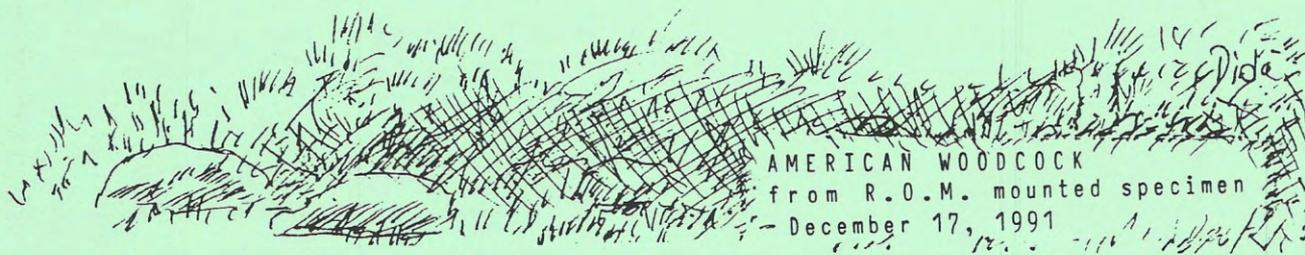


TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

Number 490

March 2000



AMERICAN WOODCOCK
from R.O.M. mounted specimen
- December 17, 1991

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TFN MEETINGS

Sunday, March 5, 2000 - REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS OF EASTERN NORTH AMERICA
at 2:30 pm an illustrated talk by Sid Daniels, retired
in the Northrop Frye Hall, Victoria University elementary school principal and life-long naturalist
73 Queen's Park Cres. East - The speaker will take us on a photographic expedition
to Kentucky, Tennessee, South Carolina, Florida
and New Jersey to illustrate the incredible
diversity of amphibians and reptiles. He will
also demonstrate techniques useful in the
discovery and observation of these little-known
vertebrates.

Guests are
welcome!

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

+ an opportunity to purchase selected TFN publications
including a NEW ravine study: THE HUMBER FORKS AT THISTLETOWN
by Joan O'Donnell.

NEXT MEETING: Sunday, April 2, 2000

NEXT NEWSLETTER: APRIL (to be mailed in mid-March)

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, including locations, dates, and any sources consulted.

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
2 Carlton St., #1519
Toronto, Ont. M5B 1J3

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Printer: DM Printing

Mailer: Perkins Mailing Services

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 EAST POINT - nature walk Lakeshore, Scarborough
 March 1 Leader: Boris Mather
 10 am Meet at the foot of Morningside Ave. (at Guildwood Pkwy.)
 Bring lunch.
 This will be a long walk so dress warmly. There is always much to see along
 this section of low bluff.
- Saturday MOUNT PLEASANT CEMETERY - trees Toronto
 March 4 Leader: Jack Radecki
 10 am Meet at the Belt-line entrance just east of Yonge St. and
 south of Merton St. Morning only.
 We will learn about how the trees in Canada's best arboretum are maintained.
- Sunday TFN MEETING (See page 2.)
 March 5 Bring a guest -- a young person of 6, 16, or 60!
 2:30 pm
- Wednesday NORTHERN DISTRICT LIBRARY - photography Toronto
 March 8 Leader: Alf Buchanan
 2 pm Meet at the library (on Orchard View Blvd. just west of Yonge
 St.) on the second floor.
 Bring your own nature slides, as many as 20, or just come and enjoy looking.
 A projector and screen will be provided. If you have questions, please
 call the TFN office at 593-2656. Snap shots are also welcome.
- Saturday WEST DEANE PARK - nature walk Mimico Cr., Etobicoke
 March 11 Leader: Diana Karrandjas
 11 am Meet at the southwest corner of Martin Grove Rd. and Eglinton
 Ave. West. Bring lunch.
 We will be walking south through this small valley towards Montgomery's
 Inn where we can have afternoon tea. This is a joint outing with the
 Friends of Mimico Creek.
- +
- Saturday BLACK CREEK TRIBUTARY - heritage walk Humber tributary
 March 11 Leader: Ian Wheal
 2 pm Meet at the northwest corner of Dufferin St. and Wilson Ave.
 Some of this walk may be on city streets.
- Sunday WATERFRONT TRAIL - nature walk Toronto
 March 12 Leader: Joanne Doucette
 1 pm Meet outside the entrance to the Queen's Quay terminal building
 at the foot of York St. on Queen's Quay West.
 This is a joint outing with the Toronto Bay Initiative. We will be looking
 at a variety of waterfowl and some plants.

MARCH OUTINGS (cont'd)

Wednesday EAST DON - nature walk North York
 March 15 Leader: Robin Powell
 10:30 am Meet at the southwest corner of Steeles Ave. East and Leslie St.
 Bring lunch.
 We will be exploring this shallow valley as we look for wildlife.

Sunday MUD CREEK - urban ecology Don tributary, Toronto
 March 19 Leaders: Peter Hare, Helen Mills, Janice Palmer
 2 pm Meet at the southwest corner of Mt. Pleasant Rd. and Merton St.
 This is a joint outing with the North Toronto Green Community and the Task Force to Bring Back the Don. We will be learning about the relationships of urban creeks and sewers as we follow the creek on its course to the Don.

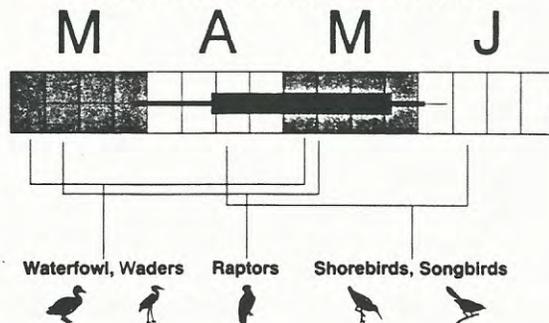
Tuesday HIGH PARK - nature walk Toronto
 March 21 Leader: George Bryant
 10:30 am Meet at the park entrance on the south side of Bloor St. West opposite High Park Ave. Bring lunch.
 Welcome spring with a walk in one of our favourite parks with its many habitats and abundance of wildlife.

Sunday NEILSON CREEK RAVINE - nature walk Highland Cr. tributary, Sc.
 March 26 Leaders: Carol and Murray Seymour
 10:30 am Meet at the entrance to Col. Danforth Park on the south side of Kingston Rd. at Col. Danforth Trail. Bring lunch.
 From the park we will walk north and explore a little-known ravine.

+
 Sunday WESTERN BELTLINE - heritage walk Toronto
 March 26 Leader: Ian Wheal
 2 pm Meet at the northwest corner of the Queensway and Windermere Ave.
 We will be walking north looking for signs of this long-abandoned link in the old Belt Line Railway route. Much of the walking will be along streets.

Thursday TORONTO ISLAND - nature walk Toronto
 March 30 Leader: George Bryant
 10:30 am Meet at the ferry docks at the foot of Bay St. Bring lunch.
 \$ ferry Dress warmly and bring binocular and notebooks. We will be
 \$ tickets looking for signs of spring -- early migrants, etc.

GENERAL SPRING MIGRATION PATTERN FOR BIRD GROUPS THROUGH SOUTHERN ONTARIO



from a Kortright pamphlet

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

One of the primary needs of human beings is connectedness. We need to **belong** - to a family, a group of friends ('peer group'), associates at work, school, sports, play, or a club wherein we share interests, a political party, a congregation of people with similar beliefs. A person who feels shut out, isolated, disconnected, may well develop serious psychological and social problems. I suspect that **virtual** connection, as through the internet, will not prove to be an adequate substitute for **real** relationships.

We who share our enthusiasm for the natural world and for discovering its wonders on outdoor walks are truly fortunate. We can pursue our interest from early childhood, or from whenever we get 'turned on', until as octogenarians we may have to slow down a bit, or sit on porch or balcony and read some of the books we had no time for when we were younger. No great expense is required and as amateurs we can associate with and learn from those who have made natural history their life's work and have become expert in one or more fields of study.

Since becoming active on the TFN board I have met many people involved in a great variety of organizations who give countless hours of research and service in their effort to protect the natural features of their special area. One may feel like a voice crying in the wilderness, but listen...there are many voices. We can make a powerful chorus advocating the conservation of areas of natural significance. Toronto Field Naturalists should continue to work with groups who have similar aims, while recognizing that we also need to interact with those whose ideas may not coincide with ours, but who have a legitimate stake in plans for the areas concerned. For a still relevant summary on conservation of natural areas as an important aspect of planning, I would refer you to Chapter 6 of the TFN publication: TORONTO THE GREEN.

In past reports I have mentioned active volunteer groups which have been instrumental in preserving the Humber and Don watersheds and the Lake Ontario waterfront. One very dedicated organization is Friends of the Spit, whose members have vigourously resisted any incursions onto Tommy Thompson Park, that amazing man-made projection into Lake Ontario from the foot of Leslie Street, which nature has reclaimed, with a little help from her friends. The Spit has become a treasured location for weekend birding and botany walks in all seasons, as well as for cyclists and in-line skaters.

