positive and practical handbook that will be invaluable for anyone who wants to help make sure the natural wonders of the Escarpment are saved for future generations to enjoy.

from a flyer from CONE

200 YEARS YONGE: A HISTORY, edited by Ralph Magel, published by the Regional Municipality of York, 1997, $29.95 plus GST of $2.10 for a total of $32.05 + a handling fee of $5. Available from Office of the Regional Chair, York, 17250 Yonge St., Box 147, Newmarket, Ont. L3Y 6Z1.

Includes information and illustrations from Yonge Street celebrations and displays. TFN illustrations included. □

PALE SWALLOWWORT IN BLOOM

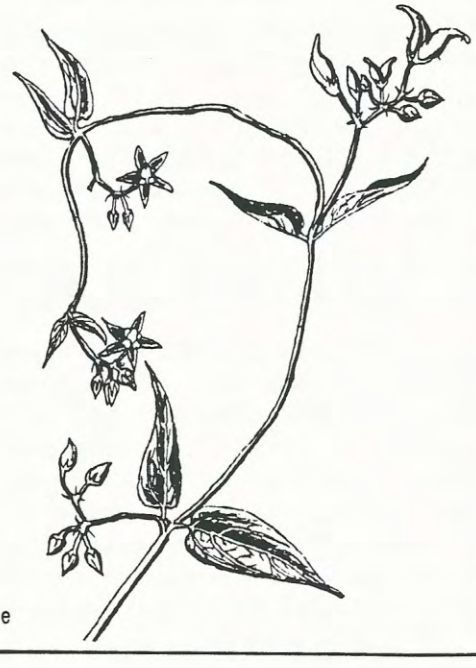
Morningside Park,
June 27, 1998

(origin Europe -
established in Toronto)

[See also page 18.]

Flowers were nearly purple,
but more brownish overall.

D. Andrew White



THE SECRET LIVES OF TODMORDEN MILLS

In the fall of 1994 a small pond south of the historic buildings at Todmorden Mills was enlarged and deepened and an island created. Numerous native wetland species such as arrowhead, soft stemmed bulrush, giant bur reed and narrow leaved cattails were planted. In April of 1997 a muskrat arrived and munched his way through quite a few of the plants. The pond had been a victim of a classic muskrat "eat out". Regeneration of the plants began after the muskrat left in the fall. Now the pond is used a an outdoor education resource, and the viewing stand on the south side protects the pond's delicate edge from trampling.

As part of a school environmental program, groups of 8 to 12 children spend from 20 to 45 minutes examining the life to be found in the pond. One adult collects water samples using a small pail and a kitchen strainer, and children are encouraged to inspect what has been found using the naked eye and a magnifying glass.

The following have been found in the pond:

water fleas predacious diving beetle scavenger beetles
water boatmen backswimmers dragonfly larvae (of at least 2 species)
mayfly larvae (of at least 2 species) pondstriders
water stick insect (scorpion) some unidentified small larvae
many small fish (brook stickleback and creek chub) algae
duckweed

Although no mosquito larvae were found in the pond, some were obtained from standing water in nearby swales.

From the viewing stand children can see fish, water striders, damselflies, many dragonflies, sometimes two turtles on two different logs, occasionally ducks, many redwing blackbirds, once a kingfisher, and once a great blue heron, plus a great variety of plants.

Small waterboatmen and pondstriders were not found until late May and boatmen were observed getting larger each week. Mosquitoes, dragonflies and damselflies appeared in late May.

During identification of the insects, emphasis was placed on the value of wetlands, significance of the aquatic food chain, aesthetic value of variety in the environment.

As a Todmorden environmental volunteer, I feel this program and the pond which makes it possible is a valuable addition to the enrichment of living with nature.

from TODMORDEN MILLS WILDFLOWER PRESERVE - seasonal update, ~~Summer~~/Fall 1998

Comment: This article has been adapted from two articles: "Pond Update: Build it and they will come!" by Paula Davies and "Todmorden Pond Study - May, June 1998" by Merne Powers. We note that two programs are offered annually to schools visiting Todmorden Mills. They are "Trees in the Valley" offered each fall and "Puddles, Ponds and Polliwogs" offered each spring. For more information about museum programs, activies and volunteer opportunities, call 396-2819.

SURPRISE!

For the past four years I have given up balcony-gardening in the usual sense, and have simply left my large soil-filled containers to do what they will -- to surprise me, in short. They have. Four years ago, amidst the climbing false buckwheat, chickweed, Manitoba maple striplings and dayflowers, a peanut vine materialized out of thin, though somewhat polluted air. I even harvested two peanuts from it, but, being an annual, it did not alas return.

Last year I noted amongst the "weeds" what looked like the beginnings of tiger lily. I had taken leaf mulch from a nearby ravine to cover my container soil during winter, but nowhere in that ravine had there been anything as spectacular as tiger lilies.

This year the sproutings were back, and from the black bulblets in the leaf axils were indeed the unlikely lily. Before they could get very far, however, the large pot containing them was taken over by a thrusting plant whose leaves also looked teasingly familiar. The lilies were overshadowed and did no more than drop their bulblets inside the container (which might encourage them to produce blooms next year), while the newcomers poked sturdily skywards. And in this second week of September there they are in full bloom: three two-feet tall, splendidly golden-faced common sunflowers.

I must presume sunflower seeds, but not from me. Birds? Discards from the balcony above? Do the seeds of wild sunflower get into the usual sunflower-seed mix? I have no idea, but it certainly puts planned gardening in the shade. After all, variety is supposed to be the spice of life.

Eva Davis

THE NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL

WHERE TO SEE IT IN TORONTO...

Toronto Island
Leslie Street Spit
High Park
Mount Pleasant Cemetery
Humber Valley

WHEN TO SEE IT IN TORONTO...

January 1 to June 13
and
October 6 to December 31

(not summer through the first few weeks of fall)

TORONTO REGION RECORDS TFN 1988-1998

[See Nov. 18 outing on page 4.]

ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEER

Upon first becoming aware of environmental engineering, I could not help but wonder what an "environmental engineer" would actually do. As my mind tried to grasp the scope of work implied by such a lofty title, it began to wander, trying to imagine just what a day in the life of such a person would be like...hmm.

In a downtown office filled with potted indigenous plants the engineer (we'll call him EE) begins the requirements' specification process with his first customer (we'll call him C).

