

TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

Number 461

September 1996



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TFN MEETINGS

Sunday, September 8, 1996 - WETLANDS OF DURHAM REGION,
at 2:30 pm
in the Northrop Frye Hall
Victoria University
73 Queen's Park Cres. East

an illustrated talk by Dale Hoy, professional
botanist and member of the Pickering Field
Naturalists.

TFN Annual General
Meeting before
the lecture

- Not all wetlands are created equal. In
Durham Region there are coast marshes, beach
swamps, a bog, several fens and systems of
riverine wetlands [TFN nature reserves have
been purchased to protect riverine wetlands in
Durham Region]. We will learn how these
wetlands are different and what makes them
important and who lives there and how they
depend on the surrounding countryside.

+ a "social hour" starting at 2 pm with free
coffee and juice.

+ "Always Alice" cards for sale. (For custom
or individual cards, call TFN member Alice
Mandryk at 767-6149.)

+ Jean Macdonald will be providing a display of
material about the Owl Foundation [See pages
11 to 12].

+ sale of "A life with birds: Percy A. Taverner",
soft cover: \$10.

IT'S YOUR NEWSLETTER

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

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

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

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

Send material to: Toronto Field Naturalists
605 - 14 College St.
Toronto, Ontario M5G 1K2

Newsletter Committee members: Helen Juhola, Diana Banville, Jenny Bull, Eva Davis
Nancy Fredenburg, Eileen Mayo, Joan O'Donnell, Toshi Oikawa.

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 TORONTO ISLANDS - nature walk Lakeshore, Toronto
 September 4 Leader: Barbara Kalthoff
 10:30 am Meet at the ferry docks at the foot of Bay St. in time to catch the 10:30 am ferry. Bring lunch.
 \$ ferry tickets We will be taking the ferry to Hanlan's Point where we will visit the nature reserve. Bring your guide to the plant communities of the Island and binoculars.
- Saturday METRO ZOO - nature arts Rouge, Scarborough
 September 7 Leader: Erik Weirmsa
 10:30 am Meet just inside the zoo entrance on the west side of Meadowvale Road, north of Sheppard Ave. East.
 \$ entry fee Bring camera or sketching materials and stool. Lunch optional. We will be looking at animals inside or outside the building, depending on weather, and will meet for lunch at McDonalds and compare "works".
- Saturday LITTLE NORWAY PARK - lakeshore gardens Lakeshore, Toronto
 September 7 Leader: Peter Iveson
 2 pm Meet at the southwest corner of Lakeshore Blvd. West and Bathurst St.
 We will be visiting gardens in the exhibition grounds as well as the formal gardens at the western gap.
- Sunday TFN Annual General Meeting and illustrated natural history talk
 September 8 See page 2 for details.
 2:30 pm
- Tuesday EARL BALES PARK - nature walk West Don, North York
 Sept. 10 Leader: Jim Purnell
 10:30 am Meet at the north entrance to the park (on the east side of Bathurst St. just south of Sheppard Ave. West). Bring lunch.
 We will be exploring some of the back trails in the park, looking for fall flowers and birds and enjoying the variety of habitats in this large park.
- Saturday TFN NATURE RESERVE - a day in the country north of Uxbridge
 Sept. 14 Leaders: TFN directors
 10 am to 5 pm Call the TFN office (968-6255) and leave your name and telephone number if you want to attend. Confirm by sending a cheque for \$12 (not post-dated), payable to TFN, to TFN, 605 - 14 College St., Toronto M5G 1K2. Bring lunch and something to drink. Water-proof footwear is recommended.
 PMCL school bus The bus leaves the south exit of the York Mills subway station (on Old York Mills Rd. just east of Yonge St.) promptly at 10 am and returns there at 5 pm. No washrooms on bus, but 3 outhouses at the property.

SEPTMBER OUTINGS (cont'd)

- Sunday
Sept. 15
2 pm
BLACK CREEK - nature walk
Leader: Gavin Miller
Humber tributary, North York
Meet at the northeast corner of Keele St. and Rustic Rd. (north of Lawrence Ave. West). [a joint outing with the Bl. Cr. Project]
In this sixth walk along Black Creek we will be following another tributary of the creek through North Park and Queen's Greenbelt.
- Wednesday
Sept. 18
10:30 am
EAST DON - nature walk
Leader: Maureen Allain
East Don, North York
Meet at the Bayview Woods Plaza on the north side of Finch Ave. East between Bayview and Leslie. Lunch optional.
The valley of the East Don is not deep in this area, but it is wide, providing lots of habitat for wildlife.
- Saturday
Sept. 21
2 pm
MUIR GARDENS AND SHERWOOD PARK - nature walk
Leader: Morris Sorensen &/or Ann Millett
Burke Brook, Toronto
Meet at the southeast corner of Yonge St. and Lawrence Ave.
This is a joint outing with the Toronto Historical Board to celebrate "200 Years Yonge". We have chosen to introduce the public to some of the linear parklands that are accessible from Yonge St. subway stations.
- Sunday
Sept. 22
2 pm
YELLOW CREEK - nature walk
Leader: Peter Hare
Don tributary, Toronto
Meet at the northeast corner of St. Clair Ave. East and Alvin Ave. (one block east of Yonge).
This is a joint walk with the North Toronto Green Community and a Healthy City event. It is also the first anniversary of the Lost Rivers Walks.
We will be following Yellow Creek south to Park Drive Ravine.
- Wednesday
Sept. 25
10:30 am
VALE OF AVOCA - nature walk
Leader: Jo Butler
Don tributary, Toronto
Meet at the subway exit on the south side of St. Clair Ave. East, just east of Yonge St. Lunch optional.
We will be visiting a deep ravine containing a small creek and abundant wildlife.
- Saturday
Sept. 28
10 am
MIMICO CREEK - nature walk
Leader: Robin Powell
Mimico Creek, Etobicoke
Meet at the northeast corner of Bloor St. West and Islington Ave. Bring lunch.
We will be following Mimico Creek south to Lake Ontario through a series of parkettes and streets. This area is the best place in Metro Toronto to see nut trees.
- Sunday
Sept. 29
2 pm
CLOVER HILL - human & natural history
Leader: Ian Wheal
Toronto
Meet at the Wellesley subway station, north side of Wellesley just east of Yonge St.
This walk will take us through the University of Toronto downtown campus where we will learn about some of the past topography.

□

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This month's report better belongs, perhaps, in the "Keeping in Touch" section, for it is precisely out of touch that I write this in July, ensconced in an old house overlooking the DeSable estuary on the south coast of Prince Edward Island. Not far to the east and north lies the Bonshaw hill country, the most hilly and woodsy part of the Island. "Hilly," here, denotes a gentle roll; the real mountains are the blue-white pinnacles of clouds that gather in the west over the flat hedgerow horizon and the glimmering sea.

Beside the house, a narrow densely wooded ravine with a gurgling brooklet winds down by grain and potato fields to a little tide-marsh on the bay. In the thick cool shade of yellow birch and white birch, large-toothed and trembling aspen, spruce and fir, red maple and white oak (the last surely introduced but doing well), the rusting garbage of bygone residents is almost swallowed up in the carpet of oak ferns and wood ferns, starflower and sarsaparilla, shinleaf pyrola and dwarf enchanters-nightshade. All morning, every nine seconds brings the bright "cheet-cheet-cheet-chorry-chorry" of the inaptly named Mourning Warbler. (He is, of course, named for his slate-coloured veil. Heard incessantly and, in the dense foliage, glimpsed but infrequently and with effort, a more cheerful name would seem more appropriate.) To the nectar feeder come hummingbirds; to the small seed feeder come Goldfinches, Pine Siskins and Purple Finches; to the woodshed on a regular schedule come Bluejays, though I have yet to determine just why. The music of Song and Savannah Sparrows tumbles steadily out of meadows and thickets. Summers come cool and late here. The strawberries do not begin to ripen until July.

Meanwhile, back in doubtlessly sweltering Toronto, savannah restoration experiments should--if all goes well--have gotten under way in High Park over the summer. Plans for 14 test plots were released for comment in early June. They involve attempts to regenerate black oak and native prairie plants, in part by reducing competition from invasive exotics such as lawn grasses, buckthorn, Tartarian honeysuckle, and the dreaded swallowwort (The Thing that Ate Charles Sauriol). The decline of native prairie species in the park is quite widely understood by now, so I predict that no one will condemn the proposal to control invasives as "ecological ethnic cleansing" (as someone did a few years ago). The proposal suggests that this control might be accomplished by means including--in addition to burning, pulling, tilling, cutting and other modes of physical violence--the use of chemical herbicides. City of Toronto Parks and Recreation evidently learned no lesson from the reaction to its suggestion that herbicides be used in aid of ecological restoration in the Lower Don. When public agencies engage in projects ecological, the "environmentally right thing" must not only be done but must, like justice, be seen to be done. I predict that references to herbicides will be expunged in due course.

