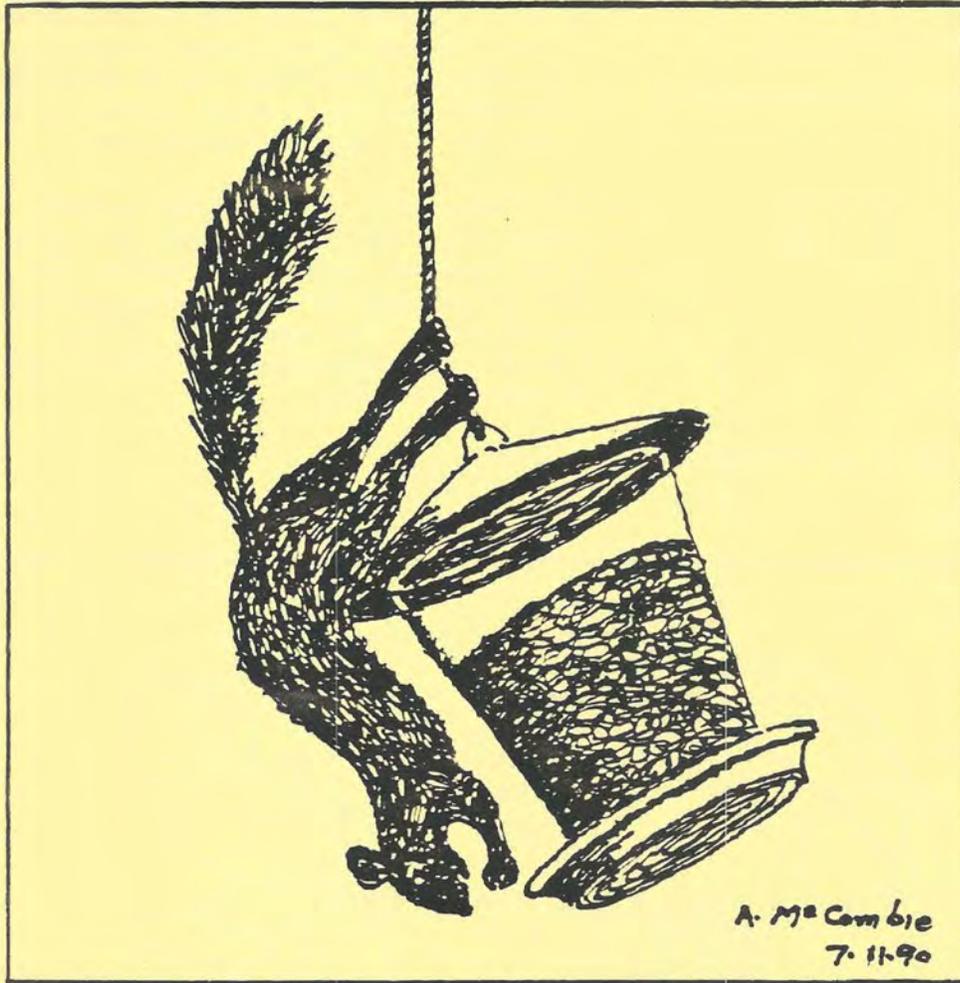


TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

Number 423

November 1991



Where there's a will, there's a way.

Inside

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| Amphibians & reptiles 22, 25 | Projects 10,11,12 |
| Birds 7,8,9,12,13,17,18,19,20,21,22,25 | Skies 15 |
| Coming events 29 | TFN - meetings 2,10 |
| Fish 27 | outings 3-5 |
| Issues 6,7,8,10,11,14,16,22,23,26,27 | newsletter submissions 5,6 |
| Mammals 1,25 | President's report 6 |
| Plants 2,7,9,10,11,13,14,15,18,23,24,
25,26,28 | Travel 27 |
| | Weather 28 |

TFN MEETINGS

Monday, November 4, 1991 - PLANNING AND DEVELOPING PUBLIC TRAILS
an illustrated lecture by Ian Deslauriers,
project planner with the Metropolitan and
Toronto Region Conservation Authority
- The speaker will talk to us about some of the
methods used to develop trails in landscapes
such as the Oak Ridges Moraine.

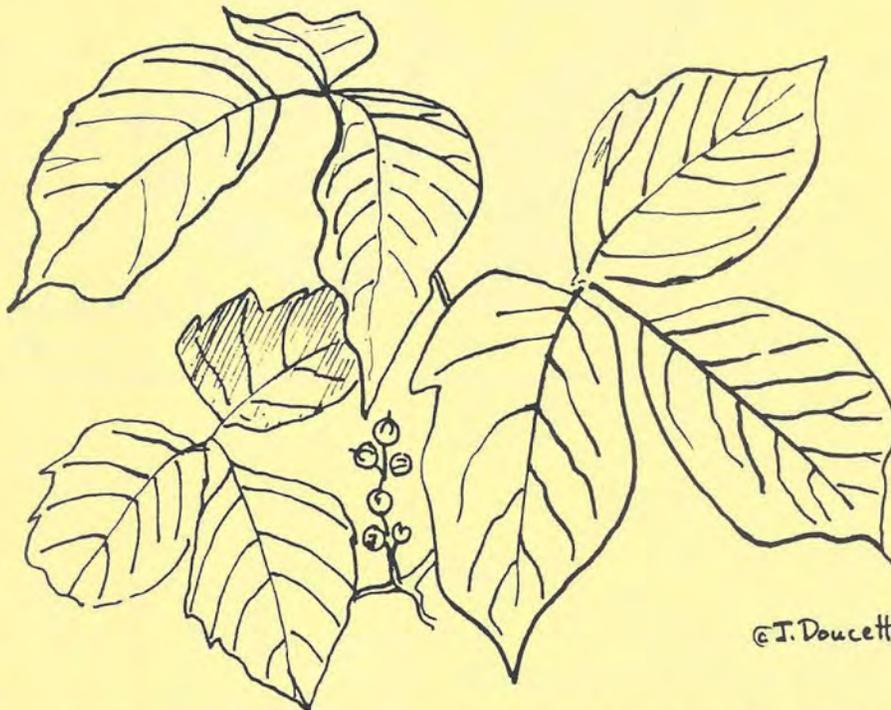
at 8 pm
155 College St.
6th floor auditorium

at 7 pm
to 8 pm

- TFN social hour in the foyer outside the auditorium
- memberships and publications for sale
- Clive Goodwin, well known birder and author, will be present to sell and autograph his most recent book: "The Traveling Birder" (see page 9).
- a display of photographs of wildflowers, etc. by Joanne Doucette

Next Meeting: Monday, Dec. 2, 1991

□



POISON IVY leaves and fruit are shown in this drawing by Joanne Doucette. The green leaves, which often turn red in fall, have three leaflets - "leaves of three, let it be!" When the leaves have gone, the off-white to pale greenish-gold berry-like fruits are often still present in great, attractive clusters on the wood. Continue to "let it be!"

TFN OUTINGS

November

Saturday POTTERY ROAD RAVINE - treasure hunt Don, East York
 Nov. 2 Leader: Eva Davis
 10 am Meet at the corner of Nesbitt Drive and Bayview Avenue. Bring
 to 12 noon work gloves. Garbage bags and truck are being provided.
 For those who want "hands on" experience in helping the Don, this is a chance
 to collect litter and learn about the history and natural history of one of
 the many tributaries of the Don. Local citizens and the East York Parks
 Department will be present so we can all help and learn together.

+ TFN OUTINGS TAKE PLACE, WHATEVER THE WEATHER!

Saturday GALLERY HOPPING - nature arts Toronto
 Nov. 2 Leader: Mary Cumming
 11 am Meet at the southeast corner of Bloor St. E. and Yonge St. Lunch
 optional.
 This is an annual outing to tour the art galleries of the Yorkville area.
 Everyone is welcome. At noon participants often have lunch together and
 compare art.

CHILDREN ARE WELCOME ON ALL OUTINGS.

Sunday WILKET CREEK - trees West Don, North York
 Nov. 3 Leader: Tom Atkinson
 10:30 am Meet at the southwest corner of Leslie Street and Lawrence
 Avenue East. Morning only. Walk will end where it begins.
 This is one of a series of outings with the same leader to the same place,
 but in another season. A good way to get to know individual trees and
 eventually species.

DON'T FORGET TO BRING A NOTEBOOK AND PENCIL SO YOU
 CAN LOOK UP WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED WHEN YOU GET HOME.

Wednesday LOWER DON - nature walk Don, Toronto
 Nov. 6 Leader: Graham Neville
 10:30 am Meet at the southeast corner of King Street East and Sumac St.
Walk will end at a different public transit stop.
 We will explore the newly opened trail along the Don River to Riverdale Farm
 where we will leave the valley via the new staircase. Morning only.

PLEASE LEAVE PETS AT HOME.

Saturday YORK MILLS PARK - trees Wilket Creek, North York
 Nov. 9 Leader: Bill Morsink
 9:30 am Meet at the park entrance on the south side of York Mills Rd.
 just east of Bayview Ave. Morning only.
 This is another chance to get to know trees of our region in both a formal
 park setting and in a woodlot. Leaves on the ground, bark and winter buds
 all give clues to the species you are looking at. Learn what species to
 plant on streets and which do best in valleys.