The green valley which I have known since childhood as the eastern edge of Toronto is still verdant and abounding with wildlife, thanks in large part to members of a most effective volunteer group now known as Save the Rouge Valley System Inc. To quote from the Rouge Park brochure: it is "a reality today because

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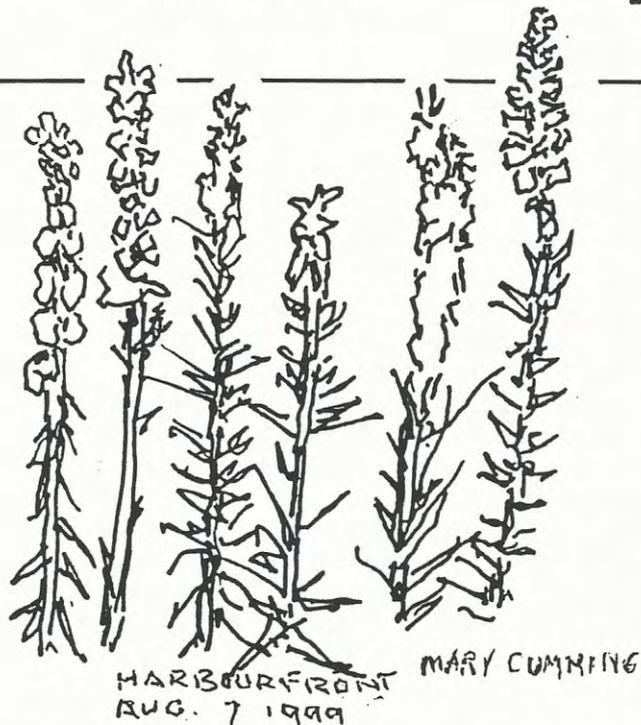
PRESIDENT'S REPORT (cont'd)

people and local governments in the area demanded it and Federal and Provincial representatives acted. Citizen organizations like Save the Rouge Valley System Inc. and the Rouge Valley Foundation plus other community groups and concerned residents pushed to establish the Park and now have the opportunity to participate in stewardship of the Park's fragile ecosystems." Other "Park Partners" include the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, the Toronto Zoo, and the municipalities of Toronto, Durham, York, Markham, Pickering, Richmond Hill, and Whitchurch/Stouffville. Since this is a system where "helping nature heal has a priority", concerned citizens are dedicated to working with naturalists in STORM (Save the Oak Ridges Moraine) Coalition to conserve and manage this environmental treasure. The Moraine's gravelly hills and sandy soils are the source, natural filtration and storage system for the major rivers flowing southward into Lake Ontario. As well, it performs the same essential function for streams flowing northward to Lake Simcoe and Georgian Bay, including Uxbridge Brook, which runs clear alongside our Jim Baillie Nature Reserve before joining Pefferlaw Brook on its way to Simcoe's southern shore. Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find information on ways to support the preservation of a green corridor through the Richmond Hill section of the Moraine with the creation of 2700-acre Kettle Lakes Park. If you would like to round out your study, you could read OAK RIDGES MORAINE, a beautiful book compiled by the STORM Coalition, or call for further information to Save the Rouge Valley System Inc. (Ramona Wall/Glenn De Baermaeker), 416-261-7096.

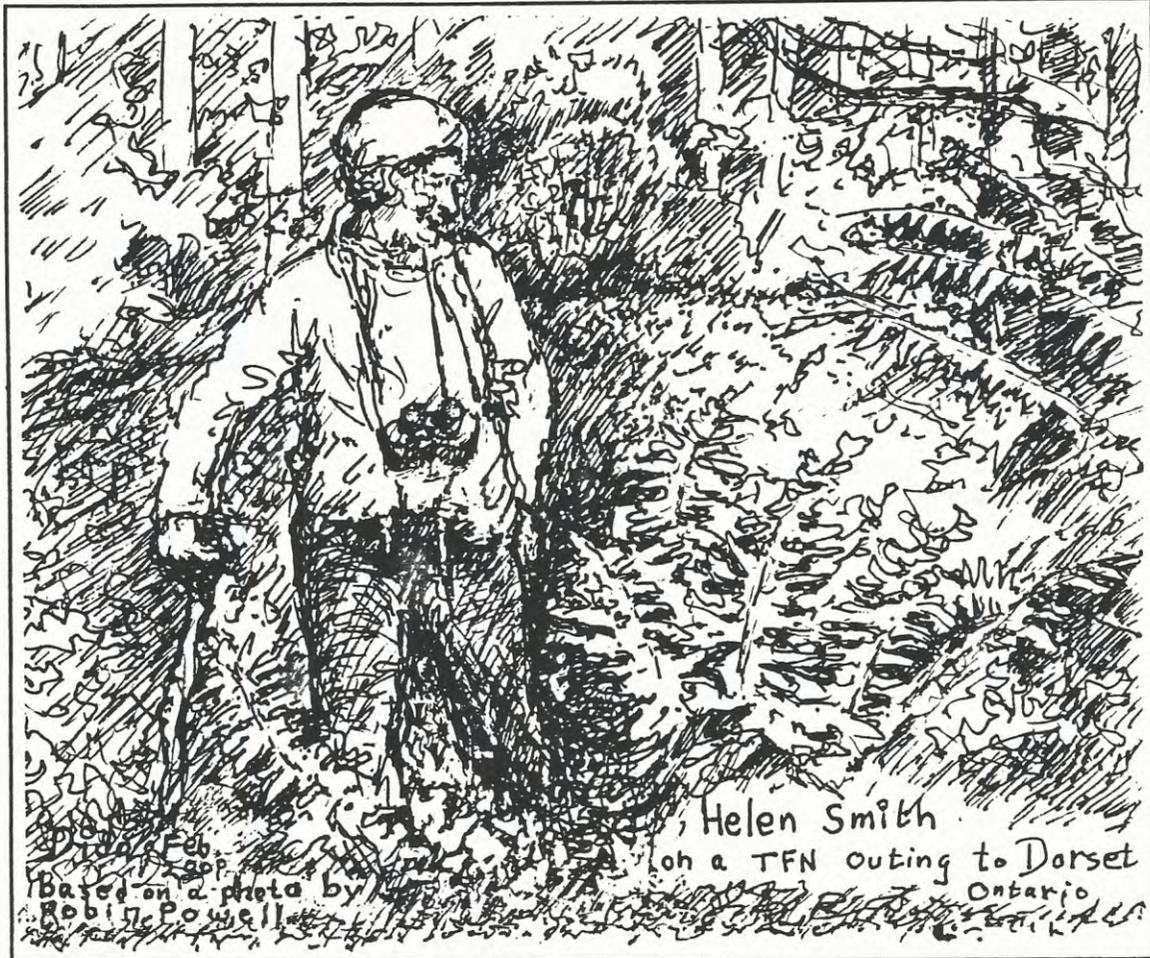
Phoebe Cleverley

DENSE BLAZING-STAR is a prairie wildflower often planted in Toronto gardens and sometimes escaping - such as those found at East Point Park near rail-beds. Native to southwestern Ontario, we probably can't claim it as part of our Toronto flora.

Field sketch by
Mary Cumming on a
TFN Nature Arts
Outing to
Harbourfront.



REMEMBERING HELEN SMITH



Helen Smith passed away on January 20, 2000 at the age of 86. She was a life member of the TFN and FON and a long-time member of the TOC. She led many bird walks over the years for the TFN, the last one in May 1996.

Helen spent almost no time talking about the past; she was too busy enjoying today. However, we do know she was born and raised in Orillia, then came to Toronto to train as a nurse. She was "an old Army gal", serving in England, Belgium, Germany and Holland. After the war, she returned to Toronto and worked as an occupational nurse for Christie's Biscuits and then for the city.

She didn't take up birdwatching until after the war, although she had always liked the outdoors. After she retired she was free to travel and took many birdwatching trips, usually with one of Gus Yaki's tours. She ranged

▷

REMEMBERING HELEN SMITH (cont'd)