Allan Greenbaum

□

**Alistair
J. Kennedy**
Chartered Accountant

REVIEW ENGAGEMENT REPORT

To The Members Of
Toronto Field Naturalists

I have reviewed the Balance Sheet of Toronto Field Naturalists as at June 30, 1996 and the Statement of Revenues and Expenditures and Capital for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Corporation's Directors.

My review was made in accordance with generally accepted standards for review engagements and accordingly consisted primarily of enquiry, analytical procedures and discussion related to information supplied to me by the Corporation.

A review does not constitute an audit and consequently, I do not express an audit opinion on these financial statements.

In common with many non-profit organizations, the organization derives revenue from donations and other receipts, the completeness of which is not susceptible to satisfactory review. Accordingly, review of these revenues was limited to the amounts recorded in the accounting records of the organization and I was not able to determine whether any adjustments might be necessary to these revenues.

Based on my review, except for the effect of adjustment, if any, which I might have determined to be necessary had I been able to completely review the revenues referred to in the preceding paragraph, nothing has come to my attention that causes me to believe that these financial statements are not, in all material respects, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

Toronto, Ontario
July 19, 1996


ALISTAIR J. KENNEDY
Chartered Accountant

TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS
 (incorporated without share capital under the laws
 of the Province of Ontario)
BALANCE SHEET
AS AT JUNE 30, 1996

ASSETS

| | <u>1996</u> | <u>1995</u> |
|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Current Assets | | |
| Cash | \$ 84,800 | \$ 82,438 |
| GST Recoverable | 858 | - |
| Inventory | 3,374 | 2,746 |
| Photo Library | <u>9,200</u> | <u>9,200</u> |
| | <u>\$ 98,232</u> | <u>\$ 94,384</u> |

LIABILITIES AND EQUITY

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Current Liabilities | | |
| Accounts Payable | \$ 642 | \$ 712 |
| Membership Fees Received in Advance | <u>12,200</u> | <u>14,400</u> |
| | <u>12,842</u> | <u>15,112</u> |

EQUITY

| | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Retained Earnings | <u>85,390</u> | <u>79,272</u> |
| | <u>\$ 98,232</u> | <u>\$ 94,384</u> |
| Working Capital: Dollars | \$ 85,390 | \$ 79,272 |
| : Ratio | 8:1 | 6:1 |

NATURE RESERVES - RESTRICTED FUNDS (Notes 1 & 2)

| | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Current Assets | | |
| Cash (Note 2) | \$171,605 | \$160,287 |
| Property and Equipment | | |
| Land | <u>109,187</u> | <u>109,187</u> |
| | <u>\$280,792</u> | <u>\$269,474</u> |
| Equity | | |
| Reserve for Future Expenditures | \$171,605 | \$160,287 |
| Property | <u>109,187</u> | <u>109,187</u> |
| | <u>\$280,792</u> | <u>\$269,474</u> |

APPROVED ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD

Joan O'Donnell (Director) *R. Powell* (Director)

The accompanying 'Notes to Financial Statement' are an integral part of these financial statements.

UNAUDITED

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**TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS
COMPARATIVE INCOME STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 1996**

| | <u>1996</u> | <u>1995</u> |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| REVENUE | | |
| Membership Fees | \$ 23,425 | \$ 25,305 |
| Publications | <u>318</u> | <u>583</u> |
| | <u>23,743</u> | <u>25,888</u> |
| EXPENSES | | |
| Outings | \$ 802 | 1,197 |
| Meeting Expenses | 2,335 | 2,558 |
| Newsletter, Printing and Mailing | 12,416 | 13,824 |
| Other Printing Expenses | 23 | 777 |
| Other Mailing Expenses | 1,593 | 1,788 |
| Accounting | 642 | 642 |
| Advertising and Publicity | 984 | 515 |
| Office Supplies | 823 | 385 |
| Telephone | 683 | 524 |
| Rent | 4,683 | 4,173 |
| G.S.T. Rebate | <u>(858)</u> | <u>(958)</u> |
| | <u>24,126</u> | <u>25,425</u> |
| Operating Income (Loss) | (383) | 463 |
| Interest Income | <u>3,379</u> | <u>3,813</u> |
| Net Income before Donations | 2,996 | 4,276 |
| Donations | <u>3,122</u> | <u>4,495</u> |
| Net Income for Year | <u>\$ 6,118</u> | <u>\$ 8,771</u> |
| Retained Earnings, at Beginning of Year | <u>\$ 79,272</u> | <u>\$ 70,501</u> |
| Retained Earnings, at End of Year | <u>\$ 85,390</u> | <u>\$ 79,272</u> |

The accompanying 'Notes to Financial Statement' are an integral part of these financial statements.

**TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
AT JUNE 30, 1996**

Note 1: Significant Accounting PoliciesNature Reserves

Donations received for the Nature Reserves are segregated on the financial statements, and are to be used solely for Reserve purposes.

Note 2: Restricted Funds - Activity During Year

| | <u>1996</u> | <u>1995</u> |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Designated Donations | \$ 5,000 | \$ 12,922 |
| Interest Earned | <u>7,386</u> | <u>7,993</u> |
| | 12,386 | 20,915 |
| Property Taxes and Other Expenses | <u>1,068</u> | <u>527</u> |
| Increase for Year | 11,318 | 20,388 |
| Restricted Cash at Beginning of Year | <u>160,287</u> | <u>139,899</u> |
| Restricted Cash at End of Year | <u>\$171,605</u> | <u>\$160,287</u> |

Note 3: Commitment

The organization is committed to the following annual rental payments under leases:

| | <u>Year Ended</u> | <u>Annual Rent</u> |
|----------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Building | June 30, 1997 | \$ 5,578 |
| | June 30, 1998 | 5,857 |
| | June 30, 1999 | 5,857 |
| | June 30, 2000 | 6,136 |
| | June 30, 2001 | <u>6,136</u> |
| | | <u>\$29,564</u> |

KEEPING IN TOUCH

April 29, 1996

Re: the TFN issue of February 1996

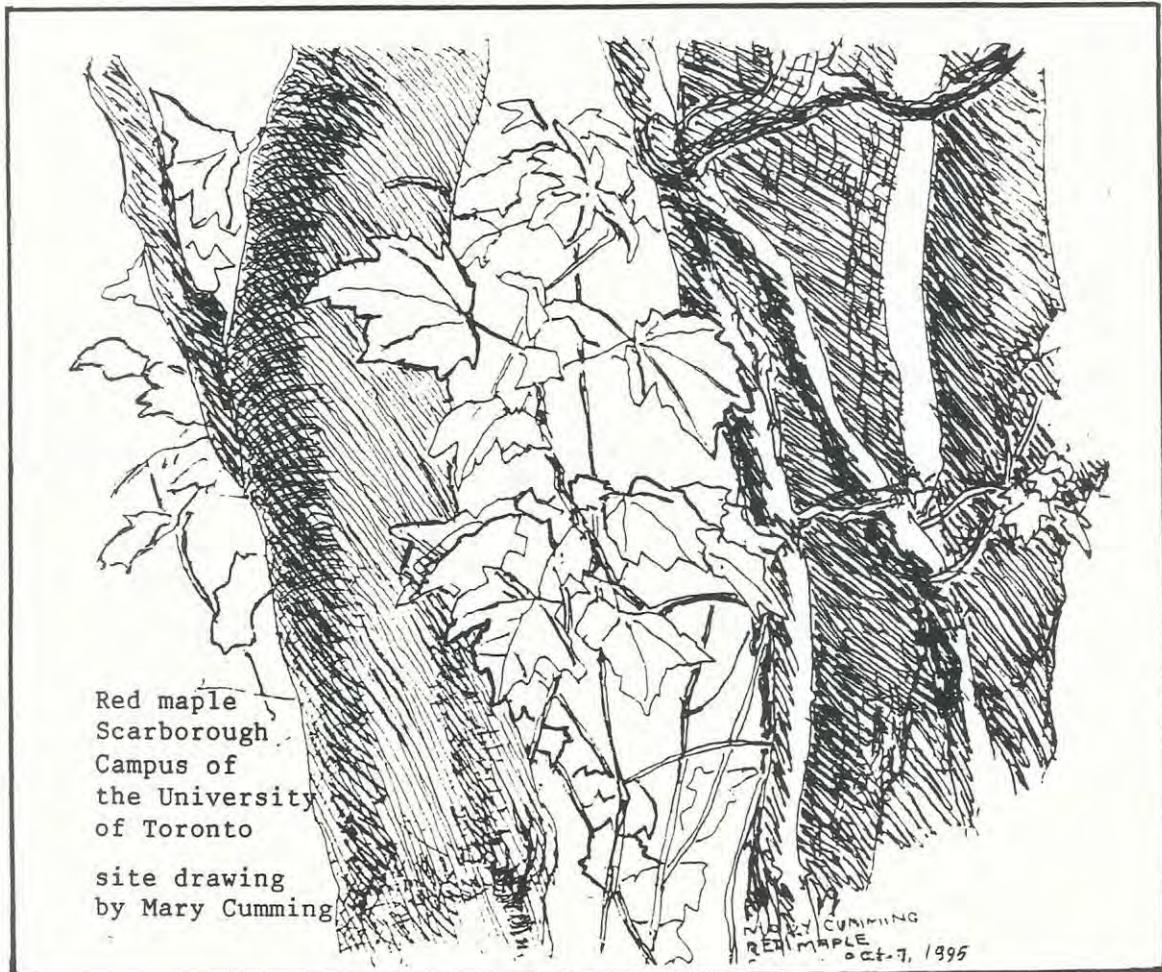
The Toronto region wildlife report of that issue makes no mention of red squirrels, and I just wanted to report that there are red squirrels in the Centennial Creek/Highland Creek area close to the lake.