EE, with a warm smile: "Good morning. What can I do you you today?
C, with genuine concern: "I would like you to build an insect control system for me".
EE, savouring the challenge: "Okay, for what area?"
C, leaning forward a bit: "The North American continent".
EE, with raised eyebrows: "The...the..the whole continent!"
C, thinking: "Well, okay, just the boreal and...um...Carolinian forest, to start!"
EE, with mind boggling: "Wow, quite a huge system we're talking about here".
C, with concern: "Oh no, it must be unobtrusive, efficient, and, and,... environmentally friendly, of course".
EE, a bit bewildered: "Of course. But unobtrusive...?"
C, with head tilted: "Well, I was thinking of small devices which would move into the insect infested areas, do their job and...well...leave".
EE, blustering a bit: "Oh...big transportation problems here".
C, ignoring the concern: "I was thinking they could be self-propelled. Maybe they could fly in, do their job, then fly out".
EE, still trying to discredit: "Oh, big storage problems here. We'd have to put them somewhere in the winters, and...
C, exuberantly: "I was thinking you could hide them in rain forests and jungles during the northern winters and then,...turn them on in the spring."
EE, beginning to plead: "But we're talking thousands of miles, travelling back and forth. They'd have to find their way."
C, getting excited: "Well, you're the engineer. Haven't you heard of inertial guidance systems and automatic navigation by star charts, whatever!"

I think you see where this is heading. We have one of these. The months of May and September have become fairly special to me. Then I have a chance to see wood warblers (Parulidae). But it's not just seeing them on their incredible journey that is interesting, it's the realization of the gratitude we owe them. My thoughts above were triggered when I finally comprehended the global significance of migratory insectivorous birds. Several families of birds fall into the category, but the wood warbler family is the favourite of many. I have had the good fortune to see warblers at very close range, and they are among the most delicately beautiful creatures that have ever evolved. But they are also one of the many creatures invaluable to mankind. Millions of years under development and a contributing part of the North American continent's Insect Control System -- the wood warbler. Please realize this and help take care of them.

Ken Cook

□

GOLD IN THE ROUGE

This past summer was unusual and unusual things resulted. A humongous wild blackberry crop, for instance, though without the usually necessary rainfall. A marvellous pear crop. And then there are the goldenrods, in all their variety.

If Gluck's Sprits danced in fields of asphodel, their Canadian counterparts would surely disport themselves in meadows of goldenrod. I went to the Rouge on Labour Day, a gorgeous change from moist heat to clear sunshine and cool breezes. It was to walk in gold! Meadows stretching to the treeline, avenues shoulderhigh. I have never seen such an efflorescence of this native plant. Continuing the colour motif were great swathes of Jerusalem artichoke, bur marigold, pale jewelweed ("pale", I must suppose, only in contrast to the orange of the "spotted", though it has always looked a rich enough yellow to me -- and, yes, I know the official term is touch-me-not-, but I stick doggedly to the old name, for dangling jewels is exactly what these lovely little blossoms resemble).

Next commanding attention were countless stretches of white snakeroot and, along the river banks, head-high smartweeds with their tough red stems and waving tassels of minuscule pinkish/green flowers. The asters threw in their colour range of purple-to-mauve-to-white, and determined remnants of chicory brought the heavens down to earth. At the other extreme were patches of tiny, pink slender gerardia, and I even found a few late rosy-maroon blooms of groundnut. On the east side of Twyn Rivers Drive, towards the Glen Rouge campsite, this vine is even more prolific than swallowwort!

Berries ranged from the doll's-eyes of white baneberry, the red of Tartarian honeysuckle and false Solomon's seal, the black of buckthorn, to hillsides hosting thousands of the orange berries of bittersweet not yet opened to reveal their exquisite cerise centres.

There were some mushrooms: the polypores, of course, great soupplates of Dryad's Saddle and Artist's Conk (Laetiporus sulphureus and Ganoderma applanatum); a couple of young giant puffballs (Calvatia gigantea); scattered bunches of Bear's Head (the tooth fungus Hericium americanum); some jelly fungi (Dacrymyces palmatus); an area rich in Meadow Mushrooms (Agaricus campestris); and a solitary and beautiful species of Gymnopolis echoing the prevailing colour scheme of deep yellow cap, gills and stalk, with a lovely rusty-orange spore print.

Ongoing problems with the park are, naturally, increasing with increased human usage: a paucity of garbage bins along Twyn Rivers Drive and bikers on out-of-bounds trails.

For now, however, the honours remain with nature and all that gold. Torontians are so lucky.

Eva Davis

A growing tree can absorb as much as 22 kg of carbon dioxide a year, while replenishing the planet's oxygen supply.

from PROBEABILITIES, Pollution Probe's newsletter, Fall 1990

THE TREES OF MOUNT PLEASANT CEMETERY

The name pawpaw (Asimina triloba) has always struck me as exotic. I think I first heard the name in the lyrics of an old song. When I first obtained the arboretum guide of the cemetery, I was surprised to see it listed. I searched for it in Section D, where it was supposed to be, with no luck. Fortunately I came across two trees that were not listed -- one in Section H, the other in 28. The leaves are large and droop like a houseplant that needs water. I think the trees in Mount Pleasant are not old enough to produce fruit but I am hopeful one day I will get a chance to taste it. It is sometimes called the custard apple, an indication of the flavour.