▷

NOVEMBER OUTINGS (cont'd)

- Sunday EAST DON - nature walk East Don, North York
 Nov. 10 Leader: Paula Davies
 2 pm Meet at the southwest corner of Steeles Ave. East and Leslie Street. Walk will end at a different public transit stop. This is the most northerly of our explorations of the Don watershed in Metro. Though this area has been farmed in the past, its recovery into a wilderness is encouraging. A chance to see how the Lower Don might look in a few years.
- Tuesday ROYAL WINTER FAIR - nature arts Toronto
 Nov. 12 Leader: Diana Banville
 10 am Meet inside the main entrance to the coliseum (near Bathurst streetcar terminal in the CNE grounds, east entrance).
 \$ admission Bring camera or sketching materials. Stool and lunch optional. Whatever
 fee the weather members can enjoy sketching plants and animals being shown or taking photos or just enjoying the show.
- Wednesday BIRKDALE & THOMPSON PARKS - nature Highland Creek, Scarborough
 Nov. 13 Leader: Vivian White
 10:30 am Meet on the south side of Ellesmere Rd. at Birkdale Road. Morning only. Walk may end at a different public transit stop. This tributary of Highland Creek may look like any formal park but it has a fascinating past -- an Indian settlement, early pioneer houses, a church, a library, remains of an early railroad. Many interesting trees have been planted recently and birds use this valley as a migration corridor.
- Saturday HUMBER BAY PARK - birds Lakeshore, Etobicoke
 Nov. 16 Leader: Helen Smith
 10:30 am Meet at the park entrance on the south side of Lake Shore Blvd. West opposite Park Lawn Rd. Morning only. Dress warmly. This outing is for beginning birdwatchers. Don't forget your bird book and a notebook. This is a good time and place to learn about the ducks that spend the winter along our lakeshore.
- Sunday PINE POINT PARK - nature walk Humber, Etobicoke
 Nov. 17 Leader: Mark Kubisz
 11 am Meet at the east end of Allenby Ave. (first street north of Hwy 401) off Islington Ave. Bring lunch. Mark has been studying this area for more than 11 years and knows the birds and plants well. He is preparing a report. Come and learn about the area, or if you know it already, come and share your knowledge with Mark and the other naturalists.
- Wednesday HUMBER VALLEY - nature walk Humber, Etobicoke
 Nov. 20 Leader: Elly Elder
 10 am Meet at the southwest corner of Eglinton Ave. West and Scarlett Road. Walk will end elsewhere. Morning only. A good time of year to admire the river and the shape of the valley as well as look for winter birds and study the shape of trees on the landscape.

OUTINGS START AT THE TIME LISTED.
 PLEASE, BE ON TIME.

FOR INFORMATION ON BUS SCHEDULES, CALL 393-INFO.

▷

NOVEMBER OUTINGS (cont'd)

- Saturday
Nov. 23
10 am WEST DON - nature walk West Don, East York
Leader: Robin Powell
Meet on the south side of Eglinton Ave. East at Leslie Street.
Walk will end at a different public transit stop. Bring a snack.
This will be a difficult walk with lots of hills to climb and wet places to cross. A chance to see an undeveloped piece of valleyland.
- Sunday
Nov. 24
1:30 pm EAST POINT - nature walk Lakeshore, Scarborough
Leader: Ken Cook
Meet on the east side of Morningside Ave. just north of the Guildwood Parkway at the railway tracks.
This is a joint outing with the WATERFRONT GREENWAY group. See page 16.
In TFN explorations of the waterfront from Whitby to Clarkson, this came out as the most beautiful and unspoiled area along the whole waterfront. Come and see for yourself and learn more about plans to DEVELOP this area for active park uses and learn what you can do about it.
- Wednesday
Nov. 27
10 am BURKE RAVINE - nature walk West Don, North York
Leader: Molly Campbell
Meet on the east side of Bayview Avenue just north of the C.N.I.B. overpass (north of Eglinton Avenue East). Walk may end elsewhere. Lunch optional.
This is one of Metro's "wilder" ravines which TFN members studied and prepared a report on in 1976. Though the ravine is deep and wild it can be approached via a path and roadway into the valley. The ravine itself may be muddy, but may hold wintering robins at this time of year.
- Saturday
Nov. 30
10:30 am MORNINGSIDE PARK - nature walk Highland Creek, Scarborough
Leader: Phil Joiner
Meet at the park entrance on the west side of Morningside Ave. (between Lawrence Avenue East and Ellesmere Rd.) Morning only.
This is a very large and beautiful park, well-known to Phil Joiner who is an expert at introducing nature to those wanting to learn more. A great opportunity to learn how to look more closely at the world around us.

□

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

Needed: 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
20 College St., Unit 4
Toronto, Ont. M5G 1K2

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

For the past three years TFN members have been the guest speakers at our Annual General Meetings. At this past meeting on Sept. 3, Helen Juhola and Robin Powell gave an illustrated talk on "Preserving and Linking our Waterfront Heritage". Slides from the TFN library were used to show the state of the Lake Ontario shoreline between Whitby and Clarkson. By getting to know the area we can determine where opportunities exist to re-link the elements of our natural heritage to each other and the world beyond. The presentation was warmly received by the audience of some 200 members and their friends.

The minutes of the 1990 Annual General Meeting, the meeting at which the fee increase was approved, and the financial statements were approved. Alistair J. Kennedy, C.A., was appointed auditor for the 1991-92 year.

At the opening of the Lower Don Trail in August several TFN directors met representatives from provincial and municipal governments, officials from the Conservation Authority, and members of other environmental groups. Once again we had an opportunity to speak to the Honourable Ruth Grier, Minister of the Environment, and remind her of our concerns about proposed developments for East Point in Scarborough. She assured us that decisions are "on hold" at this time.

TFN publications and our slide library continue to be an invaluable resource for students from Ryerson, York University, and University of Toronto, planners, consultants, other environmental groups, and so on. Our publication "Vascular Plants of Metropolitan Toronto" is proving to be particularly useful with so many individuals and groups wanting to "restore" landscapes. As well, the fact that our newsletters are indexed from their beginning in 1938, with complete sets available at a number of reference libraries, is proving useful for researchers wanting to understand changes to the natural heritage of this region.

Eileen Mayo

□

ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS? SPECIAL EVENT?

You want the world to know about your issue.

Send a note to the newsletter committee! See below or page 5.

Please, don't try to bring your issue to the monthly meeting. After all, numbers are what count -- better that 2,000 people read your announcement than 200 hear it (and not bother to make a note of it). Members come to meetings to hear the scheduled speaker, and get home quickly. If your issue is important, it's worth letting all of us know about it! A short note with a number to contact for further information could be critical to the success of your project.

Helen Juhola (924-5806) 112-51 Alexander St., Toronto M4Y 1B3
Diana Banville (690-1963) 710 - 7 Crescent Place, Toronto M4C 5L7
Eva Davis (694-8928) 203 - 1080 Kingston Rd., Scarborough M1N 1N5
Nancy Fredenburg (781-8550) 807 - 360 Ridelle Ave., Toronto M6B 1K1
Toshi Oikawa (425-3161) 1063 Pape Ave., Toronto M4K 3W4

□

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Sept. 1991

The fig tree on Huron Street south of Dundas Street West provided great beauty and the sight of succulent figs to passersby for many years. It was cut down in the spring. Several tomato plants are now growing in its place. Our sacred code of private property makes intervention impossible.

I have watched repeatedly as mature flowering rose bushes were yanked out by the root in order to facilitate the laying of cement tile. Perhaps our private yards should be redefined as public space and any diminishment or neglect therein considered a diminishment of all of our environments, aesthetic and botanical.

G. Geltner

Sept. 27, 1991

Enclosed is a copy of THE SELDANE TIMES I just received in the mail. Notice the admission, "In the countryside, ragweed growth is often intermingled with that of goldenrod, with the result that goldenrod is often blamed for the allergic reactions that the less showy ragweed causes."

This is what their literature is saying, yet the billboards, newspapers, and television imply the opposite, that goldenrod and other showy wildflowers are the source of some allergies.

Notice too, their concluding paragraph, "Always mindful of the environmental issues that concern each of us, Merrell Dow is constantly demonstrating leadership...". Come to think of it aren't these the same "leaders" that flood North America and the globe with often unnecessary pesticides, herbicides, biocides and yes, remember Vietnam, napalm, etc.

These "Seldane" people are devious and dangerous. Does this reflect or typify the chemical industry in general?

Jim Hodgins

SEE ALSO PAGE 14.

Sept. 30, 1991

Please find enclosed a cheque for \$80.13 to cover your club's share of proceeds raised in the 1991 Baillie Birdathon. This cheque represents your organization's share of monies received until 10 September 1991.

This money was raised for your organization by Irene Fedun, and it is to the more than 300 participants this year that the bulk of the credit for another successful Birdathon must go.

The Baillie Birdathon is an excellent vehicle to raise money for local projects you are presently involved in or may be considering. Clubs will be receiving nearly \$20,000 as their share of 1991 Birdathon proceeds. In addition, the James L. Baillie Memorial Fund will receive \$80.13 on behalf of your organization, for redistribution to worthy bird projects across Canada.