We noticed a doe and three fauns in the Centennial Creek ravine last spring and assume they are part of the same group reported. They have access to this ~~area~~ and the Rouge Valley via the corridor along the lakeshore.

Warren Bonisteel

Ed. note: In 1995 we had reports of the red squirrel in York Cemetery, High Park, Newtonbrook Creek, East Don Valley, and urban North York, as well as Highland Creek, some associated with larch, Austrian pine and Norway spruce.

D.B. □





THE OWL FOUNDATION (TOF)

It began about 1965 when Kay McKeever became interested in owls and how to care for the injured and orphaned birds. Although she did not have any formal training she had an inquiring mind which propelled her to pursue an idea or situation until the answer was found. This interest and her expertise continued and developed, and when Kay and her husband Larry had been caring for owls for about ten years the Foundation was established in 1975 as a charitable Foundation which could receive donations. Known now as The Owl Foundation (TOF) it was originally the Owl Rehabilitation Research Foundation (ORRF). A responsible handling of funds has ensured that the Foundation has always remained solvent and an Endowment Fund has been maintained as a safety net.

Their yearly Newsletter has wonderful stories of their experiences. One of these concerned two owls which never developed a relationship while living together in a compound. When an overhead tunnel was built, giving access to the next compound, one of the owls dashed through the tunnel, immediately began a relationship with the two owls in the new compound, and brought one home with her. She drove out her roommate - another female - and soon laid four eggs.

It is extremely difficult to tell the sex of owls and TOF has, at times, had biologists come in to take DNA tests and to determine sex. It is necessary to know the gender for the McKeever's to understand the owl's behaviour in pair and group situations, to enable them to deal with the birds most effectively.

The Foundation has many resident owls of both sexes and of eleven species. These are birds which have defects which would prevent them from living in the wild - partial blindness, damaged wings or feet and so on. These birds breed, the offspring are trained to catch mice and in due course are released in the wild in suitable locations throughout Canada. Some of the resident owls, perhaps not breeding themselves can act as foster parents, greatly helping in the survival of owlets which need to be "imprinted" on other owls.

Kay McKeever is the active one in dealing with the owls themselves and their problems and behaviour. Larry is supportive and is deeply involved but mainly handles the administrative and financial side of the endeavour.

Last December a severe storm caused an enormous oak to fall and smash three cages and damage another four. Most of the owls were netted by the staff but one Great Grey, no longer recognizing his territory, took off and ended up in Port Dalhousie, in a private garden. A keen birder was told of this and was about to put it on the birders' hotline when it was realized that it was the missing owl. Staff at the foundation immediately got organized and the owl was recaptured.

One of the most impressive things about the work of Kay McKeever is that she has always sought out a solution to whatever problem arose, often through

THE OWL FOUNDATION (Cont'd)

experts in each particular field. She has become incredibly knowledgeable, is known world-wide, and has valuable allies and supporters in the work of the Foundation. It is a remarkable achievement - starting from scratch, as it were, and finding answers by her own efforts, skill and intelligence.

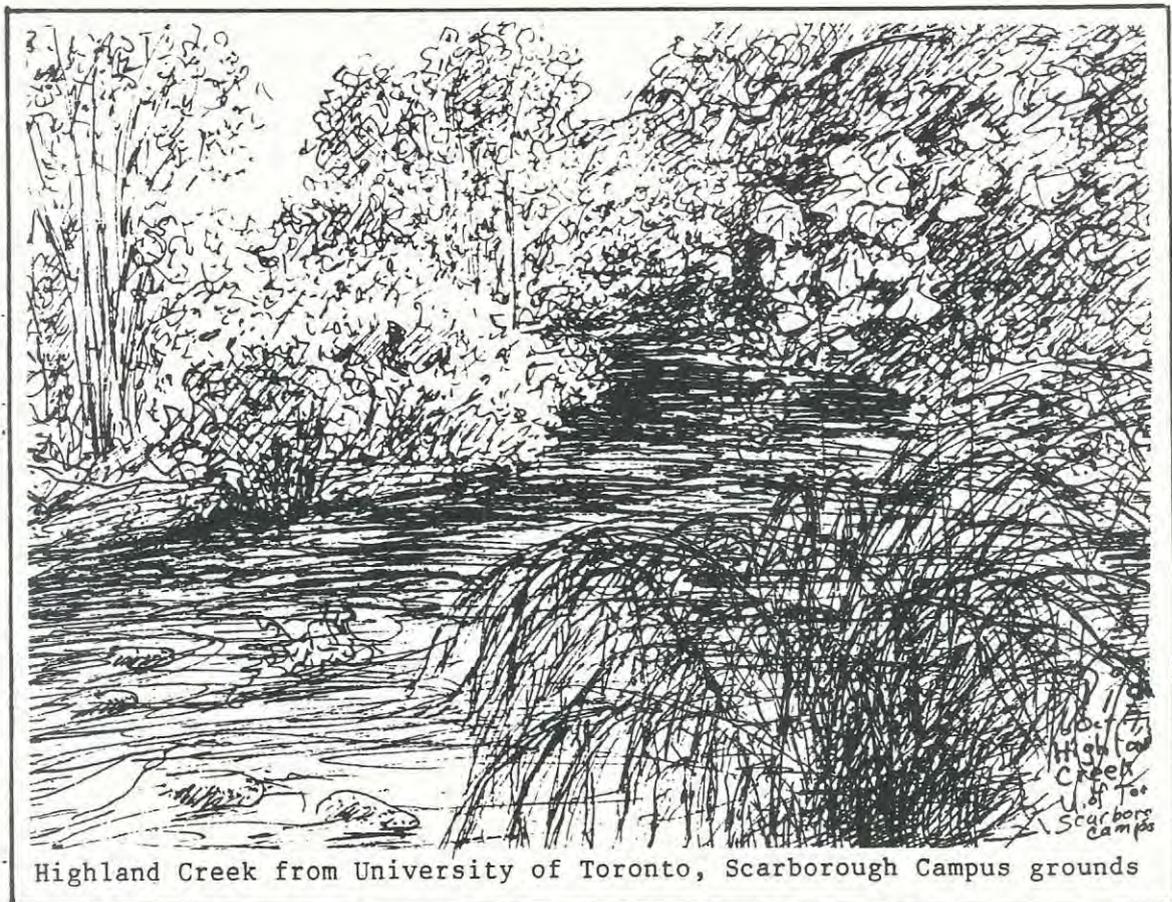
If you want to know more about how this marvellous project began, look for Larry (Lawrence) McKeever's book, A Dowry of Owls published by Lester and Orpen Dennys Ltd., Toronto, and have a great "read".

If you wish to assist this fascinating, wonderful place you can make a donation (tax receipt over \$10.00), you can sponsor a juvenile owl (\$50.00 minimum - includes photo certificate), or you can sponsor a resident owl (\$100.00-\$200.00 a year, includes photo certificate). Anyone giving \$50.00 or more will be invited to a "Sponsor's Tour".

▷ The Owl Foundation, 4117 21st Street, R.R.1, Vineland Station, ON, L0R 2E0.

Jean Macdonald

□



Highland Creek from University of Toronto, Scarborough Campus grounds

The Geese and Their Egg

"If I was a goose," one of us said, "it's not where I would choose to lay an egg!" We were looking out of our office window, across the parking lot to the neighbouring building. A pair of geese had built a nest in the waist-high planter that ran around the building, right outside of the front doors. "How do they plan to get the babies down from that planter?", someone asked. "And where do they plan to take them for swimming lessons? There's no water anywhere near here," someone else said.

