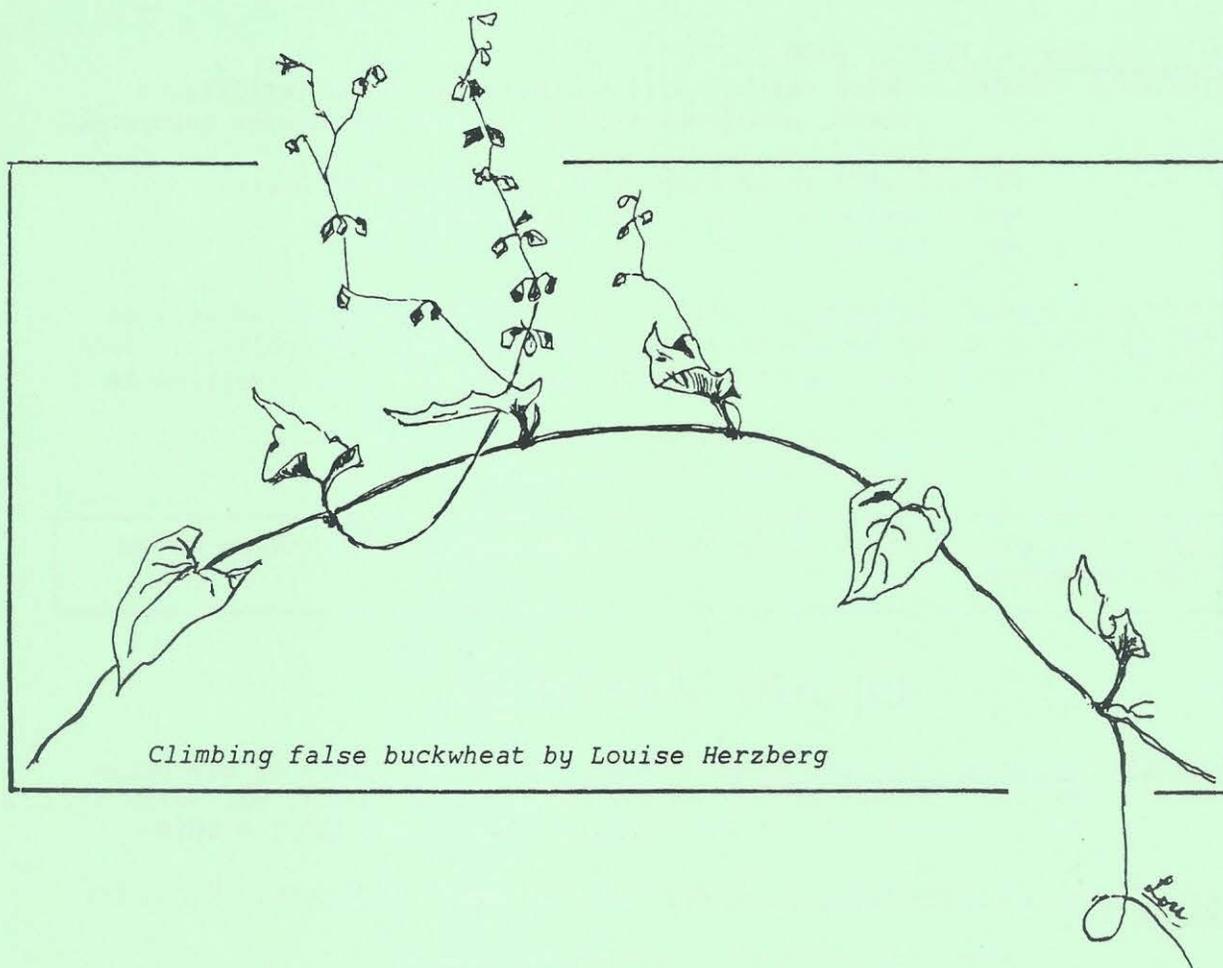




TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

Number 398, October 1988



Climbing false buckwheat by Louise Herzberg

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TFN MEETINGS

Visitors welcome

General Meetings

Board of Education Centre, 6th Floor Auditorium
155 College Street, at McCaul*

Monday, October 3, 1988 at 8:00 pm

A WILDFLOWER GARDEN! - Helen Skinner will describe the Humber Wildflower Woods, a regeneration project at the Humber Arboretum.

Artwork will be on display during the Coffee Hour which begins at 7 pm. This month the work of Mary Cumming will be featured.

Next meeting, Monday, November 7, will be the 65th Anniversary, as well as the 50th Birthday of the Newsletter, of the Toronto Field Naturalists. Join us from 7 to 10 pm and help us to celebrate our anniversaries; everyone is welcome!

*Free parking in the Board of Education garage on McCaul St., south of College.

TFN publications, hasti-notes, prints of selected newsletter covers, pins and crests are for sale at the General Meetings.

Group Meetings

Bird Group: Wednesday, October 12 at 7:30 pm in Rm. 252, Board of Education Centre, 155 College St. Leader: Ross Harris - Tel. 921-5975
Guest speaker will be John Harman. Topic: ALL ABOUT BIRDING

The Botany and the Environmental Groups will not meet this month. Watch for announcements.

TFN EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

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
Louise Herzberg (423-8063) 59 Hillside Dr., Toronto M4K 2M1
Eileen Mayo (445-4621) 405 - 44 Stubbs Dr., Willowdale M2L 2R3
Toshi Oikawa (425-3161) 1063 Pape Ave., Toronto M4K 3W4
Mary-Louise Stewart (960-9860) 203 - 221 Russell Hill Rd., Toronto M4V 2T3
Harold Taylor (225-2649) 264 Horsham Ave., Willowdale M2R 1G4

Members are encouraged to submit notices, reports, articles up to 1,500 words in length, and illustrations, at least six weeks before the month in which the event is to take place or the material is required to appear. Please include address and telephone number so submission can be acknowledged.

 (NO DOGS)	Upcoming OUTINGS	TFN 
RAIN 	OR  SHINE	Everybody Welcome!

OCTOBER

OUT OF
TOWN

- | | |
|--|--|
| Saturday
Oct. 1
8 am to
5 pm
BUS | CRAWFORD LAKE - birds, botany, archeology, nature arts west of Metro
Leader: Phil Joiner & others
Call Eileen Mayo (445-4621) if you want to attend. Confirm by
sending a cheque for \$22.00 payable to TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS
CRAWFORD LAKE OUTING to Eileen at 405 - 44 Stubbs Dr., Willowdale M2L 2R3.
Bus leaves from the southeast corner of Yonge and Old York Mills Rd.
(south exit of York Mills subway station). Bring lunch. Washroom
on bus. |
| Sunday
Oct. 2
10:30 am | EDWARDS GARDENS, WILKET CREEK - mushrooms Wilket Creek, North York
Leader: Jack Parkin
Meet at the entrance to the Civic Garden Centre which is located on
the south side of Lawrence Avenue East just west of Leslie Street.
Lunch optional. |
| Wednesday
Oct. 5
11 am | PARKLAWN CEMETERY - nature walk Humber, Etobicoke
Leader: Isabel Smith
Meet just outside the Old Mill subway station. Bring lunch. |
| Saturday
Oct. 8
9 am | LAMBTON WOODS - birds Humber, Etobicoke
Leader: Fred Carnrite
Meet at the park entrance on Edenbridge Dr. east of Royal
York Road, north of Dundas St. West. |
| Monday
Oct. 10
9 am | TORONTO ISLANDS - birds lakeshore, Toronto
Leader: George Fairfield
Meet at the ferry docks at the foot of Bay Street in time to leave
on the first ferry out. Bring lunch and membership card. |
| Wednesday
Oct. 12
11 am | ST. MARGARET'S IN THE PINES - nature walk Highland Creek, Scarborough
Leader: Ruth Munson
Meet at the churchyard entrance on the north side of Lawrence Avenue
East just west of Kingston Rd. Bring lunch. |
| Saturday
Oct. 15
1:30 pm | LOWER DON TRAIL - nature walk Don, Toronto, East York
Leader: Muriel Miville
Meet at the southeast corner of King Street East and Sumach St.
Walk will end at Pottery Road. |

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OCTOBER OUTINGS (contn'd)



- Sunday HIGH PARK - for families Toronto
 Oct. 16 Leader: Mary Louise Stewart & others
 2 pm Meet at the park entrance on the south side of Bloor Street West
 opposite High Park Ave.
- Tuesday METRO ZOO - nature arts Rouge, Scarborough
 Oct. 18 Leader: Leslie Mirylees
 10:30 am Meet at the zoo entrance on Meadowvale Road north of Sheppard Ave.
 East. Lunch optional. Bring sketching materials and stool,
 camera, photos, sketches, crafts or just come and enjoy an outing
 and informal workshop.
- Wednesday NECROPOLIS CEMETERY - nature walk Don, Toronto
 Oct. 19 Leader: Nancy Fredenburg
 1:30 pm Meet at the southeast corner of Winchester St. and Sumach St.
- Saturday WEST DON PARKLAND - nature walk West Don, North York
 Oct. 22 Leader: Allan Greenbaum
 2 pm Meet at the entrance to the Jewish Community Centre on the west side
 of Bathurst Street, north of Sheppard Avenue West.
- Sunday WILKET CREEK - birds Wilket Creek, North York
 Oct. 23 Leader: Ross Harris
 10 am Meet at the park entrance on the west side of Leslie Street
 (opposite the Inn on the Park) just north of Eglinton Avenue East.
 Bring lunch.
- Wednesday YORK CEMETERY - nature walk West Don, North York
 Oct. 26 Leader: Eileen & Geoff Chopping
 10 am Meet at the cemetery entrance on the west side of Beecroft Road,
 south of Park Home Avenue. Lunch optional.
- Saturday HIGH PARK - trees & planning of High Park Toronto
 Oct. 29 Leader: Bill Morsink
 9 am Meet at the park entrance on the south side of Bloor Street West
 opposite High Park Ave. Morning only.

▷ TTC (393-4636) for information about routes and schedules to help you get to
 outings on time

▷ Police (867-2222) for motorbikes (note licence numbers) in valleys
 Ministry of the Environment (424-3000) for pollution complaints

It is Indian summer, a season filled with the riches of the year, and looking
 at the meadow overflowing with goldenrod and Michaelmas daisies, a riot of
 lavender and gold, I find myself wondering again how to explain the miraculous
 achievement of the plants, the glory with which they have clothed the earth.
 Flowers are among the very recent products of terrestrial evolution. Life
 flourished on earth for billions of years before the first flower burst into
 bloom. They look like what they are: one of the highest expressions of life.