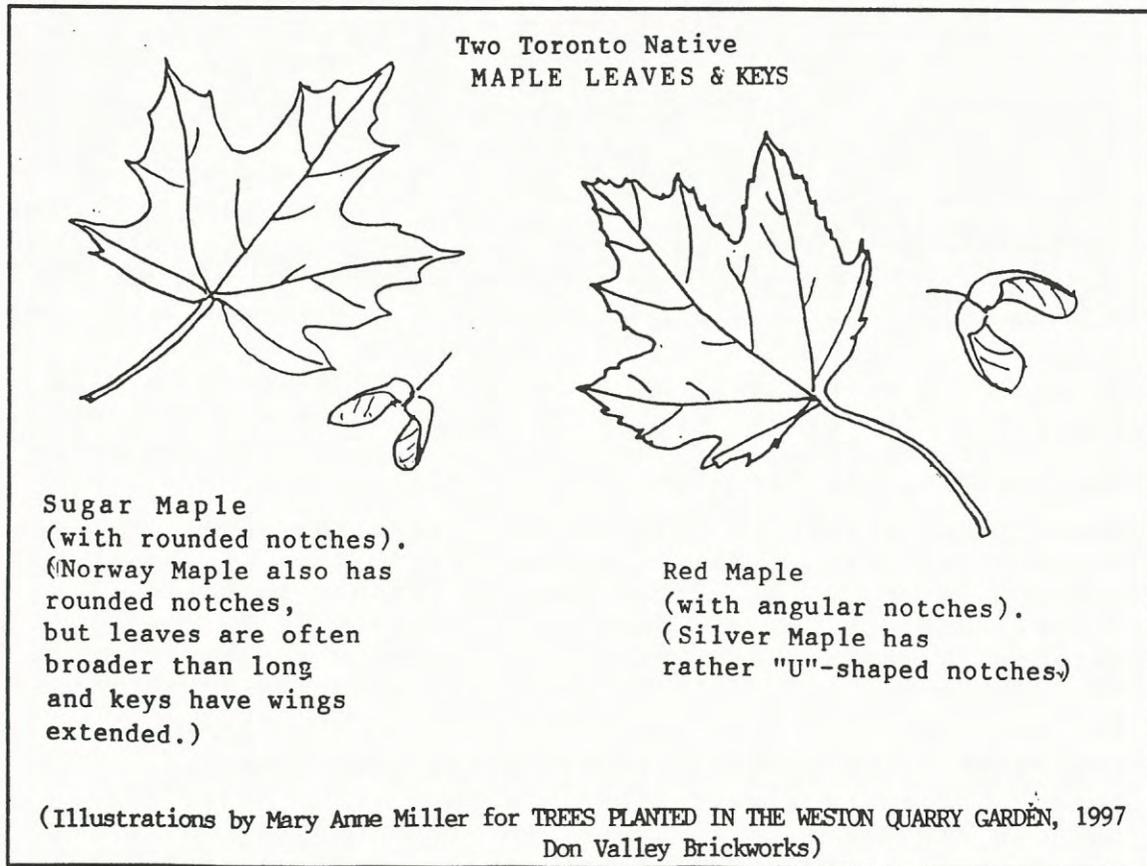
from Baja California to Bathurst Inlet to Australia and New Zealand.

I was lucky enough to meet Helen when she was still leading walks regularly for the TFN. She was knowledgeable, enthusiastic, had a wonderful ear for bird song and a lot of patience with tin-eared beginning birdwatchers. She didn't just look at birds, either. She was very fond of wildflowers and quite knowledgeable about them. Mammals really warmed her heart too: chipmunks, raccoons, dogs, foxes, and once even a deer at her apartment window!

Helen was a very hardy person for most of her life. Weather didn't bother her - heat, cold, wind, rain - if there was birdwatching to be had or she'd committed to an outing, she just ignored the weather. She did the annual TOC waterfowl count along the Humber, usually on a bitterly cold windy January day. At almost 81, she led a TFN walk at Sunnyside through gusting winds, whiteouts, and -30°C windchill. And enjoyed it!

And we enjoyed being with Helen, sharing her love for the birds and the flowers and whatever else there was to be marvelled at. She was a very special person who left us with many wonderful memories.

Carol Sellers



KEEPING IN TOUCH

January 19, 2000

More on the ladybugs! [For even more, see page 17.]

On reading our newly-arrived "Toronto Field Naturalist", February 2000, I saw Therese Paradis' answer to my question about ladybug hibernation.

Thank you, Therese. You may be interested to hear about a strange coincidence. A week or so after finding the ladybugs under our balcony carpet we were watching the "Nature Nut" (John Acorn) on TV. And guess what his subject was -- yes, ladybug hibernation. He was out in the woods finding clusters of them under the snow!

After some searching I found his e-mail address and wrote to him about my experience. This is his answer ---

"Sounds like you have a hibernating site for the introduced Southern Ladybug (aka Multi-coloured Asian Ladybug aka *Harmonia axyridis*). They can congregate in huge numbers in houses, but they should all try to leave when spring comes around. In the meantime they shouldn't be much of a bother, and they are harmless in the medical sense as well. Some will bite from time to time, but the bites are not dangerous at all."

I think our carpets are a nicer winter home than the snow.

Sybil Carmichael

Jan. 24, 2000

Re Mount Pleasant Cemetery Horse Chestnuts, I have also planted the following: Yellow Buckeye - *Aesculus octandra*, Red Buckeye - *Aesculus pavia*, Bottlebrush Buckeye (shrub) - *Aesculus parviflora*, Ohio Buckeye - *Aesculus glabra*. There is an excellent collection of Buckeyes and Horse Chestnuts (they are both the same genus) at the nuttery at Elgin Mills.

Jack Rudecki

Comment: To learn more about Mt. Pleasant Cemetery trees, attend the TFN outing on March 4.

□

Pair of coyotes
make home in cemetery.
A peaceful haven.

Haiku by Therese Paradis

PROJECTS

PLENTY OF BUILDING SPACE OFF MORAINES*

AGAIN
The region of York had, by the beginning of 1999, approved land for the construction of 54,555 units of housing, according to a report just released by the ministry of municipal affairs and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. There were another 40,000 units in the York approval pipeline. That was a year ago, of course, and developers have already begun to build on some of those sites -- and applied to have more land approved for construction. So developers have plenty of space to build in York Region. Why do they have to risk the moraine's future?

from an article by David Lewis Stein in the TORONTO STAR, January 27, 2000

FRAGILE MORAINES POORLY MANAGED: SCIENTISTS

In a petition to Premier Mike Harris, 465 scientists recommended a moratorium on development on the ridge north of Toronto known as the Oak Ridges Moraine until more research is done on how it might affect water quality and wildlife. Their recommendations include maintaining a green corridor from east to west from Durham through Peel Region to the Niagara Escarpment and establishment of a 1,200-hectare park at the upper end of Richmond Hill that would include forests and wetlands. The area is now slated for development. The petition was also presented to the office of Environment Minister Tony Clement.

from an article by Wallace Immen in the GLOBE & MAIL, February 2, 2000

MORAINES PARK MAY COST \$40M: PLANNER

Richmond Hill's planning commissioner said "The potential exists for a 1,500-acre (600-hectare) park that encompasses many of the kettle lakes, but only if -- only if -- all of the agencies are prepared to co-operate, negotiate and put up the money." It could cost as much as \$1 billion to preserve all of the moraine lands in Richmond Hill slated for development and about \$40 million for the 600 hectares if it was purchased at market value. She has recommended that 3,520 hectares of rural and agricultural land situated on the moraine be redesignated to accommodate housing. About 65 watercourses -- including the Don and Humber rivers -- run from the moraine to recharge major bodies such as Lake Simcoe, Lake Ontario and Georgian Bay.

from an article by Gail Swainson in the TORONTO STAR, February 3, 2000

MORAINES HOUSING BAN ADVOCATED

The population along the moraine would grow by nearly 100,000 in the next 20 years based on development plans approved by York, Durham and Peel regions. Another 20 development proposals that would boost the population by another 56,000 are still outstanding in York and Durham. The most controversial proposal is in Richmond Hill where developers intend to build 11,000 homes on agricultural lands along the Yonge St. corridor that would divide the moraine into two distinct sections.

* See also TFN 489, pages 17 and 21. ▷

PROJECTS (cont'd)

A 1,200-hectare park in Richmond Hill would halt development around nine kettle lakes, nearly 150 wetlands and Jefferson Forest, one of the largest woodlands in Greater Toronto. Kettle lakes are deep, rounded lakes created by fragments of glaciers that scooped out the ground 12,000 years ago. The proposed park covers an area that is home to 15 mammal species, 16 types of reptiles and amphibians, and 99 species of birds including the endangered red-shouldered hawk.

from an article by Brian McAndrew and Gail Swainson in the TORONTO STAR, Feb. 2, 2000

There are a number of ways you can help to save the Oak Ridges Moraine:

- ACTION**
- . A Town meeting is being held with Richmond Hill Council and its Mayor on February 23 at 7.00 p.m. at the Sheraton Hotel, Grand Ballroom, 600 Hwy#7 - NW corner of 7 and East Beaver Creek Road, in Richmond Hill. (Please attend the meeting to show your solidarity and, if able, speak too!)
 - . A letter expressing your concern, should be sent to:
 - Hon. Michael Harris, Premier of Ontario,
 - Room 281, Legislative Building, Toronto, Ont. M7A 1A1 with copies to:
 - . Hon. Tony Clement, Minister of Environment and Municipal Affairs and Housing, 17th Floor, 777 Bay St. Toronto, Ont. M5G 2E5
 - . Mayor William Bell and Members of Council, Town of Richmond Hill, Chairman, York Region Transportation and Works Committee, P.O.Box 300 Richmond Hill, Ont. L4C 4Y5
 - . Your own MPP

You may want to make the following suggestions:

- . Create a 2700 acre Kettle Lakes Park to protect the unique geological and biological features of the Oak Ridges Moraine in Richmond Hill, and to preserve a recreational area for all to enjoy;
- . Use 5% (\$1 billion) of the existing \$20 billion SuperBuild growth fund to create a land acquisition fund so that the government could buy and protect land on the Moraine and in other sensitive wildlife areas in southern Ontario;
- . Stop the extension of Bayview Avenue through the Proposed Kettle Lakes Park area;
- . Put a development freeze on the whole Oak Ridges Moraine until a complete protection strategy is in place.

... a shortage of clean fresh water could well be the ultimate limiting factor to human population growth.

from FRESH WATER by E.C. Pilou, University of Chicago Press, 1998

GOLF ASSOCIATION NIXES PLAN FOR COURSE AT PROVINCIAL PARK

Bowing to pressure from Oakville residents, the Royal Canadian Golf Association dropped Bronte Provincial Park from its list of potential sites for a new national training centre and championship golf course.