Whatever the inconveniences of their nesting site, the geese were soon a fixture of the office park. The female sat on the nest, occasionally coming down to the lawns for a quick nibble of grass. The gander strutted back and forth across the parking lots, sometimes flying up to the roof-tops or disappearing for hours at a time. From our windows, we were able to keep an eye on the geese, and to observe that many office workers were aware of their presence and were taking an interest in how they were doing. On one occasion we saw some children climbing up into the planter, and one of us ran outside and chased them away. Another time, the gardening crew came to clean up winter debris, but they assured us that they would not disturb the nest.

We learned that although there had originally been four eggs, there was now just one left. Perhaps squirrels or crows had raided the nest when the female was feeding. As time went on, the female spent more and more time on the nest, and the gander became more and more protective and territorial. One afternoon we watched as he chased a woman across the parking lot. Apparently he thought she had been too close to the nest. On another occasion, we had a good laugh when we saw a man walk past the nest, not knowing it was there, and jump about two feet into the air when the female hissed at him!

It had been a long, cold winter. The presence of the geese, and the anticipation of the hatching of their egg made this spring special. One morning, one of our staff saw the gander chase a woman from the building. She ran and fell down in the parking lot. Later in the day, we were horrified to learn that the building's management had been contacted, the nest destroyed, and the egg taken to a local school on the advice of the Humane Society. The two geese were obviously upset. They kept flying up to the place where the nest had been, and wandering around the grounds.

When we spoke to people in the building across the parking lot, we found out that the woman who had been chased thought she had broken her arm when she fell, and that she had been terrified by the gander. She suffered a few cuts and scrapes. Her office staff decided that the geese constituted a danger, and had to be dealt with.

We were not pleased by this development. The egg would have hatched soon and the geese would eventually have gone away. A goose is relatively small in comparison to a human, and its ability to harm

THE GEESE (cont'd)

a human quite limited. The geese and their egg were providing interest to many people who came and went to the office complex, offering a little glimpse of "nature" in the midst of a swirl of human activity. It did not take very much effort to avoid the gander or the nest.

In any case, the geese and their egg are gone. Does it matter? We certainly don't "need" more geese in this city! For all we know, this pair of geese had raised many goslings over the years, and may have been relieved to be freed from parental duties this spring by human intervention. They seemed disorientated for a few days, then were seen peacefully nibbling grass in another part of the office park.

For us, this little episode is more important for what it shows about the role we humans take on our planet. "Our" planet - what arrogance! We loot and vandalize the place like a swarm of rioters. Is there money to be made from this stand of virgin timber? Chop it down and sell it to Japan. Is this little wetland - home as it is to migrating birds - close to a growing city? Fill it in and build houses on it. Do we think that the seals are eating the salmon? Kill them and - how convenient and coincidentally profitable! - sell their penises for aphrodisiacs. Do two geese and their egg constitute a danger or an annoyance to an office worker? Just get rid of them.

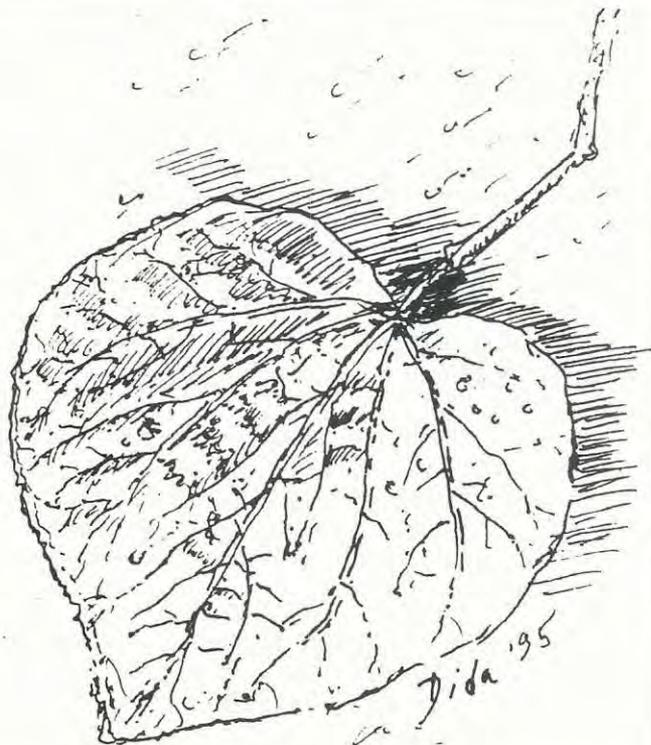
Christopher Morden

□

A basswood leaf in
the rain...

it is much larger
than those of most
of the lindens (or "limes")
which are often planted
in Toronto, species and
hybrids of the Old World.
The basswood is a Toronto
native.

Drawing made at the
Life Sciences University
of Toronto Carolinian
Forest project,
September 20, 1995



**THE CHARLES SAURIOL ENVIRONMENTAL LAND TRUST
AND
MILNE HOLLOW**

The Charles Sauriol Environmental Land Trust Fund was created in 1993 to assure the continuance and perpetuation of the work begun by Charles Sauriol.

Charles Sauriol spent a lifetime pursuing the conservation of natural lands all across Canada. He was instrumental in bringing thousands of acres of resource lands under the stewardship of responsible conservation agencies.

Since 1960, hundreds of natural area sites have been preserved for conservation purposes in southern Ontario thanks to the generosity of foundations, corporations and individuals from the private sector. This financial support has made it possible to preserve some of our best wetlands and forest tracts, which would otherwise have been lost to environmental use.

In his ninety-two years Charles worked tirelessly at conserving the natural areas that now compose Toronto's world-envied park system. The Don Valley was his first love.

There was one more piece of land in Toronto that Charles wanted to see purchased and conserved for the use of all our citizens. This property is known as Milne Hollow. His dream was that Milne Hollow would become the "Trail head" or entrance to the Charles Sauriol Conservation Reserve, an "urban wilderness" that stretches from Lawrence Avenue East down to the forks of the Don River, a hike of some three hours through forests of very old trees and fields of wild flowers.

Milne Hollow, a 4 hectare (10 acre) property **situated at the southeast corner of Lawrence Avenue and the Don Valley Parkway (the site of the old Don Valley Ski Club)**, provides a unique opportunity to form the northern entry and gateway to The Charles Sauriol Conservation Reserve. The property lies entirely within the Don Valley and is of considerable historical significance, having been the location of a series of woollen mills in that part of the Don Valley.

Before he died last December, Charles made a commitment to The Conservation Foundation of Greater Toronto to raise \$250,000 of the Milne Hollow purchase price from the private sector - businesses and individuals. In a short period he was able to secure about \$50,000 of this pledge.

The Conservation Foundation of Greater Toronto is committed to seeing that Charles' dream is realized and that the other \$200,000 is raised.

Very real progress has been made on the regeneration of the lower Don Valley. Inclusion of sites like Milne Hollow continue this progress and further the goal to have our valley lands, which are the green lungs of the urban area, in public care for education, habitat, restoration and public enjoyment.

Help make this dream of an urban wilderness come true. Your donation to The Conservation Foundation of Greater Toronto will qualify as a charitable donation and an official receipt will be issued.

For more information, contact:



The Conservation Foundation of Greater Toronto
5 Shoreham Drive
DOWNSVIEW, Ontario
M3N 1S4

(416) 661-6600, Ext. 276

NEW CANADIAN FUNGUS AMONG US!

On October 11, 1994, a Stinkhorn was found growing on the grassy crest of the first dune in the vicinity of Pinery's Dunes Beach. Tom Purdy and his school group were planting dune grasses. Knowing my fascination for fungi, he showed me the fragrant fruiting satisfying the curiosity of my less than nimble nose. Stinkhorns, of course, smell bad, attracting flies which hope to lay eggs in carrion. The flies unwittingly serve as spore dispersal agents. Afterwards I dutifully returned to photograph this most delightful Stinkhorn (*Phallus hadriani*). Wandering back through the first interdune I encountered a small, brownish, half-buried, nondescript fungus poking through the sand on the backside of the first dune. Given the harshness of the habitat, I had low expectations of finding fungi in the dry, infertile shifting sands of Pinery's dunes. Once more I was dumbfounded by the fortitude of the often forgotten fungi.

While the Stinkhorn is unique in its shape and structure, this second, somewhat subterranean, sand dune fungus was going to be much more difficult to identify. A typical toadstool in appearance (i.e., stem, cap and gills), it was a classic case of an "LBJ" (little brown job). There were, however, a few distinctive features. Upon digging up a fruiting body I saw that 3/4 or more of the twisted, almost corkscrew-like stem was buried beneath the sand. This must be a response to turn away from the driving, constantly changing wind and emerge through the ever inundating sand.