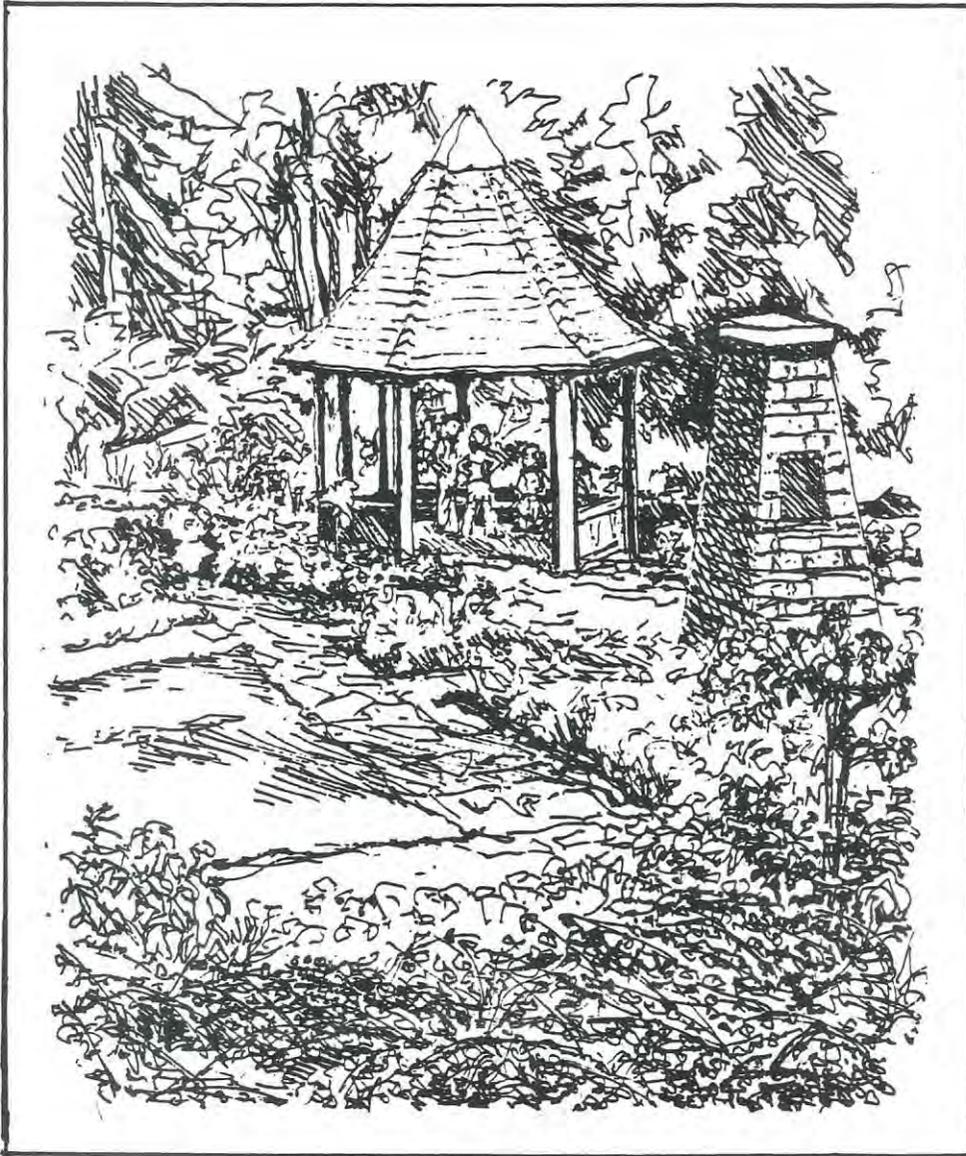
from DANCING ON THE SHORE by Harold Horwood, McClelland and Stewart, 1987

President's Report

Sixty-five and fifty--remember these numbers. It's the 65th anniversary of the Toronto Field Naturalists and the 50th anniversary of the newsletter. We are celebrating both these anniversaries at the November general meeting with displays--colour photos, members' art work, old newsletters, maps--and colour slide shows in the auditorium. Refreshments will also be served.

Come to the Monday, November 7 general meeting and celebrate these two anniversaries of the Toronto Field Naturalists.

Robin Powell



*The gazebo
at
James
Gardens
with cairn
and plaque*

*Field drawing
by Mary Cumming
on Nature Arts
Outing*

September 16, 1987

Keeping in touch...

Dear Ms McGill,

July 7, 1988

The trees on Eglinton Avenue and Yonge Street were planted by the City of Toronto, with permission of the Metropolitan Toronto Roads and Traffic Department, on what are Metropolitan roads. You may not know, but most of the Metro roads within the City of Toronto limits, with the exception of streets such as University Avenue, have been planted by the City of Toronto at our own expense over the last two decades. This request to plant City and Metropolitan roads started at the request of citizens in the late 1960s under the leadership of Alderman June Marks. This planting effort was started by the City of Toronto despite the great difficulty in finding space in sidewalks, because of underground utilities, as well as the requirement for space for pedestrians to walk on. As a result of these requirements and obstructions and because of the citizen requests for greening the commercial areas and Metro's roads within the City of Toronto, trees were planted first in planter boxes. This was done because of the resistance by Metropolitan Roads and Traffic Department to having in ground trees. The box planters are now being discontinued as permission to plant into sidewalk squares is now increasingly being granted. As a result, the City of Toronto planted trees that now are present on the many Metro roads, such as Eglinton Avenue, St. Clair Avenue, Bloor Street, Danforth Avenue, Queen Street, Yonge Street and so on, for a total of 10,000 City maintained planter-box and sidewalk insert trees.

The City of Toronto Parks and Forestry staff are fully aware of the optimum requirements trees need as outlined by the University of Guelph experts. [This comment refers to a letter (from a horticulturalist at the University of Guelph) concerning the planting of city trees in boxes or small enclosures in sidewalks. Jean McGill had sent a copy to the City Parks Department.] The Toronto City street pattern, however, is an inheritance from historical times 1800-1900 when no trees were wanted on streets. As a result, streets are narrow and full of utilities, while our present sidewalk trees are only an afterthought from the late 1960s. Perhaps the planners of the early 1900s could in hindsight be blamed for the inadequate tree growing spaces on streets. Present day planners, however, cannot be blamed for this oversight from the early 1900s, and in fact these Toronto planners have worked hard to plan and budget for existing streetscape plantings in spite of the great physical difficulties encountered in planting trees.

Our Forestry staff, under these very limiting circumstances, are planting and maintaining trees in sidewalks. Our friends in Guelph, unfortunately cannot provide us with any better advice on our commercial street plantings than is available now! We agree with you that future developments in new neighbourhoods would benefit from spacious layout of planting situations. In the meantime, the Metro roads within the City of Toronto have almost been completely planted by the City of Toronto at their costs, and hopefully the Metropolitan Parks and Property Department will extend this core planting of Metro streets to the outlying boroughs of Metropolitan Toronto.

Herb Pirk, Commissioner
Toronto Parks and Recreation

I think that I will never see
A Hydro Pole as lovely as a tree.

LH

Beginnings

To help us celebrate our 65th birthday, several of our members are going to recall for us their first experiences with wildlife. Their stories will appear under the general title, BEGINNINGS. This month it is appropriate that our first contributor is Dr. Richard M. Saunders. Dick, as he is known to friends and colleagues, served two terms as club president, 1940-41 and again in 1942-43. As well, he was Newsletter editor from September 1938 to May 1965. Some of our members also know him as the author of FLASHING WINGS, a much-treasured graceful account of birding in southern Ontario in the 1940s.

HT

DR. RICHARD M. SAUNDERS

When did I first become interested in Nature? In answer to that question my memory takes me back to a wide sweeping hillside in New England. I was four or five years old when my grandmother began to take me for walks to "the visiting slope". There we sat on a large rock which I now realize must have been a glacial erratic but in those early days such names and identities were unknown and unimportant. Birds flying by or singing near at hand were exciting. Flowers along the path we used or in the field and nearby woods were beautiful in colour and shape. All these were new adventures and full of wonder for me. Under my grandmother's guidance I was learning to notice and to appreciate my surroundings. Without any formal instruction I was being introduced to the world of Nature. That introduction was a door that once opened has never closed for me.

As I grew old enough to wander by myself I began to explore ever more widely. The shadowy wonders of the great pine woods that then existed were a special delight to me. In season I became an ardent picker of blackberries and blueberries for wild fruits were always welcome at home. They could even be the means of earning a few pennies as I sold some to the neighbours. The seashore cliffs and beaches that formed a major part of our neighbourhood gave me the chance to learn about clams and mussels, horseshoe crabs and numerous other creatures. Salt marshes were alluring mazes full of novelty and beauty. They were also rather dangerous and this in itself was a real attraction. Those of us who travelled them usually learned in the hard way of duckings and mirings just how to handle ourselves in such places and felt very superior when we had. Learning of this sort was all done on our own, seeing what others did and doing likewise.

Formal instruction about anything in the world of Nature did not come my way until I was a student at Clark University. There also I helped to form a Nature Club. Through this group and with our professors' help some of us began to observe Nature much more seriously. It was great fun as well. I still remember clearly the leaping excitement of being shown hills glowing with the pink beauty of sheep laurel. That is why many years later I was so happy to see masses of these beauties along the Opeongo Road in Algonquin Park.

Without question the most exciting field trip while I was at Clark University was a class venture. On this we were taken to the top of Mt. Monadnock in southern New Hampshire. There on that bold, bald stony crest we were shown the long striations grooved in the rock by a great glacier that had ridden over the peak. Here were we standing upon bare rock, able to look up at a clear blue sky above us, where once there had been incredible masses of ice grinding through

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BEGINNINGS (cont'd)

the rocks at our feet. It gave one an awesome feeling. It is such experiences as this that leave a permanent impression of the power and wonder of Nature.

When I finished at Clark University in 1925 I was appointed for a three-year term to the staff of the American University of Beirut in Lebanon. There in the Middle East a whole new panorama of Nature opened up before me. On the day after my arrival in Beirut, for instance, I was taken up to a summer home in the mountains. We got there in a flurry of excitement since we found a hunt on for a poisonous snake, an asp, and I was enlisted in the search. The snake was not found but precautions were taken to deal with it if seen again for this is the type of snake which is associated with the death of Cleopatra as well as with a number of recent deaths in the Lebanon Mountains.

I soon found that the Biblical flowers like asphodel grew on the campus in Beirut. In a secretive little ravine just beyond some academic buildings there were so many wild cyclamens that in season their perfume filled the air. Later we found cyclamens dotting the slopes of Mount Hermon. Indeed, we climbed the peaks and hiked the ridges of the Lebanon Mountains quite freely, exploring the remaining groves of the magnificent Cedars of Lebanon, being shown and finding natural beauty and wonders of all kinds. I was able to watch huge Egyptian vultures sailing above their nesting cliffs in the Anti-Lebanon not far from Damascus. And in that same region I was directed to a cave where it was known that hyenas lived. I went into this cave but fortunately did not find the animals, only the signs of their residence. In these three years, 1925-1928, it was possible to go and see and explore in places where no one would go unarmed today and few would risk the danger. From these years I emerged with a broad spectrum of new experiences in Nature and a greatly deepened interest.

To complete my graduate work in my chosen field of History I went from Beirut to Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. Hearing that I was going to do this one of my colleagues at Beirut, who was a graduate of Cornell, alerted me to the fact that that university is a centre for the study of Ornithology. He had himself enjoyed a course of lectures with the great bird-artist, Louis Agassiz Fuertes, which had left him with an undying enthusiasm for the study of birds. Fuertes I could not know since he had been killed in an accident but the deep fervour for the study of birds which pervades the Cornell campus was inescapable. Added to this were the countless natural beauties of the countryside in the Finger Lakes region. In the three years at Cornell my wife and I found a wealth of opportunities for nature study as a balance to our official work at the university.

In 1931 after the completion of my course of studies we came to the University of Toronto and so to Canada where we have been ever since.

It will be evident from what I have already said that my interest in Nature has been lifelong. I was, therefore, eager to find how and where to carry on Nature studies in Toronto. This proved to be much easier than I had supposed. As soon as I became acquainted and made my interests known my University colleagues, J.R. Dymond and T.F. McIlwraith, had me going to meetings and out on trips. It was they who brought my wife and me into the Toronto Field Naturalists where we discovered a community with broader and more various interests in Nature than any we had ever met. We felt very much at home and became members of this group with great satisfaction. In this my 84th year it gives me deep pleasure to be able to say that I am a Life Member of the Toronto Field Naturalists.