Michael S.W. Bradstreet
Executive Director
Long Point Bird Observatory

□

FOR READING

GREEN RAGE: RADICAL ENVIRONMENTALISM AND THE UNMAKING OF CIVILIZATION

by Christopher Manes, Little Brown & Company (Canada) Ltd., 1990

"The world is a web of interdependent living communities, not a department store." (Christopher Manes)

This book was highly recommended by a TV Ontario panel. The author's contention is that mainstream environmentalism has become mired in "respectability" and that it is the so-called radicalists -- Earth First!, Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, Deep Ecology, German Green Party, etc. -- who are the true descendants of Thoreau and Jefferson. Their rationale for breaking the law is that it is done "out of opposition to a moral wrong" and they believe there is another path besides the destructive imperialism of western civilization. That humans can live in balance with nature is illustrated by Borneo's Penans whose 30,000-year old culture has not destroyed their ecosystem.

Industry's "solution" to technologically-caused problems is more technology. With an escalating population, this course can only result in an authoritarian regime with the clout necessary to handle the social reorganization consequent upon environmental degradation. Indeed, corporations, often indirectly, already determine whose children will be allocated the toxic water, poisoned food, radioactive space (as when we sell toxic chemicals banned in North America to Third World Countries).

Radical environmentalists seek to deflect the industrial juggernaut and see this as necessary to the planet's survival. Copernicus forced humanity to abandon geocentrism -- Earth as centre of the universe. We may now be forced to abandon anthropocentrism: "belief that...we have a special, privileged status in the biosphere" (Lynton Caldwell). In short, we change course, or we won't be here to change anything, as environmental prophets have been telling us for the past 20 years. Christopher Manes brilliantly and passionately elucidates our options at this crossroads.

Eva Davis

WATERBIRDS OF THE STRAIT OF GEORGIA by E.C. Campbell, R.W. Campbell & R.T. McLaughlin, British Columbia Waterfowl Society, 5191 Robertson Rd., R.R. #1, Delta, B.C. V4K 3N2, 1991

This 9" X 4" booklet contains colour photographs and a quick key to main features of 48 common waterbirds in both breeding and nonbreeding (winter) plumage. Each identification key is accompanied by a migrational calendar and map showing where and when the birds are most likely to occur. In addition, it contains a calendar of occurrence for another 40 to 50 less common species. MacMillan Bloedel paid the costs of producing, publishing and promoting the booklet, and all proceeds will go towards the preservation of habitat for wildlife. The booklet is designed to satisfy both the seasoned bird watcher and novice. For anyone travelling to the coast, this publication is a must.

Eileen Mayo

FOR READING (cont'd)

THE TRAVELING BIRDER: 20 FIVE-STAR BIRDING VACATIONS by Clive Goodwin,
Doubleday, New York, 1991, \$13.00

If you are planning your own trip, or going with a group to any of the 20 destinations described in this book, you will want to own your own copy. Clive offers practical tips for planning each trip, tells you what to expect of the climate, the locals, and the accommodations. And, although the emphasis is on seeing birds, he includes information on the history, landscape, plants and other animals to be seen. Locations in Canada are Point Pelee, Churchill, Newfoundland and Southern British Columbia. Twelve destinations in the United States are described and four destinations off the continent.

H.J. □



NORTHERN CATALPA, a tree of the central part of the eastern United States, is often planted, quite successfully, in Toronto parks. After the showy blossoms, the long fruiting capsules develop, as shown in this field drawing by Mary Cumming, at Cassel's Garden.

Curiously, this genus is one of those with representatives in China and North America, but nowhere in between. To a lesser extent, the Chinese catalpa is grown in cemeteries here, as well as the southern catalpa of this continent, the "umbrella" variety.

ref.: ARBORETUM
GUIDE, MOUNT
PLEASANT CEMETERY

MARY CUMMING
AUG. 4 1880

PROJECTS

ENERGY PROBE

Did you know? Almost all the photocopying at the Energy Probe Research Foundation is done on the back of out-of-date stationery that people are kind enough to donate. If you, your company, or an association you belong to are about to throw such paper out, please give it to them instead. (They can also use out-of-date envelopes, forms, etc.) Call Sandra at 978-7014 to arrange a pick up or delivery. Reduce, reuse, recycle -- let's all do our part to help the environment.

from the TTC Customer News, Sept. 25, 1991

5,000 DAYS BY MAIL

The University of Guelph is offering a course by mail examining the world's environmental predicament. Entitled "5,000 Days", the course is intended to inform and empower students to take meaningful action to preserve the planet. It is funded by the Ministry of the Environment. For further information, call the school of continuing education at (519) 767-5000.

from Ontario Recycling Update, Vol. XI, No. 4, July/August 1991

WEEDATHONS

How about having a "weedathon"? Instead of riding, walking, running ... to raise money, how about weeding a lawn -- an individual's, or a park lawn? Get paid for it (to raise money), provide an alternative to the use of herbicides, learn about "weeds", get some fresh air, and some not too strenuous exercise. The weeds could be bagged, composted, and later returned to the land as mulch instead of being sent to a landfill.

Madelaine McDowell
City of York

□

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

It is apparent that fewer people living in Metro Toronto are attending evening events, because of driving risks due to inclement weather and the increasing occurrences of purse snatchings, muggings, etc. During the past year TFN members have been suggesting the possibility of changing the regular monthly meetings from Monday evenings to Sunday afternoons.

Your comments on this, and suggested locations for meetings are invited. Such a change, if approved, would not be effective until September 1992.

Call 968-6255 & leave a message.

Eileen Mayo

CELA LIBRARY UPDATE

Do you need information on waste reduction, pesticides, global warming, or the environmental effects of international trade? Come to the CELA (Canadian Environmental Law Association) Library! Over 500 people used the library in 1990. It holds over 7,000 catalogued documents, 150 periodicals and newsletters and research files under 2,000 headings. With the closure of the libraries at Pollution Probe and the Ministry of the Environment, the CELA Library has become the main publicly available environmental library in Toronto.

Environmental groups not only use the library for their own research but also refer inquiries from the public to it. Who uses the library? A wide cross-section of the public: lawyers and researchers from Toronto law firms, students from the many courses that now deal with environmental topics, journalists from various magazines, newspapers, radio and television, and even government personnel.

Given the growing urgency of informed decision-making on environmental issues, it is ironic that the library does not have a stable funding base for providing the full-time service that is obviously needed and used. CELA, a legal aid clinic with very limited funding resources, has made a substantial commitment by including a part-time librarian on staff. Now a search has begun for supplementary funding support for the full-time staff and increased acquisition budget which is required if the service provided for the past three years from grants is to continue.

▷ If you are able to provide any assistance, either through working on the funding committee, or suggesting contacts for grants and donations, please get in touch with Mary Vise, CELA librarian, at (416)960-2284.

▷ If you wish to make a donation, please send your cheque to CELA at 517 College St., Suite 401, Toronto M6G 4A2. Indicate the money is to be used for the library fund.

adapted from an article by Mary Vise in the INTERVENOR, Vol. 16, Iss. 2, Mar/Apr. 1991
(newsletter of the Canadian Environmental Law Association) □

THE NATIVE DOGWOODS of Toronto number six. The five shrub species have clusters of tiny white florets which produce berry-like fruits later in the season, as in the field drawing by Mary Cumming, which may be deep blue, light blue or white, depending on species. The low-growing bunchberry of High Park has larger, individual flowers and produces red "berries" (similar in these respects to the flowering dogwood, a small tree sometimes planted here and native south-westward.)



Ref.: MANUAL OF VASCULAR PLANTS
by Gleason & Cronquist

PROJECT FEEDERWATCH

One way to track winter bird populations from the comfort of our own homes is to watch bird feeders. Since an estimated one in five North Americans purchase bird seed, the potential pool of volunteer observers is huge, and they are well-distributed geographically. In 1976 the Long Point Bird Observatory began the Ontario Bird Feeder Survey to document the numbers and kinds of birds at feeders. Observers watched feeders for two days every second week from November to April, and recorded the peak number seen of each species.

At first, we thought that numbers at feeders would bear little relation to wild bird populations. We were wrong. This was proved by a comparison of 12 years of our survey data to Christmas Bird Count results. In about two-thirds of the species common at Ontario feeders, there was a statistically significant parallel fluctuation in both kinds of counts. In other words, higher numbers at feeders meant there were more birds actually out there "in the wild", and vice versa.

With the realization that feeder counts have a role to play in monitoring populations, we helped expand the survey continent-wide in 1986. The new Project FeederWatch is coordinated by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, and managed in Canada by the Long Point Bird Observatory. Participation promptly increased from 500 in Ontario to nearly 8,000 across North America (over 1,000 across Canada). Volunteers support the project with an annual registration fee. In return, they receive two newsletters with up-to-date results, and articles on bird feeding and on the winter ecology of species common at feeders. Canadian participants also get "FeederWatch North", an annual supplement put out by the Long Point Bird Observatory with detailed Canadian results. (If you can identify the common birds at feeders and would like to join, send \$12 to Project FeederWatch at the Long Point Bird Observatory, P.O. Box 160, Port Rowan, Ontario NOE 1M0.)

extracted from a report in the Long Point Bird Observatory 1990 Annual Report

□

NOVEMBER STIRS

*The wind stirs up the house sparrows
in the forsythia so!*

*Frostily they cry.
(Oh, yes, I know.)*

*East Indian children
are playing in the snow.*

*Brightly they call "hi!"
(Oh, yes, I know.)*

*Diana Banville
Crescent Town, East York
November 19, 1989*

WATCH OUT, FLOWERS FLOURISHING!