In most specimens only the cap was visible. Sometimes it, too, was completely buried. The stems (3-5 cm) were often twice as long as the caps (2-3 cm) were wide. The stems were narrower near the cap and wider (but not bulbous) at the base. The wider stem girth towards the base may be an adaptation for anchoring in the unstable sand. In part this could be caused by sand adherence to the stem possibly through the development of dense, fur-like mycelium (fungal "root hairs") along the buried portion of the stem. The cap was convex, becoming almost flat in older specimens. Both caps and stems were fibrillose (i.e., hairy), possibly a protection against abrasive sand. When young, the gray-brown, well-spaced gills were covered with a cortina (a cobweb-like veil stretching from cap margin to stem). With age the cortina ruptures, at first leaving veil remnants hanging around the cap edge. Eventually these disappear. In old specimens the now unprotected gills become cinnamon coloured with spores and the only remaining evidence of the cortina is the smudgy ring zone around the upper stem.

While the apparent adaptations to burial and stability were impressive, the "clinker" clue to this confounding fungus was the cortina. It narrowed the field to a single family, Cortinariaceae. However, it just so happens there are more species in this group than in any other family of gilled fungi. To go further than guessing the genus could well require the expertise of a mycologist with the appropriate technical references. So pictures were taken, spore prints made and field notes recorded from fresh specimens (often critically important for subsequent identification of dried specimens). This package of material and information was sent to Dr. S. A. Redhead,

NEW FUNGUS (cont'd)

a mycologist with Agriculture Canada.

The resulting identification was more exciting than I ever imagined! There's a new Canadian fungus among us: *Hebeloma affine* Smith, Evenson & Mitchel (1983). This obscure, almost "stepped-over" little brown job turned out to be a very rare fellow indeed! Pinery's record of *Hebeloma affine* is a first for Canada and second for the world. The only other known site is the type locality of Wilderness Park area in Emmet County, Michigan where it was first recorded September 21, 1953, on the edge of beach dunes. Based on current knowledge this species may well be a Great Lakes endemic specializing in sand dune settings.

After the Pinery discovery and subsequent recognition of the identity and unusual status of this species, Alf Rider and I set out on November 15, 1994, to see if we could still find evidence of our fungal friend in Pinery's dunes. Sure enough 24, albeit mostly over-mature and dried up, fruiting bodies were found in an area approximately 3 metres by 5 metres. While there were several dune grasses and Common Juniper nearby, I believe these fungi were forming mycorrhiza (plant partnership by way of interconnected "root" systems), with Balsam Poplar shoots distributed throughout the area. Digging through Pinery's past on a historical hunch I later found some old, unlabelled fungi slides. It was *Hebeloma affine*; the now familiar, sometimes shrivelled, unidentified specimen collected by D. Tyerman on September 8, 1990, "in a sand dune." The characteristic sand-covered stem, general aspect and habitat data revealed that *Hebeloma affine* had, once again, been "hiding in the woodwork."

Often we travel far and wide in search of special things. Sometimes, however, rare and special things can be found in our own backyard where least expected. Not always spectacular and showy, they can still have an interesting story to tell, their own unique struggle for survival. So keep your eyes open; we have one of the biggest backyards in the world!

an article by Gordon Vogg in EARTHWAYS, a publication of Lambton Wildlife Incorporated, October 1995

Reference: Smith, A.H., Evenson, V.S. and Mitchel, D.H. 1983. *The Veiled Species of Hebeloma in the Western United States*. The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, MI.

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...As long as I can remember I have been a naturalist with a perpetual itch to show wild nature to other people in the hope they too will get as much delight from it as I have done. And the more people who become interested in the natural world and committed to it, the greater the chance that wild nature will continue to exist.

from TRAVEL DIARIES OF A NATURALIST by Peter Scott, Collins, London, 1987

ENCOUNTER

Ontario's black bear is much in the news and I won't repeat the Whys and Wherefores of the environmentalist and animal-support pressure groups for an end to the yearly spring bear hunt. (Whatever MNR "guesstimates" about population, hunters and the ugly and vastly profitable illegal bear-parts trade could well combine to place black bears on the endangered list in the not too distant future.) However, personal experience is all. I have only once found black bear to be dangerous. On every other occasion when I have sighted a bear in the distance and raised my camera, it was to focus on a sudden void.

The very first time I encountered the animal was 23 years ago in Emsdale, which is just south of Burk's Falls. He and I were both so busy picking blueberries that we strayed into each other's collecting territory. Once sighted, a few yards between us, the blueberries were immediately disregarded. I stood poised on one leg ready for flight. The bear -- a young one -- sat back on his haunches and looked me over, bear-fashion: a glance to the side, then back to me, a glance to the other side, and back to me again. Putting these angles together convinced him -- as who can blame him -- that he did not like what he saw and he reverted to all-fours and made a speedy disappearance.

A year later, again in Emsdale, I was meandering along an eight-foot wide bush road (doubtless now turned into a "proper" thoroughfare). My eyes were on the ground and my mind was concerned solely with what I was, presently and pleasurably, going to put into a very empty inside. I was jerked out of my self-absorption by a sudden snarl, and looking up found, a few yards off in the raspberry bushes, a bear reared to full height, displaying yellowed teeth. At the same time I was aware of a dark object by her feet which was fleetingly reminiscent of a small dog. These registrations took a split second or two and I realized I had blundered into the classic No-No situation of Mother-and-Cubs. I had alarmed her as much as she alarmed me, but with great good luck the crisis was defused by a second youngster in the bush who promptly scuttled up a tree. Mum's attention diverted, she went after her cubs and I, with as much dignity as was compatible with not breaking into an actual gallop, went after my resort a few hundred yards down the road. Later in the evening, seated at a picnic table with the resort owner and assorted visitors, I mentioned my encounter. The owner was surprised that a bear family would be about so late in the year (middle of July). One of the others asked eagerly if I had taken photographs! No! This was one occasion when I was not staying around to fiddle with light metre and depth of field.

Eva Davis

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| <p>In the summer woods the great crested flycatcher is "weeping" away.</p> |
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Haiku by Helen Juhola
and Diana Banville
June 6, 1994

RE PARKDALE HONEY INDUSTRY IN 1906

Parkdale had over 200 swarms of bees in 1906. Clover honey production was high. The Toronto Star article, June 19, 1906, suggested that clover should be spared when the annual cutting of thistles and burrs took place.

While no particular part of Parkdale was mentioned, from contemporary accounts, the area would have been in South Parkdale, perhaps near the lake or along the rail corridors (Grand Trunk on the south) and CPR/Grand Trunk (now CNR) on the northeast and east.

There were also a number of empty lots and fields in Parkdale as late as 1906. Post and wire fencing ran along parts of Fraser Ave. and Liberty St. at this time. A large baseball field and diamond enclosure existed. Mercer Reformatory and Central Prison grounds lay to the west and east respectively.

Right after finding this reference (Tuesday, Oct. 10, 1995), I went down to the area on Thursday Oct. 12 and walked along Liberty St. by Lamport Stadium. I saw only a few birds and insects, including one bee. Then I walked to the foot of Fraser Ave. and along the heavily overgrown rail corridor. Here I saw more insects of all sorts and one group of bees together swarming over something in a crevice east of Fraser Ave. The place was perhaps 50 or so feet from Fraser Ave. The day was hot and sultry with a temperature of 26°C. I did not come too close.

Ian Wheal

drawn by E.D. from a photo by Lynn & Donna Rogers on the cover of the Animal Alliance of Canada pamphlet, "Stop the Spring Bear Hunt", 1996



FOR READING

HANDBOOK OF THE CANADIAN ROCKIES, second edition: "Geology, plants, animals, history and recreation from Waterton/Glacier to the Yukon", by Ben Gadd, Corax Press, Box 1557 Jasper, Alberta, TOE 1E0, 1995. 831 pages, including 27-page general index and a 19-page atlas with its 2-page index; bibliography following each chapter; all subjects liberally illustrated in colour and black-and-white. \$35.95.

Many of the pen-and-ink drawings which appeared in the first edition of Ben Gadd's handbook in 1986 (SEE TFN 387:8) have been coloured in this second edition which is printed on glossy paper; those of the birds and mammals have been replaced by illustrations in a painting medium by Matthew Wheeler. The first edition contained 876 pages, the second, with 45 pages fewer, covers much the same material and a new chapter of 15 extra pages on seasonal ecology as well as 7 pages on the additional subject of boating in the chapter, "Enjoying the Rockies". Among the other updated information in this chapter, the etiquette portion for trail-cyclists has been expanded and featured in contrasting colour. Some hikers may wish to head for Waterton Park which is the most restricted with only two trails open to cyclists; Jasper is the most liberal but there are still 4 trails which are not open to cyclists.