The association had expressed an interest in using part of the park -- the only provincial park in an urban area -- to build new golf facilities, but the proposal prompted objections from naturalists and environmentalists.

Bronte Provincial Park straddles the Burlington-Oakville city boundary and is a popular destination for hikers. The province plans to develop a campground in the park on the site where the association expressed an interest in building a golf course.

extracted from an article by Martin Mittelstaedt in the GLOBE & MAIL, Jan. 19, 2000

BRAMPTON CONSERVATION AREA EYED FOR GOLF COMPLEX

The Royal Canadian Golf Association is eyeing Brampton's Clairville Conservation Area as its new potential site for a 45-hole national golf complex.

The association, which recently dropped Bronte Creek Provincial Park on the Oakville-Burlington border from its list of 12 potential sites in Greater Toronto because of public opposition, is now running into the same problem with Clairville.

The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority developed the management plan in 1997, which designates most of the undeveloped area of the park as public open space.

The west branch of the Humber River runs through the conservation area, from Williams Parkway in Brampton to the Clairville Reservoir, south of Steeles Ave. at the northwest tip of Toronto, near Highway 427.

The plan would involve leasing about 40 hectares of public land between Highway 7 and Williams Parkway for \$200,000 a year. The association would also purchase Woodlands Golf & Country Club next door to include in the development.

extracted from an article by Mike Funston in the TORONTO STAR, Jan. 27, 2000

..understanding our environment is one of the deepest pleasures of mankind -- trying to make sense of the world...if we aren't interested in the world about us, what are we interested in?

extracted from "The Wildlife Interim"(an interview with David Attenborough) by D. Nicholson-Lord in BBC WILDLIFE, Vol. 16, No. 10, Oct. 1998

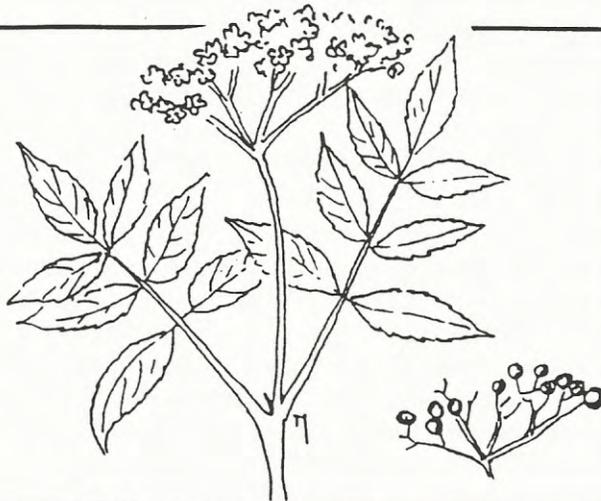
PROJECTS (cont'd)

Here we go again. See TFN 489 (February) page 16 for the beginning of this story. Let the Golf Association know what you think of their latest move. Please write to: Stephen Ross, Executive Director, Royal Canadian Golf Association, 1333 Dorval Dr., Oakville, Ont.

L6J 4Z3 with copies to:

- Mayor and members of Council, 2 Wellington Street West, Brampton, Ont. L6Y 4R2
- Chairman and members, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, 5 Shoreham Drive, Downsview, Ont. M3N 1S4
- Hon. John Snobelen, Minister of Natural Resources, Room 6301, Whitney Block, 99 Wellesley Street West, Toronto, Ont. M7A 1W3
- Your own MPP

AMERICAN or COMMON ELDER
is a common shrub of moist situations in Toronto, native to our area. Mary Anne Miller has illustrated a flowering branch and a cluster of the purple-black elderberries, arranged in a broad cyme. (Honeysuckle Family)



Individuals have a role to play in helping to maintain the planet in a habitable state.

- Concerned citizens can change their lifestyle and behaviour.
- Join an environmental organization. By doing so, you give that organization more political clout. And it's clout that will be needed to force reforms to damaging environmental policies.
- Use your purchasing power as a weapon. If you are an investor, demand accountability from companies.
- Choose to tread more lightly on the planet, whether that is through green energy, organic food, fair trade, reusing and recycling, driving less and using trains, buses and bikes more, neighbourhood shopping, or whatever.

These little changes all add up, and, multiplied across hundreds of millions of households, will make a difference.

from "Resolution Time" by Phil Gates in BBC WILDLIFE, Vol. 18, NO. 1, Jan. 2000

PROJECTS (cont'd)

GROUNDS FOR ALARM... THE DARK SIDE OF COFFEE

Coffee is a shade-tolerant plant and has traditionally been grown on small farms set within existing forests or in slightly modified environments. On a traditional farm, coffee shrubs are grown under a canopy of citrus or cacao trees, banana plants, palms and commercial timber species. Omnivorous birds find food aplenty in such a diversified environment and farmers supplement the income earned from the coffee harvest with cash from other agricultural products. As well, the biological diversity inherent in these farms reduces the need for chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Shade-grown coffee is arguably the most environmentally friendly form of agriculture possible in a tropical environment.

As a result of widespread deforestation and environmental degradation in Latin America, migratory birds increasingly rely on the refuge provided by traditional coffee farms. The prevalence of these small holdings in middle elevations, where there are few protected areas, have made them an important adjunct to existing forest reserves. In areas where the forest has been destroyed, these small farms have become the last refuge of forest species. Up to 180 species of birds have been recorded on some farms, almost as many as in an undisturbed forest. Among them are many of the warblers, orioles, tanagers, flycatchers, thrushes and vireos.

However, the traditional coffee farms are under threat. Beginning in the 1970s, concerns over fungal diseases combined with demands for increased agricultural yields and foreign exchange earnings led to a push to "technify" the coffee industry. The result has been a sweeping government-sanctioned shift to modern production techniques. The result: large industrial farms with a monoculture of coffee shrubs. The increased productivity comes at a hefty price: soil erosion, acidification, groundwater contamination by dangerous chemicals such as DDT, potential changes in micro-climatic conditions and reduced quality of life for coffee labourers. The huge plantations become a virtual biological desert. Studies have shown that 94-97% of bird species disappear following conversion to full-sun coffee production.

What can we do? Choose to buy high-quality, shade-grown coffee. (While the term "shade-grown" is as yet unregulated and offers no guarantee of significant biodiversity, it is still a step in the right direction.) Your local supermarket is probably not an option yet, but there exist reliable suppliers of coffee whose production and marketing strategies embody environmental and social justice values.

Bridgehead, a not-for-profit, fair trade organization, sells shade-grown coffee by phone, mail order, through the Internet and at their stores in Ottawa and Toronto. Phone (800)463-4143 or 975-8788 in Toronto.

Alternative Grounds, a coffee house in Toronto's west end, roast their own shade-grown coffees on the premises. Phone (416)534-6335 or (800)566-9273.

PROJECTS (cont'd)

World Wildlife Fund Canada is now marketing roasting kits for those adventurous enough to roast their own shade-grown coffee beans.
 Phone (416)489-8800.

With two million acres of tropical rainforest disappearing every year in Mexico and Central America, and almost half the region's coffee now growing on full-sun farms, it is vital that we coffee drinkers consider the impact of our habit on wildlife and create a market for a more sustainable product. Let's brew for the birds!

from TOUCHING DOWN, Spring 1999

THE DOUG TARRY AWARDS FOR THE YEAR 2000
 YOUNG ORNITHOLOGISTS' WORKSHOP

Attention parents and keen teen birders! The 2000 Young Ornithologists' Workshop will be held at Long Point Bird Observatory from 28 July to 4 August. This intensely-packed week of activities focuses on field ornithology and includes banding, censusing, field identification, birding trips, bird skinning, guest lectures, warbler model making and much more!

Come make new friends from across the country with similar interests in the world of birds. Six lucky applicants (ages 13-17) will be selected for the Doug Tarry Bird Study Awards and recipients will have all expenses (except travel costs) paid.

Applications are due by 15 March 2000. For additional information and an application form, contact: Jul Wojnowski, Landbird Programs Coordinator, Bird Studies Canada, P.O.Box 160, Port Rowan, ON NOE 1M0 (email: lpbo@bsc-eoc.org)

'TORONTO'S KIDS, INSIDE OUT!

How do you spell refreshing? The Sierra Club of Canada's Children's Summer Outings Program, that's how! To nurture a feeling of stewardship through the profound experience of nature, we invite small groups of kids, ages 8-13 yrs, from community centres inside the city to day hikes and nature walks within reach of Toronto.

Now in our second year, we are looking for happy naturalists who want the rewards of becoming a volunteer leader. In the company of these lively kids, you will gain a new perspective on the outdoors, and have a chance to pass on your enthusiasm about your favourite hikes.

Interested individuals please contact Ingrid Sikorcin at (416)763-5425 or isikorcin@globalserve.net.

Tracy Ross
 Leadership Coordinator
 Sierra Club Children's Summer
 Outings Program

PROJECTS (cont'd)

WRITERS GO WILD OVER THE ROUGE

Corporate sponsors are needed to finance a new book 'Wild In The City' which chronicles the 24-year battle to save the Rouge Valley and its water systems through photos (by Bill Lewis), anecdotes, and volunteer profiles.

Save the Rouge started in 1975 as an effort to keep development from spoiling the region.