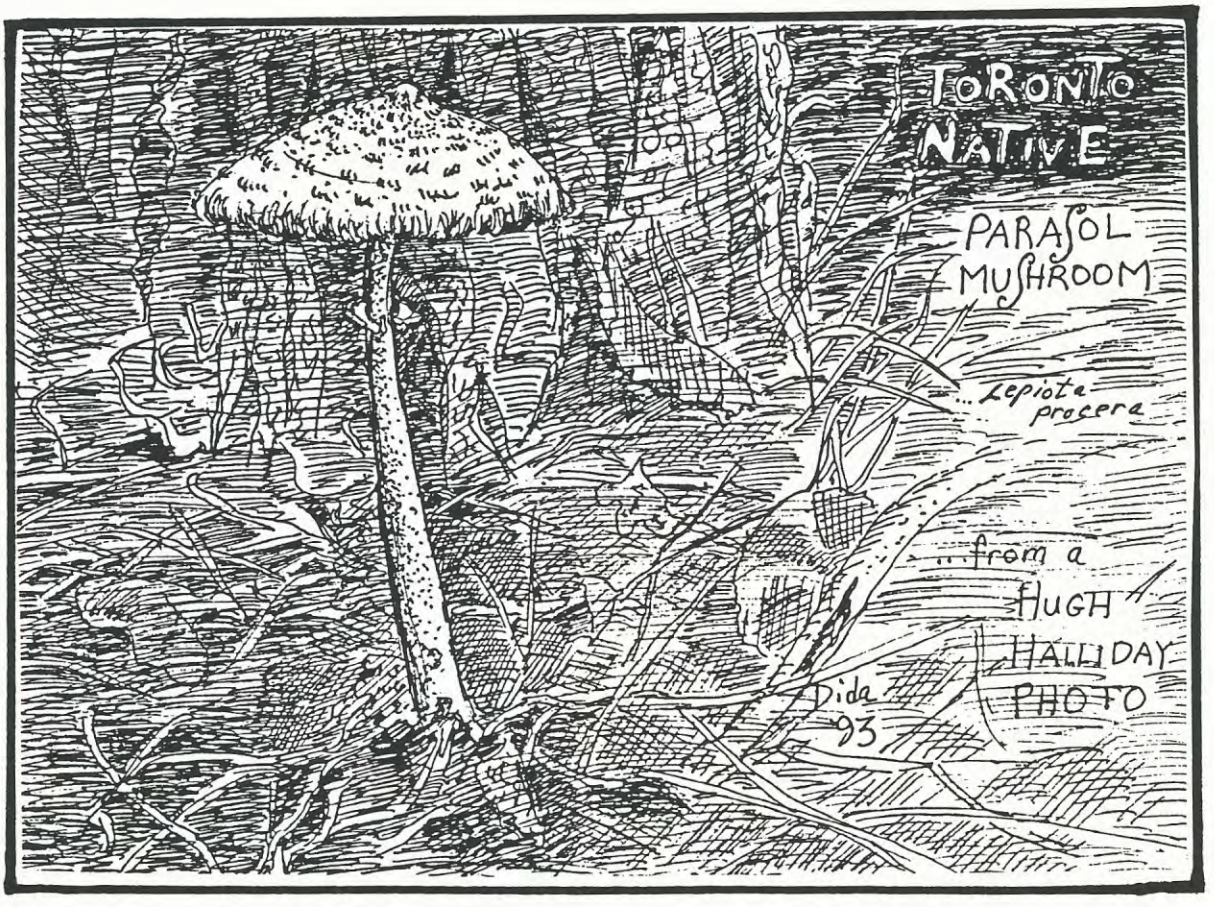
The pawpaw is a southern tree which will only grow naturally in the Carolinian zone. It usually spreads by sucker shoots so they are not solitary often. The name Asimina comes from an Illinois Indian word meaning "hidden berry". Triloba refers to the appearance of the flower.

Roger Powley

P.S. The cemetery management has recently spent a great deal of money refurbishing the pond near the cemetery office. It is worth going for a visit to see it.

R.P.

□



OUR PALE SWALLOWWORT/DOG-STRANGLING VINE

Emily Hamilton's article of May 1979 remains the best short explanation of our local swallowwort's identity and history. A comprehensive article by Tove Christensen now appears in WILDFLOWER, Summer 1998, which confirms the pale swallowwort as the species found in Ontario in a broad band from Hamilton through Toronto and as far as Cornwall, north to Ottawa and Lake Simcoe. It's the species which has a wider distribution in Canada than in the U.S., black swallowwort being more eastern and more extensive in the U. S. than in Canada. I personally have never identified a black swallowwort. The flower-colour is not much help - many "pale" swallowworts being dark maroon. The name obviously refers to the light tan colour-phase. If you see a swallowwort in Canada or the U.S. which you consider has "dark purple" petals, and you look into the corolla with your hand-lens and see hairs, then you have a black swallowwort. You will probably notice that the petals are quite as wide as long. Do report to TFN no matter where you see it, for comparison. Kingston may be a good spot - both species are reportedly there.

Though black swallowwort was reported on early Toronto checklists, this happened before there was a general consciousness that more than one European swallowwort was present in North America - the pale swallowwort being one (since as early as 1889) at The Junction. Emily's article in 1979 mentions a garden-escape with a Latin name which puts the "swallow" in "swallowwort" (inspired by the seed-pod no doubt). This is called "white swallowwort" here and has not been reported lately, though it used to be seen around Niagara Falls. Please report any swallowworts you see (anywhere) with greenish-white to yellowish flowers.

Have you got all that? Three European swallowworts but only one you are likely to see in Toronto (over and over and over again!) - the pale swallowwort.

Diana Banville

Ref.: "Swallowworts - the ecology and control of Vincetoxicum spp" by Tove Christensen in WILDFLOWER 14(3), Summer, 1998.
"The pale swallowwort reaches out" - caption TFN 439:5 Nov. 1993.
"Swallowwort or dog-strangling vine" by Emily Hamilton, TFN 324:21 May 1979.

□

Swallowwort Fruit opening to discharge seed.

(the "swallow" effect)

[See also page 10.]

TORONTO BIRDS IN THE NINETEEN-NINETIES

At the end of 1997, if not a miracle, something extraordinary occurred, the phenomenon of finding our TORONTO REGION BIRD LIST complete! Every species had been reported at least once during the calendar year. This hadn't happened since the calendar year, 1990. When we revised our checklist for this decade, we based our selection of "regular bird species" upon a count of those reported in the Region (within a radius of 48 km of the Royal Ontario Museum) at least ten times in the previous decade. On this basis, we dropped three species that were on our 1985 list which have surpassed the ten-report requirement in the first eight years of the 1990's, the GOLDEN EAGLE, STILT SANDPIPER, and CERULEAN WARBLER. It's not that these birds have changed their habits - it's that birders have changed theirs. Birdwatching has expanded, more reports are being regularly published locally, more such information is being exchanged. Twenty more species besides these have passed into the category of "at least ten reports in the decade", and there may be more before the nineteen-nineties are out.

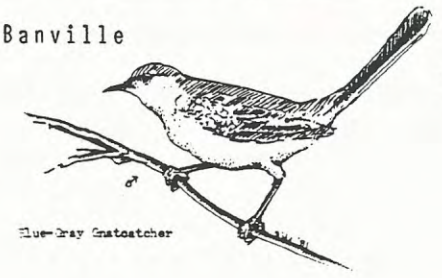
Two birds which we are seeing more often (every year) because they HAVE changed their habits or extended their range are the LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL and the RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER. Three others which we've been seeing nearly every year are the CONNECTICUT WARBLER, HOODED WARBLER AND WHITE-EYED VIREO.