The printing method accommodating an even right-hand margin accounts for much of the space-saving. However, the revised handbook is still much heavier than the first edition and less flexible to handle, because of the paper used...a trade-off of ease-for-colour. The chapter-titles are indicated at the top of each page - an improvement over the first edition. The scale-bars which were sometimes useful in the first edition for indicating size of plants illustrated have been dropped in the second edition.

If you want a field guide to end all field guides for the Canadian Rockies, as in the case of the first edition, this is the handbook you need. If you would rather just back-pack a smaller field guide on a favourite subject, such as BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA (Robbins et al., Golden Press) or ROCKY MOUNTAIN WILDFLOWERS (Porsild, National Museums of Canada) a good plan might be to carry Ben Gadd's handbook in your luggage for a wealth of information to refer to at the end of each day - or to leave at home, consulting it for note-making before your trip and checking up afterwards. Ben Gadd explains the difference between the "American Rockies" and the "Canadian Rockies", the latter including Glacier National Park in Montana. (By the way, it would be easy to make the mistake of picking up A FIELD GUIDE TO ROCKY MOUNTAIN WILDFLOWERS by Craighead et al.; however, it covers the American Rockies which extend further east and very considerably further south with quite a different flora, comparatively few plants shared with the Canadian Rockies being described.)

Before your next trip to the Canadian Rockies, be sure to read what Ben Gadd has to say. His handbook (in both editions) is tried and true, accurate and readable, and obviously deserving of the awards it has won.

Diana Banville

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FOR READING (cont'd)

THE COUNTRYSIDE IDEAL: ANGLO-AMERICAN IMAGES OF LANDSCAPE by Michael Bunce, Routledge Publisher, London (U.K.) and New York, 1994; \$22.95

This 232-page volume is a ground breaker in its field -- historical geography. The author has successfully introduced and collected most of the 200-or-so year old story of Countryside in the city, country, and suburbia.

The interweaving of art and architecture with other themes, such as environment and transportation, from the early nineteenth century makes the reader want to participate in this nostalgic search for an ideal natural landscape.

After reading "The Countryside Ideal" and being greatly uplifted by author Bunce's wonderful imagery of beautiful landscape, one is loath to question his conclusions. However, permission to do so is found in a similar pioneer work which presents a less pleasant, but more philosophical approach. (MAPPING THE SUBJECT: GEOGRAPHIES OF CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION, edited by Steve Pile and Nigel Thrift, Routledge Publisher, London (U.K.) and New York, 1995; \$33.95).

Ian Wheal

MY FATHER'S ISLAND: A GALAPAGOS QUEST by Johanna Angermeyer, published by Viking Penguin, 1989 (Penguin Books Canada Ltd., 2801 John St., Markham, Ont. L3R 1B4) 302 pages, illustrated, some in colour, sketch maps of Galapagos Islands

This fascinating autobiography covers a period from the 1930s to the author's coming of age. The author's mother came to North America from Russia with her parents in 1913. They settled in Nebraska. Her mother married a young Ecuadorian aviator, training in Nebraska. He died in an air crash while they were living in Quito. Later she remarried.

This adventure autobiography goes from Russia to Nebraska to Ecuador to one of the Galapagos Islands where the family of the author's widowed mother settled in the 1930s. The author's German father, along with his brothers, escaped to the Galapagos by boat just ahead of Hitler's round-up for the army. The flora and fauna and life on the island of Santa Cruz are of interest to naturalists. When the Angermeyers lived there they were already apprehensive of tourism as the Galapagos was beginning to attract an affluent, globe-trotting public. The book ends with the author and her sister pioneering as young adults. The author promised to write a sequel, but my research has failed to find it in publishers' directories.

Jean McGill

Bright on Tai Shan's slopes
like an old friend encountered
gold forsythia.

Haiku by Arthur Wade
Tai-an, North China

OUR STOLEN FUTURE by Theo Colborn et al, Penguin Books, New York, 1996. As Rachel Carson did in "Silent Spring", Theo Colborn is bringing controversial scientific debate to the public, asking us to be aware and forcing us to make informed decisions. The result is shockingly eye-opening. After the publication of "Silent Spring", both the scientific and the industrial community brought their wrath down upon Rachel Carson. "Our Stolen Future" seems destined to become equally controversial and important.

In "Our Stolen Future", ~~Theo~~ Colborn pulls together a wide range of scientific evidence to show the effect synthetic chemicals are having on our endocrine system. For example, she shows how synthetic hormones have resulted in a wide spectrum of birth defects and fertility problems in both humans and animals. In other parts of the book, she discusses studies that link exposure to PCBs and furans to impairment of normal sexual functioning and mental abilities.

What makes this book unique is the audience to which it is aimed. Colborn, with the help of journalist Dianne Dumanoski and fellow scientist John Peterson Myers, has created a work for the general population. The authors do an excellent job at first explaining the science and then describing the experiments and findings.

My one criticism of the book is that I sometimes felt that Colborn was drawing some of her conclusions without much to back them up. I am hesitant, however, to end this review on a critical note, as I found "Our Stolen Future" to be one of the most important and thought provoking books I have read in a very long time. "Our Stolen Future" is truly a scientific book for "the rest of us".

adapted from a review by Michael Wilson in THE INTERVENOR (CELA), Vol. 21, No. 3, May/June 1996

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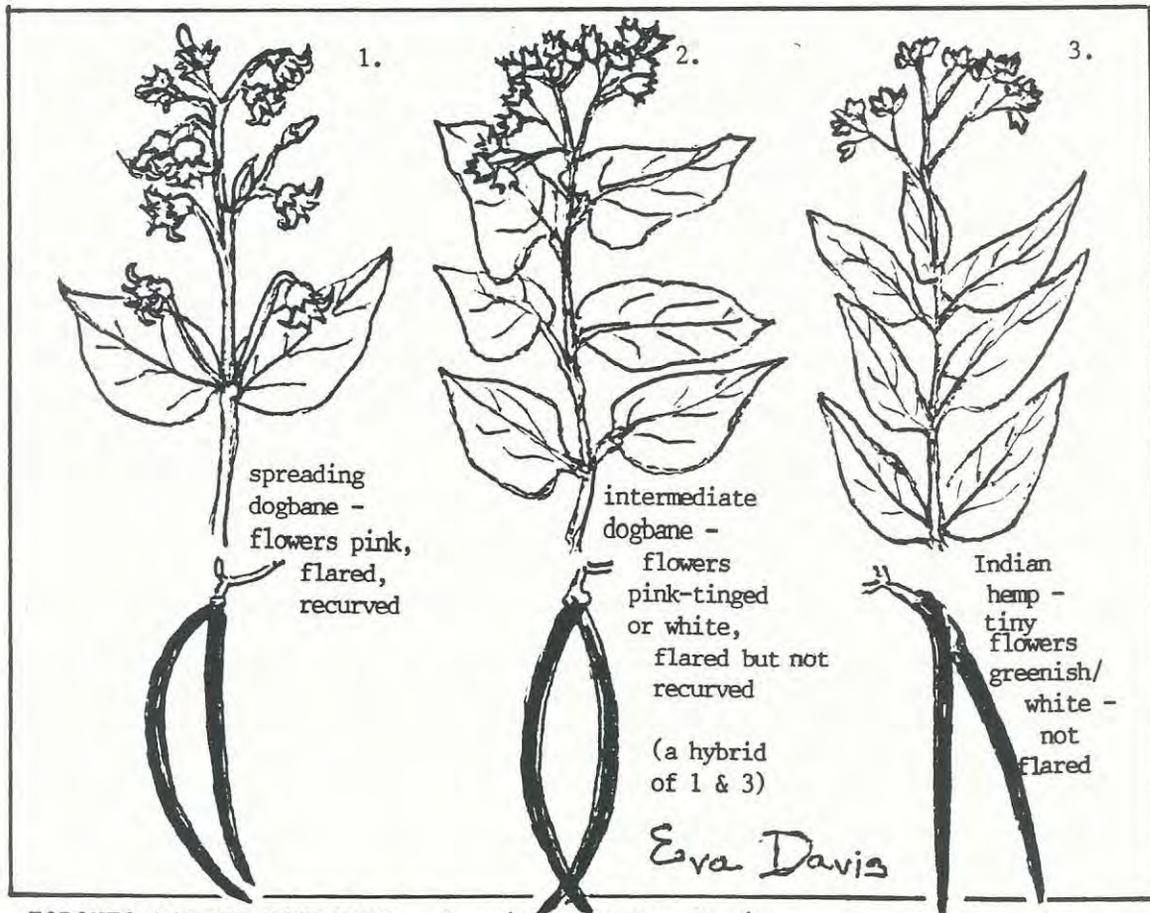
FRIENDS TO THE RESCUE!