"Wild In The City" chronicles recent battles with developers to protect the smaller water systems that flow from the Rouge River through Toronto and eventually into Lake Ontario.

The main message is that people can make a difference.

The book will cost about \$50, with all proceeds going to Save the Rouge projects. Interested sponsors can call 282-9983 to receive a donor information package.

from an article by Stephanie Waddell in the SCARBOROUGH MIRROR, Dec. 1, 1999

WHAT TO DO IF YOU FIND A BANDED BIRD

If you find a banded bird, it is important to gather all the information you can about the bird and report it to the Bird Banding Office by phone (toll-free): 1-800-327-2263 1-800-327-BAND or by mail: Bird banding Office, Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0H3

Note all the numbers on the band, the date the band was found and the exact location where it was found. Other information regarding how the bird was found or killed is also very valuable. If you can identify the species, that information is helpful. Remember to include your name and address. If you see a colour-marked bird (marked with dye or with supplementary coloured bands or tags), record as much of the above information as possible and send it to the Bird Banding Office. Any bird bander can assist you with this.

When you provide this information, you will receive a Certificate of Appreciation telling you where and when the bird was banded, who banded it, and other information collected by the bander. Data obtained from recovered bands reported by the public are a critical part of bird banding. The recovery information will be a valuable addition to the permanent files of the Bird Banding Office.

from a flyer prepared and distributed by the Ontario Bird Banding Association,
10 Paulson Court, St. Thomas, Ont. N5R 1M9

PROJECTS (cont'd)

FREE EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

The Canadian Nature Federation (CNF) national Lady Beetle Survey comes to a close November 15. If you haven't yet received your beautiful full colour ladybug poster, call for copies. A teacher's guide is also available to help bring the bugs to life in the classroom.

The CNF Schools for Species kit has everything you need to teach kids about Canada's 339 species at risk. An information guide, teacher's guide, and fact sheets on 25 animals and plants are included with a beautiful poster of the extirpated Karner blue butterfly. Call for copies.

Ontario residents and visitors will want a copy of the CNF "Ontario Old Growth Ecotour" booklet. This four-pager tells you all about the province's most precious forests, and includes a map and description of 10 Ontario old Growth "hot spots."

While these educational materials are offered free of charge, donations to cover mailing costs are greatly appreciated.

Canadian Nature Federation, 1 Nicholas Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B7
 (613)562-3447 (800)267-4088 Web site: <http://www.cnf.ca>
 Charitable Registration Number 11883 4704 RR 0001

from NATURE MATTERS, Autumn 1999

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AND YET MORE ABOUT LADYBUGS!!!

Ladybugs may be tiny, but they can eat like a horse. In fact, when researchers at Michigan State University's Department of Entomology studied one ladybug species, known as convergent lady beetles, they found a female may eat up to 75 aphids a day, and a larva may consume up to 350 aphids during its lifespan. No wonder ladybugs are called beneficial insects!

from "Tidbits" in BIRDS & BLOOMS, Feb/March 2000

AND MORE...

If ladybugs are invading your home, you may want to move them elsewhere. Here's what to do. Place fresh apple slices in the infested areas, replacing them every 4 to 7 days as needed. As the ladybugs congregate by the apple slices, gather them up with a small broom and dustpan. Then gently shake them into a bag or jar. Just store the jar in your refrigerator -- the cold temperature will force the ladybugs into hibernation. When spring arrives, release them in your yard, where they'll mate and also provide effective and natural pest control.

from "Leave those ladybugs be" in BIRDS & BLOOMS, Feb/March 2000

THE LOWER DON? - NO WAY.

I had the good fortune of being asked to help lead a grade three class on a "nature walk". It was mid-October and the trip was from the Regent Park/Duke of York Public School to the Chester Springs Marsh. I was impressed with the environmental awareness program which is being undertaken by the Toronto School Board these days, and jumped at the chance. This walk was not just an "identification and appreciation" walk, it was to be a demonstration of the concepts of biodiversity and the interaction of the flora and fauna in a creek/wetland environment. A bit of a handful for grade three I thought, but I really wanted to get a first-hand look at the program.

The day started with the nervous "Hello, my name is Ken" introductions in the classroom -- a wonderful classroom I might add, run by a teacher who really cares. Next there was the regimentation in the courtyard in preparation for a trip through Regent Park, Riverdale Farm and the Don Valley. It looked like behaviour-related things were well in hand, which was reassuring.

The trip through Regent Park was filled with a constant stream of questions about the names of trees and, of course, the intensity of the questioning increased as the number of identifications were made. But this was not really the point of the trip, although I felt it would help later in the explanation of biodiversity. We arrived at Riverdale Farm primed for a lesson in nature through personal observation (a TFN type of thing -- which pleased me).

The class of 25 enthusiastic kids was divided into four teams. Each team was assigned a leader responsible for writing down the names of various species of plants that were observed by the team. The others were designated as observers and were "tasked" with taking small samples of some of the leaves, flowers and seeds. Care was taken that the samples were small and just representative of some of the various plant species and that only one sample of each was taken by the class. The location covered was a meadow next to a treed area and beside two naturalised ponds filled with ducks, turtles and, unfortunately, bits of garbage. All of the observations were carefully recorded by the note-taker with help from the team, from me, and from the teacher. Simple bird identification was introduced -- the ducks were "mallards", a picture of which was found in a book (special note was made of that). After several short discussions, we left this area and moved to the grass-covered dog run outside the fence.

At this point we performed a simple experiment.

"How many plant species do you see in this place? Count them."

This was to reinforce the concept of "biodiversity", and it was noted that there were way fewer plant species here than there were inside the fence (the kids seemed to get the point). The importance of biodiversity was reinforced by a first-hand look at an American elm in the final stages of "death by fungus" and a story about what happened to the species. I think I was getting through, the students were

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THE LOWER DON? - NO WAY. (cont'd)

almost listening -- I was pleased again.

The next phase of the trip is where I got a real wake-up call regarding the Don River. I have been a supporter of the "Bring back the Don" program, but I really had no idea of the successes until...

We walked onto the foot bridge just north of Gerrard and looked down into the river. I talked a bit about how abundant the fish were in this river at one time, but, although we saw no fish, I made special note of a few black-backed gulls wading under the bridge. These are serious gulls, generally not looking for garbage like the ring-billed variety; black-backs eat fish. We descended the stairs onto the bike path and started towards Chester Springs Marsh. We had just got started when one of the students (the one with a hidden stash of Pokemon cards in his pocket) grabbed me and said he saw a blue jay flying into a tree across the river. I struggled to get a glimpse of it, and, as I'm sure you guessed, it was a belted kingfisher, another serious fishing bird... wow. I had seen one on the pre-walk, but this was the confirmation that it was a resident, not even spooked by 25 kids and three adults on a field trip. But the last observation sealed it. I looked downstream and saw a bird with a large wing-span flying just above river level under the Gerrard St. bridge. A large gull? Nope, a great blue heron! It's hard to explain how that made me feel. This river used to be a public health hazard just a few years ago. Something is working, and I am pleased to have been a part of it, in whatever small way I have. I smiled.

We made our way up to Chester Springs, making another great observation on the way -- a small brown snake that we saved from being squashed on the bike path. We were back to the "what's this?, what's that?" phase, and stopped once to collect some garbage while observing the diversity of plant species that the garbage was messing up. But, we were treated to a special bonus at Chester Springs Marsh. We walked out onto the sand bar at the edge of the river and can you believe it, we came across a beached salmon about a metre in length! The kids went wild, they thought it was great. But that was it, they couldn't take any more, these kids were "observationed out" and we were ready to go back. Before leaving we did let them do "their thing" which was... throw stones into the river (they were grade three kids). Their game -- who could make the largest plop, who could make the smallest, who could skip a stone the farthest. Some things never change, do they -- this part was fun (and I won the farthest skipper contest -- although these grade threes are getting harder to beat all the time...smile).

Back in the classroom, the "debriefing" session was a real revelation. Good questions were asked by the teacher, which were responded to with good answers. These kids even remembered the names of all the animals pictured on the Chester Springs Marsh sign. This all made things worthwhile for me, they were learning.

