



# TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

Number 677 June 2023



Toronto Skyline from Tommy Thompson Park, October 2022. Photo: Marianne Cruttwell

## 100th Anniversary Edition

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT: HAPPY 100TH ANNIVERSARY, TFN!

This month marks the beginning of our celebration of TFN's 100th anniversary. To kick it off, this special June issue of our newsletter includes articles about the history of TFN, our stewardship, advocacy, junior naturalists, lectures and walks programs, and the newsletter. The idea for a "Toronto Field Naturalists Club" was conceived in June 1923, and it was officially launched in October of that year. From its inception, TFN has spoken up for nature and continues to do so today.

We intend to celebrate in a variety of ways including the launch of a new logo, a *Members Only* website to better serve members, re-creating historical walks, a special stewardship event with the City of Toronto, photo exhibitions featuring green spaces of historic significance to TFN and celebrating our ravines, social gatherings for our volunteers and members, and documentary film screenings.

Our Advocacy Committee has begun an engagement strategy with city councillors to let them know that they and their staff can rely on TFN for urban nature expertise and thoughtful independent perspective. Thanks to the committee's efforts, we have already had a successful discussion with Councillor Ausma Malik from Ward 10 on issues in her ward, specifically the redevelopment plans for Ontario Place and the Toronto Island Master Plan.

As president, I will be doing a series of outreach talks and walks this year on the subject of ethical nature viewing in order to make people more aware of the impact of human behaviour on the wildlife in our city. We will also conduct outreach walks in partnership with community groups to highlight nature advocacy issues facing their communities.

Stay tuned for updates on all of our 100th anniversary plans for the summer to be communicated via email and on the website. Fall and winter plans will be announced in the September issue of the newsletter.

We are grateful for the good wishes and commendations received from so many organizations that share our objectives of enjoying and conserving nature in our city, and with whom we have had the privilege of collaborating over the years. Their encouraging messages, to be found throughout this newsletter, are greatly appreciated.

**Please remember to renew your membership. See new procedure on page 27.**

Let's get outside, enjoy nature, and remember to speak up for nature when the opportunity arises so we can preserve its beauty for all to enjoy for another 100 years.

Zunaid Khan

## CELEBRATING OUR 100TH – EVENTS

TFN is planning a series of events between June 2023 and June 2024 to celebrate our Centennial. Details of each event will be published on our *Members Only* website and members will be informed via our monthly communication email. These events will include social gatherings and opportunities to celebrate the history of our various programs. Here is what you can expect over the course of the 12 months' celebration:

### Outings

The Outings Committee plans to re-create walks of historical significance to TFN, including the first "field trip" held in 1924 from High Park to Old Mill, the first urban nature trail established in Canada in 1930 in Sunnybrook Park, and in a variety of locations which hold special meaning in our history.

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Walk in High Park, 1999.  
Photo: Helen Juhola



Old Mill Bridge, 2018.  
Photo: Jason Ramsay-Brown



Log cabin in Sunnybrook Park that housed TFN Nature Information Centre.  
From TFN slide collection



EVENTS *continued***Lectures**

The Lectures Committee is planning a series of talks including special topics to celebrate our history, and nature documentary screenings.

**Photo Exhibits**

We will hold two photo exhibit events. The first, entitled *Then & Now*, will showcase photos of locations in the Toronto area from our slide archives alongside photos of those locations taken today (for examples, see back cover). This exhibit will be available for members to view on our website and will be on display in the fall of 2023 for the public to see. For the second, entitled *Toronto's Ravines*, TFN and selected partners will present photographs from a wide variety of photographers depicting our ravines over the past century. The aim of this exhibit, scheduled to take place in the spring of 2024, is to give the public a passionate appreciation and understanding of Toronto's significant natural assets – its ravines.



Garthdale Ravine, 1984.

Photo: Robin Powell



Beth Nealson Ravine, 1980.

Photo: Robin Powell

**Volunteer Appreciation**

Recognizing that, as a volunteer-run non-profit organization, we would not exist without volunteers past and present, we will host a series of social events to show appreciation for those who have helped us get to where we are today and who ensure that we will continue well into the future.

**Stewardship**

To celebrate our history of stewardship, the Stewardship Committee will organize a number of special events in addition to their normal activities. These will include an event in partnership with the City of Toronto and one at the Jim Baillie Nature Reserve.

Details for all of these events will be published on our website in the coming months. Stay tuned for announcements in our monthly communications email.

Zunaid Khan



Cedarvale tree planting, 1955.

Photographer unknown



Beechwood phragmites removal, 2018.

Photo: Jason Ramsay-Brown

## TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS: OUR ORIGIN STORY

(The following is a heavily edited and abridged version of *TFN history prior to WWII*, taken directly from *Toronto Field Naturalists' Club: Its History and Constitution* by R. M. Saunders, 1965. It is meant to remain true to the style and substance of Saunders' source. The editor, Jason Ramsay-Brown, accepts all errors and omissions as his own. If you wish to read the original in its entirety it is available online at <https://tfngo.to/history>).

About the first of June, 1923, two friends, Mr. Will F. Gregory and Dr. Lyman B. Jackes, met at the corner of Church and Colborne Streets. Both were keen naturalists and their conversation soon turned to the need for an organization in Toronto which would provide opportunities for people like themselves to meet together, make field trips, exchange observations, hear lectures, and increase their knowledge of subjects of natural history. Mr. Gregory suggested that he would interview several people who would be most likely to cooperate in the forming of such a society. With that the two friends parted.

After visiting with Prof. R. B. Thomson of the Department of Botany at the University of Toronto, a plan of organizing a society for naturalists, young and old, experienced and inexperienced, received his warm approval. On June 12, 1923, an organization meeting was held at the Central YMCA with the following people being present: W. F. Gregory, Dr. L. B. Jackes, Prof. R. B. Thomson, Prof. E. M. Walker, F. H. Brigden, Dr. W. A. Clemens, Dr. A. Cousens, R. G. Dingman, Prof. J. R. Dymond, R. Ferris, Magistrate Jones, Shelley Logier, C. W. Nash, Taylor Statten, Stuart Thompson and Lockie Wilson. They voted at once to establish the Toronto Field Naturalists' Club.