Richard M. Saunders

□

OUTINGS REPORT

FALL AND EARLY WINTER - OCTOBER-DECEMBER, 1987
inclusive

Attendance: 3 to 45; reports received: 25.

BIRD OUTINGS were among the most popular during the fall, with three held in October, two in November and one December 14. At Toronto Islands, October 13, 46 species were observed, with encouragingly large numbers - such as 200 whitethroats and 30 each golden-crowned kinglets and yellow-rumped warblers. Ten Bonaparte's gulls were observed. Harbingers of the winter season were the two buffleheads. Five people in the large group were viewing these species for the first time. It was partly cloudy at 10°C, but with no wind. It was warmer on the 17th at Humber Bay Park, sunny at first, then came the downpour - yet 29 species were observed. The October 25 outing was a van trip; new members especially enjoyed this aspect. The object was to view the McKeever's owls at Vineland, where the baby saw-whets were particularly appreciated. A northern mockingbird was seen en route. The group stopped for refreshments both ways. By November 14, at Leslie Street Spit, the winter residents were more apparent, with 100 oldsquaws, a common goldeneye and 4 snowy owls observed. Both the greater scaup (6), the winter resident, and the lesser scaup (35), the migrant, were present, as well as other migrants such as 25 snow buntings, 12 common loons, 14 horned grebes. Only 2 herring gulls were noted, compared to 100 ring-billed. 33 species were seen in all. It was sunny and warm. November 28, it was cloudy, windy and 3°C at Toronto Islands. By this time, more buffleheads were around - 40 of them were seen. 5 common mergansers had come in - perhaps to stay the winter; the 5 red-breasted were likely migrants. 800 Canada geese were still on hand. The Windfields Park report started out musically, "'twas in the moon of wintertime when all the birds had fled..." Except it seems for a sharp-shinned hawk which was described, and ten other species. It was 14°C and cloudy; on the pre-walk December 8 it had been raining when the leader started her count. The second page of the report was on the back of an old recipe - anyone for corn-and-bacon chowder?

A GEOLOGY OUTING to Chapman Creek on November 1 was enjoyed in partly sunny weather with a temperature of 12°C. In the bedrock (exposed by erosive action of the creek), a waterfall, fossil ripples and mudcracks were examined. Fossil animal life such as clams, crinoids, cephalopods were observed in the stream bed as well as fossil worm castings. Trees noticed were bluebeech, butternut, and yellow birch.

A CLEAN-UP of Warden Woods was held in sunny-to-rainy weather October 24. Tires, sofa, baby carriage, kitchen stove, and other "collectables" were gathered up. Metro Parks personnel had been alerted to offending apartment buildings the year previous, and even taken to the area.

MUSHROOM OUTINGS were held in October. At York County Forest on the third, in 12°C sunny weather, 26 species representing 24 genera were listed. On the 7th, at High Park, 12 genera were collected in rain. Lists were included with the reports.

TREE OUTINGS were held at York University on October 10, in bright 8°C weather, in the midst of colourful fall foliage, and on October 11, at Mount Pleasant Cemetery in sunny 10°C weather. "Some of the native trees had turned to autumn colours - others had already dropped their leaves - the ornamentals were still quite green," said Emily Hamilton. A shortage of fruit, except for crabapples, was reported. A detailed list was included and new plantings reported on "including Scots heather!"

OUTINGS REPORT (cont'd)

NATURE WALKS produced much variety. On October 14 at G. Ross Lord Park in warm, sunny weather with blue skies, highlights included an eastern grey squirrel swimming across a pond, and a little brown snake. A map was included with the report. It was overcast at Highland Creek at 10°C on October 18. A list of plants was included with the report. On October 28, at Chine Drive, it was sunny at 10°C. A short-tailed shrew casualty was found; though dead it showed no injury. Its soft "mole-skin" coat was admired. A lone black cohosh was in flower, robins were invading the hawthorns and a late meadowlark was accidentally flushed. At Cedarvale Ravine it was cloudy at 17°C and the virgin's bower (old man's beard) was in fruit. The original watercourse was pointed out. It was sunny on the Beltline on November 11, at 3°C. A purple finch was seen and a Kentucky coffee-tree noted. For the Mountsberg trip on November 21, there was sun and cloud and some snow-squalls, at -2°C. The group had an introduction to bird-banding, a tour of the raptor pens, and a nature walk through the Conservation Area where a ruffed grouse and snow goose were seen among the 23 bird species observed. Not very inviting was the weather - freezing rain and snow - on November 25, the York Cemetery and West Don walk. Only for the few. They managed half the planned walk, and returned home to dry out - but not before noting some mourning doves and six species of songbirds. It was 10°C and clear in the Don Valley on December 9. A new trail was reported, parallel to the river from Pottery Road. Among other birds, a hairy woodpecker was noted, and poison ivy berries were observed. On December 23 a dandelion was still in bloom in the West Don Valley (Bathurst to Finch). It was 2°C, cloudy and damp. Green leaves of garlic mustard were noted, and a slug on a wet leaf. At one point the group was "enveloped by cedar waxwings". Trees were identified by bark, twigs, buds and seed litter. A brown creeper was found impaled on a thorn of a hawthorn - apparently by a shrike. A small stand of butternut trees was found. At Mimico Creek Dec.30 no snow was evident; it was sunny and calm at -5°C. Then it started to snow - "Such fine sparkling crystals, we were not sure at first if it was snow," reported Vera Cooke. "As we walked along a slope, the birds were at our eye-level and they watched us as carefully as we watched them". There were cardinals, a nuthatch and cedar waxwings. "The chickadees were chattering in the sheltered brush on the hill." Two children were seen crossing the creek on the ice.

FAMILY WALKS were very popular. Interests are most eclectic on these walks. On the Earl Bales outing, October 18, seven distinct classes were represented among the life forms reported. There were mammals, birds, spiders, insects (such as praying mantis), slugs (a sort of mollusc) - which were held in the hand, sowbugs (a type of crustacean), and plants. It was overcast but calm at 13°C, and the fall colours were appreciated. There were "lots of kids" said Ilmar Talvila (many strollers; a young mother was heard to remark to another "Isn't this a good idea?" - even though it was windy at 4°C). A dead meadow vole was found. Excitement was provided when police caught two trail-bikers "who were tearing up the terrain and helping to make our hike miserable." The walk ended with a general romp on the manicured grass (of which there was too much). At Humber Arboretum at a sunny 2°C December 6, a long-eared owl and a cottontail were seen.

Many of the reports included bird lists, and mammals were reported regardless of the theme of the outing - for instance two muskrats on a bird outing to the Islands. Our thanks to the leaders: Alfred Adamo, Howard Battae, Sandy Cappell, George Comper, Vera Cooke, Eva Davis, George Fairfield, Nancy Fredenburg, Bill Granger, Emily Hamilton, Ross Harris, Phil Joiner, Helen Juhola, Eileen Mayo, Kay and Larry McKeever, John Morgan-Jones, Maisie Newby, Mary Nickle, Joan Patterson, Raphael Sussman, Ilmar Talvila and cohort, Mel and Elna Whiteside.



For the new naturalist, a visit before Thanksgiving to the TFN Nature Information Centre in Sunnybrook Park is essential. There you will be able to admire posters of our local flora and fauna, test your knowledge on our Answer Board, pick up park and nature trail maps and obtain a hawk silhouette to scare migrating birds from your picture window. And you will meet other TFN members.

The cabin is open from 12 noon to 4 pm on Sunday afternoons from May 1 to Thanksgiving weekend.

From the park entrance on the west side of Leslie Street (opposite the Inn on the Park) just north of Eglinton Avenue East, head north following the Nature Information signs. The cabin is located on your right at the north end of a long parking lot.

HJ

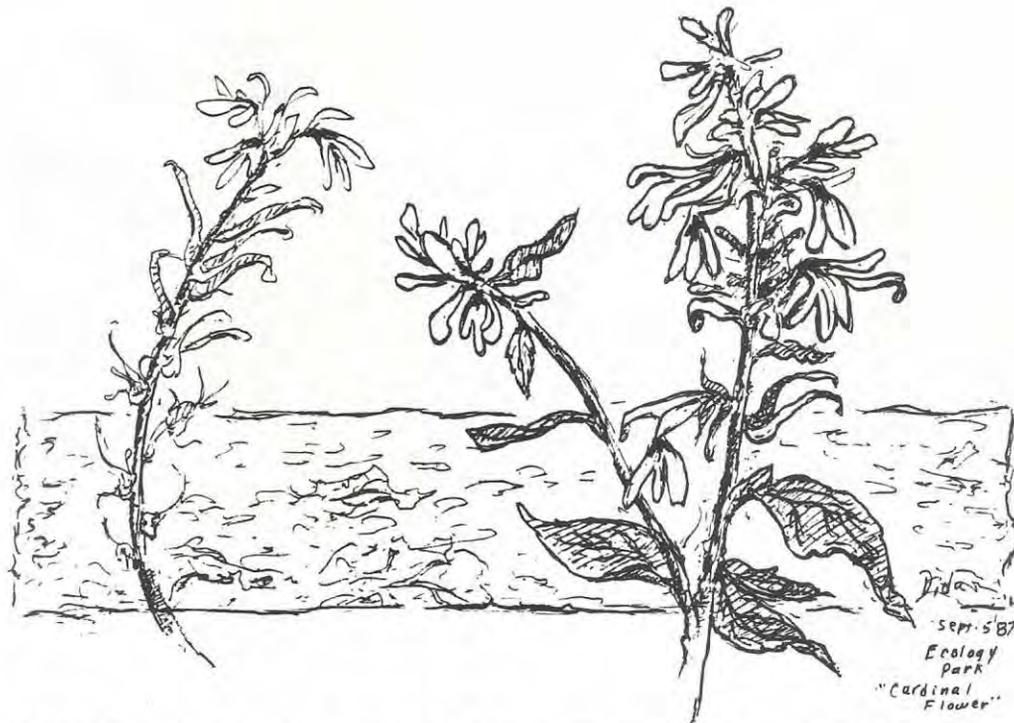


THE NEW NATURALIST (cont'd)

So you want to be a naturalist...

Why not be an ALL-ROUND NATURALIST? Then, on outings, no matter what the weather or season, you will never be bored. Of course, you will always have your favourite interest, but if conditions are not the best for insects or birds or whatever it is, try listening to what the leader has to say about a tree or a wildflower for instance. You will sometimes find out some amazing thing about your birds or your insects that you wouldn't want to miss. Next time you DO see them, you may be able to point them out better to others with you - instead of using the famous line, "It's in that tree." And if you "only do wildflowers", there's no need to say "Ho hum - not much in bloom this time of year". Take a look at the fruits of your favourite wildflowers, notice their special shapes - and what's eating them! Try it. Notice what you can about everything that surrounds your favourite subject. Nothing stands alone. You'll soon get the idea - neither do you.

DB



Cardinal flower, a showy red lobelia, has difficulty surviving in the wild because of picking. It has been found in Lambton Woods in recent years.

Organizations of Interest to Naturalists

HERITAGE SEED PROGRAM

At the turn of the century, a scientist compiled a list of 8000 apple varieties available in the United States. When a new list was prepared in 1981, only 1000 of these varieties could be found.