The students were then asked what they liked most about the trip and I got a bit of a laugh at some of the responses. There were many good ones but the one I liked best: ▷

THE LOWER DON? - NO WAY. (cont'd)

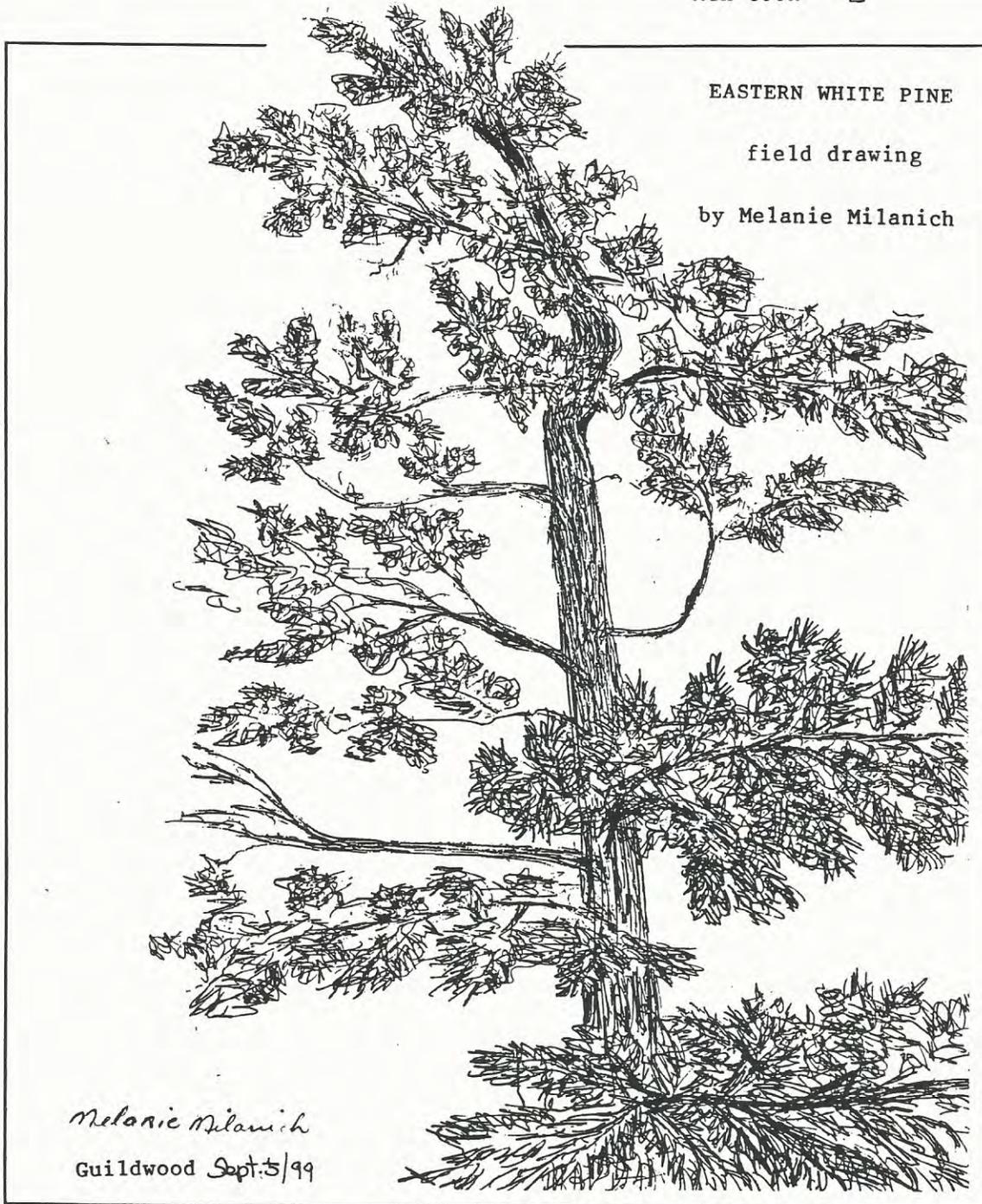
"Jason, what did you like most about the trip?"

Jason, with a smile, "I didn't get a detention all morning!"

(Think about it.)

A good day was had by all, and everyone learned something.

Ken Cook ☐



SPRING AND SUMMER MUSHROOMS TO FIND IN TORONTO

Are you fascinated by mushrooms but don't know where to start to study them? A recent list of Toronto lawn mushrooms by David Malloch should help. In just about any field guide you will find:

SPRING

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. <i>Agrocybe dura</i> | HARD or CRACKED EARTHSCALE |
| 2. <i>Agrocybe pediades</i> | HEMISPHERIC AGROCYBE or
ROUNDTOP EARTHSCALE |
| 3. <i>Coprinus atramentarius</i> | INK CAP or ALCOHOL INKY or
TIPLER'S BANE |
| 4. <i>Coprinus micaceus</i> | MICA CAP or GLISTENING INKY |
| 5. <i>Panaeolus foenisecii</i>
(<i>Psathyrella foenisecii</i>) | HAYMAKER'S or LAWNMOWER'S
MUSHROOM |

SUMMER

- | | |
|---|---|
| 6. <i>Agaricus campestris</i> | one of two called MEADOW or
FIELD MUSHROOM |
| 7. <i>Clitocybe dealbata</i> | SWEATING MUSHROOM or IVORY CLITOCYBE |
| 8. <i>Conocybe lactea</i> | WHITE DUNCE-CAP |
| 9. <i>Conocybe tenera</i> | BROWN DUNCE-CAP |
| 10. <i>Coprinus plicatilis</i> | JAPANESE UMBRELLA (INKY) |
| 11. <i>Marasmius oreades</i> | FAIRY-RING MUSHROOM |
| 12. <i>Entoloma sericeum</i> | SILKY ENTOLOMA |
| 13. <i>Psathyrella candolleana</i>
(<i>P. atrolaminata</i>)
(<i>Hypholoma appendiculatum</i>)
(<i>H. incertum</i>) | COMMON PSATHYRELLA or
FRINGED CRUMBLE-CAP |

That's a baker's dozen but you wouldn't want to eat them. Those not mildly or seriously poisoning may well be contaminated with pesticides. "Lawn" doesn't only mean yours or your neighbours' but those of parks, cemeteries, golf-courses - wherever you find a lawn in the course of your day. If you want more of a challenge - and a feather-in-your cap for the distinction of reporting the first location and date for species never before reported in Toronto, try these:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. <i>Calocybe carnea</i> | PINK CALOCYBE |
| 2. <i>Gastrocybe lateritia</i> | (BRICK-COLOURED) GASTROCYBE |
| 3. <i>Marasmius graminum</i> | (GRASS) MARASMIUS |

Not found in most popular field-guides, but 1 & 2 are illustrated and described in the new Barron. No. 3 challenge is a tiny (3-8 mm) mushroom on a dark wiry stalk - easy to identify if you don't mind lying down and searching among the individual grass-plants; from their bases arise these minute brick-red mushrooms. Please send in reports to TFN of any mushrooms you find - familiar or obscure.

Diana Banville

Ref.: Fungi in general and mushrooms in particular by David Malloch, 1999
in SPECIAL PLACES published by Royal Canadian Institute.

MUSHROOMS OF ONTARIO AND EASTERN CANADA by George Barron, 1999 (See Review TFN 485:20.)

 ETHICS IN THE SNOW

Like other kids, I tried putting baby birds back in their nests on the one hand, and hunted frogs with a bow and arrow on the other. As I grew older, I learned that there are a number of good reasons for *not* putting baby birds back in their nests, and that shooting at something that can't shoot back is not only unsporting, it isn't justifiable on any grounds. Rule: don't interfere with Mother Nature.

Simple rules – simple life.

And then reality intrudes.

Now the robin fledgling we saw on the ground was dead already, and anyway I'm just not up to climbing maple trees anymore. The young blue jay that looked so helpless was able to flap up to a low limb when I approached, well out of range of cats and foxes. OK. No problems.

We were out for a short mid-January stroll in the Hydro corridor along Taylor Creek, listening for crows and decrying dog droppings, when for no particular reason I looked down. On the trail, just where my left foot was headed, was something yellow that wasn't a candy wrapper.

Without thinking; that's important, without thinking; I stooped down and picked the thing up.

The "thing" was a young budgie.

RULE VIOLATION!

The bird was too exhausted to struggle. It just nestled in my warm hand, its heart hammering. It had not even the energy left to bite me.

The temperature was about minus 8 and snow clouds were gathering. I had three choices: I could check with the thousands of tenants in the nearby apartment buildings to see if anyone had lost a bird; I could take it home; I could put it back down where I found it and pretend I never saw it. It would be dead within the hour.

If you and I were sitting together enjoying a cup of tea, at this point I would ask you: "So what should I have done?" We aren't; I won't; I'll just tell you what I did do.

I cupped my other hand around the first to add warmth and keep out the wind. We turned around and headed for home.

The first young woman we met said "I knew you had something alive and important by the way you were holding your hands. It's OK, my cat's a stray I picked up one cold night." The second worked in the pet store we visited to get some budgie food. She saw no bird, and noticed only the young man she was conversing with. She paused only long enough to ring up the sale on her cash register. Different priorities.

We didn't have a bird cage hanging around the house so a sieve had to do; it really wasn't a budgie sized sieve. To make a number of trip stories short, we now have \$75 worth of cage and budgie paraphernalia to house our "free" bird.

And the third option - locating the owner? Perhaps some heart-broken child is mourning the loss of her feathered friend? Our rationalizations went something like this: there were too many apartments and too many buildings; the owners should have closed their windows; it was a young bird so no one had time to become attached to it; it was too cold; we could be charged with birdnapping. We walked the same route a couple of weeks later and found no Lost Bird signs!

Since our last cat ran away from home, we have reassured each other that we neither need nor especially want a pet. We have human friends and each other for company. Pets would tie us down. We aren't home enough to give a pet the attention it needs. And so on.

I have a feeling I haven't heard the last of this. "Pretty bird. Pretty bird."

Oh well.