TFN members will rejoice with the Friends of the Spit on a job well and truly done. The Friends' pressure brought Toronto City Council to unanimous rejection, on May 21 of this year, of a preposterous application to turn 18 acres at the base of the Spit into a golf driving range, to be called Port Golf Academy! Without the Friends' vigilance, this horror (70 foot high nets, mini-putt, clubhouse, parking lot, licensed restaurant) would have gone through -- it had already received blanket support from Parks and Recreation, with no consideration of the Spit's environmental significance, and the Executive Committee of Council were all set to rubber-stamp the proposal. NO NOTICE HAD BEEN GIVEN TO THE PUBLIC OF THIS INTENT. Not only did the Friends' publicity campaign stop this dead, but Council, at the time of their rejection, instituted a rezoning process so that the baselands of the Spit, previously designated industrial, would become parkland.

Fittingly, on May 4 this year, at a ceremony in Ottawa, the Friends of the Spit received the 1996 ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS AWARD FOR SERVICE TO THE ENVIRONMENT.

Eva Davis

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TORONTO NATIVE DOGBANES - Drawings by Eva Davis.

IN THE NEWS

A TREE GROWS IN BROOKLINE -- OR ELSE

"Those guys deal with rapes and murders all day" says New York City Parks official Bradley Tusk of the city's criminal court judges. "They never took environmental crimes that seriously. This law fixes that." And how. Hack down a tree in the Big Apple and you're looking at a year behind bars, a \$15,000.00 fine and \$10,000 per tree in civil damages. The new penalties, among the most severe in the nation (U.S.) for destroying public vegetation, come after a string of highly publicized tree slayings. In the most recent case, a former N.Y. City firefighter, convicted of "pre-meditated aborcide" for removing seven trees that obstructed a billboard owned by his employer, was sentenced to a whopping 500 hours of "tree related community service".

from "For the Record" column in OUTSIDE MAGAZINE, April 1996

THE FORGOTTEN FOREST

A search for the "forgotten forest" of Britain began on June 21. Around the country, children are being encouraged to look out for the trees which surround them in towns, villages and cities. Tree watchers will survey five street trees and note signs of ill health, before comparing them to five of the same species in a nearby park or woodland. This study comes in response to mounting fears about the damage caused to urban trees by pollution, trench digging, traffic and poor care. The "forgotten forest" surrounds us. It's where 80 percent of us live.

extracted from "RHS News" in THE GARDEN, Vol. 121, Part 7, July 1996

CHRISTMAS TREE SHORE-UP

South Devon Heritage Coast Service put 500 dead Christmas trees to good use shoring-up parts of eroded dunes where the natural vegetation has broken down. Once in place, the trees slow the wind, allowing the sand to accumulate around them. It will take 3 to 4 years to bury the trees. Meanwhile, where chestnut paling has been used in the past to repair damaged dunes, there are problems at the other end of the scale. The dune system which should be dynamic is now so stable that scrub plants are taking over from endemic dune plants.

extracted from "RHS NEWS" in THE GARDEN, Vol. 121, Part 7, July 1996

Environmentalists are the true conservatives; they want to save, protect and slow down the pace of life. People who rush into wilderness areas like the Stein, which have never been studied or inventoried, and trash it without regard to whether they can be sustained or restored, are the real radicals and eco-terrorists.

from "Environmentalists aren't the real radicals any more" by David Suzuki in the LONDON FREE PRESS, Oct. 21, 1995

IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

ANCIENT MUSHROOMS

Two early relatives of modern mushrooms have been discovered in a piece of amber 90 million to 94 million years old. The caps of the mushrooms were 3.2 millimetres across -- a little smaller than the length of an average house fly. The ancient mushrooms, which were found in New Jersey, appear to be forebears of the common fairy ring mushrooms that are found on many North American lawns. The mushrooms were evidently growing on a piece of an early cedar tree.

extracted from *Digest* in THE GLOBE AND MAIL, 14 October 1995

EUROPE'S FUNGI GOING STALKS UP

The Field Museum of Natural History and the Chicago Botanic Garden are collecting mushroom varieties as part of an unusual and ambitious three-year study of how these oft-overlooked organisms serve in maintaining the health of an ecosystem. Nearly a dozen European countries -- including Germany, Poland, Sweden and the Netherlands -- have noticed that various kinds of mushrooms have all but disappeared. And in those places, the forests themselves are showing signs of ill health. Scientists are uncertain why they are disappearing in Europe. But they do know that mushrooms and trees have an unusual symbiotic relationship, allowing them to exchange nutrients. And scientists are wondering whether a dearth of mushrooms is an early warning of a forest's flagging vitality. "There's no really comprehensive study of mushrooms. We may be able to use this to monitor the health of the forests." The lack of scientific detail about the world of fungi comes, in large part, because fungi are akin to icebergs -- only the tip is visible. The part that is visible is merely the fruit of a vastly larger organism. The fungus itself consists of long spidery filaments that are woven through the earth, sometimes covering acres of land. In addition to sharing nutrients with tree roots, these slender threads also produce mushrooms during wet weather. If the weather is dry, the mushrooms are not formed. Scientists are working as quickly as they can to amass information about fungi on this continent, especially in old-growth forests where trees have never been harvested. There is no baseline fungi study in North America but in Europe they are losing mushrooms that grow with the tree roots. At the University of Minnesota researchers are comparing the numbers of fungi found in old growth forests to the numbers found in younger forests that are less than 50 years old. The undisturbed forests are found to have literally hundreds of different species of fungus, while younger forests have only from 25 to 50 species of fungus.

extracted from an article by LeAnn Spencer in THE TORONTO STAR, 7 October 1995

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THE TUB -- HONEYMOON CAPITAL OF NORTH AMERICA?

Scientists aboard the Cormorant, a Canadian Navy dive support ship, have found another "huge" underwater waterfall in Georgian Bay near Tobermory. It's further evidence that a vast watershed as far west as Lake Winnipeg once drained through that area -- rather than over Niagara Falls -- on its way to the Atlantic Ocean. And it's more evidence much of what now lies underwater between the Bruce Peninsula and Manitoulin Island was dry land thousands of years ago except for rivers and "giant" waterfalls. It's the Cormorant's third mission in three years to survey underwater geological features in various parts of the Great Lakes, including Fathom Five National Marine Park where it's continuing a search for more shipwrecks. The 2,100 Tonne ship carries a camera-equipped submersible capable of diving to 610 metres (2,000 ft) with five people. The Cormorant's mission includes a survey of the sediment in Severn Sound near Midland as part of a Remedial Action Plan to clean up those waters. It's hoped a better understanding of the sediment and the pollution it contains will help avoid stirring up potentially dangerous organisms, like the Cryptosporidium parasite that has caused problems in Collingwood. The mapping of Georgian Bay's underwater geology began two years ago. Many unusual features suggesting the area has gone through major ups and downs in the past 10,000 years have already been found. One is a "pop-up" ridge of bedrock possibly being pushed up as North America drifts slowly away from Europe and rides up on the floor of the Pacific Ocean. Other scientists think the ridge was formed about 10,000 years ago during the ice age because of the immense weight pushing down on the rock. It's hoped this latest survey mission will help decide which theory is right. The first underwater "abandoned spillway" near Flowerpot Island was also found two years ago. It looks like an enormous rapids and likely carried as much water as Niagara Falls does today. The second similar feature found [this summer] north of Cove Island also looks like a "giant rapids or big, huge ramp". Now we know water from the west 10,000 to 5,000 years ago spilled over two giant rapids and from there flowed out of Georgian Bay, through the present-day North Bay area, down the Ottawa River to the Atlantic.

adapted from an article by Phil McNichol in the SUN TIMES of Owen Sound, July 6, 1996

SUDBURY LAKES STILL ACIDIC

Once highly acidic lakes in the Sudbury, Ont., region are not returning to good health, as was hoped. Ontario Ministry of the Environment researchers report in the journal NATURE that after a decade of slow de-acidification, one lake under review is suddenly 20 times more acidic. Analysis shows that Swan Lake, about 13 km from Sudbury's nickel-smelting complex, was the victim of both too little and too much rain. Two years of drought shrank it and dried neighbouring wetlands. At the same time, sulphur that bacteria had made non-acidic returned to an even more acidic state when it was exposed to air. Heavy rains the next year swept the sulphur into the lake, likely killing both life in it and water-borne vegetable material that normally blocks potentially deadly ultraviolet radiation.

from the GLOBE AND MAIL, May 18, 1996

IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

FALSE ALARMS

A dawn chorus of blackbirds that have learned to imitate the exact wailing sirens of car alarms regularly jolts residents of a small English town from their sleep. It started with just one bird, but has now apparently spread to the entire blackbird population of Guisborough, according to [a citizen] who discovered the phenomenon when he rushed out at dawn to confront car thieves but found only a bird in mid-song.

from "Earthweek: Diary of the Planet" in the LONDON FREE PRESS, May 25, 1996

BIRD CALL

Police in the Italian port of Genoa forced their way into an apartment to save what they thought was a child in danger, but were confronted with only an exotic bird, singing "Mama, mama, help!" The authorities were called by a worker in the area who thought he heard the plaintive cry of a small child. The bird, an Indian songthrush taught to speak by its owner, was startled when the police broke down the door, but quickly struck up a new chorus of "Mama, mama, help!"

from "Earthweek: Diary of the Planet" in the TORONTO STAR, June 8, 1996

TIME FOR A CROW BAR?