At the next meeting on June 19th, Will Gregory and Stuart Thompson were designated to draw up a set of by-laws for the club, and a list of officers was presented and accepted. Prof. R. B. Thomson became the first president and Mr. Will Gregory the first secretary.

The Toronto Field Naturalists' Club was launched upon a public career on October 29th, 1923. Two meetings were held that day, one in the afternoon for "school teachers and senior pupils," and one in the evening "with the addition of music" for the general public. Both meetings were in



TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB EXECUTIVE 1932  
TOP ROW: Arnott M. Patterson, Fred P. Ide, Norma Ford, T. F. McIlwraith, Rupert Davies, Clarence G. Brennand  
FRONT ROW: Dr. E. M. Walker, Lewis T. Owens, Colin S. Farmer, Dr. J. R. Dymond, Stuart L. Thompson.

Foresters' Hall, 22 College Street. Prof. E. M. Walker was chairman at the public meeting. The program consisted of songs by Mr. Tom Mead and Miss Edith B. Champion and a lecture entitled "Illustrated Nature Story", by Dr. L. W. Jackes. The moving pictures and "dissolving views" shown in the lecture were all made by members of the new club.

Members were circularized with a questionnaire and, on the basis of the

suggestions received and of their own ideas, the executive council drew up a program for the season: Mark Robinson speaking about Algonquin Park, of which he was superintendent; Stuart Thompson ("Our Winter Birds"); W. E. Saunders of London ("Bird Music"); Harrison F. Lewis of Ottawa ("Our Bird Friends and How We May Protect Them"); Francis J. A. Morris of Peterborough ("W. H. Hudson, Field Naturalist"); Norman Criddle of Ottawa ("Wild Life in Manitoba"); Prof. Klugh of Queen's University ("Our Spring Flora"). There was also a members' meeting when Stuart Thompson and others spoke and showed exhibits. The first year's program was brought to a close by two field trips, the first of which was held on April 26th, 1924, organized by Stuart Thompson. The route followed was from the end of the College streetcar line in High Park to the lakeshore, thence up the

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ORIGIN *continued*

Humber. The other field trip of this season was held at Armour Heights on May 31st.

Once under way, the regular meeting place for the club became the theatre of the Biological Building at the University of Toronto. The meetings continued to be held there except for special occasions and for a brief sojourn at the Humane Society's auditorium on St Alban's Street, until the transfer to the Royal Ontario Museum in October 1936.

By 1926, thanks to the enthusiasm and good planning of the founders, a pattern of activities, centering upon a series of lectures during the fall and winter and field trips in the spring, had been created. Both local and outside talent was called upon in making out the program for each year. A number of distinguished names appear among the lists of speakers in the early years. Worthy of special note is Prof. A. P. Coleman, Honorary President of the club, and Canada's most distinguished geologist at the time.

In the past the club was much more clearly built around special groups representing particular interests. For instance, in 1926, there were seven such groups, each with a chairman and secretary as follows: Bird Group, Stuart Thompson and J. L. Baillie; Mammal Group, Prof. J. R. Dymond and L. L. Snyder; Flower Group, Prof. R. B. Thomson and Miss E. R. L. Reed; Insect Group, Prof. E. M. Walker and Dr. Norma Ford; Fish, Reptile and Amphibian Group, E. B. S. Logier and T. B. Kurata; Geological Group, Dr. A. Maclean and Jack Satterley; and a group for wild life preservation, R. G. Dingman and Dr. J. N. McKinley. Until 1939 leaders for these and other special interests were selected to take charge of field trips. With the war, leaders became scarcer and the system

began to give way. Field trips tended to become more general in character or to emphasize birds and flowers, the most favoured subjects.

The Newsletter came into the club's life in 1938 – the original suggestion made by Mrs. Harvey Agnew, with the support of Russell Dingman and Dr. Norma Ford. An Editorial Committee consisting of Mrs. Agnew and Dr. R. M. Saunders was formed. The first number of the Newsletter\*, two pages in length, appeared in September, 1938, and was at once met with an enthusiastic reception. After one or two issues it was evident that such a project could best be handled by a single editor rather than a committee, so Dr. Saunders took full charge.

TFN found its expanding activities carrying it well beyond Toronto in its associations by the autumn of 1941. The McIlwraith Ornithological Club of London and the Hamilton Bird Protection Society were consulted at the time of the club's organization in 1923. Affiliation with the Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club started in the first year. But it was the establishment of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists (now Ontario Nature) in 1931, with several TFN members prominent in its organization, which made our naturalist connections province-wide. By association with nature clubs throughout Ontario, it has been possible for all these clubs together to make their influence felt in a way which would be impossible for any one club.

*Ed. If WWII is a topic of interest to you, you may wish to read our blog post, "TFN: The War Years" at <https://torontofieldnaturalists.org/tfn-the-war-years/>*

\* Available at <https://tfngo.to/firstissue>

**Ontario Nature** congratulates the Toronto Field Naturalists (TFN) on its centennial anniversary. TFN is one of seven groups that founded the Federation of Ontario Naturalists (now Ontario Nature) in 1931 and has a legacy of connecting people with and protecting nature. We are grateful for TFN's many successes as a voice of nature in Toronto and beyond.

*Congratulations Toronto Field Naturalists on 100 years! Through your leadership Torontonians are deepening their appreciation and care for our natural spaces. Here is to another 100 years and continued growth of our partnership.*

**Stephanie Jutila,  
Executive Director,  
Toronto Botanical Garden**



## WALKING IN NATURE TOGETHER

Our walks and outings program has long been cherished and enjoyed by TFN members. For many, it is how they discovered us. We have been blessed with wonderful walk leaders who cover a wide variety of subjects during delightful excursions through our green spaces. The time and effort our current walk leaders put into planning their walks and outings pays homage to the long history of this storied program.