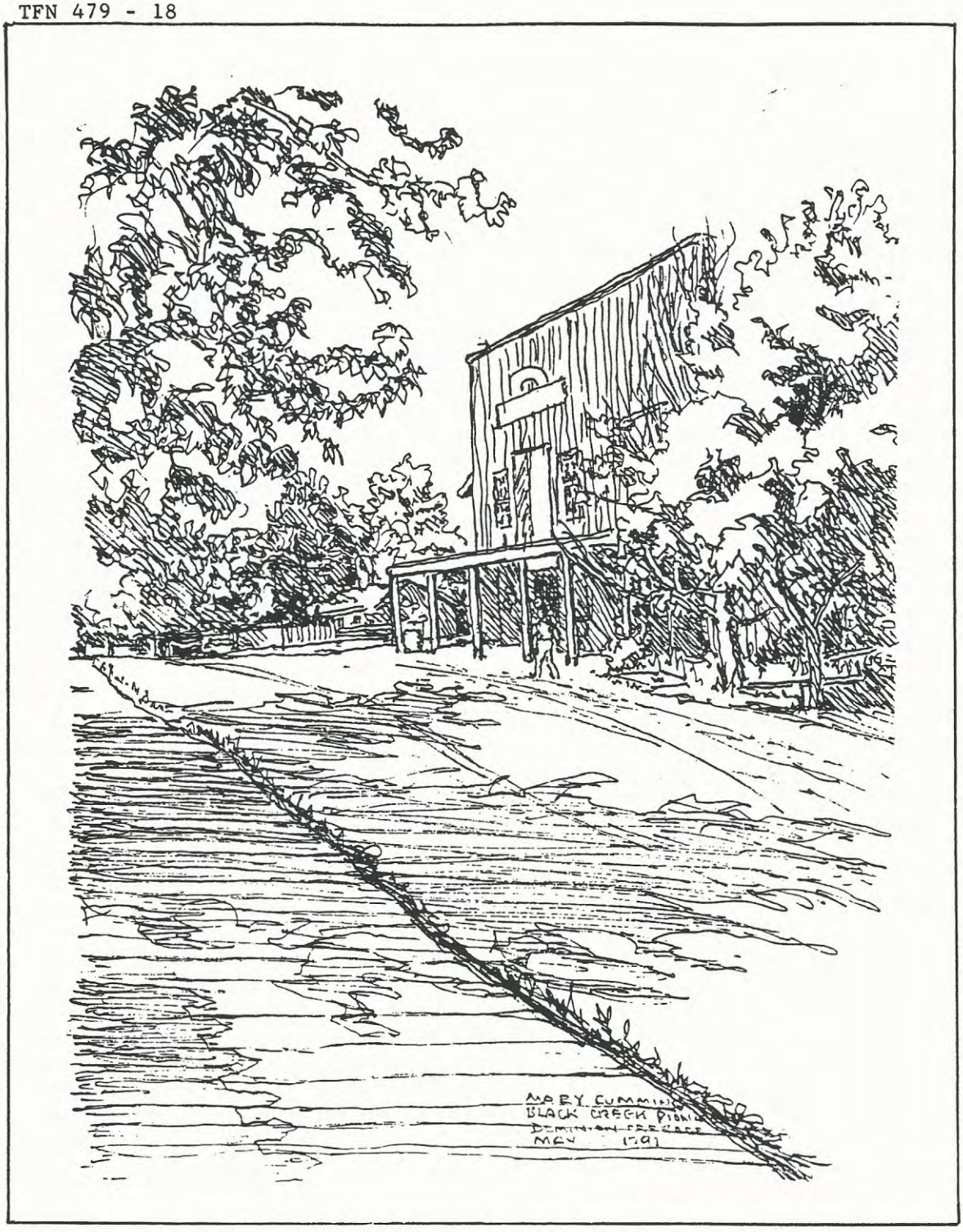
Less frequently, but still beyond the ten-report requirement are: KING EIDER, GYRFALCON, SANDHILL CRANE, WESTERN SANDPIPER, BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER, LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER, PARASITIC JAEGER (maybe), FORSTER'S TERN, GREAT GREY OWL, BOREAL OWL, COMMON RAVEN, PRAIRIE WARBLER, LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH, KENTUCKY WARBLER, CLAY-COLOURED SPARROW. (Come to think of it the buff-breasted sandpiper was on our 1985 list too.)

In all of this, we do not count probable escapees, hybrids and breeding-program species. However, we still have our unpublished "irregular" bird list - though as you can see, some have become "regular". Eleven of our regular birds have not been reported every year in the present decade so far, but we still have reasons for wanting to monitor each of them...and particularly since every one of them showed up in 1997. We list 234 species. The figure for BREEDING BIRDS OF THE CITY OF TORONTO still stands at 94 species recently nesting here. (I'm not counting those strongly suspected of nesting - only those who have made it quite clear to our observers.) A surprising percentage of regular-occurring birds in the City breed or winter in the area or occur year-round. I never quite get used to thinking in those terms - but your reports tell the story. Please keep them coming.

Diana Banville

Ref. TORONTO REGION RECORDS, TFN
"Checking the Checklists", TFN 465:13
"Winter Birds in Toronto", TFN 472:15





BLACK CREEK PIONEER VILLAGE lends itself to sketching structures of an earlier period, as this drawing by Mary Cumming on a TFN Nature Arts Outing indicates. Just south of the village, THE BLACK CREEK PROJECT were working on erosion control problems in 1991. This is a community action group concerned with another aspect of life on the Creek, its natural quality and character. (SEE TFN 421:15, 1991.)

IN THE NEWS

TREE-KILLING BEETLES FROM ASIA STIR FEAR

After recently spotting an Asian long-horned beetle in a warehouse in Waterloo, Ont., inspectors have been combing ships, cargo containers and Toronto businesses that trade with China in search of the insect. They are also conducting visual surveys in Toronto and six other sites in Ontario, including St. Thomas, Niagara Falls, Georgetown and Walkerton. The beetle whose scientific name is Anoplophora glabripennis is very difficult to control and hard to detect. Once the beetle makes its way to urban hardwood trees or forests, the only way to eliminate it is to chop down and burn any infested tree. The beetle, about three centimetres long with coal-black wing covers that are sprinkled with distinctive white spots, has no natural predators and cannot be effectively killed by a pesticide. Once they find a host tree, the adult beetles and their larvae chew large, deep holes into the trunk, roots and branches. The holes inhibit the tree's vascular system (the network of sap channels) and ultimately kill the tree.

extracted from an article by Sarah Schmidt in the GLOBE AND MAIL, Sept. 3, 1998

WOOD CRATE RESTRICTION IRKS CHINA

Beijing has expressed regret over emergency U.S. restrictions on China exports packed in untreated wooden crates, and hinted at retaliation if the United States failed to reconsider the measure. The U.S. restrictions, to take full effect in 90 days, are aimed at eradicating the Asian long-horned beetle, which can ravage hardwood trees and forests. The beetle has been found in 26 sites in the United States -- mostly around import warehouses and all traceable to larvae surviving in wooden packing material from China.

extracted from an article in the TORONTO STAR, Sept. 14, 1998

Ed. Note: IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE SEEN THIS BEETLE, PLEASE REPORT YOUR SIGHTINGS TO Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Food Protection and Inspection Branch, Plant Protection. Save a sample and call 416-954-1714 or 1-800-442-2342.