You've probably read the headlines: "Is loosestrife loose in the city a danger to wetland species?", "Purple loosestrife not banned in region", "Colborne council passes by-law against purple loosestrife", "Groups issue call to arms against purple loosestrife"... and on it goes.

Recently a member wrote us about the war she is waging on wild grape which is killing trees in the Humber Valley.

And TFN members who attend outings have become concerned about the explosion of swallowwort in Metro valleys.

These invasions have all occurred because of what people have done. For 200 years we have been draining, filling, polluting and generally disturbing wetlands in Ontario. We shouldn't be surprised that our native flora find it difficult to compete with the alien loosestrife which we have planted for its beauty and attractiveness to bees and butterflies.

Similarly, wild grape which prefers to grow in sunny locations finds single trees and forest edges excellent habitat. If we had more trees, we wouldn't mind losing a few at the edge! Meanwhile, the grapes are great food for birds and the leaves make excellent substitutes for cabbage leaves if you're making cabbage rolls and the fruit makes excellent jelly.

The swallowwort is something else. So far it seems to be a Toronto problem. It grows in all our valleys and appears to have no enemies. Before we try to "control" its spread, we should determine why it is flourishing. What have we done to weaken the defences of our native flora in Metro's valleys?

H.J.

□



DOWNY WOODPECKER

In the NATURE SOCIETY NEWS August 1986, Jerry and Bette Jackson (the woodpecker specialists) state that the male downy hunts "almost always" on limbs and trunks not more than two inches in diameter, and the female (with no red on the head) on the larger surfaces of trunks and large limbs. "Check it out for yourselves" they say. Apparently this is how the sexes divide the food source. Goldenrod galls are not mentioned.

Drawing by Geraldine Goodwin
from a photo by Karl
Maslowski.

PHARMACEUTICAL PSEUDO SCIENCE

Many of us have been aggravated this past summer and fall by the fake illustrations of flowers aggressively expelling pollen in advertisements for SELDANE. Well, Jim Hodgins, Editor of WILDFLOWER, did something about it. He sent the following letter to the Chief Executive Officer, The Seldane Times, Merrell Dow Pharmaceuticals Ltd., 380 Elgin Mills Road East, Richmond Hill, Ontario L4C 5H2. If you too have been aggravated by this totally dishonest message, let the producers of SELDANE and the TV and newspapers know it.

H.J.

Just as many large companies in North America are re-evaluating and realigning their philosophies and products to fit into an ecologically balanced environment, Merrell Dow Pharmaceuticals has thrown its engines into reverse and is jetting back to the 1800s when snake oil and quackery medicine were commonplace.

I'm certain my criticism of your recent mega blitz advertising campaign for SELDANE anti-allergy medicine, comes as no surprise. Even your average weekend naturalist knows that it is WIND BORNE pollen that is a partial contributor to some nasal allergies. Your months long campaign on billboards, radio, and full page ads in major newspapers, tell us that species with INSECT BORNE pollen cause allergies. In these ads you have portrayed goldenrod, daisies, hibiscus and fuchsia? to be sources of suffering for those with an allergy condition. This is pseudo science and fraudulent advertising at its worst. It is a giant lie you are promoting and I am forwarding a copy of this letter to the Canadian Environmental Law Association should litigation for fraudulent advertising be advised.

For decades now, science teachers in elementary and high schools have been teaching ecological relationships among living organisms. The younger generation has become ecologically mature. Your irresponsible SELDANE advertising only befuddles and fogs the public's attitude and vital understanding of the plant world.

Please stop this SELDANE lie and be noble enough to apologize through all the media sources you have been using.

The following sources confirm the insignificance of insect borne pollen as an allergenic source:

AN ATLAS OF AIRBORNE POLLEN GRAINS AND COMMON FUNGUS SPORES OF CANADA by I.J. Bassett et al, Research Branch, Can. Dept. Agriculture, 1978, page 160

ONTARIO WEEDS by J.F. Alex and C.M. Switzer, University of Guelph, 1976, page 159

SEE PAGE 7.

Jim Hodgins

□

...we can only help if we each do our bit, no matter how small it may seem. If we don't, we are betraying our own humanity. And we must never forget that, insurmountable as the environmental problems facing this world may seem, if we all pull together we have a good chance of bringing about change. We must. It is as simple as that!

from "Through a Window" by Jane Goodall, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1990

TO HAVE NO BOUNDS

All existence is an exchange of energy; the carbon of our chemistry, the iron in our blood and the oxygen we breathe were forged in supernovas long before the solar system took form.

Several independent studies have found that something unexpected is happening. Widely separated galaxies seem to be moving in unison at 600 kilometres per second, drawn towards an object dramatically named The Great Attractor.

Each planet in our solar system is tremendously fascinating, unique and new. Neptune is the most exciting by far, consisting of molten rock and water with an atmosphere of hydrogen and helium mixed with methane. The methane absorbs red light and gives back an aqua hue. It has gigantic storm spots, one hurricane is as wide as Earth. This storm sweeps at a speed of 1,000 kilometres per hour in the opposite direction of the planet's rotation -- awesome stuff. The fastest winds ever clocked travelled at 2,500 kilometres per hour opposite to the rotation.

Neptune's magnetic field is tilted from its axis, the magnetic fields of other planets coincide with their rotational axes. Neptune has rings and moons, the largest of which is Triton. It orbits in the opposite direction of the planet, the only moon in our solar system to do so.

Are you now ready to embark on your voyage of new wonders, as I did this summer when I took up astronomy?

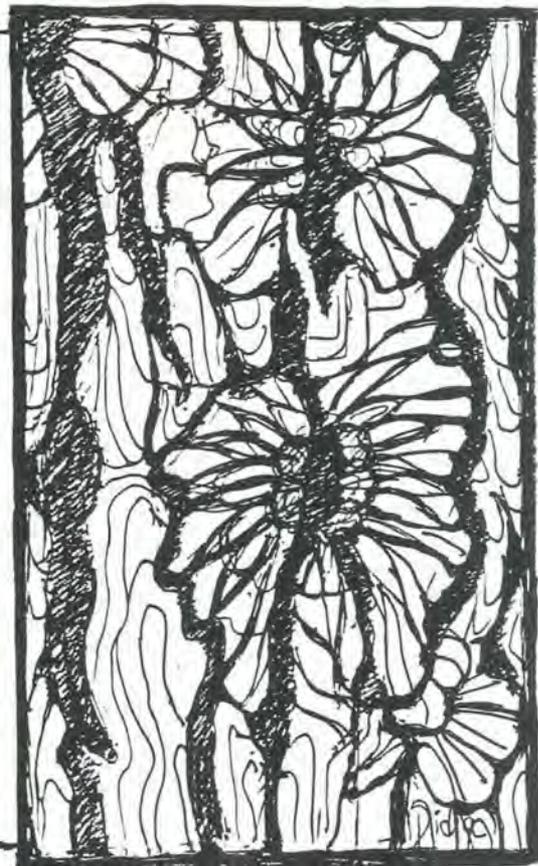
adapted from an article in STRATA DATA, newsletter of the Gem and Mineral Club of Scarborough, Oct. 19, 1990 (written by Vicki Hunter). □

BRANCH SCARS OF EASTERN HEMLOCK are among many subjects which make pleasing designs based on tree-bark.

In this case, large rosettes showed up on the trunk of the tree where the branches had fallen off. The subtle colours were mushroom pink through brownish gray, neutral grey, charcoal and rust.

This was a preliminary drawing made in Wilket Creek Park, to be part of a series, in tempera, called "TWENTY TORONTO TREES", which was shown at the General Meeting in September, 1988, the year of TFN's 65th Anniversary.

DB



WATERFRONT RAMBLINGS

In June 1991, Citizens for a Lakeshore Greenway (CFLAG) was formally incorporated. We are currently setting out our goals and planning our strategies. Our first goal is the promotion and setting up of a greenway/trail for the Lake Ontario waterfront from Burlington, through Toronto, to Port Hope. This walking/cycling trail would span 180 kilometres and pass through 11 municipalities and 5 regions.

This fall we have been cooperating with Ruth Grier, Minister of the Environment for Ontario, and David Crombie of the Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront on a series of public walks in Burlington, Metro Toronto and Durham Region.

A second goal of CFLAG is to establish public consultation in the planning of the greenway/trail. By ensuring that public consultation is part of the process, CFLAG hopes to avoid the confrontations which other proposed developments for the lakefront have precipitated.