This tradition began on April 26th, 1924 when Stuart Thompson (nephew of E. T. Seton) led a “field trip” from High Park to Old Mill, enjoying the lakeshore and Humber River along the way. By 1930, TFN was spending considerable time advocating for “placing nature trails in public parks” – a passion that saw TFN establish the first urban nature trail in all of Canada. Located in Toronto’s Sunnybrook Park, it was opened on June 7th, 1930. Back then, our walks program provided only a few outings a year. By the 1960s this had grown to about 45. Prior to the pandemic we were providing 140+ walks every year.

Let’s take a stroll through our history to highlight walks over the years.

On a Wednesday morning in May 1938, walk leader Murray Speirs spotted a White-eyed Vireo in Ashbridge’s Bay – a new bird sighting added to the local list.

In 1940, on the morning of Saturday, April 6th, participants walked from Yonge Street and Highway 7 in Thornhill to a 75-acre virgin woods to observe a maple sugaring operation.

In the 1950s most walks took place on Saturdays to locations such as Hogg’s Hollow, Purpleville Woods (Vaughan), the Don Valley, Cedarvale Ravine and Hanlan’s Point.

The 1960s saw a dramatic increase in the number of walks and outings offered, mostly on Saturdays and Sundays. Locations included High Park and Glendon Hall for birds, and Prospect Cemetery for trees. There were also out-of-town trips to places like Collingwood and Lake Erie, in many cases under the auspices of other naturalist groups such as the Hamilton Naturalists’ Club.

In the 1970s, TFN continued to offer a wide variety of walks and outings including bird walks in High Park, the Toronto Islands and Duffin’s Creek, and tree walks in Mount Pleasant Cemetery. In June 1971 a special trip to the Bruce Trail in Caledon was led by Mr. Ron Scovell, who had made a study of the ferns of the Bruce Trail. Interestingly, TFN also offered ‘beginners only’ bird walks, led by Mr. Red Mason, which limited the group size and required advance registration.

In the 1980s the variety of walks and outings continued to increase as we started to include new locations such as the Leslie Street Spit, the Rouge Valley, Wilket Creek Park and out-of-town trips to Long Point, and we see an increase in the number of walks across all seasons. In terms of subject matter, birds were always popular – waterfowl that spend the winter on Lake Ontario, spring and fall migrants passing through, and species that live and breed here. There were walks focusing on trees and other plants, insects and fungi, nature arts walks in which artists gathered to sketch or paint, and special outings such as cross country skiing. Members of the Environmental Group held outings for members interested in learning how to evaluate Environmentally Sensitive Areas. In the spring of 1986, TFN held its first *Scavenger Hunt* – a clean-up walk at Todmorden Mills during which the 30 participants collected 120 stuffed garbage bags, tires, shopping carts and countless other junk items.

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TFN outing at Brick Works before quarry was filled, April 1985.  
Photo: Helen Juhola



TFN outing led by Jason Ramsay-Brown in Rosedale Ravine, 2018. Photo: Charles Bruce-Thompson

WALKING *continued*

Moving into the 1990s, there were more walks offered each month and the choice of subjects expanded to include natural history and heritage. The diversity of locations continued to broaden, including the Lakeshore, the Belt Line, Thorncliffe Park and Crothers Woods. We began to offer evening rambles, taking advantage of longer summer daylight.

In the 2000s we see more heritage walks and subjects such as urban ecology. Photography-focused walks made an appearance as well as wildflowers and environmental themes such as the impact of heavy trail usage in sensitive areas. Members continued to be given the opportunity to explore more areas of the city, including Mud Creek, Cherry Beach, Lambton Woods, Taylor Creek, G. Ross Lord Park, and Centennial Park. This period saw the start of two (still continuing) annual walks led by Madeleine McDowell: Aggie's Wildflowers walks in celebration of



Hurricane Hazel Memorial walk, October 15, 2022.

Photo: Jean Trivett.

Agnes Fitzgibbon, Susanna Moodie's daughter, who made the engravings that illustrate the book *Canadian Wildflowers* (1866), and a series focusing on how Hurricane Hazel impacted our city in 1955. In 2007, Helen Juhola and Pleasance Crawford started a series of Jane Jacobs Tribute evening rambles in Cedarvale Park, recognizing her role in stopping the Spadina Expressway.

As we move into the 2010's we see consistent and comprehensive walks scheduled across the city, including architecture walks and clean-up walks. Certain locations such as Humber Bay Park and Colonel Samuel Smith Park appear more frequently. TFN linked up with the Toronto Green Community to co-lead Lost Rivers Walks featuring the many rivers running through Toronto that had been put underground, evidenced only by a willow tree or a gurgling sound beneath the sidewalk.

That brings us to today as we move away from the pandemic, during which we had to temporarily suspend our walks program and slowly restart with restrictions. Thanks to the work of the Board, the Outings Committee and our wonderful walk leaders, the program continues to evolve as we seek to continue the great tradition of providing walks and outings to our members covering diverse nature-related subjects, natural history and heritage. We currently offer over 100 walks per year in a wide variety of locations. As we celebrate our 100th anniversary, the Outings Committee will be re-creating a series of historical walks from June 2023 to June 2024. We look forward to sharing the details with you via our website this summer.

Zunaid Khan

*I am pleased to congratulate the Toronto Field Naturalists on the occasion of its 100th anniversary. The group that launched in October 1923 has so much to be proud of. From its public lecture series to its newsletter and guided nature walks, the TFN has made an essential difference to Torontonians' appreciation and understanding of the natural world we all share. I've learned so much from the TFN's knowledgeable walk leaders, and as much or more from the in-depth articles in the newsletter. I particularly enjoy the print version of the newsletter and still cherish all my back copies and refer to them frequently.*

*Congrats, TFN! May you continue to lead further generations of aspiring and accomplished naturalists into the future, and celebrate your next centenary in 2123.*

**Margaret L. Bream, Wild in the City columnist, Toronto Star**



## BROWSING TFN NEWSLETTERS

TFN's 100th anniversary is an occasion to celebrate our history and accomplishments and to honour individuals who have made valuable contributions to our organization throughout the past century. For 85 of these years, our Newsletters have recorded members' activities, their observations of nature in Toronto, and issues that were important to them. Thanks to Jason Ramsay-Brown, who took on the mammoth task of digitizing all past newsletters, you can browse through this valuable resource at <https://tfngo.to/nlbrowse>.