[Arthur Lismer] used his own brand of homemade reed pen. These pens were made from a weed with a bamboo-like configuration of stem called Canadian bamboo, knotweed, or Polygonum cuspidatum...These pens gave Lismer the rough expressive line he liked better than that which flowed from the smooth commercial pens.

from BRIGHT LAND: A WARM LOOK AT ARTHUR LISMER by Lois Darroch, Merritt Pulb. Co. Ltd., Toronto/Vancouver, 1981

Comment: The plant mentioned above is called Japanese knotweed by people trying to restore the wildlands in the Don Valley. The Task force to Bring Back the Don has days devoted to "zapping the knotweed". It's a pity that we can't find a consumptive use for this lovely plant with its interesting hollow stems and its late-blooming white plumes of flowers.

H.J.

IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

MONARCH BUTTERFLY TRAIL BLAZERS NAMED TO ORDER OF CANADA

Frederick Albert Urquhart and his wife Nora Roden Urquhart have been appointed to the Order of Canada. After 40 years of determination in mobilizing thousands of professionals and amateurs in a massive volunteer tagging program, the couple located the wintering sites of the monarch butterfly in a remote area of Mexico. Thanks to their advocacy of protecting the butterflies' habitat, ecological preserves have been established throughout North America. The first municipal garden named in their honour is in Dundas, Ont. The Order of Canada recognizes a lifetime of achievement, merit and service to community or country. Members of the Order are recognized for distinguished service in or to a particular group, locality or field of endeavour and no more than 100 appointments are made in any year. The Urquharts' life-long, dedicated research on insect migration has raised environmental awareness from scientists to school children. The Urquharts jointly received the Franklin L. Burr Award given by the National Geographic Society for "outstanding scientific contributions" in 1979.

extracted from an article by Kim Goodman in the SCARBOROUGH MIRROR, July 11-12, 1998

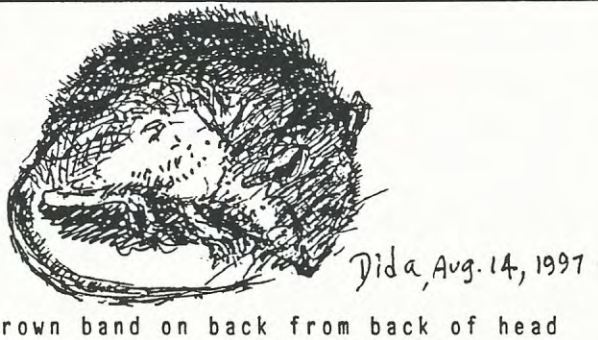
TUBE MOSQUITOES

London's underground rail network, known as the Tube, appears to be the breeding ground for a new type of mosquito that has adapted to underground life. The new species is being dubbed "molestus" by British scientists. The subway's warm and damp conditions have fostered the growth of the blood-sucking insects, which have developed a taste for rats and mice. The new mosquitoes are believed to have evolved from those that became trapped underground when the tunnels were dug a century ago.

extracted from "Earthweek: Diary of the planet" by Steve Newman in the TORONTO STAR, Aug. 29, 1998

"FREEZE-DRIED DEER MOUSE"

found in a pail in a garage on Pitcairn Crescent at Wigmore Park, East Don. It had frozen in a huddled position and dried that way through spring & summer.



(Actual size). Definite dark-brown band on back from back of head to base of tail - contrasting with tan flanks and white underside, pinkish feet - lightly furred. Tail furred for full length (blackish above contrasting with white on sides and below), lightly tufted at the end. Toes five on back-,four on front-quarters.

IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

THE WATER MAY SMELL, BUT IT'S HARMLESS

Calls are streaming in to water departments this week in Toronto and the regions of Durham, York and Peel, where people are complaining that their taps are delivering something that tastes more like earth than water. While officials agree that it smells foul and tastes musty, they insisted yesterday that the water is perfectly safe to drink. The problem is a bloom of algae in Lake Ontario -- the source of local water supplies -- that releases compounds that stay in the water even after it is processed. The algae have multiplied because of an extended heat wave, which warmed the lake. The water temperature spiked up from about 10°C to about 22°C since the end of July. The last time this happened so quickly was in 1994, when the same earthy smells and a grassy taste plagued the water for more than a week. While tests are showing the microscopic particles are at levels of about 10 parts per trillion in the water, most people can smell them in water straight from the tap. The best way to reduce the taste is to let the water chill in a refrigerator. The smell comes from the breakdown of the algae by the same bacteria that give damp soil its musty odour. The tastes naturally dissipate in a week or two as the water cools.

extracted from an article by Wallace Immen in the GLOBE AND MAIL, Aug. 12, 1998

MODERATE EARTHQUAKE RATTLES ONTARIO

The strongest earthquake in decades jangled buildings and nerves through a wide stretch of Southern Ontario on Sept. 25 at 3:52 pm. The quake measured 5.4 on the Richter scale. It was centred just south of Lake Erie on the Ohio-Pennsylvania border. The geological survey said the quake was one of the largest ever recorded in the area. The last big tremblor to hit Southern Ontario was a 5.0 quake in January 1986. Two major fault lines -- weaknesses in the Earth's crust -- cross through southern Ontario and into the United States. One extends from Lake Scugog in the north through Pickering and St. Catharines on Lake Ontario, then across Lake Erie. The second fault line follows the eastern shoreline of Georgian Bay, crosses Lake Ontario and extends to Attica, N.Y.

extracted from an article by Colin Perkel in the GLOBE AND MAIL, Sept. 26, 1998

Common weeds may be relics of a flora which existed in a place before homes were built. They may be deliberate or accidental introductions. They may appear as components of the seed rain from the sky or seed banks in the soil. But however they got here and wherever they came from, weeds tell us a lot about ourselves and our gardens. And because they appear spontaneously as nature's response to our meddling, rather than by design, they say a lot about place -- specific, particular places. In their wild, outlawish way, weeds represent a truly local distinctiveness.