This story can be repeated with other fruits, vegetables, grains and flowers. What happened to the lost varieties? How did they disappear? How is it that the rich agricultural heritage bequeathed to us by our ancestors has been so reduced?

People have stopped growing the old varieties in favour of the new hybrids offered by the seed companies, many of which have been taken over by chemical corporations. And when a variety is no longer grown, it becomes extinct. With this comes not only the loss of our agricultural heritage but also a devastating loss of genetic material necessary to ensure the safety of our future food supply. Furthermore, with Plant Breeders Rights, the control of seeds is moving out of the hands of the people and into the hands of the chemical corporations.

In 1984 the Canadian Organic Growers held a conference to deal with this issue. Out of this grew the Heritage Seed Program, a network of growers dedicated to growing and exchanging the seeds of heirloom varieties and endangered nonhybrid commercial varieties. The Program includes vegetables, fruits, herbs, grains and ornamentals. It is not a seed company. When members adopt a variety that is offered, they take responsibility for growing, maintaining, multiplying it and listing it in the next publication so that it can be made available to other members for free. And so, varieties like Moon and Stars Watermelon, Mostoller Wild Goose Beans, and Mrs. Moehrle's Purple Baker Potatoes will live on.

To become a part of the program, people pay a yearly membership and can become members even if they do not want to be growers. The first publication will come out in December 1988 and will contain listings of seeds, tubers, scions etc., information about seed saving, articles by people working with preservation, and a networking report on similar projects in North America.

▷ For all correspondence, including membership applications, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Heather Apple, R.R. #3, Uxbridge, Ontario L0C 1K0. Make cheques payable to the Heritage Seed Program. Membership rates are \$10 (regular), \$7 (fixed income), \$20 (supporting), \$15 money order (U.S. and foreign).

MORE ABOUT PLANTS

Of the more than five hundred thousand species of plants that inhabit the earth, about eighty thousand are thought to be edible. Yet only about a hundred of these have been made to yield significant harvests. Most of the world's food comes from a mere score of species -- cereals such as wheat, rice, corn, millet, and sorghum; root crops such as potatoes, sweet potatoes, and cassava; legumes such as beans, peanuts, and soybeans; and a few other crops such as sugar beets, sugar cane, coconuts, and bananas. ... In the last hundred years, despite our sophisticated knowledge of breeding and genetics, we have tamed only rutabaga and some minor fruits and nuts such as boysenberries, cranberries, kiwi fruits, macadamias, and pecans.

from "Future Harvests" by Noel Vietmeyer in HORTICULTURE, April 1983 (Vol. LXI, #4)

ORGANIZATIONS (cont'd)

HUMANE PROJECT

Recently I visited northern Ontario. From the bus the landscape looked beautiful, although defaced by an endless succession of regularly spaced and garish billboards culminating in a huge invitation, on top of a roadcut, to stay at a specific northland Paradise which promised ice fishing, moose hunting, bear hunting, wolf hunting I reflected that Paradise for one animal appeared to spell death and disaster for the rest.

It was most cheering, therefore, to receive from TFN member, Jean McGill, a page from the Toronto Humane Society's newsletter of June 1988. The Toronto Humane Society (THS) have recommended inclusion of Humane Education in the new Ministry of Education guidelines for Science curricula in primary/junior school grades. THS have produced a new teacher's kit, entitled "Friend for Life", which emphasizes more than just "the mechanics of living things". Writes Carol Takagi, THS Education Coordinator, "We felt that the old curriculum guidelines treated animals as commodities or utilities, instead of thinking, feeling beings, worthy of respect". York's Board of Education intends to acquire the kit for its primary Science curriculum; North York has expressed interest. It is to be hoped other Boards will follow suit.

I can think of no better antidote to the unthinking "bang, bang" approach to wild Nature than a generation geared to view other life forms as "worthy of respect". Perhaps there is hope for the animal kingdom after all. Even for humans.

Members interested in the "Friend for Life" kit should contact the Toronto Humane Society Education Department, Attention Carol Takagi, 11 River Street, Toronto, Ontario M5A 4C2 or telephone 392-2273.

Eva Davis



British Columbia

WILD BLEEDING HEART

NOTICE

The NATURE CONSERVANCY OF CANADA has become a membership organization. Yearly membership is \$25.00 (tax deductible). Members receive two newsletters and an Annual Report. Your cheque, along with name, address, and phone number, may be sent to The Nature Conservancy of Canada, 794A Broadview Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, M4K 9Z9.

Projects

MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR WORLD

In 1984 TFN received copies of letters sent by Merle Hanes Chant to the Toronto Transit Commission on the subject of bird kills at the Rosedale subway station. She offered to pay for "hawk" transfers and their application on eight glass panes in the station which were causing the deaths of many birds migrating between the parks on either side of the station. The matter was resolved when the TTC had the "hawks" installed. We note that hawk silhouettes have since been installed at the Old Mill station which crosses the Humber Valley, another bird migration route.

Recently, we received a copy of another letter written by the Chants. We hope they have as much luck with this project and encourage other members to "make a difference in your world" (the theme of the 1988 Children's Environmental Festival) by writing letters on environmental issues. The following letter was sent to the Lytton Park Resident's Association with copies to the Principal of Glenview Senior School, the Glenview School Parents/Teachers Association, the Toronto Parks and Recreation Department and the Toronto Field Naturalists.

Dear Sirs,

July 15, 1988

HJ

As new residents in this area, having moved into a house on Glenview Avenue last fall, we are surprised at the behaviour of some of the children who attend Glenview Senior Public School on Rosewell Avenue.

During the school year, the Chatsworth ravine, running east from Glenview School through Duplex Avenue, becomes a quagmire of litter--juice boxes, soft drink cans, plastic bags, candy, gum, and cigarette wrappers, etc.--as the kids go to and from school. The ravine woods and creek are spoiled by the mess. (Glenview Avenue is similarly littered.) Apparently, the students seem never to have heard of litter baskets, nor has it been suggested to them that they dispose of litter properly by leaving it either at home or at school.

A fence erected on the ravine slope by the Parks Department to preserve native trees and plants from destruction is regularly vandalized. Recently, three separate fires have been set in the ravine, one a couple of days before school ended, one on Canada Day, and the latest on July 11. On Canada Day, fire was set to one of the few remaining native pine trees, at a regular student hangout on the ravine slope, and firemen recommended that the damaged tree be cut down. An attempt was also made to burn the bridge over the ravine creek.

It seems obvious to us that the young people who act in this way lack even a rudimentary understanding of proper behaviour, with respect to litter and waste, to the environment, and to the rights of other citizens to enjoy the neighbourhood surroundings. In the broader sense, we wonder how the world can hope for environmental protection when these young people, with all the advantages of growing up in an affluent, well-educated community, have so little regard for the environment and so little understanding of the obligation on all of us to deal properly with litter and garbage, and to respect the environmental rights of others.

We strongly suggest that both the teachers at Glenview School and the parents of the schoolchildren who act in this way have an obligation to instill in these young people some sense of environmental appreciation, and an understanding of how to behave at the personal level with respect to litter and junk.

We hope that the Lytton Park Residents' Association feels it has a responsibility to discuss this matter with the principal and staff at the school, and with its member parents at the beginning of the next school year.

Dr. Donald A. Chant & Merle Chant

PROJECTS (cont'd)

Make Your Leaves Work For You

You can tell that fall is here by the sight of bulging bags of leaves waiting at the curb for a one-way trip to the land-fill site. What a waste! Leaves have a high mineral content, as well as a high fibrous content. When composted or used as mulch, they can be a great benefit to our gardens.

When autumn comes to a forest and the leaves drop to the ground, they are worked on by bacteria and fungi to turn them into a rich dark mould which feeds the trees again in years to follow. We can learn a valuable lesson from this natural re-cycling and put it to good use in our gardens.



You can use leaves in a number of different ways.

1) Add some leaves to your compost heap along with other kitchen and yard waste. Avoid putting on too many at one time as they may clump together and inhibit good air circulation. You can put some leaves aside to add to the compost heap gradually over the following months.

2) Have a separate compost heap for leaves only. A simple pile in an out-of-the-way corner of your yard, where there is some protection from the wind, will do the trick. It is amazing how an enormous pile of leaves will reduce dramatically in volume in a relatively short time.

If you wish to be more sophisticated, follow these steps:

- a. Use a wood frame with wire netting. Pile the leaves inside and add thin layers of soil every now and again to speed up decomposition. Cover the leaves with wire netting during the winter to stop them from blowing away.
- b. In the spring when the snow has melted and the leaves are moist, remove the netting cover, sprinkle on a couple of handfuls of high-nitrogen fertilizer and add a few shovelfuls of soil. Cover the soil with a sheet of heavy-duty polyethylene and weigh it down.
- c. During the summer check the heap from time to time and water if required. The leaves should be broken down enough to add to the garden by fall. If there is a high proportion of oak or chestnut leaves, it may take up to 2 years to decompose.

3) To compost leaves using a slightly different approach, try the following: shred the leaves with a lawn mower (smaller pieces will decompose faster), place them in garbage bags, moisten, close the bags and leave them till spring. Anaerobic decomposition (i.e., without oxygen) will give you leaf mould which can be dug into your garden in the spring.

4) Use leaves as a mulch on your vegetable garden or flower beds. (Mulch is a layer of material which covers the soil surface.) You can use some now and save some for use in the spring. As a mulch the leaves will conserve soil moisture, insulate the soil, control erosion, and reduce weed growth. Also, as the leaves decompose, they will add organic matter and nutrients to the soil. Acid leaves - oak, pine or spruce - can be used, shredded, as a winter mulch on small fruits, azaleas and rhododendrons.

▷

PROJECTS (cont'd)

MAKE YOUR LEAVES WORK FOR YOU (Cont'd)

5) Some organic gardeners bag leaves and put them on beds of root vegetables to insulate them. (Do this on a dry day.) By marking the spot with a brightly painted broom handle, you can find your carrots, rutabaga and parsnips when you want them.

AS YOU CAN SEE, LEAVES ARE MUCH TOO VALUABLE TO THROW AWAY!

Sources of Information:

- 1) Mary Perlmutter, Canadian Organic Growers Association, 348 Briar Hill Ave., Toronto, Ontario M4R 1J2, Tel. (416) 485-3534
- 2) Composting, Trevor J. Cole, Agriculture Canada
- 3) Everyone's Guide to Home Composting, Robyn Bem

▷ For more information, contact: Ontario Recycling Information Service, Recycling Council of Ontario, P.O. Box 310, Station P, Toronto, Ont. M5S 2S8 Tel. (416) 960-0938 (Toronto Area); 1-800-263-2849 (Toll-Free)

a release of the Recycling Council of Ontario, August 1988

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CELEBRATE OUR HUMBER

The twinning of cities is a well-established concept, but the twinning of rivers is a new idea. A committee, made up of heritage and environmental representatives from the communities along the Humber River, is undertaking to twin our Humber with its English namesake. It is part of an effort to have the Humber River designated as a Heritage River of Canada. The committee has plans for a local CELEBRATION OF THE HUMBER on October 15. The project is aimed at creating public awareness of the river's history, its beauty and its value to us all as a recreational and natural treasure.

To celebrate the river's place in our lives, the committee is having buttons made with "I♥ my Humber River" and is contacting elementary schools adjacent to the Humber about a poster project on the theme, "I love my Humber River". The children's art is to be displayed in malls, libraries, and public offices.