Issue #1 (<https://tfngo.to/sept1938newsletter>) was

published in September 1938, 15 years after the founding of the Toronto Field Naturalists' "Club" as it was then called. This publication consists of an engaging two-page article by Richard M. Saunders. He shared exciting news of first-time and rare local bird sightings (a Blue Grosbeak, a White-eyed Vireo and breeding Saw-whet Owls) and recorded the concern of botanists over the rapid spread of European goat's-beard, and their delight at seeing fine specimens of turtlehead and New England aster. Saunders envisaged that the newsletter would become a regular feature of TFN, and he invited members to share their nature observations.

Under his editorship, over the next 27 years the newsletter grew to about a dozen pages and included nature sightings, letters, travel stories and book reviews from members in addition to Saunders' own nature writing.

Check *Newsletter Memories* in the March 2008 issue (<https://tfngo.to/mar2008newsletter>) for a humorous account of how Ilmari Talyila came to be appointed editor in 1966. In line with his objective to offer more articles on natural history subjects, during the 10 years he served as editor the newsletter included a series on plant families, one about owls and one featuring astronomy. A new regular feature, *News & Views*, reported on such issues as

the battle against Dutch elm disease and turning the Belt Line into a park.

Clive Goodwin's *Report of the President* in the October 1971 issue (<https://tfngo.to/oct1971newsletter>) included the exciting news that TFN had acquired the Jim Baillie Nature Reserve "under Jack Gingrich's capable leadership". With a substantial club membership of 1100, TFN was actively involved in making our views known to those responsible for decision-making in our city. He speaks passionately about matters of concern to naturalists, such as the status of declining species, the distribution of rare fauna and flora,

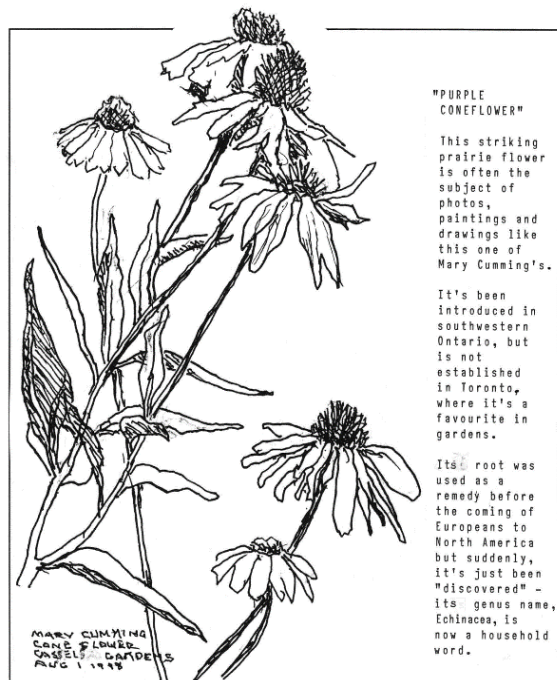
and the impact of people on parks and of cities on natural areas. Clearly, the ecological issues TFN was grappling with in 1971 are startlingly similar to those at the forefront of our minds today.

In December 1976, Helen Juhola became editor, assisted by a committee of enthusiastic volunteers. Soon the appearance of the newsletter was enhanced by the inclusion of drawings by members of the Nature Arts Group, many of them serving as stand-alone mini-articles with text about the plant or animal illustrated, often researched by Diana Banville.

Forty years after the newsletter started, the October 1978 issue (<https://tfngo.to/oct1978newsletter>) celebrated the thriving organization TFN had become. Under Helen's leadership, the newsletter fostered relationships

among TFN members, publicized nature-related educational opportunities, reported TFN's social, stewardship and citizen science activities, and built connections with other nature organizations. In her *Editorial Committee Report*, Helen asked members if they would like their newsletter to have a name, citing examples such as the Hamilton club's publication *The Wood Duck*. Helen later recalled that it was Diana Banville who chose the name *Toronto Field Naturalist* "as it was to be by and for members about Toronto's natural history. We certainly weren't going to call it *The Starling* or *The Dog Strangling Vine*."

In the 1970s TFN undertook surveys of natural areas within Metro Toronto that eventually contributed to TRCA's 1982 *Environmentally Significant Areas Study*.



Purple coneflower. Drawing: Mary Cumming

### "PURPLE CONEFLOWER"

This striking prairie flower is often the subject of photos, paintings and drawings like this one of Mary Cumming's.

It's been introduced in southwestern Ontario, but is not established in Toronto, where it's a favourite in gardens.

Its root was used as a remedy before the coming of Europeans to North America but suddenly, it's just been "discovered" - its genus name, *Echinacea*, is now a household word.



NEWSLETTERS *continued*

The newsletter presented three important surveys undertaken by TFN member Steve Varga, who also drew beautiful illustrations accompanying articles about the plant communities on Toronto Island (September and November 1979), in the Rouge Valley (March, April and September 1980) and in High Park (October 1981).

In the September 1984 issue, Gavin Miller wrote an article entitled *Phenological Observations*, describing the relationships between weather and certain events in nature. This led to Gavin's series of articles *Weather – this time last year* that continues to this day, a remarkable 465 monthly reports to date!

When Helen Juhola retired in the summer of 2005, Jenny Bull became the newsletter's fourth editor. TFN acquired its first computer at that time, streamlining the newsletter production process and enabling us to create a more professional-looking publication, eventually with colour photographs.