from "Gardening on the Edge" by Paul Evans in BBC WILDLIFE, Vol. 16, No. 7, July 1998

IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

A VOTE TO LET THE RIVER RUN WILD

A good 64 inches of rain pelted Napa Valley since last July. So valley residents went to the polls and decided to do something about it. By a two-thirds majority, Napa County voted to raise taxes to pay for ripping out its flood-control system, allowing the near-dead Napa River to return to life and run wild for much of its 55 miles. After suffering 27 floods in less than 150 years, with flood controls, the Napa Valley now will take a chance with unfettered nature. By voting to let the river run free, reclaiming much of its own meandering path, Napa residents have also steered the Army Corps of Engineers on a new path. Under the Napa plan some of the dikes and levees built to keep the river in a straight channel -- largely without success -- would be lowered or removed. Bridges that block the flow of high water would be raised or torn down. People living in areas that regularly flood would be bought out and asked to move. About 600 acres of low-lying land would be given back to the river, as wetlands. The river's water will go where it usually goes in floods, but in the future nobody will live there. The Napa plan is the most systematic effort in the country to try what is known as the "living rivers" approach to improve flood control. In South Florida, the Corps is similarly dismantling dikes and dams, but in an effort to save the Everglades.

extracted from an article by Timothy Egan in THE NEW YORK TIMES NATIONAL, April 25, 1998

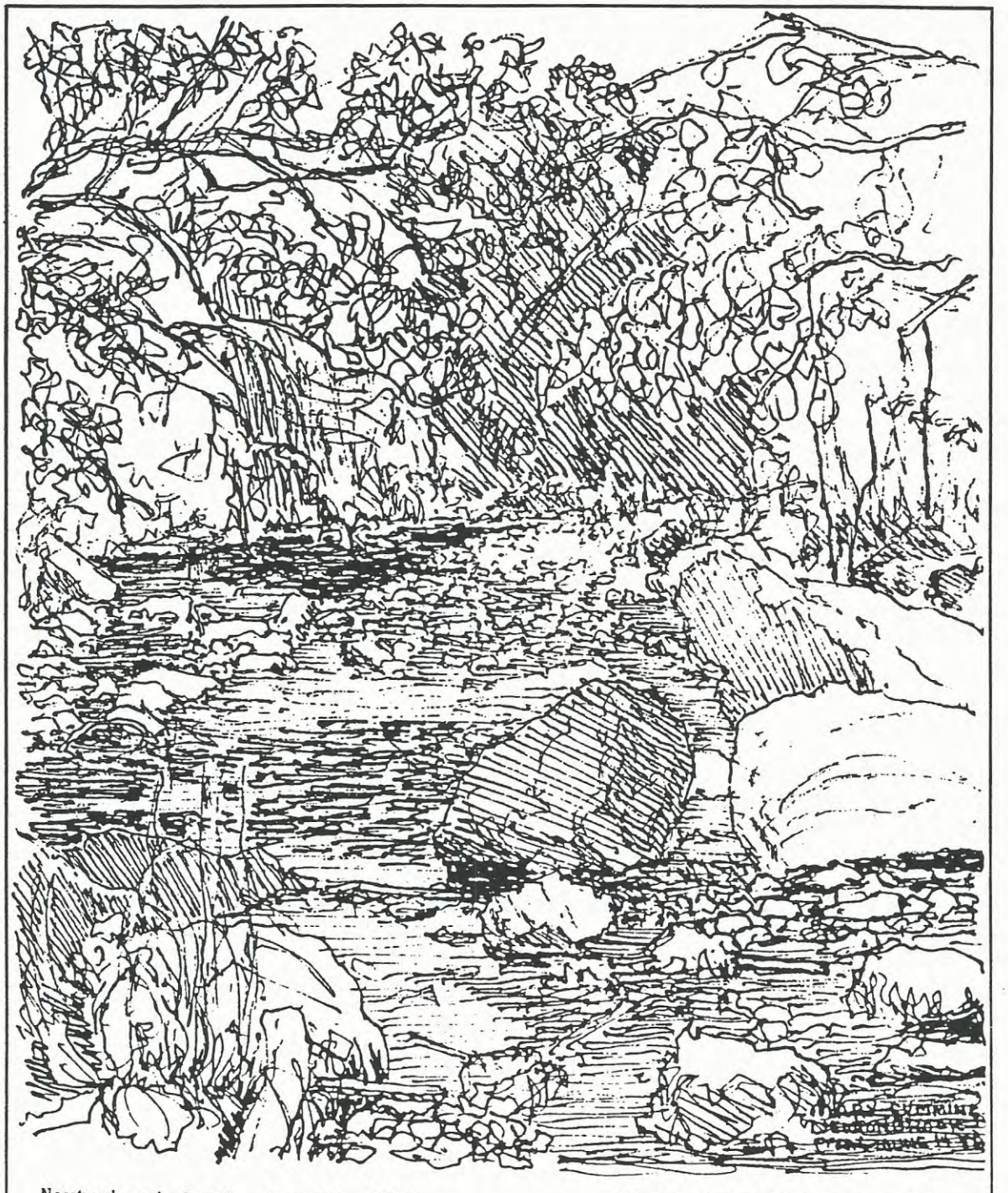
ENGINEERS PLAN TO SEND A RIVER FLOWING BACK TO NATURE

For nearly four decades, levees lining 23 miles of the Snake River have held high spring runoff from the Teton Mountains in check, allowing lavish homes to blossom amid cottonwood forests in the river's flood plain. But the 15-foot-high levees, serpentine piles of rock originally put together by the Army Corps of Engineers to protect farm fields and hay meadows, have created serious, unanticipated problems along one of the most scenic stretches of river in the world. The upper Snake's inability to flood its banks each spring, coupled with an increase in the velocity of the water that has come from confining the river to one or two channels instead of five or six, has dramatically altered the river's ecology, wiping out islands and leaving long stretches of riverbank nearly barren. While researchers are well aware of the ecological havoc dams can wreak, they have only recently begun to recognize the destructive nature of levees and their free-form cousin, riprap -- piles of rock and earth dumped along rivers by homeowners to guard against erosion. Upriver where there are no levees, islands are thick with willows and cottonwoods, of different ages and sizes. Flooding is a disturbance regime, just like fire. The cottonwoods need the flooding every year to keep reproducing. When water washes over the banks of a river and onto the flood plain in a healthy river system an assortment of microhabitats is created including ponds, wetlands and marshes that support a different assortment of life from the river itself. Studies show that fall and spring migrations of waterfowl are timed to flooding, because wet conditions in river corridors create food supplies. After a river floods and then retreats, organic debris from downed trees and other sources in the flood plain is pulled into the river, which forms the foundation of the aquatic food chain, ▷

IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

providing food for phytoplankton and zooplankton, which in turn serve as food for insects, which fish eat. When flooding is not allowed, it's like pulling the Safeway out of the neighbourhood.

extracted from an article by Jim Robbins in the NEW YORK TIMES SCIENCE, May 12, 1998 ▷



Newtonbrook Creek, June 14, 1986 field sketch by Mary Cumming

MANY LOON DEATHS ARE PREVENTABLE

Did you know that 5 million recreational fishermen in Canada use lead sinkers; 7 out of 8 sinkers are lost (which is 300-500 metric tonnes of lead dropped in Canadian lakes and streams every year); loons catch and swallow fish whole, and those easiest to hunt are "those that got away", burdened with hook, line and sinker; in just weeks, no matter how small the sinker, the loon is dead -- the body sinks unnoticed? The Avian Care and Research Foundation has found that 30% of adult Common Loon deaths were caused by lead-sinker poisoning. The Foundation urges anyone interested in fishing to purchase non-toxic sinkers, jigs, etc. from Larry Kissau, Bilogic Tackle Co., R.R. #3, Thessalon, Ont. POR 1LO or call 1-705-841-2521.

extracted from NOTES & ANECDOTES (newsletter of the Avian Care and Research Foundation, Box 182, Verona, Ont. K0H 2W0), Spring-Summer 1998

GRAINS SHED BY COMET TO GIVE NIGHT-SKY LIGHT SHOWS

In the early morning sky on Nov. 17, tiny fragments of stardust -- the size of grains of sand and called the Leonids -- will hit Earth's atmosphere and burn up in a blaze of glory, putting on a show for Canadians from coast to coast. Meteor storms and showers are predictable. Every 33 years, the Leonids provide a series of spectactular autumn encounters. If this year is a disappointment, then pin your hopes on Nov. 18, 1999. In 1966, meteors were estimated at as high as 40 meteors a second. This time around, a meteor a second would be very impressive. The encounter is with a ribbon of dust shed by Comet Tempel-Tuttle. The radio region of the upper sky will fizz, crackle and pop, and instruments orbiting above the atmosphere will be at extra risk.

extracted from an article in the GLOBE AND MAIL, Sept. 5, 1998

PICTURES OF AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES WANTED

Kawartha Conservation (formerly the Kawartha Region Conservation Authority) is creating an amphibian and reptile monitoring poster for its watershed residents. The poster will use local photographs and informative literature to highlight the benefits, threats and characteristics of these species. Needed are slides or photographs of the amphibians and reptiles of the region. The pictures may be taken anywhere in Ontario. Kawartha Conservation will acknowledge all published contributors. All submissions will only be used in this publication. Contact Dina Wijesinghe or John Abati at 705-328-2271 for more information or for slide pick-up.

extracted from an article in THE ORCHID (Bulletin of the Peterborough Field Naturalists), Vol. 44, No. 7, Sept. 1998

IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

PEREGRINE FALCON RECOVERY REACHES KEY MILESTONE

For the first time in decades, peregrine falcons have successfully produced naturally hatched offspring in southern Ontario. Three falcons hatched this spring from a natural nest site in the Niagara gorge near Horseshoe Falls. Falcons are becoming re-established because chemicals such as DDT are no longer being used and the quality of their environment is improving. Previous indiscriminate use of pesticides caused reproductive failure in peregrine falcons, which led to the complete loss of Ontario's nesting population for several decades. This spring, peregrines hatched young falcons at sites in Ottawa, Hamilton and London, as well as two sites in Toronto. Populations are also establishing and increasing at Northern Ontario cliff sites.

extracted from a Ministry of Natural Resources Press Release in THE BLUE BILL (Kingston), Vol. 45, No. 3, Sept. 1998

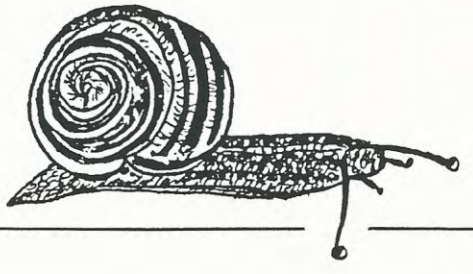
YOU CAN HELP UNRAVEL THE SECRETS OF BIRD MIGRATION

The mysteries that have been solved about bird migration have been unravelled through banding hundreds of thousands of birds and tracking their movements through recoveries. The great majority of band recoveries are reported by interested members of the public. If you find a bird with a band on it, please report it. Each new piece of information is a precious piece of the migration puzzle!

You can now report the band number, location and date of recovery, directly to the international banding office at a toll free number: 1-800-327-BAND. You will be sent a recovery certificate informing you of the history of your bird, what kind it was, where it was banded, by whom and when and how old it was.

from an article in the LONG POINT BIRD OBSERVER, Vol. 2, No. 1, Summer 1998

HUMBUG SNAIL



A very active creature! This snail was found in decaying snowdrop leaves. The shell was creamy yellow with warm brown stripes. The body was a mixture of light brown and tan. The shell measured 7/8", The body 1-3/4" fully extended. May 22, 1998.

Anne E Leon

DEATH OF GREENHOUSE HAS RESIDENT SINGING BLUES

A greenhouse that has been a landmark at the York Cemetery since the 1950s is being torn down to make way for a building expansion. The showhouse portion of the greenhouse which featured hundreds of plants and flowers was open to the public year round. The showhouse along with a dozen greenhouses will be closed in early September and its hundreds of tropical plants donated. The move to close was strictly a business decision of the Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries. Plant material can be purchased for half the price it was costing. The show house plants are being donated to Spadina House and Casa Loma. York Cemetery was opened on 175 acres of land in 1948.

extracted from an article by Kim Goodman in the NORTH YORK MIRROR, Aug. 29-30, 1998