Among the events already planned are the following:

- a talk on the Baby Point Indian Village of Teiaiagoh by Dr. Mima Kapches, ROM at the October meeting of the West Toronto Junction Historical Society
- a Humber art show
- Humber River is to be featured at the Weston Historical Society meeting in Oct.
- two tours of the Humber marshes with the Toronto Field Naturalists

▷ For further information about the heritage designation and twinning project for the Humber, call Joan Barrett at 763-1393.

Joan Barrett, Secretary
Twinning Committee

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▷ See page 33 for more details about the Celebration of the Humber.

PROJECTS (cont'd)

A PLEA FOR TREES

A great deal has been written recently on the loss of global oxygen, an estimated 12% less than a couple of centuries ago. Oxygen is, of course, an element required by all life and by all brains regardless of species.

Trees are powerful suppliers of oxygen. Hence growing world consciousness of one of the boomerang effects of the destruction of rain forests. In this, we are at least belatedly aware, and Government officials wax eloquent over the crucial conservation of habitat--over there. Over here, when preservation of wilderness runs counter to immediate economic demands and requires a whole rethinking of long-term forest management, those same officials are still trusting to Nature to make good the inadequacies of their policies. The recent decision on Tamagami is a classic case.

A tree may take anything up to one hundred years to achieve maturity. It is the largest trees which produce the most oxygen, yet a century of growth can be destroyed within 10 minutes by application of a chainsaw. If Government pursues its chosen course, not only will Ontario lose a wilderness treasure, but more forest will perish in Tamagami in the form of pine stands older than Confederation, and more oxygen will be lost to the global climate.

We can all protest official myopia, but those fortunate enough to possess gardens can also make their own personal contribution. I cannot think of an emergent movement more productive of instant returns on this continent than that of a reverence for trees--those marvels which we take for granted, magnificent machines which reduce air pollution and buffer noise, create beauty and privacy, and work for all of us regardless of who "owns" them. Trees, in every sense, are close to home. As individuals we can write to Government, fight the all too frequent depredations of developers, private and municipal, let American acquaintances know what we think of their Government's dodging of responsibility for industries' heavy contribution to acid rain, but we can do something more. We can plant a tree. Adopt a tree. Above all, preserve a mature tree. This is one resource we destroy at our immediate peril.

Eva Davis

□

Every year a given tree creates absolutely from scratch 99% of its living parts. Water lifting up a tree trunk can climb 150 feet an hour; in full summer a tree can and does heave a ton of water every day. A big elm in a single season might make as many as six million leaves, wholly intricate A tree stands there, accumulating deadwood, mute and rigid as an obelisk, but secretly it seethes; it splits, sucks, and stretches; it heaves up tons and hurls them out in a green, fringed fling...

from PILGRIM AT TINKER CREEK by Annie Dillard, Bantam Books, 1974.



Eastern hemlock by Mary Cumming

ISSUES

A PLEA FOR SENSITIVE PARK PLANNING

My introduction to the Hinder Estate was a view, from Bathurst Street, of a farm on the floodplain of the West Don Valley. In the Toronto of 1976 it was like looking into a lost world.

Only a few years later I found myself writing letters and speaking against proposals to convert the property into a subdivision. Thus when the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority expropriated this flood-prone valley property in 1986 so that it could form another link in Metro's linear park system, I was elated.

On my first official visit to the site I watched a pair of downy woodpeckers nesting in an old apple tree, listened to meadowlarks and bobolinks in the unmown meadows adjacent to the house and was scolded by a wren as I walked along the tree-lined lane. As I looked for the remains of Hinder's dam, I wondered if it was true that Mackenzie had hidden out on this property during the Rebellion of 1837. This part of the valley has an atmosphere unlike that of the rest where park "development" leaves little room for the imagination to work. Here there are no roads (merely a tree-lined lane) and meadows instead of mown lawns.

My elation did not last long. My letter-writing and speaking were not over. First came the news that the Metropolitan Toronto Parks Department had plans to replace the lane with a road from Bathurst Street and to build a parking lot in the middle of the park. (Remember a "road" according to Metro is 9 feet wide with a 25 foot clearance on either side. Nothing less is acceptable. On this site it would mean the loss of more than 1000 trees.) Metro has a 10-year Master Plan to link all its parks by roads within the parks.

The next threat was the news that a North York teachers' association had plans to take over the property as a club where its members could drink and swim. Ratepayers and naturalists had this stopped.

Next came the news that Metro had leased the property to a croquet association who immediately mowed the meadows and parked cars on the site.

The Hinder estate is well-served by public transportation. Two buses run on Bathurst Street. The parkland south of it (Earl Bales Park) has plenty of parking lots and the parkland to the west has a large parking lot just opposite the laneway of the former Hinder property.

Surely it is time that the Conservation Authority, as owners of Metro's parklands, prohibited any further paving over of floodplain lands and any further loss of vegetation. According to Metroplan (the Official Plan for all of Metropolitan Toronto), "the planning, design and management of the Metropolitan park system shall support the natural environment in the valleys". The construction of roads and parking lots cannot possibly "support the natural environment of the valleys"!

Helen Juhola

□

*They've barbered up that bit of park
where once I saw the meadowlark.*

Diana Banville



GROWING CANADA'S FLORAL EMBLEMS (1988) by L.G. Sherk, Canadian Wildflower Society, 35 Bauer Cres., Unionville, Ont. L3R 4H3 (8" X 9", paperback, illustrated)

This small book includes a colour photograph of each of Canada's twelve floral emblems with notes on where the flowers grow and various ways to propagate and grow them. The book also includes information about the Canadian Wildflower Society and their Guidelines for Gardeners.

PEOPLE AND CITY LANDSCAPES: A STUDY OF PEOPLE AND OPEN SPACE IN METROPOLITAN AREAS OF ONTARIO (1987) by M. Hough and S. Barrett, Canadian Council of Ontario (8½" X 11", paperback, illustrated, \$15.00 from C.C.O., 74 Victoria St., Suite 202, Toronto, Ont. M5C 2A5)

Written as a sequel to the Conservation Council's THE URBAN LANDSCAPE (1971), this book is about all kinds of urban open space, uses people make of these areas and ideas about their management. Includes an annotated bibliography.

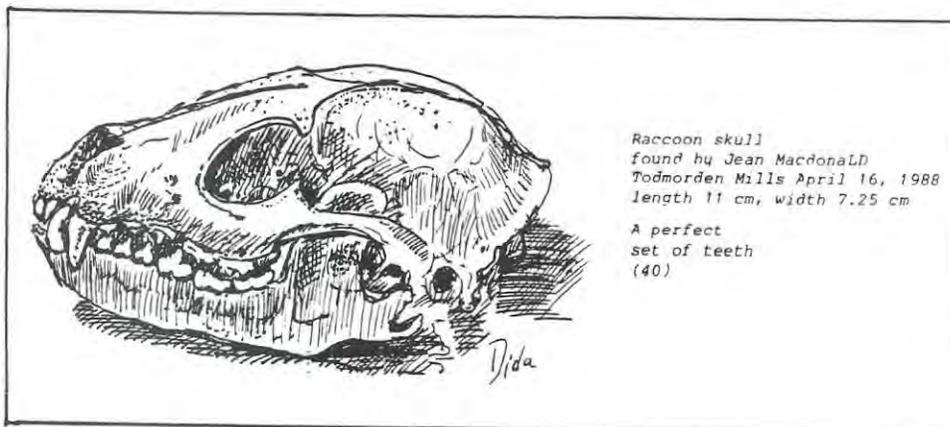
A NATURAL HERITAGE INVENTORY OF THE BLACK CREEK WATERSHED (1988) by G. Miller, The Black Creek Project, Box 324, Stn. A, Downsview, Ont. M3M 3A6 (8½" X 11", coil bound, maps, photos) (in TFN library).

As well as providing background on the geology, soils, vegetation and land use of the Black Creek area, this report includes detailed descriptions and plant lists for five areas along Black Creek that are threatened by development proposals.

WATERWAYS WALKABOUT (1988) by Mike Dickman, Biological Sciences Dept., Brock University, St. Catharines, Ont. L2S 3A1 (8½" X 11", paperback, illustrated) available for \$6.00 from Ecology House, 12 Madison Ave., Toronto

To quote from the introduction, "The foremost objective of this manual is to encourage individuals who are concerned about the pollution of their waterways to document their observations so that collectively these findings will improve our stewardship of our harbours, lakes and rivers." It also encourages one to take action and tells about the ways this may be done. A must for anyone doing a ravine study.

HJ



Raccoon skull
found by Jean Macdonald
Todmorden Mills April 16, 1988
length 11 cm, width 7.25 cm

A perfect
set of teeth
(40)

In identifying this skull from the field guide, we noticed how similar it was to that of the black bear. No wonder there's confusion about the family of the giant panda.

REF.: A FIELD GUIDE TO THE MAMMALS by Burt & Grossenheider

IN THE NEWS

Acid Rain Killing Coastal Marine Life

Acid rain, which we already know detrimentally affects freshwater organisms, is also responsible for the degradation of marine life along the Atlantic coast. A new report issued by the Environmental Defense Fund indicates that acid rain is a major culprit. The Fund focussed mainly on Chesapeake Bay and its tributary streams, but also dealt with Long Island Sound, the New York Bight, and North Carolina's Albemarle-Pamlico Sound.

Up until the publication of this new report, it was thought that agricultural run-off and sewage were responsible for the increasing frequency of mass killings of marine life along the northeast coast of the U. S. Now, however, acid rain emerges as an important contributor. It is apparently not sulphur dioxide that is the culprit, but oxides of nitrogen also present in air pollution. The nitrogen oxides convert to nitric acids in coastal water. The excess nitrogen stimulates the growth of algae which cut off the oxygen from other coastal plants and also block sunlight. Thus the ocean's nurseries in the area studied are being destroyed. This can only lead to a long-term decline in coastal plant and animal marine life.

Adapted from an article by Philip Shabecoff of the New York Times Service in the Globe and Mail, 25 April 1988.

The European Perch a Threat to the Great Lakes

Freighters engaged in the grain trade visit the Great Lakes regularly to pick up grain which they carry back to Europe. Before leaving Europe the freighters scoop up water which acts to stabilize them on their empty way over. When they pick up the grain, they discharge the ballast water and any life it may contain into the Great Lakes. About 200 exotic organisms have been introduced in this way, including the sea lamprey (see TFN #214), the Chinese mitten crab, and European flounder. The ruffe or European perch is the most recent introduction. The ruffe is not a fish that appeals to anglers and it eats the eggs of native perch and whitefish. The ruffe's habit could be a serious threat to fishing, both commercial and sporting, in the Great Lakes. The Great Lakes Fishery Commission is now surveying the water around Duluth to see whether the ruffe has established itself and is spreading.

Adapted from an article by Craig McInnes in the Globe and Mail, 3 May 1988.

Snakes Protected

Special protection is being given to eight species and subspecies of snakes for the first time under Ontario's Game and Fish Act. Some of these snakes are rare and others are at risk of further declines in population. It is now illegal to kill or possess the eastern fox snake, black rat snake, eastern hognose snake, blue racer, timber rattlesnake, queen snake, Lake Erie water snake and northern water snake.

IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

Last Remains

(1) A French researcher examining a musty storeroom at the Kew Royal Botanical Gardens came across what was meant to be King Tutankhamen's last meal. The artifacts had been consigned to Kew by the American archeologist Howard Carter who accompanied the Earl of Carnavon when he discovered King Tutankhamen's tomb in the Valley of the Kings in Egypt in 1922. The French researcher was working on a Masters degree when he made the exciting discovery. The meal was meant to nourish the King in his journey into Eternity and consisted of watermelon seeds, emmer wheat, barley, coriander, fenugreek, black cumin, sesame, almonds, dates, juniper berries, grapes, and tropical fruits. The food was stored in 30 cardboard boxes and was accompanied by wreaths.

Adapted from an article by Reuters in the Globe and Mail, 20 May 1988.

(2) Saskatchewan scientists have discovered a vast deposit of coprolites--petrified animal feces--near the town of Assiniboia. The deposits stretch for 10 km with an additional deposit 30 km away. The deposits were produced by animals drinking on the edge of a vast, shallow inland sea about 65 million years ago. They are the feces of crocodiles, turtles, flightless birds, and dinosaurs. The site was opened up during mining for Kaolin, a fine white clay used in the manufacture of porcelain. Earlier researchers thought the feces were produced by fish. The variety of geological information suggests they were deposited during a dry season and covered with mud when the rains came. Examining feces enables scientists to say something about the animal which produced them. Geologist Pier Binda compared the process to a ballistics expert attempting to match a bullet with the kind of gun which fired it. One can gain clues about the shape of the animal's anus!

Adapted from the Globe and Mail, 2 May 1988.

Illegal Trade in Eagle Feathers

An international smuggling ring operating in Ontario and the United States has been broken after a three-year investigation by the Ministry of Natural Resources. The ring dealt in bald and golden eagle and vulture feathers which were sewn into Indian ceremonial garments and sold to North American Indians and to non-Indian art collectors. Ministry officials estimated that several hundred eagles must have been killed for their feathers. Eagle feathers were smuggled into Canada as goosefeathers. Single feathers fetched \$35 while the feathers of an entire eagle fetched \$800. Two men were arrested and warrants issued for several more.

Adapted from an article by Canadian Press in the Globe and Mail, Summer 1988 (the Keeper-of-Clippings herself forgot to attach date!).

IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

Tales About Whales

(1) Last April Harbourfront excavations turned up a whale vertebra--a vertebra belonging to the baleen family of salt water whales. Now if this find were taken at its face value the extent of the Champlain Sea, which covered a great deal of eastern Canada and the U. S. about 12,000 years ago, would have to be revised. It was thought to end east of Kingston. The vertebra was submitted to carbon dating by the ROM. Meanwhile an historian Allan Ironside recalled one of those interesting snippets of historical trivia that might be relevant. About 100 years ago a Toronto resident, Harry Piper, was fascinated with whales. A dead whale was washed up on the shores of Nova Scotia and Piper had it trucked to Toronto and exhibited it in an octagonal building close to where the whale bone was found. Perhaps when the smell of the decomposing whale got too strong it was dumped into Lake Ontario. Research subsequently proved that the vertebra belonged to a modern whale. The shores of the Champlain Sea stayed east of Kingston! Allan Ironside must have smiled!

Adapted from articles by Alfred Holden, Toronto Star, 20 & 21 April and 8 June, 1988.

(2) Cambridge University scientists have been able to isolate the "genetic footprint" of whales. They can now identify individual whales from genetic material and indicate a particular whale's relatives. In a way not explained in the short article, they feel their technique should put a stop to what are called "scientific" whale hunts. Earlier this year Japan, the principal adherent of the practice, killed an estimated number of 300 Minke whales in the Antarctic, despite pressure from the International Whaling Commission to stop.

Adapted from the London Observer appearing in the Globe and Mail, 4 June 1988.

(3) The federal government will spend \$6 million to save the St. Lawrence River's Beluga whales. Past overhunting and present pollution have reduced a population of several thousand at the beginning of this century to 500. Ottawa is also planning long-term environmental measures such as the establishment of a marine park at the junction of the Saguenay and the St. Lawrence.

Adapted from Canadian Press article in the Globe and Mail, 23 June 1988.

▷ Send news clippings to Louise Herzberg, 59 Hillside Dr., Toronto, Ont. M4K 2M1.

THE TOAD/TOADSTOOL LINK

It is still widely believed that the term "mushroom" means edible fungus, whilst "toadstool" denotes something poisonous to humans. In fact, toadstool has no scientific meaning and does not correspond to any botanical classification. Nevertheless, the association between animal and plant has transcended national boundaries. It was first used in England by Dr. Bartholomeus Anglicus in 1398 to apply to any wild inedible mushroom. Similarly, inedible mushrooms in France were "toad's bread" (pain de crapaud), as with the Welsh "toad's bread" (bwyd y llyffant), in the Ukraine "toadlike mushrooms" (zhabjachi hryb), in Denmark and Norway "toad's hat" (peddehatt), while in Holland "toadstool" (paddestoel) referred to all mushrooms. Toads and mushrooms were linked down the centuries with poison, folk medicine, hallucinations and witchcraft.

The common European toad, which bears the splendidly resonant name of Bufo bufo bufo, can exude a poison from its skin when alarmed which causes sore eyes and mouths to predators. Folk medicine attributed a curative power to this poison (it has since been found to contain bufotoxins and bufogenines which strengthen heart contractions). In China, 3000 years ago, it was used for heart problems; in the 17th century, European doctors employed it until the discovery of digitalis. The venom also possesses anaesthetic powers stronger than those of cocaine, and various tribes have used it in their rituals during which members coat their skins with this secretion.

But it is as hallucinogens that toads and toadstools possess a common link. In Greek literature, mention of hallucinatory mushrooms goes back as far as the 4th century B.C.; supposedly the Vikings used Fly Agaric (*Amanita muscaria*) to induce battle frenzy. Another mushroom, *Panaeolus*, contains psilocin which is chemically related to the indolalky lamines of toad secretions. Crystallized bufotenine from toads produces reactions similar to those of LSD or psilocin. The Mayans added toads to a fermented drink used during rituals.

Toads have a long history as victims of human cruelty, superstition and fear (along with wolves, bats, harmless reptiles, etc.). The poor things were often used in witchcraft and boiled alive in potions; it was believed that witches could turn into toads. It is an advance that they are now regarded as gentle creatures and valued for their enormous contribution to insect control (every garden should have one, if not a pair -- they are much cheaper and infinitely safer than pesticides). Their new-found acceptance is nowhere better illustrated than in the toad tunnels which have been constructed in some European countries.

E.D.

adapted from summary of an article in The New Scientist submitted by
A. Valiunas to the Mycological Society of Toronto Newsletter (Jan.-Mar. 1988).

WELL MAY THE WILLOW WEEP

On May 31, 1988, the smell of 2-4-D was evident from Dawes Road to beyond the fen in Taylor Creek Park. There is a school adjacent. Not only were dandelions and plantain curling up - so were goldenrod, choke cherry (in bloom), ash, Manitoba maple, weeping white willow, and other trees. Meanwhile the dandelions were in fruit and ready to multiply anyway. Parks Departments and Municipalites, let us hope you will begin to consider the harm you are doing in your attempts to control these harmless plants.

Diana Banville

SOLVING A PORCUPINE'S PREDICAMENT

I had been feeling my recurring need for a retreat from the boredom of housewifery and the frustrations of psychiatric nursing, but I hadn't time for a vacation or even an extended weekend. A day hike would help but an overnigher would be better.

Thursday evening I gathered my gear and loaded my backpack. Immediately after work on Friday I headed for the Blue Mountains. I parked off the road, shrugged on my pack, and climbed toward Osler Shelter. By the time I reached the campground the bubbling stream beside the trail and the refreshing green of the hills had started the healing process.

The tent went up in a hurry and I set out for as long a walk as I could fit into the time left till dusk. By the time I returned to my tent I was already feeling better. My tiny Olympus 123 heated my soup as I munched on an apple. Because there was still time before I could expect to sleep and it was too dark to read, I made a small campfire and sat on a log staring into the flames, relaxed, almost somnolent.

In the quietness the low cry was startling. It sounded like a baby crying behind me. Since that was impossible I ignored it at first, but it persisted, getting closer and louder. I overcame my inertia and turned. A young porcupine approached until he almost touched me. He attempted to creep under my arm but the very idea made me nervous so, feeling guilty and unmotherly, I shooed him away and settled myself into my sleeping bag with the tent zippers securely closed!

Next morning I was barely up, starting my stove for coffee and splashing cold stream water on my face when he appeared again, equally persistent. As there was no other conversationalist handy, I said to him, "Show me what you're fussing about," and I stood up. He turned, waddled off, and I followed. We hadn't far to go till the reason for his anguish was evident. There, in the long grass was a large porcupine with a bean can stuck on her snout. Obviously she'd been hungry and some careless camper had left his garbage behind.

What to do? The loaded tail looked dangerous. I picked up a yard long stick and tried to push it under the edge of the can to pry it off, standing well back from her armour. She stood still, not raising her quills at all, letting me work at it for several minutes. No dice, not even a budge. There was nothing for it but to step closer and use my hands. I held the stick firmly against her, bent over, grabbed the can and pulled. Slowly it came away. I think we simultaneously breathed a sigh of relief.

Without a word of thanks she turned and lumbered away, through the stream and up the hill with her little one following behind, now at last quite silent.

Betty Carter

from the BRUCE TRAIL NEWS, Spring 1988

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Flame leaves flutter free,
 escaping from your letter.
 Fall from Canada.

haiku by Janet Illingworth-Cooper
 Gloucestershire, England.

ANIMAL INTELLIGENCE

EQUINOX magazine (November/December 1987) carried an article adapted from the book "Red Fox: The Catlike Canine" by J. David Henry, 1986. In a paragraph dealing with vulpine consciousness Mr. Henry writes on "...the issue of fox awareness -- forbidden fruit for an ethologist". Animal behaviourists will examine the overt behaviour of a species but balk at attempting to analyse the animal's feelings -- the scientific veto against anthropomorphism. However, he found red foxes to be as individualistic as humans and instances one particular animal, "My Friend" as he calls him, who at six months made three successive kills. The first two mice he caught he ate. He played with the third until the trapped creature died, when he then hid it for future larder use. Continuing on his way he came upon and captured a shrew which he carried in his closed mouth out to the road and began to toy with it. After some 45 seconds of prancing and dancing, he picked up the still live animal, returned to where he had found it, and tossed it straight at a small burrow, into which the shrew instantly scuttled. The fox then continued his hunting foray.

Mr. Henry is convinced that the fox had deliberately let the shrew escape, something which, over the years, he had observed other foxes do. On this occasion, however, the fox had returned his booty to the spot at which he had caught it and flung it at the accompanying hole. To the writer this could be interpreted as the young fox viewing the shrew as a food source to be captured later, "perhaps to have the enjoyment of catching it another time". But did his return to the burrow mean that the fox comprehended that the shrew was not only alive but had a home, just like the fox himself?

Fox and cat kill when the inborn hunting instincts are alerted. In that, they are what Mr. Henry calls innocent killers. But the behaviour of his young fox Friend suggests to him that more goes on in a fox's head when hunting than accepted scientific wisdom concedes.