THE TREES OF MOUNT PLEASANT CEMETERY

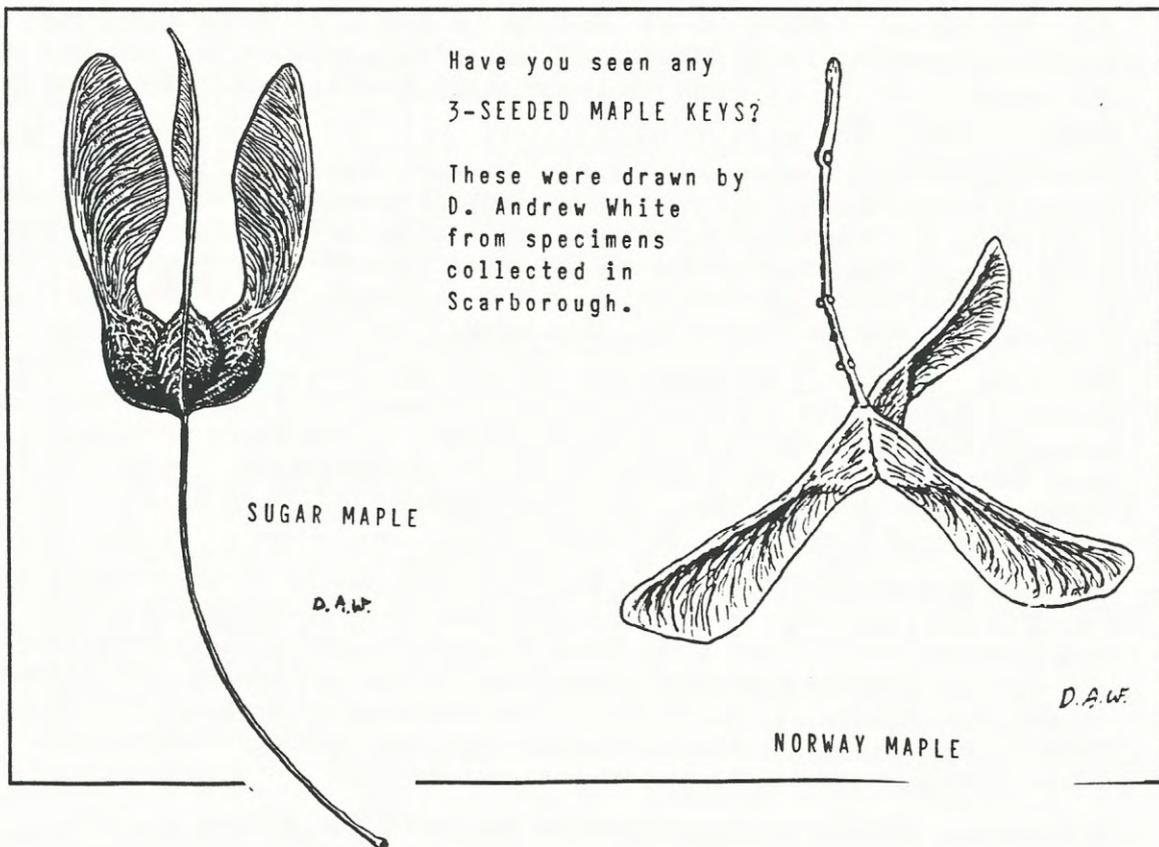
As a teenager I was a big Elvis fan. I still love his music but all those "B" movies ruined his image. Every fan knows he was born in Tupelo, Mississippi in 1935. I later learned Tupelo was named after a local tree (*Nyssa sylvatica*). This tree just ranges into southern Ontario and has been planted in section "J" in Mount Pleasant. Other common names for the Tupelo are Sourgum and Black Gum. The trees seem to be stunted from our cold winters but the autumn colours are spectacular. The leaves take on the same colour as Crotons, the house plant.

The scientific name *Nyssa* comes from Mount Nyssa in Asia Minor. It was the legendary home of the water nymphs. Tupelo seems to like to grow near water. It has a very close grain and some decoy duck carvers swear by it. Many old homes in Toronto have gum wood trim around inside doors and windows. Real estate agents try to sell it as a big feature as if it were expensive. It is actually very cheap.

The people in Mount Pleasant have labelled this tree Black Gum but to me Tupelo is a much nicer name.

Roger Powley

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IN THE NEWS

TWO BIRD SPECIES DECLARED ENDANGERED

Two rare birds, the prothonotary warbler and the king rail, have been added to the province's endangered species list.

The prothonotary warbler, a small bird that nests in swampy woodlands, has been in decline for 15 years, and breeding populations are limited to two provincial parks on Lake Erie.

The king rail is a chicken-sized marsh bird. The Ontario population is estimated at fewer than 50 breeding pairs.

Ontario's endangered wildlife legislation now protects 26 species.

from an article by Martin Mittelstaedt in the GLOBE & MAIL, Jan. 6, 2000

AN INCREDIBLE JOURNEY IN KING

To the astonishment of duck biologists, mallard ducklings this past summer scurried and scrambled after their mothers across fields, forests, marshes and roads of King Township, covering more than two kilometres.

It was an incredible journey for the ducklings. But what was surprising is that the mallard females bypassed many ponds that looked perfectly healthy. Ducks always have a good reason for whatever they do. The reason: The bypassed ponds in this area of farms and estate homes may have been contaminated by pesticide runoff which, even at low levels, can dramatically reduce aquatic invertebrates, the primary food for ducklings.

Those hazardous walkabouts compounded already troubling findings: Ontario's most common and well-known duck is producing fewer ducklings. Despite being determined nesters -- one female laid a fifth set of eggs after the previous four had been destroyed by predators -- only 14 nests hatched ducklings out of 116 nests located. Most of the eggs were eaten by skunks, foxes and raccoons.

Since the prime food for ducklings is aquatic invertebrates -- mosquito larvae, freshwater shrimp, and so on -- their mothers normally take them to the nearest pond. But in the study area, most took their ducklings on dangerous one- and two-kilometre treks, bypassing many ponds before finding a suitable one, such as a sewage lagoon.

Scientists suspect the bypassed ponds had low levels of invertebrates. Aquatic invertebrates are known to be sensitive to low levels of insecticides and to common farm and lawn herbicides such as atrazine and 2,4-D. Long-term runoff of many pesticides can lead to reduction of numbers, diversity, distribution and richness of such species. Good nesting habitat for mallards involves both a high-quality aquatic environment and low predator numbers.

extracted from an article by Stephen Leahy in the TORONTO STAR, November 20, 1999

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IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

WILD TURKEYS REINTRODUCED

Wild turkeys were reintroduced to the Rouge Park with the release of 10 birds from other areas of Greater Toronto. The project was funded by a \$3,900 grant from the provincial natural resources ministry and matched by the Rouge Park Alliance.

extracted from an article in the TORONTO STAR, January 31, 2000

DON'T FEAR OR FEED CITY-DWELLING COYOTES, TORONTONIANS URGED

Don't be afraid of the coyote, but don't feed it. They are found across the metropolitan area -- in Ajax and Pickering on the east, along the Scarborough waterfront, up the Don and Humber valleys and into Mississauga on the west, not to forget High Park. They generally weigh 18 to 22 kilograms and resemble German shepherds in size and stature; they are considerably lighter, but their grey or grey-beige fur is so thick they may look as heavy as a 40-kilo dog. They very rarely bite people and seldom get rabies; in fact, they may help to fight the disease by killing or displacing foxes, the main carriers in this area. The trouble is that they are less and less shy of people, associating them with food rather than danger. People are urged to keep their dogs leashed in the park and, if they are nervous, to carry an umbrella, which will scare off a coyote if opened suddenly, or a noise-maker. Don't feed the coyotes by accident or on purpose. You're not doing them any favour. You are, in fact, creating a situation where their fate may not be so great.

extracted from an article by John Saunders in the GLOBE & MAIL, January 19, 2000

SEWAGE LEAK COULD DAMAGE WETLAND

An underground spill of thousands of litres of raw household sewage from a broken pipe may damage an environmentally sensitive wetland in Caledon East. The leak began when a 30-centimetre sewage pipe, buried about 3 metres deep, ruptured near a sewage-pumping station east of Airport Rd., beside the Trans-Canada Trail and Centreville Creek. The stench finally alerted people to call the Ministry of the Environment. The leak went undetected for as long as six hours, with raw effluent, mostly residential sewage from Caledon East, inundating a strip of reclaimed wetland along the creek. The creek is a tributary of the upper Humber River, which flows east of the spill site.

extracted from an article by Frank Calleja in the TORONTO STAR, January 27, 2000

WORKING TO BRING BACK THE DON

The North Toronto pollution control plant is getting a facelift. A conceptual plan has been developed and includes a clean-up of the site, development of wetlands and many terrestrial habitat enhancements. Proposed are some trail improvements at the base of Crothers Woods to try to decrease some of the traffic going through the woods, as well as a formal trail connection between the east and west side of the river so it could be accessed more easily. Some of the other improvements

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IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

include a prairie restoration centre and extension of Crothers Woods. In the fall, approximately 400 trees were planted to extend Crothers Woods down into the more level area around the plant. There is also the opportunity to put in an off-channel wetland on the north side of the plant and create a wildlife habitat. These projects are sometimes funded by some of the provincial and federal ministries that are interested in cleaning up the waterways.

extracted from an article by Cathy Sheldrick in the NORTH TORONTO TOWN CRIER, Feb. 2000

COPPERISH ECLIPSE WINS A WOW RATING FOR MOON

On January 20, 2000 the first total eclipse of the moon in almost four years occurred with perfectly clear skies for the entire three-hour event. This eclipse was slightly darker than average, with deep copper and brown hues, the full moon dimmed to 1/10,000 its normal brightness.