Long-term goals for CFLAG involve the protection of significant natural environments and the fostering of environmental planning among local governments -- teaching the greenway concept. That means educating municipal politicians, architects, and conservation authorities to think and plan for the bioregion, not just for a political jurisdiction (as has been pointed out in WATERSHED, the interim report of the Royal Commission). Signs of change are encouraging, but success depends on continued public interest through citizen groups such as CFLAG and the TFN.

Since June, CFLAG has been active with administrative set-up as well as community involvement. The directors have established a committee structure which includes communication, fund-raising, and special projects. So far, we have produced one issue of LINKS, our newsletter, CFLAG's brochure, and numerous press releases. Local chapters are being formed in Toronto, Burlington, and so on.

To stimulate further discussion, CFLAG is preparing a Statement of Principles and a survey to be circulated among user groups and local residents.

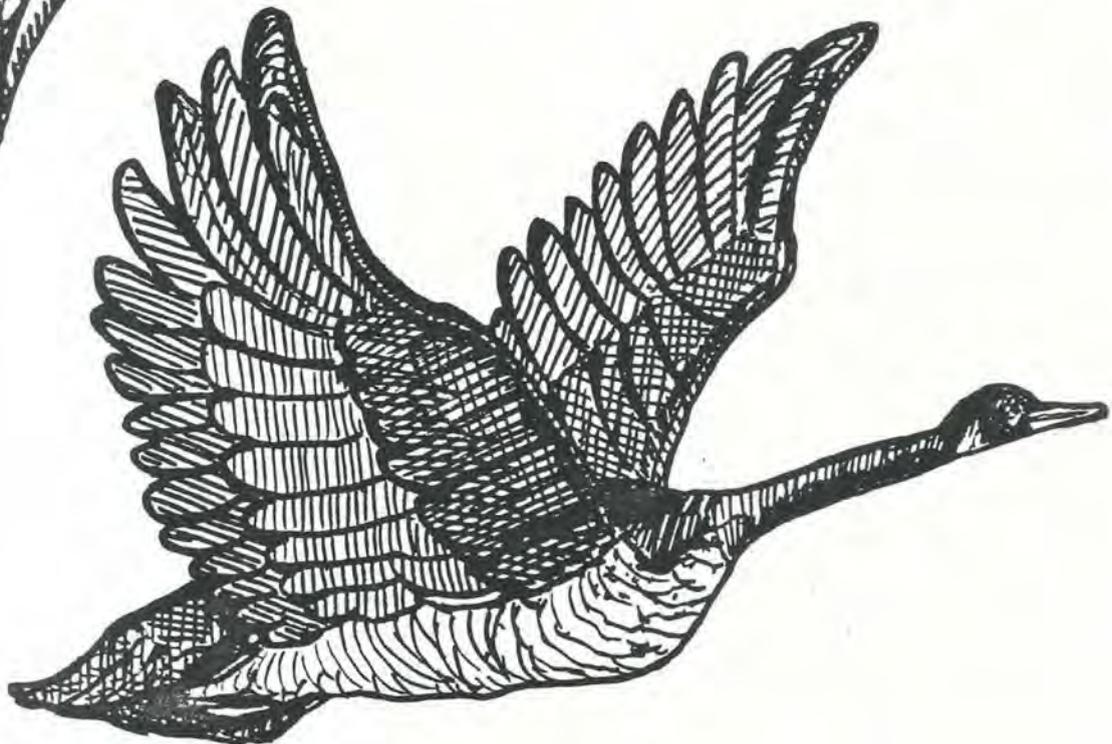
On the political front, CFLAG has made its presence known, even in the short time since its founding. We have communicated with many levels of government, from Duncan Allen, Special Advisor to the Premier on Waterfront issues, to local Councillors.

In August, the first in a series of field trips took CFLAG directors to Whitby and Oshawa to examine environmental and development issues along the lakeshore. Because of local desires to protect Cranberry Marsh, Lynde Creek, Thickson Woods, Pumphouse Marsh and Second Marsh, it is our recommendation that the trail bypass these areas. Other concerns included proposed housing developments at Lynde Shores and Whitby Harbour, and the storage of PCBs in an old ferry boat in Whitby Harbour.

To quote Commissioner David Crombie, "Achieving this greenway will require grease and gas". The grease is public support, which CFLAG hopes to channel towards building an enlightened greenway. CFLAG welcomes new members as well as public comment. The gas is funding. It is clear that seed funding will be needed from government and the environment community in order to make the vision for Canada's largest greenway a reality.

Bill Frankling (535-8118)

□



THE CANADA GOOSE
lends itself to
shopping-mall decor.
These were sketched
at the Shipp Centre
at a TFN Nature Arts
Outing in March 3,
1990.



Dida

FROM THE PAST

The Weekly MAIL of September 3, 1891, in a report of the Botanical Section of the Canadian Institute, lists 19 ferns 'found growing in the vicinity of Toronto this month by Charles W. Armstrong'. Most of these ferns, though sometimes called by different names, are the same as species found in Metro today. Exceptions are:

BROAD BEECH FERN - 'Only one small patch of this species has been found in this vicinity so far. It is growing in open though moist woods and the place where it is found will be sold for building purposes before next year.'

MALE FERN - '...not very common in Toronto; it grows in low, shaded woods.'

BLUNT-LOBED WOODSIA - 'This is a very rare find; it was found growing on the south bank of a small [wooded] ravine just north of the city. There are five small clumps of it, the fronds measuring 4 to 12 inches high, graceful and delicate, broadly lanceolate in form.' J. Macoun is quoted; "'This fern which is found on rocks and stony hillsides is one of our rarest species, only three stations being recorded for it, and these strangely far apart [two in B.C. and one in N.S.]"...Specimens collected by Charles W. Armstrong were flourishing in rich woodland soil...lots of rock 4 or 5 feet below, but none directly in contact.'

ROYAL FERN - 'This is also a good find for this district; it was found just west of Toronto by Mr. A. Gilchrist of Toronto Junction.' [This fern has been extirpated from High Park and probably from Lambton Woods in recent times. Interrupted and Cinnamon ferns, both now classed as 'uncommon' in Toronto, were described as 'common everywhere' and 'abundant in swamp and low grounds', respectively.]

We were lucky to find this old Toronto list, since the 1913 list in the NATURAL HISTORY OF THE TORONTO REGION, edited by J. H. Faull, dealt with ferns of an extensive general area including the Niagara Escarpment.

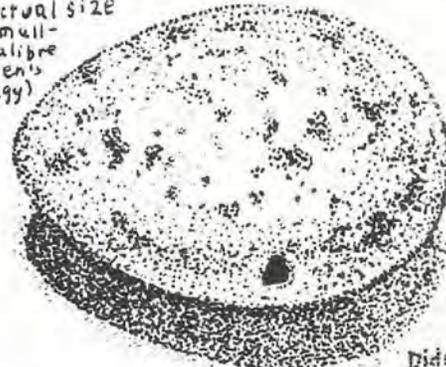
The above quotations were gleaned from an elegantly hard-covered scrapbook, entitled 'Newspaper Cuttings'. The motto on the flyleaf reads, "'When found make a note of," Captain Cuttle'.

DB

□

A RING-BILLED GULL EGG was found March 9, 1991, pierced as in the drawing, on the Leslie Street Spit, in a thicket by the trail close to the colony. When examined, it was found to be hollow, except for the dry "fly-pepper" which sprinkled out of the hole. There was no odour - a striking example of Nature's hygiene.

actual size
(small-
calibre
hen's
egg)



THE STARLING AND THE SPARROW AMONG US

In "Schiefflin's Birds" by Jack Lord in PAPPUS Vol. 10, 2:16-17, 1991, the story of the introduction of the house sparrow and the European starling into North America - in large measure by Eugene Schiefflin in New York City - is recounted. Individual introductions of the house sparrow were made there between 1860 and 1863 and of the European starling in 1890 and 1891. There were other introductions but these were the most successful. By 1875, the house sparrow was well established; the first date for the starling in Hamilton is given as 1923. (Judging by Jim Baillie's bird migration chart, it appears to have been observed by him in Toronto in 1922.) At first, nest boxes were built in North America for the starling, as in the Old World, but "the novelty wore off". Both species find habitat around mowed lawns, in parking-lots, about buildings and fast food outlets. They adapt well to our "artificial landscape".

DB

□



THE TORONTO ISLAND DUNES are an important part of Metro's natural heritage. The TFN Nature Arts group found it a most pleasant environment in which to spend a beautiful spring day in May of 1990. The serenity was heightened by birdsong (though "serene" probably did not describe the sentiments of the singers). Find the American goldfinch on an evening-primrose, one of its favourite food-plants.)