Crows in Japan have developed a new line of behaviour that worries train commuters. Police staking out railway tracks have on three occasions videotaped the birds picking up small stones and placing them on the rails of busy lines. Police in Kanagawa prefecture near Tokyo released the videotape but were quick to point out that the stones were only small bits of gravel. While the birds' behaviour was inexplicable and annoying, police said crows were unlikely to have been involved in a large number of cases of track vandalism this year.

from an article in the SUN, June 29, 1996

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THANKS! to the many clippers of newspapers. Though we can't use every story, we do have many files of subjects pertaining to nature in Toronto. Anyone wanting to look at the files may call 968-6255 and make an appointment. Our new offices make it a little more comfortable for anyone wanting to use materials.

Contributors: D. Banville, M. & N. Cumming, A. Cappell, K. Fawthrop, N. Fredenburg, A. Hansen, H. Hansen, M. Hunter, E. Mayo, A. McCombie, J. McGill, T. McMurtry, J. Purnell, L. Stemmler, G. Somers, A. Wade, M. Whiteside, M. Young, J. Macdonald, S. Whitmore, P. Iveson, M. Thomson

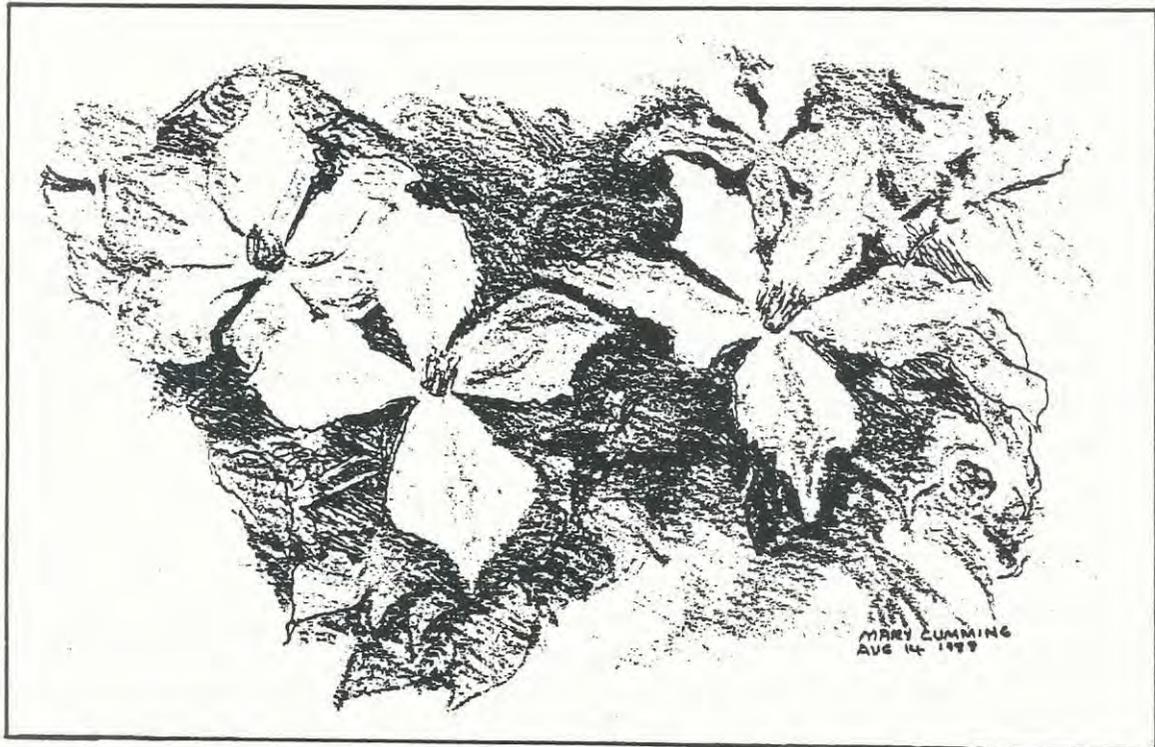
THE WEATHER (THIS TIME LAST YEAR)

September 1995, Toronto

Autumn swept in with cool temperatures on the heels of this rather hot summer of '95. By Sept. 8th, Toronto recorded a record-low maximum temperature of 14.7°C. Bright, dry airmasses from the northwest brought lots of sunshine, low humidities, below-normal temperatures, and drought conditions to our area this September. Minimum temperatures averaged distinctly on the cool side, while maxima were closer to normal. The average minimum temperature at Pearson Airport of 7.8°C was the lowest for September since 1975. In spite of this, there was no frost, and overall averages were only about a degree below normal. Rainfall totals downtown of 33.2 mm, and at Pearson Airport of only 27.5 mm were the lowest since 1969 (16.5 mm and 15.0 mm respectively). Normal is about 75 mm. Sunshine hours were 223.1 hours, almost 40 more than usual and the highest since 1991.

Gavin Miller

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A CLEMATIS Hybrid planted at Alexander Muir Gardens, Toronto. Fernald in GRAY'S MANUAL OF BOTANY 8th Edition says that the genus normally has four sepals. Four, five, and six on the same plant are shown in this photocopy of a watercolour by Mary Cumming. If there are any "petals", they are small and transitional into stamens, according to Fernald. Our native "virgin's bower" has much smaller flowers than the horticulturists' hybrids. This is the genus whose feathery persisting styles give the plants the name "old man's beard" later on.

COMING EVENTS

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

- Shorebirds and other migrants - Sat. Sept. 7 from 8 am (all day) with Hugh Currie. Meet at the foot of Leslie St. and bring a lunch.
- Fall Warblers - Sat. Sept. 14 from 8 am to 12 noon with Don Burton. Meet in the parking lot at James Gardens (access from Edenbridge Dr.)
- Fall Migration - Sat. Sept. 21 from 8 am to 12 noon with Bob Yukich. Meet in the parking lot inside the Bloor St. entrance at High Park Ave.

Birding at Sam Smith Park - Sat. Sept. 28 from 9 am to 11 am with Ron Scovell
- Sun. Sept. 29 from 2 pm to 4 pm with Hugh Currie
Meet in the parking lot at the foot of Kipling Ave. south of Lake Shore Blvd. West. For more details call the Lakeshore Arts Committee at 259-9597.

Mycological Society of Toronto - Fungi Fair - Sept. 23 from 12 noon to 9 pm at the Civic Garden Centre, corner of Lawrence Ave. East and Leslie St. Admission: adults,\$2; children,free.

Environmental Public Art Bike Tour - Sun. Sept. 8 at 10 am, outside the Broadview subway station - Ecolage projects are temporarily on display in the Lower Don Valley.

Explore the Brickworks - Sat. Sept. 14 from 2 pm to 4 pm at the Don Valley Brick Works - to see what is happening at the brickworks.

Casa Loma gardens - free from 4 pm to sunset on Tuesdays; also from 10 am to 4 pm on the second Monday of August, Sept. and Oct.

Groundworks - from naturalization to restoration - a Southern Ontario Regional Conference at Metro Hall - Oct. 4-5 from 8:30 am to 5 pm. Fees: two days, \$120; one day, \$60; half day, \$30. For information and to register, contact the Evergreen Foundation, 355 Adelaide St. West, Suite 5A, Toronto, Ont. M5V 1S2 or call 596-1495.

Annual Meeting of the Ontario Eastern Bluebird Society - Sept. 13-15 at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Hamilton. For more information, contact Bill Read, 165 Green Valley Dr., #2, Kitchener, Ont. N2P 1K3 or call 519-748-4853.

Wonders of the Earth presented by the Gem & Mineral Club of Scarborough - Sept. 14 from 10 am to 6 pm and Sept. 15 from 11 am to 5 pm. Free. For more details, call 282-5319 or 282-0444.

Friends of Don East York - plantings and outings in East York. For details, call Paula Davies at 423-1504.

Royal Ontario Museum - family workshops - Sept. 29 - Bears: Imagination and Reality. For details, call 586-5797.

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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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