extracted from an article by Terence Dickinson in the TORONTO STAR, January 23, 2000

FIRST PROOF: PESTICIDES, PCBs CAUSE BREAST CANCER

Canadian cancer researchers have found the first firm evidence that PCBs and the banned pesticide mirex cause breast cancer, in a three-year study that's the largest of its kind ever done. Dr. Kristan (correct) Aronson of Queen's University analyzed tissue from breast biopsies and presented her findings to the World Conference on Breast Cancer in Ottawa.

from an article by Tom Spears in the OTTAWA CITIZEN, July 20, 1999 via the INTERVENOR, July-September 1999

80% of CANADIANS FAVOUR PROTECTING HABITAT

A poll by Pollara in early September 1999 show that 80% of Canadians are in favour of endangered species legislation that protects wildlife habitat regardless of whether it is on private or public land. A little more than 60% said landowners should be criminally responsible for destroying habitat. But 86% agreed with the idea of offering landowners incentives.

from an article by Anne McIlroy in the GLOBE & MAIL, September 22, 1999 via the INTERVENOR, July-September 1999

DEER AMONG HEADLIGHTS

A rampaging deer caused havoc in Etobicoke after leading police on a wild chase from one underground parking garage to another. The deer, believed to have come from a wooded area near the Humber River, damaged several cars in a condominium complex garage on Southport St. near The Queensway. Police were called but the animal eluded officers and ran a block to another garage on Ripley Ave. Police surrounded the animal with the help of Humane Society employees, who tranquilized it.

extracted from an article in the TORONTO STAR, January 16, 2000

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IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

ONTARIO PREPARED TO DEVELOP PARKS IN LAKESHORE AREAS

Almost 3,000 kilometres of lakeshore along Georgian Bay, Lake Huron and Lake Superior is to be protected and its recreation potential is to be developed and promoted, the Ontario government says, under an expansion of its parks policy.

The lakeshore stretches from Port Severn on Georgian Bay along the Saint Mary's River and along the north shore of Lake Superior to the U.S. border. The total area of the so-called Great Lakes Heritage Coast is 1.1 million hectares. The protected parks will cover 760,500 hectares, an area one-third larger than Prince Edward Island.

The stated objective of the new parks program is to protect the coast's scenic beauty and its natural ecosystems. The program is to promote the potential of the coast for recreation, tourism and other economic benefits. About 290,000 people live along the coast and there are 13 major cities and towns and 18 First Nations communities.

The heritage coast area will extend two kilometres inland from the shoreline of Georgian Bay, the North Channel above Manitoulin Island, and along Lake Superior to Wawa. From Wawa to Marathon it will extend five kilometres inland, and from Marathon to the U.S. border, five kilometres inland.

extracted from an article by Richard Mackie in the GLOBE & MAIL, Jan. 27, 2000

EARTH-SHAKING WEATHER CHANGE

They may not be earthquakes, but trembles of some sort have been driving people shaking and scared from their homes in Orillia.

A seismologist with the Geological Survey of Canada has received numerous calls on the earthquake line in the last week from people in Ontario and Quebec describing shaking houses and rumbling sounds.

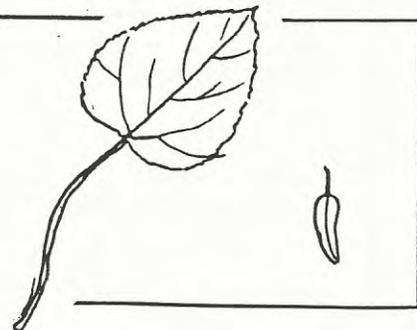
With little or no snow to insulate the ground, the sudden cold temperatures penetrate more deeply and quickly.

Ice in the ground contracts as temperatures plummet and these sudden contractions will set off rumbles in the ground that can shake houses.

extracted from an article in the GLOBE & MAIL, January 20, 2000

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TREMBLING ASPEN - common Toronto native
 Leaf with flattened stalk
 which causes the trembling;
 Fruit capsule from one of the
 seed catkins - showing the split.
 Illustration by Mary Anne Miller



THE WEATHER (THIS TIME LAST YEAR)

March 1999, Toronto

March was a spectacularly sunny, dry month. Mean temperatures were just over average, extending the warm run another month, but only by about one degree or less. Downtown received only 4.0 mm of rain, the lowest since 1967 which had 3.6 mm. The story at Pearson was even more extreme, with 0.6 mm being the lowest March rainfall ever. Snowfall was in the 20-25 cm range, just above normal, and this rendered a total precipitation of 23.4 mm at Pearson and 31.0 mm downtown, less than half the normal and the lowest since 1992. What was perhaps more amazing was that no measurable precipitation fell in southern Ontario after March 6th (a substantial snowstorm) and so the rest of the month was dominated by a blocking high with almost total sunshine, especially from March 10th-17th and March 23rd-31st. Sunshine hours were 228.8 hours downtown and 232.0 hours at Pearson Airport. This easily beat 1915s record of 211.6 hours.

Under the high pressure regime, storm systems stayed well to the south in the U.S. after March 6th, and while the month's beginning was cold and a little stormy, temperatures rose slowly but steadily, briefly just breaking the 20°C mark on March 31st. This could not be compared with last year's freakish warmth at the end of the month, but it did indicate another early start to spring. The dry, sunny weather was reducing soil moisture levels already, notwithstanding the heavy snows of early January. A few patches of ice and snow persisted in shaded ravine areas to the end of March.

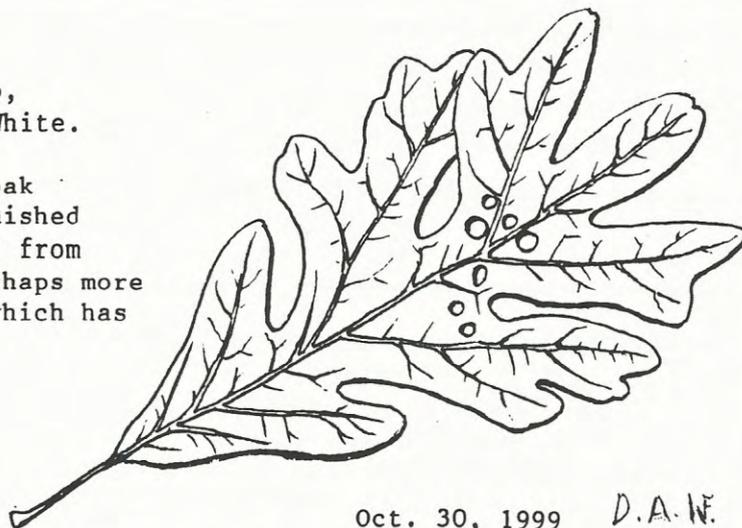
Gavin Miller

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A WHITE OAK LEAF
from Dundas, Ontario,
drawn by D. Andrew White.

The familiar white oak
of Toronto, distinguished
by its rounded lobes from
the equally - or perhaps more
familiar - red oak which has
pointed lobes.

Both common
Toronto natives



Oct. 30, 1999

D.A.W.

COMING EVENTS

Toronto Ornithological Club - Jim Baillie Memorial Bird Walks - aimed at the intermediate birder, but beginners are welcome. Free.

- Waterfowl - Toronto to Burlington - Sat. March 25 from 9 am (all day) with Glenn Coady. Meet at the southwest corner of Grenadier Pond at Ellis Ave. and the Queensway to form a car pool. Bring a lunch and dress warmly.

High Park Citizens' Advisory Committee Walking Tours

- March 12 - Colborne Lodge - inside and out at 1:15 pm (nature diaries for children)
- March 26 - The birds of winter at 9 am

Meet at the south side of the Grenadier Teahouse & Cafe (across the street at the benches). Walks may go on uncleared trails. Wear appropriate clothing and footwear. For more details call 392-1748.

Toronto Entomologists' Association meeting

- Sat. March 25 at 1 pm in Room 432, Ramsay Wright Zoological Labs., southwest corner of Harbord St. & St. George St. The topic of the meeting is "Student Research Symposium".

TFN
display

Canada Blooms - The Toronto Flower and Garden Show - March 22-26 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

Market Gallery exhibit - Stock Photography: a pictorial history of Canada's greatest livestock market - March 9 to April 30. Call 392-7604 for details.

Save the Rouge Valley System - nature walks on the last Sunday afternoon of each month. Call 282-9983 to find where the walks begin.

Astronomy Department, University of Toronto - astronomy lecture (slide show) followed by views of skies through telescope, weather permitting - first and third Thursday of every month at 8 pm (Oct. to April) and at 9 pm (May to Sept.) at 60 St. George St., Room 134. Call Wayne at 978-2528 or Lillian at 978-2016 for more details.

Royal Canadian Institute - free Sunday science lectures at 3 pm in the Medical Sciences Building, U of T, 1 King's College Circle.

- March 5 - From People to Robots and Back - Maja Mataric
 - March 12 - Wolves of Algonquin Park - John Theberge
 - March 19 - A brief tour of the Universe - Terence Dickinson
- Call 928-2096 for details.

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TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

Published by the Toronto Field Naturalists, a charitable, non-profit organization, the aims of which are to stimulate public interest in natural history and to encourage the preservation of our natural heritage. Issued monthly September to December and February to May.

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