Scientists are adamant that we must not attribute a type of human emotion or consciousness to other life forms: "How human!" of an animal's behaviour is verboten. (Much less, "How animal" of the elevated process that is human behaviour!) We are quite sure what an animal's behaviour does not indicate mentally but we back away from any suggestion as to what it might indicate. Of course, we cannot "get inside" an animal's awareness. But flattering assumptions as to the superiority of our own have always struck me as one of humanity's fondest illusions. I like Henry Beston's outlook:

"We need another and a wiser and perhaps a more mystical concept of animals...We patronize them for their incompleteness, for their tragic fate of having taken form so far below ourselves. And therein we err, and greatly err. For the animal shall not be measured by man. In a world older and more complete than ours they move finished and complete, gifted with extensions of the senses we have lost or never attained, living by voices we shall never hear. They are not brethren, they are not underlings; they are other nations, caught with ourselves in the net of life and time, fellow prisoners of the splendour and travail of earth" ("The Outermost House", Publishers Doubleday, 1928).

What do TFN members think of the red fox incident?

Eva Davis

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ALL THAT GLITTERS...

Last year my mineralogy club undertook a week-long tour of the Lake Superior shoreline in search of once and still producing mine sites negotiable only by personal introduction, specific permission, intensive map-reading and geological know-how, the sort of thing more easily accomplished by a club than by individuals.

As a rock enthusiast, I confess to unfashionable tastes. I have always been more excited by semi-precious minerals than by "true" gems: amethyst before diamond in short, "tiger-eye" before topaz, pyrite before gold. Particularly the last, if only because I have a friend who has a sliver of native gold which is kept in a tiny plastic box, locked in a drawer and is almost certainly insured. It cost a small fortune and it might be worth a mint, but she only occasionally takes it out to enjoy it, whereas I keep splinters and chunks and cubes of pyrite glinting all over the place and affording me enormous satisfaction as my eye lights on any of these over the breakfast table.

When, however, it was announced that our club president had obtained entrance to Hemlo Gold Mines Inc., everyone rejoiced and I was fully prepared to enter into the spirit of the thing. Hemlo is acclaimed as a world class mine and is one of North America's largest gold producers, with an average grade of 9.70 grams of gold per tonne. It is situated on Highway 17, some yards past the turn-off to Manitowadge. Now a lot of "mines" are really open pits or quarries -- the amethyst mines of Thunder Bay, for instance, consist of quarried veins, and although anyone can dig himself in quite deeply, these veins are not truly underground. But Hemlo is, emphatically, a mine. We were first taken from the administration buildings to the change rooms where we each put on obligatory mine garb: heavy overalls, great weighted rubber boots, safety belt, hard hat, head lamp, safety glasses, ear plugs. The end result produced a great deal of merriment amongst the women; the men looked much more authentic. We then entered what I still think of as a lift but which, I believe, is correctly called a cage. As I said, Hemlo is truly a mine: 3,000 plummeting feet and nearly three minutes later we got out and were led by our guide through a gloomy maze to a particular tunnel where we were invited to go ahead and collect.

This sounds a simple procedure. It was, however, performed in a Stygian blackness highlighted solely by our head lamps; the tunnel was narrow and engulfing; the air was stifling owing to lack of oxygen and the reek of machine oils; the humidity had us all running in sweat; machinery rattled overhead and dynamiting could be heard at different mine levels. Unstressful it was not. Different it certainly was.

We stayed down an hour and a half, waiting to return with the next shift to go topside. During this time the men in our party hacked away at the tunnel walls in the perennial male hope that they would, against all odds, discover a sliver, even a nugget in matrix. I contented myself by picking up a 5" oblong of rock from the floor.

The guide had been asked if the miners were allowed to take anything out. "As much as they can carry" he replied jovially. Since it takes a tonne of ore to produce a teaspoonful of gold, what little could be removed would hardly make threatening inroads on company profits.

When we finally ascended, one of the workers asked me if it was my first time down. All too obviously it was! I enquired how long he had been a miner. "Twenty-seven years!" He looked unassuming enough, but as far as I'm concerned this was a Man of Steel. The whole experience gave me an enormous respect for

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ALL THAT GLITTERS (cont'd)

the miners. No wonder they have a reputation for blowing their earnings when once on the loose. I propose that every Minister of Mines qualify for his post and perks by first undertaking a month-long stint underground. There would be no rush for this particular ministerial honour.

The women amongst themselves agreed that the legendary Romance of the Gold Rush might have had some validity, working as one would largely in the open, roughing it alongside one's faithful burro, panning in crystal-clear streams with the ever present hope of striking lucky and making a fortune. But the modern troglodyte reality better qualifies, as far as I'm concerned, as one of Dante's circles of hell.

And what of my small hunk of rock picked up from the bowels of the earth? It gleams -- now that I have it in the light of day -- golden with pyrite (the "gold" which was reflected from tunnel walls by our head lamps), and consists also of milky quartz, green mica, a patch of molybdenum and a dash of realgar. And yes -- somewhere in all this there must be some microscopic specks of gold.

Eva Davis

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A NOTE OF OPTIMISM

If you missed SPEAKING OUT on Channel 19 on April 7, you may still be able to get a transcript (for \$3 from TVO Box 200 Stn Q, Toronto M4T 2T1). Judy Smith of FRIENDS OF THE EARTH, Colin Isaacs of POLLUTION PROBE and Monte Hummel of the WORLD WILDLIFE FUND were interviewed by Harry Brown, when the question was "Are you prepared to make economic sacrifices to save the environment." Such things as high-tech light bulbs whose 13W is the equivalent of a conventional 60W, were discussed; these are now on the market in a small way. The sacrifices need not be as drastic as we perhaps have imagined, if such advances are encouraged. They claim there is a 70%-80% participation rate in the recycling program in Ottawa-Carleton. Not that there were no warnings forthcoming: "If you think it's bad losing whooping cranes and other such high-profile species, wait till you see what happens when we lose some of these trophic organisms!" But don't despair: "There's a new wave of managers coming up. Those who say you don't have to be concerned about the environment are the contemporary dinosaurs."

DB



Bridging the valley,
vanguard of migrating geese -
chromo-season follows.

sketch and haiku by Vera Irving

The weather this time last year

October 1987, Toronto region

Toronto had its coolest October since 1981, decisively ending the 1986-87 warm trend which had quietly receded in August and September. However, precipitation and sunshine were close to average.

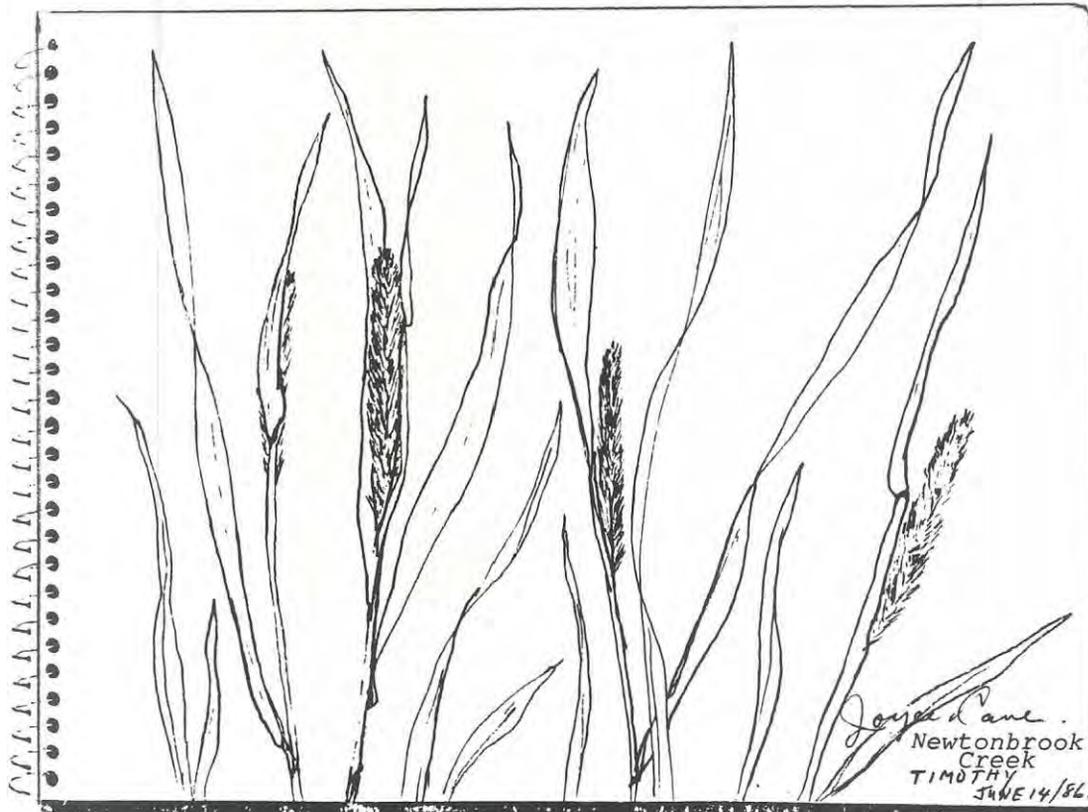
The cold swept in early with a strong front on the 2nd - 3rd; the maximum on the 3rd was only 7.5°C downtown; hard frost hit all areas except mid-town the next night. Other cool outbreaks, not quite as strong, came regularly the rest of the month, aside from one more settled spell the 11th - 17th. Partly cloudy skies, a few showers (and flurries in outlying areas), and northwesterly winds prevailed.

Gavin Miller

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THE WEED-POPPER

On TV recently a commercial has appeared advertising "the Weed-popper". Does any member know how it works? Not that naturalists are into weed-popping, but many still do maintain lawns and are concerned about the use of chemicals. The commercial recommends the device instead of "costly chemicals". When will the people in Advertising realize that a healthy environment has a special appeal? The Woolco ad could have read "instead of costly and POLLUTING chemicals".

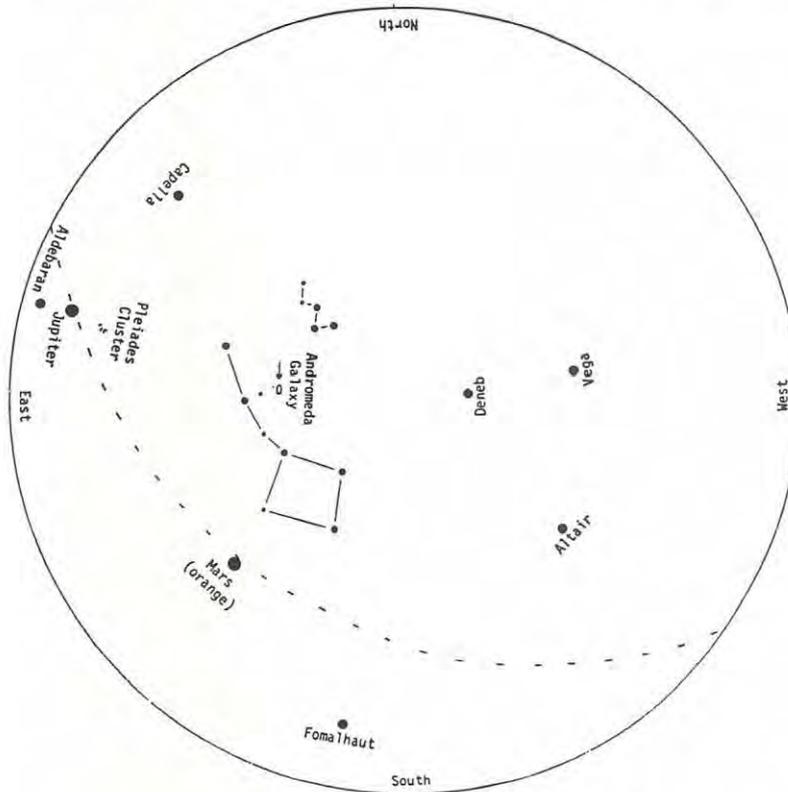


Timothy is a familiar Toronto grass, escaped from cultivation.