New features in the newsletter during this time included several informative series about flora and fauna, included Marilyn Murphy's *Bird of the Month* (May 2009-March 2011), Harvey Medland's *Fungi* (April 2014 to April 2016), and Peter Money's articles on Toronto's native wildflowers (April 2010 until May 2021). As a step towards reviving the Junior Nature Club, once an important part of TFN but discontinued in 1987, Judy Marshall introduced *Children's Corner* in the October 2015 issue – quizzes and puzzles designed to involve the children of TFN members.

The December 2015 newsletter (<https://tfngo.to/dec2015newsletter>) highlights activities and achievements of TFN members at that time – participation in restoration work at Todmorden Mills Wildflower Preserve (receiving the Community Heritage Award), 24 members raising monarch butterflies, Jason Ramsay-Brown nominated to the City's Ravine Strategy Advisory Group, and an outing led by Joanne Doucette to the Alderville First Nation's Oak Savanna.

In 2016 TFN offered members the option of accessing their newsletter online. In addition to reducing expenses, this provided the advantage of being able to link to other online resources. The print version continues to be available upon payment of a surcharge towards the cost of printing and

mailing. Currently 20% of members choose to receive the print version.

Jenny stepped down from editorial responsibilities in September 2016 and I was appointed the newsletter's fifth editor with support from members of the Newsletter Committee. The year 2019 saw a number of innovations. In February, James Eckenwalder started his still-continuing *Tree of the Month* series. In May, Zunaid Khan began a *Photography Tips* series which led to the formation two years later of TFN's Photography Group – now a rich source of newsletter illustrations. In September, following

the revival of TFN's Junior Program, *Children's Corner* was replaced by a *Junior Field Naturalists* page featuring articles on nature subjects by Anne Purvis and Vanessa McMains. Also in September we began a series of *Volunteer Profiles*, recognizing valuable contributions made by volunteers and encouraging TFN members to offer their talents.

In September 2020, due to the unpredictability of COVID restrictions, upcoming outings listings were moved from the newsletter to the website, allowing greater scheduling flexibility. This freed up space in the newsletter for features

including a number of fascinating articles on botanical subjects by Nancy Dengler, and Jennifer Smith's 8-part series on *Bird Behaviour*. As an example of the rich variety of contributions by TFN members, I suggest a final stop in our browse at the special double-sized newsletter published in September 2021 (<https://tfngo.to/sept2021newsletter>) that reveals how TFN was flourishing even in COVID times.

We are grateful to TFN members who contribute informative articles on nature subjects, provide reports of TFN's many important activities including stewardship, advocacy, outings, lectures and junior programs, write book reviews or submit *Keeping in Touch* nature experiences; also those who share their artistic and photographic talents to make the publication visually appealing. Thanks are also due to members of the Newsletter Committee for their diligent proofreading and helpful suggestions. We hope the newsletter will continue to be a valuable aspect of TFN membership.

Wendy Rothwell



Cover of November 2019 newsletter featuring James Eckenwalder's Tree of the Month: Ohio Buckeye. Photo: Ron Dengler.

## LECTURES AND MONTHLY MEETINGS

From the start, the Toronto Field Naturalists' Club met monthly to exchange nature observations and to learn more about natural history from other members and outside experts. The first public meeting on October 29, 1923 featured both a lecture, *Illustrated Nature Story* by Dr. Lyman Jackes, and songs performed by Mr. Tom Mead and Miss Edith B. Champion. Following winter meetings featured talks on *Algonquin Park* (Park Supervisor M. Robinson), *Bird Music* (noted naturalist W.E. Saunders), and *Our Spring Flora* (botanist A.B. Klugh). Winter meetings indoors transitioned to well-attended field outings in the spring and summer. The subjects of these early lectures reflected the broad natural history interests of TFNC members that provided direction for the content and tone of lectures for the next 100 years – mostly minus the human musical performances!

Lectures at post-war monthly meetings included *Naturalists in War Time* (Dr. Loris Russell) and *Arctic Animals seen on Operation Muskox* (W.W.H. Gunn). Over the years, talks featured noted naturalists sharing their knowledge and field experiences. Samplings include entomologist Carl Atwood on *Insects in the Forest* (April 1951), ornithologist J. Bruce Falls on *Experimental Work with the Language of Birds* (April 1960), forester John L. Farrar on *Inside the Living Tree* (April 1970), native flora advocate James L. Hodgins on *Wildflowers of Ontario* (September 1983), herpetologist Bob Johnson on *Conservation of Amphibians and Reptiles in Ontario* (October 1990), geologist John Westgate on *Geology of the Oak Ridges Moraine* (April 2000), ornithologist Bridget Stutchbury on *Migrating Songbirds: Canaries in the Coalmine?* (November 2007) and conservation biologist Jessica Linton on *Protecting and Recovering Butterfly Species at Risk in Ontario* (November 2022). For many years, some monthly meetings were film nights with a selection of nature documentaries, and others were members' nights that featured short talks and field observations.

Toronto Field Naturalists partnered with other organizations for some memorable special talks, including

- Ernest Thompson Seton on *Voices of the Night* and *Wild Animals that I have Known*, in the late 1920s (jointly with the YMCA);
- C.W.R. Knight on *The Filming of The Golden Eagle* in 1930 (a membership promotion that featured a live eagle and brought 1,000 new members to the TFNC!); and
- Charles Sauriol on *The Trail of a Naturalist – Conservationist* in 1985 (jointly with the Royal Canadian Institute).

In 1946, the TFNC partnered with the RCI to bring Audubon Screen Tours to Toronto. Held in Eaton's Auditorium, the series was extremely popular and continued until May 1979; the film series became the sole responsibility of the TFNC after 1956.

After that first 1923 meeting in the Canadian Foresters' Hall (22 College St), most lectures took place in the Biological Building at the University of Toronto (Queen's Park Crescent). In October 1936, monthly meetings moved to the Royal Ontario Museum auditorium with displays in the

Rotunda. Meetings were discontinued during the war years, and then restarted at the ROM in February 1946.