PLAN OPENS ACCESS TO WATERFRONT

A $12-million plan that would develop a trail and waterfront improvements from Highland Creek to the Rouge River could get started as early as next spring. The proposal has undergone a full Environmental Assessment Review. The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, which coordinated the concept plan, is preparing to submit it to the Ministry of the Environment. An approval would help clear the way to start the two-to-three year project within a year. The first two phases of funding will include the construction of a waterfront corridor from Highland Creek to the east side of the Port Union node known as Chesterton Shores. The second phase will extend the project from Chesterton Shores to the Rouge River. About $150,000 in land acquisitions, planning and public consulations have been invested in the planning stages which call for a 3.6 km trail along the Port Union shoreline. A pedestrian walkway will be created at the foot of Port Union Road linked by tunnel to the proposed Port Union Village Common, a small community park proposed for just north of the CN train tracks. A secondary pedestrian connection is proposed for the west side of the Port Union Village Community. Attached to this will be a pier jutting into Lake Ontario and an observation tower with the opportunity to build an interpretive centre. Native vegetation providing habitat for coastal wildlife and migratory birds will be established along the corridor. Some lakefilling will also be done to protect the shoreline. Anyone wishing to provide further input into the project or wish a copy of the park plan as it has evolved to date is encouraged to call Larry Field at 661-6600, ext. 243. [See Nov. 10 outing, page 3.]

extracted from THE SCARBOROUGH MIRROR, Aug. 26, 1998

SWANS ANNOY FARMERS

Trumpeter swans are a conservation success story on Vancouver Island but can be the bane of farmers. This species has been protected by federal legislation since 1930. Although the swan population has made a comeback, their natural feeding grounds, estuaries rich in aquatic vegetation, haven't. The large population is causing thousands of dollars worth of damage to agricultural fields in the Comox Valley where the swans have adapted to feeding on agricultural crops.

extracted from an article in the GLOBE AND MAIL, Aug. 6, 1998

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THE WEATHER (THIS TIME LAST YEAR)

November 1997, Toronto

This month began the El Nino winter of 1997-98 on a rather early note. For the third year in a row, mean temperatures were below normal, this time by 1°C downtown and by 0.7°C at Pearson International Airport. It barely reached the low teens, and only on the first day of the month. After Nov. 9th, the temperature stayed below 10°C.

The big story, however, was the early season snowstorm on Nov. 13th-14th. It was a full-scale snow-cover, get-the-shovel-out kind of snowfall. Downtown, with the enhancing effects of Lake Ontario, we got 24.9 cm. At the airport, farther back from the lake, there was considerably less snow. The monthly totals, 29.1 cm downtown and 19.2 cm at Pearson Airport, were much above normal, but exceeded as recently as 1995. But this was from one good-sized snowfall, and snow cover persisted for about ten days until persistent showers melted it. El Nino likely had a hand in this storm by intensifying the storm track, which at this point was hovering just south of the lower Great Lakes -- the correct position to bring synoptic-scale snow to southern Ontario.

In spite of this one event, November was otherwise tranquil with sunshine remaining relatively plentiful until the final ten days of the month. Rainfall was below normal at 42.0 mm downtown and 35.2 mm at the airport, enough to bring total monthly precipitation below normal. The ten days prior to the snowfall were almost completely dry.

Gavin Miller

"... in the greenhouse -- patterns" by Diana Bunville

COMING EVENTS

Toronto Ornithological Club - next walk in December

Royal Ontario Museum I.D. Clinic - Wed. Nov. 25 from 1 pm to 3 pm. Free. Enter the Eaton's Court via Druxy's Restaurant on the main floor. Experts from Earth Sciences, Palaeobiology, and Anthropology Departments will identify your rocks, minerals, gems, and fossils.

High Park Volunteer Stewardship Program -
- Nov. 8 at 10:30 am - buckthorn removal
- Nov. 22 at 10:30 am - seed collecting and end-of-year celebration.

Call 392-1748 for more information.

Royal Canadian Institute - free science lectures, Sundays at 3 pm in the Macleod Auditorium, Medical Sciences Building, 1 King's College Circle
- Nov. 8 - Biology and conservation of sea turtles with Nicholas Mrosovsky
- Nov. 15 - Symmetry in mathematics and science with Joe Repka
- Nov. 22 - Exploring the underworld: the sport and science of caving with Derek Ford
- Nov. 29 - Aging and memory: what changes, and what can be done to help? with Fergus I.M. Craik

For more information call 928-2096.

Toronto Bay Initiative -
- Toronto Remedial Action Plan (RAP) Clean Waters Summit - Nov. 21 from 9 am to 4 pm. Call Tija Luste at 314-9485 for details.
- Connecting with our Bay Heritage - Nov. 24 from 6 pm to 8 pm. Call 314-9498 for more details.

Bring Back the Don -
- Late Autumn in the Don - Nov. 7 at 1 pm. Meet at the Broadview subway station.

For more information call 392-0401.

Market Gallery - Oct. 31 to March 7, 1999 - Conservation in Context: to want a better city passionately - a broad selection of photographs, drawings, paintings and other materials illustrating the impact of Eric Arthur on Toronto's cityscape, particularly in the 1960s. The gallery is at 95 Front St. East and is open Wednesday to Friday from 10 am to 4 pm; Saturday from 9 am to 4 pm; Sunday from noon to 4 pm. Call 392-7604 for more information.

Kortright Centre for Conservation - Winter Owls Workshop - Sun. Nov. 8 from 12 noon to 6 pm. Tickets: $25. Call 905-832-2289 for details.

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Winter weather is notoriously changeable ... prepare for the worst with good boots and warm and waterproof clothing.

COMING EVENTS (cont'd)

Royal Ontario Museum - Audubon's Wilderness Palette: The Birds of Canada from Sept. 19 until Nov. 14, 1998. 100 selected works from the Toronto Reference Library's collection, kept intact by Canada Trust's $1.2 million donation to the library. The collection will be on tour across Canada until the end of 2000. Call the ROM at 586-8000 for more information.

Conference for all Greater Toronto Area Outdoor Educators - Thurs. Dec. 10 at Kortright Centre for Conservation. Call 905-832-2289 for more information.

Bird Studies Canada (formerly Long Point Bird Observatory) - Annual General Meeting - Nov. 29 from 1 pm to 5:30 pm at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Burlington, Ont. Guest speaker is Dr. David Nettleship on the subject of Seabirds in the northwest Atlantic: Ecosystem Destruction and the Conservation Crisis. The cost is $10 (children under 16 are free) and includes light refreshments and displays, etc. Call Anne-Marie Ridout (toll free) at 1-888-448-BIRD to register.

Wilderness to Studio: Four Views of Paul Kane, at the Royal Ontario Museum from Nov. 7, 1998 to February 28, 1999. Admission: $10 for adults, $5 for seniors and students with ID.

WHITE AVENS

of the rose family

- a Toronto native

Field drawing

by Mary Cumming -

in Sunnybrook Park

TFN 479 - 30

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