DB

FIGHTING STARLINGS

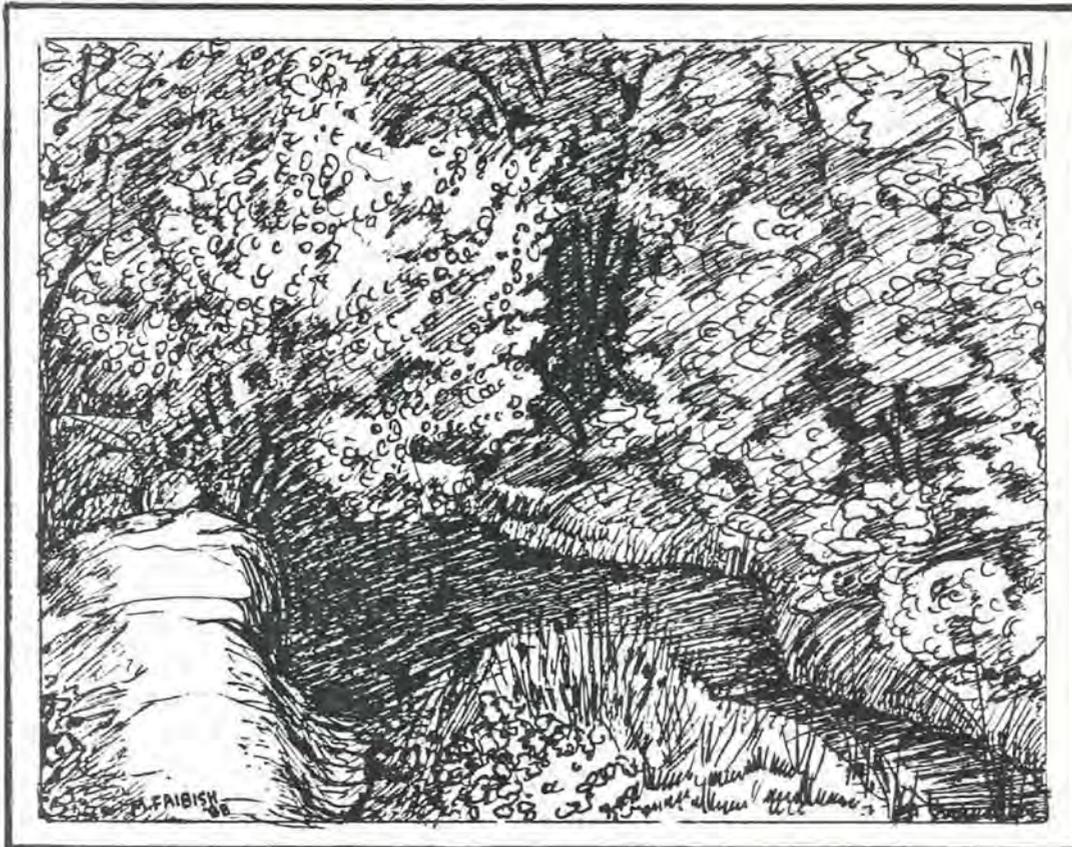
It made me think of a bar-room brawl in a western movie. But in this case the bodies rolling over and over were starlings -- claws entwined, and beaks poking at each other. When I could stand it no longer I approached the two birds. My shadow startled them and, momentarily, they broke up, only to set at each other again immediately. I approached again and again. At the third cast of my shadow they broke up and flew to the nearest tall tree, took one more swipe at each other, seemed to think better of it and backed off, making starling whistling noises.

When I told Louise Herzberg about this incident, she recalled seeing house sparrows fighting on her street on a number of occasions.

Are our street birds affected by the lead, etc. on our streets? Or does their diet of human food waste carry with it our behaviour?

Helen Juhola

□



A WEIR ON THE DON is seen in the left foreground of this drawing by Miriam Faibish. These weirs create the small waterfalls we see along our Toronto watercourses. Their purpose is to aerate and slow up the flow of the water.

AND I'VE GOT PICTURES TO PROVE IT!

September 28, 1991, started normally. My 20 house finches were squabbling over feeder perches and early visits were paid by a house wren and a sapsucker. With wildest imaginings, I could never have anticipated what was in store.

Just after 8 o'clock there was a flurry at the hummingbird feeder. To my amazement, I found an agitated black-throated blue warbler battering the feeder with his wings and pecking at the plastic bubble, trying to get nectar. Frustrated, he flew off but soon came back to try again.

The next half hour was spent frantically making up fresh syrup, trying to construct a holder for it, and hoping he'd stay long enough for me to do all this.

My first holder was too floppy; it tipped, spilling the fluid. But it did accomplish two things. It proved that nectar was what he wanted; he immediately went to feed at the drip on the porch rail. That bought me a bit more time to find a better solution.

By 9 am, a small, thick plastic container was hanging from a planter, the red syrup showing through well. Within minutes, he perched on the rim, sipping contentedly.

My little black-throated blue warbler came to his cup at 15- to 30-minute intervals for the rest of the day. Although I had to go out briefly, I saw him make 19 visits to his nectar in the 9 hours he stayed. His last visit was just before 5 o'clock.

His routine for arriving at his private feeder was always to fly first into the maple. Then, he came in high to the porch, usually landing on the feeder suspension chain under the eaves. (A few times he landed on the water dish, but I never saw him drink water.) Next, he went to the railing and had another look around. Only then did he fly up to his cup.

One of his afternoon visits was very different. I was out at his feeder, repositioning the cup (which the wind had shifted), when he flew out of the maple directly towards me. Just as he reached me he veered sharply, so near that this wing brushed my hand, and flew directly back to the tree. I was startled, but did not get the impression that he was. I went in and looked out the window. There he was, perched on the rim of his cup, sipping his nectar.

He hadn't seemed to be defending his cup. Perhaps he was telling me that it was time for him to be there, not me. Maybe, in fact, this move had no special significance at all. However, it's more fun to think of it as his recognition of a friend and his way of giving a bird "thank you". I expect I'll remember it that way.

Anne H. Davidson

□

In the flower-box
the house finches are nesting.
The balcony birds.

haiku by A. O. Juhola

WHY DID THE TURTLE...?

Returning home one August evening after a sudden rainstorm, I was startled when the van ahead of me, driven by a woman, came to a sudden stop. I jammed on the brakes and managed to avoid rear-ending her. But why had she stopped so far short of the red light? Then I saw a small turtle crawl out from just in front of the van -- the first time I had seen any wild creature trying to cross this busy section of Bathurst Street where it dips into the West Don Valley north of Sheppard Avenue West.

When the light turned green, I hurried to my home less than a block away, parked the car and ran back down the hill, thinking that the turtle, unable to climb the concrete island, might turn and make his way alongside it. Sure enough, there he was, unharmed, with cars whizzing along not more than a foot away.

I picked him up: he flailed desperately for 30 seconds, then drew his head and feet in and remained quite still. A painted turtle, his muddy shell measured about a hand's-breadth across. Wondering if he had been dis-oriented by the storm, I carried him (or, quite possibly, her) down the bank on the east side, through the wet meadow and laid him gently near the reeds at the edge of the West Don River. The turtle didn't move. I walked away, then turned back, curious to see if all was well. At the sound of my returning feet, the turtle scuttled down into the marsh.

Phoebe Cleverley

Comment: This is what happens when fill is used to bridge valleys and ravines. Wildlife which live in valley refuges have only small dark tunnels, often full of rushing storm runoff, in which to travel from one area to another. In any new development or redevelopment near waterways, authorities should be urged to create better natural corridors for wildlife.

H.J.

□

THE BALD EAGLE

This interpretation by Geraldine Goodwin is from a photo by J.D.Taylor in BIRDS OF PREY by MacKenzie. The fierce expression is due to the arrangement of the feathers over its beetling brow.

This species is shown to have wintered in Toronto in Faull/Fleming 1913, THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE TORONTO REGION, and in Bent 1937, LIFE HISTORIES OF NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS OF PREY Part I. Now it is rarely seen in winter but may sometimes be seen in fall. In 1988 no reports of observations of the bald eagle in Toronto Region were received by TFN.



AMBIGUITY

Have you ever called up Parks Departments for plant lists and received lists of permanent machinery? It's no joke - it actually happened.

"Hard on the environment" is an expression that's cropping up lately. It's used by politicians to mean, "hard on any interests which may conflict with environmental considerations". Although it has been used by some who are sincere in putting the environment before less important interests, it is ironical on the lips of certain others who are busy plotting pollution.

And what about "environmental and other special interest groups"? Not a few politicians habitually place the environment in the same category as baseball, boating, ballet and building. Perhaps, in their minds, "health" is a "special interest" too. What about "the economy"?

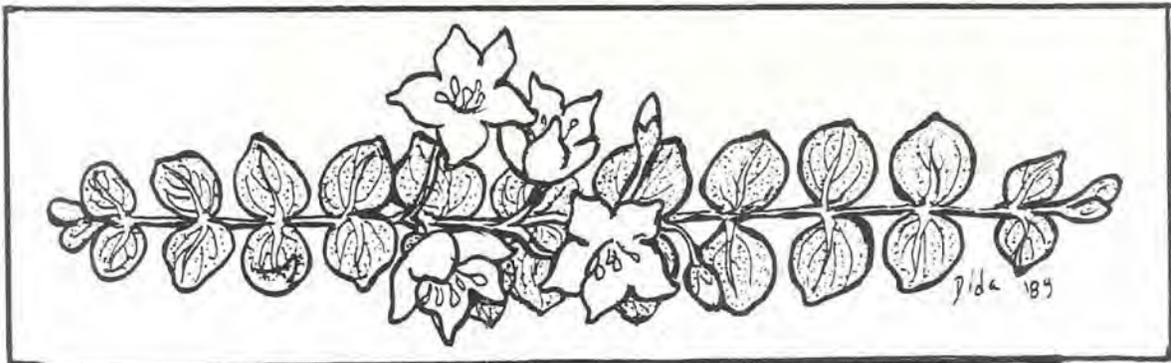
Certain words make the environmentalist shudder. "Development" is one of them, of course, especially when used in conjunction with the word "park" (an ambiguous word in itself). The word "management" suggests nature cannot be "left alone". The word "trail" once meant a beaten path, sometimes treated with wood-chips, but a political lexicon would probably include the words "asphalt road".