Twenty-five years later, meetings moved to Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (252 Bloor St W) and then in 1983 relocated again to the Board of Education building (155 College St). Newsletter announcements about the move to College Street warned members to arrive early and take advantage of the free parking, as the 250-seat auditorium filled quickly! In 1992, the decision was made to move to Northrop Frye Hall on the Victoria University, U of T campus (73 Queen's Park Crescent).

Up to that point monthly meetings had been held in the evenings, usually Mondays at 8:15 pm, with an informal social hour beforehand. The move was accompanied by a controversial switch in time to Sunday afternoons at 2:30 pm. Some members objected vigorously to the loss of Sunday afternoon field outings, but were assured that Sunday morning outings would compensate. In the end, 83% of members voted for the new day and time.



Speaker Mark Raycroft on *Crowned Giant of the Northern Wilderness*, March 2019. Photo: Jason Ramsay-Brown



LECTURES *continued*

Over the years, gathering for talks at the monthly meetings provided an important opportunity for members to share field experiences and enjoy special natural history displays in the hour before the talks started. The first meeting after the war featured sketches of Arctic wildflowers in the ROM Rotunda. Other Rotunda displays and activities included mounted skeletons from the ROM's collections, recent articles, scientific illustrations, newsletters from other nature clubs, live amphibians, reptiles and small mammals, gemstones, a tree identification contest, and presentations by Junior and Intermediate Field Naturalists. Volunteers sold copies of TFNC publications, notecards, checklists, badges and car decals. Cookies and beverages were often available, making this informal hour an important time to socialize with other members.



Audience listening to speaker Susan Macdonald on *Urban Raccoons of the GTA: Are we building a smarter raccoon?* September 2018. Photo: Jason Ramsay-Brown

TFN was not a members-only club, but that monthly meetings were open to the public, and all interested naturalists were welcome. Meetings continued to be held in Northrop Frye Hall or in the neighboring building,

Emmanuel College. With the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the Lectures Committee nimbly re-organized and switched from in-person meetings to a Zoom format. Members adapted to the new mode for lectures and many appreciated the ease of access, close-ups of the speakers, and the availability of recordings on the website, despite the loss of personal interactions. As the lectures program launches a new

“mixed” format era, TFN members will continue to be able to enjoy learning about natural history and sharing their experiences with others.

Nancy Dengler

In the late 1970s, the Toronto Field Naturalists' Club became the Toronto Field Naturalists, emphasizing that

*Congratulations to the Toronto Field Naturalists on reaching their 100th Anniversary. TFN should be incredibly proud of this accomplishment. Being able to help Torontonians connect with nature for 100 years is a remarkable feat, especially as a volunteer organization. It has been a valued part of making Toronto what it is today and remains critically important as the city continues to grow. Providing an increasingly urban population with a connection to nature is important not just for the health and wellness of the individual but also for the betterment of the city. TFN has been one of the leading organizations in giving a voice to our natural spaces.*

*TFN has also been inclusive from the beginning, inviting people of all ages and all walks of life to be part of it, which is something they can be very proud of accomplishing. They have been stewards of the land and have helped people connect with nature in the City through their various activities, walks and lecture series. They have protected nature and green spaces in the city and have imparted the knowledge through several generations. Thank you for all you have done, and I hope, will continue to do.*

**Mark Peck, Ornithology, Royal Ontario Museum**

## JUNIOR NATURALISTS – INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION

From its inception, the Toronto Field Naturalists' Club was keen to include junior members and provide programs specifically for them. The very first meeting of the TFNC, held on October 29, 1923, took place in the afternoon so that teachers and students could attend. At that meeting a folder was handed out with the stated objectives of the club, one of them being the establishment of a junior organization. The vision was for a very hands-on program with prizes for bird houses, photographs and essays on wildlife preservation. Those folks understood how to engage kids!

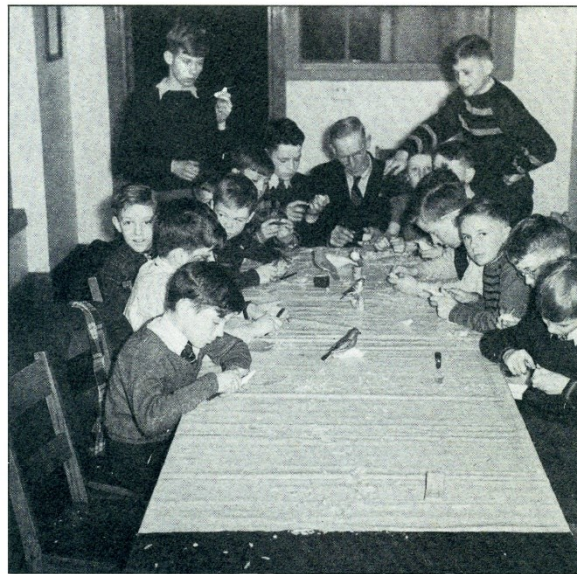
The Toronto Board of Education gave permission for the club to run essay contests for prizes in the Toronto schools in the early years. In 1931 the topic was, *The Conservation of Wildflowers*. Two sample essays were circulated, one by R. Holmes, a well-known wildflower painter, and a second by Professor H.B. Sifton who stressed the 'perilous position of our wildflowers'. The most successful essay contest was held in 1941 when forty essays were submitted from thirty different schools.

Regular monthly meetings of the Toronto Junior Field Naturalists' Club were held from around 1931 in the Humane Society Auditorium. The now-famous ornithologist, Murray Speirs, became president of the Junior club in 1934. Around 1940, the club moved to the newly opened Children's Room in the Royal Ontario Museum, where very hands-on activities were conducted such as wood-carving of birds. By the 1960s the capacity of the ROM's facilities (300-325) was constantly being over-reached.