Sky Notes

The Evening Sky - October, 1988

The following simplified star map, for 10:00 PM in early October, shows the two planets (Mars, Jupiter) and half dozen brightest stars then visible, as well as the Andromeda Galaxy and, to aid in its identification, some of the brighter stars appearing near it. The dashed line across the map represents the ecliptic, the plane of the solar system. Note that during the month, Mars fades, whereas Jupiter, now appearing in the evening sky for the first time since April, gets brighter. Also, Mars retrogrades (moves westward along the ecliptic relative to the background stars) by about $4\frac{1}{2}^\circ$, while Jupiter retrogrades about 2° .



The Andromeda Galaxy, mentioned above, is the remotest object visible to the unaided eye. At a distance of 2.2 million light-years, it is three hundred billion times as far away as Mars. It is so distant that the combined light of its half trillion stars is barely visible even under the best conditions. To see the galaxy from the city you will need binoculars. Through them it appears as a dim, hazy patch of light. For the best view, look slightly to one side of it rather than directly at it.

This month, last quarter moon falls on the 2nd, new moon on the 10th, 1st quarter moon on the 18th and full moon on the 25th. The moon is near Mars on the 22nd and the Pleiades on the 26th.

Jeff Nadir



COMING EVENTS

COMING EVENTS

JIM BAILLIE MEMORIAL BIRD WALK, Saturday, October 22 at 8 am - Bluebirds and Hawk Migration (with proper weather conditions) in High Park. Meet inside the main entrance, off Bloor St. and High Park Ave. Leader: Verna Higgins

CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL FESTIVAL AT HARBOURFRONT, York Quay Centre, Sept. 24-30. Open to the public on the weekend (Sept. 24 & 25) and on evenings during the week. Admission free. For information, call 588-6240.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH - Technology Transfer Conference, November 28 & 29, Royal York Hotel, Toronto. Air quality research, water quality research, liquid and solid waste research, analytical methods and instrument development, and environmental economics will be included. Sponsored by Research & Technology Branch, Corporate Resources Div., Environment Ontario. For information, contact Conference Secretariat, c/o Congress Canada, 73 Richmond St. W., Toronto. Attn: Shelley Stienstra, Tel. 860-1772

SCIENCE IN THE FIELD - Archaeology, Palaeontology and Mammals, three evening courses offered by Continuing Studies at the University of Toronto on Thursdays from 7-9, with field trips on Saturdays, Sept. 29 to Dec. 15. Instructor: Grant Hurlburt - Tel. 534-7359. To register, call 978-2400.

STARGAZING WORKSHOP at the McLaughlin Planetarium Star Theatre, Royal Ontario Museum, on Monday, October 17, 7-9 pm. Instructor: Tom Wujec, producer, McLaughlin Planetarium. Admission: \$6; \$3 Members, Seniors, Students, Members of the RASC. Call 586-5788 for information.

FRIENDS OF A FEATHER at Mountsberg Wildlife Centre on Sunday, October 2 will feature a bird hike at 10 am led by Clive and Joy Goodwin, followed by a slide presentation on feeding birds at 1:30 pm. Information is available from (416) 336-1158 (weekdays) or (416) 854-2276 (weekends).

BIRDFEEDER CONTEST at the Kortright Centre for Conservation from Sept. 1 to Oct. 29. Judging will take place on Nov. 6. Any ideas for the ultimate birdfeeder? Entrance fee: \$1.50 Open to all ages. For more information, call 661-6600.

Join the 1988 BAILLIE BIRDATHON PRESENTATIONS & FALL SOCIAL on Friday, October 28 at 7:30 pm at the Civic Garden Centre, Edwards Gardens, Toronto. Sponsored by the Long Point Bird Observatory. Call (519) 586-2909 for details.

Celebrate AUTUMN ON THE ESCARPMENT at Crawford Lake Indian Village and Conservation Centre on October 8, 9 and 10 from 10 am to 4 pm. For information, call (416) 336-1158 (weekdays) or (416) 854-2276 (weekends).

LAKE SIMCOE REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY - Of Trees and Leaves, a nature walk at Scanlon Creek Conservation Area at 1:30 pm on Sunday, Oct. 2. The focus will be on trees and how leaves change color, as well as the structure of trees, and the variety of seeds and nuts. Free admission. Call Newmarket (416) 895-1281 or Oak Ridges (416) 773-6482 for more information.

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COMING EVENTS (Cont'd)

ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM, Continuing Education - For information, call 586-5788.

Course No. 3002: Mars: Facts and Fantasies - Thurs., Sept. 22 to Oct. 13

Course No. 3003: Worlds Around the Sun - Mondays, Sept. 26 to Nov. 28

Creative Arts - For information, call 586-5797.

Course No. 7012: Wildlife Drawing - Saturday mornings, Oct. 1 to Nov. 26

BIRD-VIEWING DAY WITH THE MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES with Clive and Joy Goodwin at Humber Bay Park East on Sunday, Oct. 30, 10 am to 3 pm. Miscellaneous waterfowl will be featured. Free. Call Angus Norman 832-7205 for further information.

SAVE THE ROUGE VALLEY SYSTEM will hold its monthly nature walk on Sunday, Oct. 30 at 1:30 pm. Leader: Glen De Baeremaeker, research analyst, SRVS. Meet at the Glen Eagles Hotel parking lot. Call Renee Cotton at 288-8730 or 1-432-1346 for further information.

MEMBERS' SHOWING OF WATERCOLOURS at Sunnybrook Hospital, Sept. 22 to Oct. 25.

Leslie Mirylees' work will be shown as part of a four-man show.

ROSEMARY GAYMER, Integrated Interests, P. O. Box 152, Oakville, Ont. L6J 4Z5:

Courses this year are being offered in Trees and Shrubs (Introductory Level) on four successive Thursdays from October 27 to Nov. 17 from 7-10 pm in Oakville. Registration necessary, preferably by the end of Sept. A second course, Ducks....and Swans and Geese (Intermediate/Advanced Level) will start Feb. 1 and will run for four Wednesdays from 7-10 pm, also in Oakville. Registration is requested by the end of Dec. (Note: Bird Study I will be given in 1989-90; Bird Study II, in 1990-91.) Tel. (416)844-8332 for more information.

Florida - Everglades, Keys, Corkscrew Swamp, Sanibel and more - Dec. 2-16 led by Rosemary Gaymer. Group limit: 12 For information, contact Elisabeth von Herff, Thos. Cook Travel at Eaton's, Yorkdale Shopping Centre, 3401 Dufferin St., Toronto M6A 2T9, Tel. (416)343-6364.

KORTRIGHT CENTRE FOR CONSERVATION features Humber Valley Hikes on Sun. Sept. 25 Sun., Oct. 2 from 11 am to 3 pm. Forests in Our Lives, Oct. 15-16 will be weekend featuring trees. For information, call (416)661-6600.

BIRD CUBA with Doug McRae and George Wallace of the Long Point Bird Observatory. They have scheduled two trips, one in January, the other in March. For further information and bookings, call LPBO (519)586-2909, or write to LPBO, Box 160, Port Rowan, Ont. NOE 1M0.

ROYAL CANADIAN INSTITUTE FREE SUNDAY LECTURES at the Medical Sciences Auditorium, University of Toronto, at 3 pm. For information, call 928-2096.

16 October Quarks, gluons and all that - Nathan Isgur

23 October Our immune system: can it bail us out of cancer, autoimmune diseases and AIDS? - Tak W. Mak

30 October Fun is learning: educating and entertaining with science - Alan Mursall

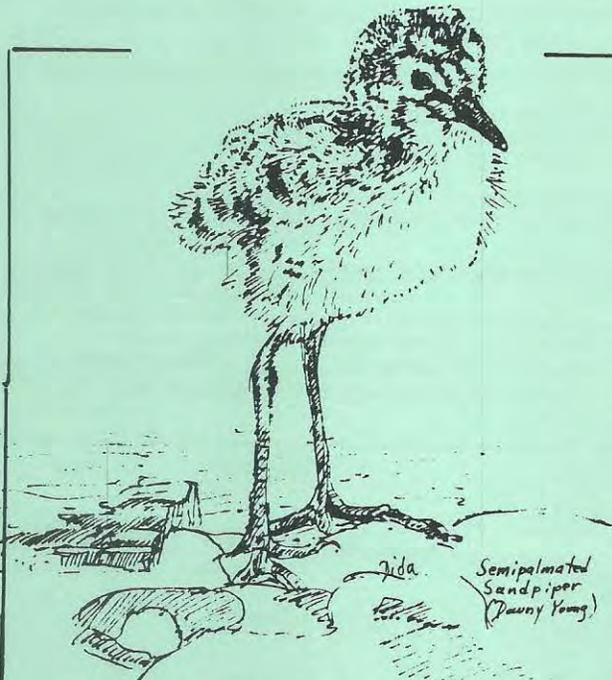
6 November Stepping into Toronto's prehistoric past - Mima Brown Kapches
Joint Meeting with the Toronto Field Naturalists

COMING EVENTS (Cont'd)

Space is available on the Clive & Joy Goodwin TRIP TO SOUTH TEXAS, Feb. 10-19, 1989. For more information, call 249-9503.

CELEBRATE THE HERITAGE OF THE HUMBER RIVER:

- Wed. Oct. 5 - At 8 pm, a lecture, The Story of the Humber, at the Westminster United Church, 69 William St. in Weston, presented by Mary Louise Ashbourne and Marjorie Mossman of the Weston Historical Society. For more information, call 244-5061.
- Sat. Oct. 15 - A canoe tour of the Humber Marshes led by Jane Weninger and Helen Smith. Jane is an expert on the prehistory of the Marshes; Helen, an expert on birds. The tour is designed for people with their own canoes who wish to bring them to the public launching ramp on the Humber. This is located off Humber Valley Road on the west side of the river, midway between Bloor St. and The Queensway. Free public parking is adjacent to the ramp. Canoe trippers are to meet at 11 am at the ramp to paddle into the marshes.
- Sat. Oct. 15 - A walking tour of the Humber Marshes led by Isabel Smith whose theme is Plants of the Marshes. The hikers are to meet at the Old Mill subway station at 11 am and from there will cross the bridge where they will descend to the marsh area.
- Sat. Oct. 15 - A walk will take place along the Humber at 2 pm. Meet at Little Avenue Town Park. (Lawrence Ave. & Weston Rd.). Walk will end at the same place.
- Thurs. Oct. 27 - At 8 pm an illustrated talk on the heritage of the Humber River will be presented at Montgomery's Inn, 4709 Dundas St. W., Etobicoke, by Mary Louise Ashbourne and Marjorie Mossman of the Etobicoke Historical Society. For more information, call 244-5061.



(from a photo by Donald Gunn)

Though the semipalmated sandpiper migrates through the Toronto region and stragglers may be seen in the summer months, we are not likely to see a downy chick like this one. The males arrive in the open tundra around James Bay and Hudson Bay in late May or early June and establish territories. They engage in song flights. After the females lay, both sexes share in the incubation. The eggs hatch in early July. Trilling may be heard. It is the adult male who supervises the fledging.

Ref.: ATLAS OF THE BREEDING BIRDS OF
ONTARIO, FON/LPBO 1987
& TORONTO REGION BIRD CHART TFN 1983



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