Reading a letter from a politician, one might think that "growth on the moraine" referred to the plant life there. But, think again, of course it refers to development. Politicians often forget they are writing to naturalists to whom natural words like "growth" still have a natural meaning, quite apart from any jargon.

"Sustainable development"? The trouble with that expression is that it doesn't have a "re" in front of it. Maybe some politicians do think of it as redevelopment and revision, not to speak of recycling, reuse and reduction, while still protecting - not compromising - the environment. But to others it is the watchword for unlimited development with token concessions (always temporary, one fears, in the case of land while it is there) to the Environment.

Politicians and environmentalists do not, it appears, speak the same language. When that dichotomy disappears, they will. Let's all work on our vocabulary.

Diana Banville



A sketch of "moneywort" made in St. Bernard's garden, Canada Day, 1989.

OF ROSES AND CANARIES

Last weekend I had the good fortune to receive two dozen beautiful long-stemmed roses. They had been given to a neighbour at a party the evening before but, as she and her husband were due to fly to Florida early the next morning, they couldn't take them on the plane. When she brought them in and set them on my dining room table they were in a sparkling cut crystal vase, and she knew that, as a gardener, I would certainly enjoy them.

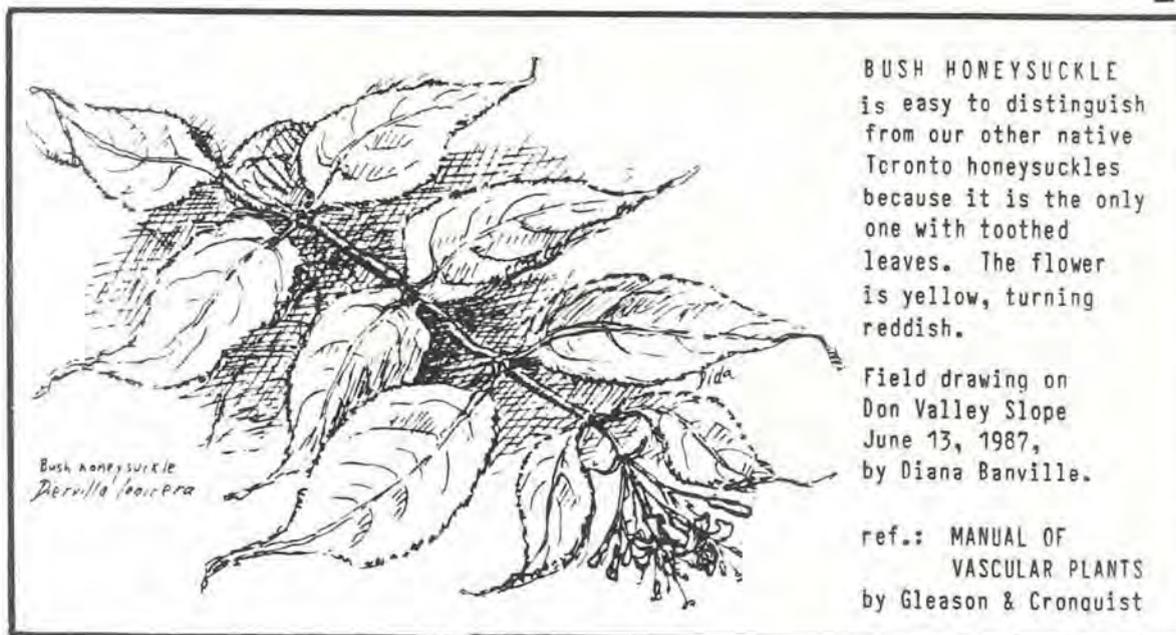
The following morning, however, I was very surprised to find that some of the roses were beginning to droop already. Thinking that perhaps there were too many crowded into one vessel, I decided to put half of them in a large porcelain jug. At the same time I cut about four inches off the bottom of the stems to provide a fresh surface for water uptake and discarded some of the accompanying fern and asparagus fronds.

Next morning I found that the roses in the porcelain jug had perked up nicely but those in the crystal vase were more droopy than ever. When I remarked on this to a friend who comes in to help with my housekeeping, she immediately said "Oh I took a course in flower arranging and they always warned us against putting flowers in crystal ware. Lead used in the manufacture of the crystal dissolves out, is taken up by the flowers and poisons them". She then cut another piece off each stem and changed the water in both vessels. But the roses which had been left in the crystal continued to wilt. Then I remembered having heard someone on the radio or television, about a week before, warning people against storing liquor in crystal carafes or serving it in crystal glasses.

What really surprised me was how quickly one could detect this effect. It brought to mind the old time coal miners using their canaries to detect methane gas in the mines. Here again the fate of humbler creatures warns us of our own vulnerability!

Alan McCombie

□



BUSH HONEYSUCKLE
is easy to distinguish
from our other native
Toronto honeysuckles
because it is the only
one with toothed
leaves. The flower
is yellow, turning
reddish.

Field drawing on
Don Valley Slope
June 13, 1987,
by Diana Banville.

ref.: MANUAL OF
VASCULAR PLANTS
by Gleason & Cronquist

IN THE NEWS

OSPREYS WINGING BACK TO THE KAWARTHAS AREA

In the 1970s, chemical pesticides such as DDT were used widely and were believed to cause ospreys to lay thin-shelled eggs that broke before the chicks could hatch. The birds almost vanished from the Kawarthas. But by 1988, after the pesticides were banned, the osprey population in the Kawarthas had risen to 68 active nests. There are now 10 active osprey nests within a 5-kilometre (3-mile) stretch around Sturgeon Lake northwest of Peterborough, making it the area of highest density in the province for ospreys. Eighty-two active nests were found in the area this spring compared to about 40 in the Parry Sound area of Georgian Bay. One question biologists are trying to answer is why ospreys have not returned to Lake Ontario where they once nested in great numbers along the lake shore. The fish stock in Lake Ontario is good and the water quality is not much different from [the Kawarthas], but the ospreys are just not along the Lake Ontario shore line. It could be that with the trees gone and influx of people along the shorelines, there is either a lack of appropriate nesting sites or contamination...though in the cottage filled area of the Kawarthas, the ospreys seem to be happy to share their habitat with increasing numbers of people.

adapted from an article in the TORONTO STAR, Aug. 10, 1991

RACCOON OUTBREAK A GNAWING PROBLEM

More than 10,000 raccoons live in Metro -- about one raccoon for every 200 humans. Life is so good here that city raccoons are heavier than their country cousins, sometimes outweighing them by a kilogram (more than two pounds). An adult male in Metro can top 8 kilograms (18 pounds). Tin cans, pop bottles and sweets also give the city raccoon dental problems, with broken and chipped teeth and gum disease. Raccoons have adapted so well to city life that, when they are captured, it is not considered humane to take them to the wilds. Instead, they are returned to park settings within Metro, from which they probably find their way into someone's backyard. Raccoons may be cute but they can cause hundreds -- even thousands -- of dollars damage to homes. They strew garbage, climb into attics and keep you awake all night with their "talking", pat down insulation, defecate in their hiding spots and will lash out if they or their babies are threatened. The Toronto Humane Society is receiving 100 calls a day from people desperate to get rid of raccoons. The best recommendation is to batten down the garbage, close up any hidey-holes and take precautions against them in the first place. Simple removal will fail to solve the long-term problem because more animals just take their place.

adapted from an article by Trish Crawford in the TORONTO STAR, Aug. 14, 1991

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*This November day,
overcast. Downcast. But then
a flurry of snow!*

*haiku by Diana Banville
November 11, 1990*

IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

THE DARK SECRET ABOUT AUSTRIAN PINES

Think twice about acquiring an Austrian pine, even at sale prices. It is doomed just as surely as the American elm and the famous spreading chestnut tree. The nurseries, either through ignorance or venality, are keeping this dark secret from their customers. But the evidence is indisputable. In North York, which lined its streets and beautified its parks with some 14,000 Austrian pines, half are now dead or dying and the city doesn't believe it can save the rest. The problem is Diplodia Tip Blight, a fungus. The disease is carried from tree to tree by spores. The older, more mature trees are the most badly affected. So, just as your evergreen has reached a decent height and you can enjoy it, it turns brown and dies. The fungus was first discovered in the early 1980s, south of the border. Now it has crossed the line. If some of the needles on your Austrians have turned brown, watch out. These blighted needles are usually located on the lower branches. Using a magnifying glass you can spot tiny fruiting bodies at the base of each diseased needle. Brown oval spores ooze out of the needles after a rainfall and are scattered by wind, splashing rain, birds, or pruning equipment. They land on the new season's young needles and when the spore germinates, the fungus enters the needle. A brown area develops and grows and grows, ruining the tree. Landscape architects are blamed because for years they have planted Austrian pines in thick groves which makes it easy for one tree to infect the next. Fewer of these pines should have been planted and these mixed with other species.