In 1947 the Senior club was invited to attend an evening meeting organized by the Juniors. Four Juniors presented five-minute talks on everything from *Fluorescence* to *Living Hydra*. Four kids recited poems from the Juniors' newsletter, *Flight*. There was also a display of Juniors' finished craft projects in the Rotunda of the Museum. Wow!

At the regular monthly meetings, it seems that the large

group of kids met for a joint activity and then in smaller groups according to interest. So there is a record of the Botany Group being in charge of the large group program on April 7th, 1962 at 10:00 am. There was a special feature with slides called *Along the Bruce Trail* to kick things off, but four Junior members of the Botany Group made their own presentations. On November 7, 1964 the Bird Group was in charge of the large group meeting and Junior members presented on the subject of birds. In 1966, the Mammal Group gave talks and showed films to the whole group.



Bird carving class at the ROM, 1944. The instructor, Frank Smith, is seated at the head of the table. Standing to the left and right of him are Robert Bateman and Alan Gordon.

A fascinating account of the program exists from the final year of this earlier club in 1987. It states that a wildlife biologist from the Ministry of Natural Resources gave a talk on river otters and then the kids went off on outings according to their ages. Eight-year olds examined rocks and minerals in the museum, but nine-year-olds traveled to Humber Bay for bird-watching! This all depended on the availability of leaders, of course.

An awards ceremony and an out-of-town field trip were held at the end of each year. The Junior Club also published its own annual newsletter, *Flight*. It appears this contained write-ups

by kids and summaries of longer treatments of subjects. A rave review exists from 1980 in which an adult TFN'er notes what an all-round naturalist organization the Juniors was. And the writer admonishes the Senior club to 'Take a leaf from their book'!

There are no records of the Junior Club after 1987, when 'family' outings were offered instead. In 2018, during the Presidency of Jason Ramsay-Brown, and with his encouragement, the TFN Juniors was re-established, largely through the work of Anne and Jim Purvis. The Juniors now meet on a monthly basis on the second Saturday of the month for two hours from 10 am-12 noon. It is an outdoor program in which Juniors explore Toronto's ravines and the wildlife that make them their home, and visit the Lake Ontario shoreline and the Meadoway to enjoy the special phenomena that Toronto hosts – the over-wintering Arctic ducks, songbird

*continued on next page*



JUNIORS *continued*

migration, monarch butterfly migration, hawk migration and pollinators. There are occasional indoor events such as acorn and owl pellet dissection. During the pandemic we moved online and kids submitted photos to share what they were seeing on their own family outings. We also had the leadership of artist Sandra Iskandar who introduced us to drawing from nature.

Our leadership team is excited to have discovered the early history of the club. It is wonderful to have learned

how responsive the early leaders were to the needs of kids and families, both to know nature and to be engaged in hands-on activities. Today, families need support with 'nature awareness' for their children, mostly in outdoor settings. Our Junior Naturalists program seeks to help families discover the ravine system of Toronto and the wildlife that lives in or passes through it. We also provide cool hands-on, discovery-based activities that always engage kids.

Anne Purvis



TFN Juniors in Highland Creek studying pond creatures with Don Scallen, September 2022. Photo: Anne Purvis

### TRIBUTES FROM JUNIOR NATURALISTS

From Mila (8 yrs): *Every lesson we learn something new, we have a new topic. I like that, most of the time, the meeting is outdoors.*

From Sonia (10 yrs): *I like that different guest speakers come and highlight different subjects, teaching us something new every time. I enjoy learning new things about nature and going to different places/parks in Toronto. I am thankful to have this opportunity to be a part of Junior Naturalists!*

From Wesley Carty (6 yrs): *I liked learning about things in nature that we could use to dye t-shirts. I collected yellow and purple flowers and my t-shirt turned yellow.*

From Maeve Adams' father on visiting a pond after dark and seeing salamanders: *Thank you for organizing last night. It was an incredible experience. Maeve had a blast. Despite being quite quiet last night, it's all she's talked about this morning.*

From Amara Young: *When the pandemic started, I was so glad to find a community of people that loved nature as much as I do. Exploring nature helps me get creative as an artist and a dancer because I can apply the sensitivity that is to care and admire nature. TFN has been such a big part of my life through hard and good times. During the pandemic, the online classes and meeting more people who loved nature as much as I do, helped me during those times. Moreover, TFN team has always done an excellent job in every class and meet-up. Learning about the natural world around me is an extraordinary experience. The stories people share about their experiences in nature, makes me wonder what there is still to learn and discover. Thank you TFN for being part of my nature journey.*

## AN INTERVIEW WITH RENOWNED CANADIAN ARTIST AND NATURALIST, ROBERT BATEMAN

Anne Purvis: We have been intrigued by how many references you have made over the years to the Junior Field Naturalists program that met at the ROM during your childhood.

Robert: It was, you know, the key thing next to my family. It was the most important event of my entire life – the Junior Field Naturalists.

Anne: Wow, that's really incredible. As the current leader of the group, I am curious to know what made it so impactful. I have a quote here from your book *Thinking Like a Mountain*.

*"Ian and Don and I were inveterate bird listers almost from the day we met.... Our passion took on a more scientific bent after my mother sent Alan and me to join the Junior Field Naturalists Club at the Royal Ontario Museum. We were both about twelve and already veteran field naturalists of a sort, who'd made detailed notes about our most interesting discoveries and kept careful lists of what we'd seen. Now we began to acquire a more systematic way of looking at nature and an idea of how each individual related to the whole. But we didn't lose our passion or our sense of wonder."*

Anne: I'm curious about that word, 'systematic'. That sounds like ecology and taxonomy. How did the club make those things so engaging to you?

Robert: Well the key thing is getting to know the names of creatures. I've always been quite fanatical (with only limited success) getting to know the names of the other creatures who are our neighbours. ... Entire species or even ecosystems could become extinct if we can't distinguish between them. Getting to know the names is the key.