adapted from an article by Pierre Berton in the TORONTO STAR, Oct. 5, 1991

ZINC LEVELS CALLED PROOF OF POLLUTION BY MOTOR OIL

High levels of zinc in Frenchman's Bay indicate toxic wastes are still being dumped into municipal sewers. The zinc levels which were more than 33 times higher than recommended guidelines are believed to have come from about a gallon motor oil dumped down a storm sewer. The levels were detected during a random water test. The problem is that people don't realize that a gallon of oil can pollute a million gallons of water. Paint thinners, left-over paint and cleaning fluids do more harm.

extracted from an article in the TORONTO STAR, Oct. 3, 1991

POLLUTION GREATER INDOORS STUDY SAYS

The air in Toronto homes and offices contains greater levels of toxic chemicals than outdoor air on a busy downtown corner according to a recently released report: "Personal Exposure Pilot Study". On average, indoor air quality appeared to be at least two to five times worse than the outdoor air quality. The findings are important because most people in Toronto spend about 90 per cent of their time indoors. Indoors, chemicals are released from synthetic furniture fabrics, detergents and cleaning materials, dry-cleaned clothes, paint and solvents, waxes, evaporation of chemicals from tap water, furniture polish, heating fuels. Exhaust from cars and trucks is the biggest pollution source outdoors.

extracted from an article by Peter Gorrie in the TORONTO STAR, Aug. 7, 1991

IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

TOURISTS CAN CUT DAMAGE THEY DO

A wide array of ecological tours are now available to tourists concerned with their impact on the environment. They include such activities as planting trees in a reforestation project in Nepal, cleaning litter from Andean mountain trails in Peru, studying rain forest ecology in the Amazon jungle and helping scientists band and weigh penguins in the southern Patagonia region of Argentina. But even more traditional tourists can help save the earth -- while still enjoying themselves. Some advice:

- When choosing your vacation, ask what the tour operator or resort is doing to help the environment. Are they recycling? Are they putting money back into the local community?
- Choose the most environmentally friendly means of travel. Often you can go by train instead of car or plane.
- When visiting historical monuments or sites, wear shoes that will do less damage to floors and steps. Don't wear high heels, for example. But also, avoid running shoes, which track in lots of sand and dirt.
- Do not expect everything to be just like home. Camping in the Himalayas, do not demand hot showers or cooked food all the time. It results in more trees being chopped down and more deforestation.

adapted from an article by Matthew C. Vita in the GLOBE AND MAIL, Oct. 2, 1991

ALARMING NEWS ABOUT LAMPREYS: THEY'RE BACK!

The parasitic sea lamprey is on the rise in the Great Lakes. The eel-like lamprey, which migrated to the lakes from the Atlantic Ocean more than 100 years ago, attaches itself to a fish with a sucking disk. It pierces its scales and skin and sucks out bodily fluids -- often killing the fish. During the 12 to 20 months of its adult parasitic stage, the typical lamprey kills as much as 18 kilograms (40 pounds) of fish. By the 1950s, the lamprey had decimated the Great Lakes' stocks of trout, whitefish and chub. The Great Lakes Fishery Commission, a U.S.-Canadian panel, was formed in 1956 to fight the lamprey. A year later, the chemical TFM was developed. It kills lamprey larvae in small streams without harming other aquatic life. Lamprey declined in the 1960s and 1970s, and the endangered fish made a comeback. But in recent years the lamprey has rebounded. Lampreys are multiplying most rapidly in Lake Huron and Lake Michigan. Recent control efforts have stemmed an increase in Lake Erie, and numbers appear stable in Lake Ontario. Northern Lake Huron appears to be particularly susceptible because it receives water directly from St. Marys River, a major lamprey spawning ground. The water is so cold and its flow so heavy, the TFM is largely ineffective there. Leaders of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, the Fish and Wildlife Service and other agencies blamed a levelling of federal eradication funding since 1986 for the lamprey's resurgence.

adapted by an article by John Flesher in the TORONTO STAR, Sept. 21, 1991

□

The seeds of [many wildflowers] can last for decades, if not centuries, deep in undisturbed soil, only to reappear in full force when the time is right.

extracted from "New moon, June" in BBC WILDLIFE, Vol 9, No. 6, June 1991

THE WEATHER (THIS TIME LAST YEAR)

November 1990, Toronto

November was generally warm, dry and sunny. The airport reported its warmest November since 1975 with a monthly mean temperature of 4.6°C. It was also the driest since 1980 with 47.6 mm of precipitation downtown and 39.6 mm at the airport. Sunshine at 113.1 hours was the most since 1986. There was no significant snowfall.

November began with a very warm spell with temperatures topping 20°C on Nov. 2-3rd. Thereafter, there was an uneventful round of seasonable to slightly chilly spells alternating with a couple of other very warm periods. It almost rose to 20°C again on Nov. 15th-16th and Nov. 27th-28th. Unusual for this time of year, sunshine prevailed from Nov. 12th-20th.

Gavin Miller

□

THE AMERICAN HORNBEAM

has several popular names - "ironwood" (shared with another tree, the hop hornbeam); "bluebeech" (though it's not a beech but is in the birch family); and "muscle tree" - which describes it well because of the hard ripples winding up the trunk.

It is native to Toronto's woodlands and has been found in every watershed except those of Highland Creek and Mimico Creek, according to TFN records. Please report if you encounter it in either of these locations.

Field drawing is by Diana Banville on a TFN Nature Arts Outing.



COMING EVENTS

FREE SCIENCE LECTURES - Sundays at 3 p.m. in the J.J.R. MacLeod Auditorium, Medical Sciences Building, University of Toronto.

Oct. 20 - The original turtles - Robert Reisz

Oct. 27 - The 17th century exploration and mapping of Canada as a scientific process - Conrad E. Heidenreich

Nov. 3 - The health of Canada's forests - Tom Hutchinson - Room 3154

Nov. 10 - From hunter-gatherers to First Nations: the Kalahari San today - Richard B. Lee

Nov. 17 - Canadian northern wetlands and greenhouse gases - Nigel T. Roulet

Nov. 24 - Long ago and far away: the origin of galaxies - Simon J. Lilly

Dec. 1 - Disease and decimation of Plains Indians - Jody Decker

For further information, call the Royal Canadian Institute at 928-2096.

JIM BAILLIE MEMORIAL BIRD WALKS - "Waterfowl" - West Toronto Lakeshore - Sunday, Nov. 17 at 8 a.m. with Ross Harris. For the intermediate birder. Meet in the parking lot at Humber Bay Park East. Bring a lunch. An outing of the Toronto Ornithological Club.

CURRENT ENTOMOLOGICAL RESEARCH - a symposium by graduate students of York University, part of the monthly meeting of the Toronto Entomologists (Insects) Association. To be held in the McLaughlin Planetarium at 1 p.m. on Nov. 23. Free. Call 727-6993 for details.

WOLVES AND HUMANS - a weekend workshop with author-naturalist R.D. Lawrence at the Haliburton Forest and Wildlife Reserve near West Guilford, Ont. - Nov. 29 to Dec. 1. Fee of \$170 includes accommodation and meals. For more information, call (705)754-2198.

LONG POINT BIRD OBSERVATORY FALL MEETING - Nov. 1 from 7 pm to 10:30 pm at the Royal Botanical Gardens, Burlington, Ont. At 9 pm Dr. Adrian Forsyth will speak on "The Fate of Forest Birds: and what amateurs can do about it". Tickets \$8.00 each from Long Point Bird Observatory, P.O. Box 160, Port Rowan, Ont. NOE 1M0.

FALL NETWORKING MEETING - of the Ontario Environment Network at Camp Kawartha at Clear Lake, Ont. from Nov. 22-24. To register for the weekend (\$90.00), contact the Ontario Environment Network, 2 Quebec St., Suite 201-C, Guelph, Ont. N1H 2T3 or call (519)837-2565.

UNDERSTANDING, PLANNING, AND MANAGING WETLANDS - Nov. 1 or 8 at the Heritage Resources Centres, Faculty of Environmental Studies, University of Waterloo. For details call (519)885-1211. Cost of this certificate seminar is \$95.00.

GREENWAYS FOR ONTARIO - a workshop on Nov. 22 for \$45.00. Contact the Heritage Resources Centre at Waterloo by calling (519)746-2031.

THE WORLD OF WHALES AND DOLPHINS - a lecture by Dr. Roger Payne sponsored by Zoocheck Canada on Friday, Dec. 6 at 8 pm at the Board of Education Building, 6th floor auditorium. Tickets \$12.00 each from Zoocheck 5334 Yonge St., Suite 1830, Toronto M2N 6M2 or call 696-0241.

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TFN 423 - 30

TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS
20 College St., Suite 4
Toronto, Ontario M5G 1K2

Publications Mail
Registration No.
6669

(416)968-6255



TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

Published eight times a year 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.

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ISSN 0820-636X