Anne: You'd had lots of exposure to birds in the Beltline ravine behind your house, but when you went to the Junior Naturalists program you learned the names of the birds. I believe your mother gave you the *Peterson Field Guide to Birds* for Christmas when you were 12 years old. Do you think she might have got the idea from the program you were attending at the ROM?

Robert: Yes, I think so.

Anne: You said in your 1984 documentary, 'I am a field person. I love to hike long distances, climb big trees, really get out there and see things, no matter what the weather...' Yet the Junior Naturalists program at the ROM was an indoor program. How did they bring it alive for you?

Robert: Well it was a place where there was the coming together of minds. At school you might be the only person in your class or even in your school who loves nature. I was accused of being 'the nature boy', and not necessarily in a complimentary way. Kids really like buddies. At the ROM I had buddies. It was my second home. ...

There were two really important human beings [at the ROM]. One was Jim Baillie. He wasn't the head of Ornithology because he didn't have a university degree, but he was warm. People were attracted to him and he had his finger on what was going on in the field. He had an office on the third floor. After the Juniors program was over around 11 am, we were allowed to roam about till 12 in the museum. We knew the door to barge in and hang out with Jim and find out what had been seen in the field. He knew when the first Snowies showed up on Toronto Island or where the Short-eared Owls were nesting. The other important person was Terence Shortt. He was the ROM artist. He did the illustrations on *Ducks, Geese and Swans of North America*. ... So those are the two parts of me that are still here. These were wonderful human beings, who were professionally into nature and worked at a museum.

Anne: There's a wonderful scene in the 1984 documentary where you are out in the woods with your kids and Birgit, and you are looking for salamanders. You say that it has been very natural for you to share your love of nature with children because it's what they are already interested in.

Robert: Oh yes, it's so natural for children to be interested in other species.

Anne: It's the goal of the TFN Juniors program to come alongside and support families who would like to encourage the natural interest in nature their kids already have. I didn't have a group like this when we were raising our kids and I think I would have valued it, so I am highly motivated to keep the group going and meet the needs of the families.

Jim Purvis: Do you have a word of encouragement to the TFN Juniors about the urgency of such a program in this day and age, that we could pass on to the TFN and to the Juniors leadership?

Robert Bateman sent the following response to this request:

*"I grew up in Toronto in the 1930's and 1940's. Like a typical mother, mine was looking for things for her children to do in their spare time. Although neither of my parents were naturalists, the Junior Field Naturalists at*

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## WHAT'S IN A LOGO?

We hope you noticed something the moment you saw the cover of this special issue – TFN has a new logo! But before we delve into the whats and whys of that, perhaps a quick trip down memory lane might be entertaining to some.

In the first few years of TFN's existence our letterhead is said to have been adorned with an image of a song sparrow feeding its young, although the image itself is lost to time. But in 1926, the masthead image used at the top of this page became the official brand of the Toronto Field Naturalists' Club. This sketch by then president Dr. E. M. Walker was meant to "suggest the plenitude of life that is open to the nature lover ... but also something of the wonderful mystery inherent in it all".(1) While in routine use for over a decade prior to the first issue of the newsletter, due to the way the newsletter was originally produced, the masthead only begins to grace issues in January 1947. One-hundred and eighty-eight issues would carry this sketch, until its retirement in May 1970.



By October 1970, TFN had fully adopted a new logo, designed by celebrated artist (and TFN Member) Eric Anderson Nasmith. As past president Jean Macdonald wrote in April 1985, "First, it's a leaf – and what more important

symbol for a naturalist? If all leaves were, by some catastrophe, to die, the human and animal world would

soon follow. Inside the leaf is a design – is it a bird? Is it an evergreen tree with outstretched branches? Is it a fish sliding through reeds? And the colours – sky blue, snow white, spring and summer green, the gold of the sun and the trees in autumn. A simple design that reveals much to the imaginative mind." (2)

Nasmith's design remained TFN's official logo for the better part of four decades, although it faded from prominent use in about half that time. The May 1989 issue is the last time it was sported on the cover, being relegated to the back page in September 1989 before disappearing altogether in December 1989. In the November 1992 issue, we discover, "It has been suggested that the Toronto Field Naturalists employ a new logo in keeping with today's environmental climate. Members are cordially invited to submit designs which they feel typify the Toronto Field Naturalists."

With such an obvious desire to rebrand, you might be asking what kept Nasmith's design alive for several more years. The answer lies with a quilt. Specifically, a quilt unveiled at Metro Hall on February 15th, 1993, in celebration of "the 200th anniversary of the city's founding by Lieutenant-Governor Simcoe". (3) Our logo was stitched in as block 43, recognizing TFN for "Preserving the natural heritage, studying and recording it in detail, and sharing the wonders of nature with the public". The quest for a new logo was cancelled but Nasmith's design never returned to the newsletter.

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## BATEMAN *continued*

*the ROM seemed like a good idea. I took to it immediately and it focused my life, making me who I have been ever since. The leaders seemed to be 'my type of species'. I became a museum 'junkie'; after the meetings I would drop in on Jim Baillie and Terence Shortt, who worked on Saturday mornings in those days.*

*"I now firmly believe that everyone should learn about nature as a child, and be able to identify and name their neighbours of other species. About 20 birds and 20 plants would be a good start. Combined with that, joining a club*

*of like-minded kids is very important. Often a young naturalist is alone in the world of sports-minded youngsters. One good buddy is enough. I had two – Alan Gordon and Donald Smith. Al went on to a PhD and career in forestry, and Don to a PhD and career as a biology professor. Because I lack the genes for math, those doors were closed for me. So I took Honours Geography and went into high school teaching, which I loved. But I am certain that the TJFN put me on the path that resulted in who I am today."*

LOGO *continued*



By 2007 it was obvious we were long overdue for proper branding. Thus enters the logo current members are most familiar with, officially unveiled at our 85th Anniversary celebration on November 2, 2007. Created by TFN member Elaine Farragher

(who also built TFN's very first website), the logo "with its Toronto skyline, a representation of the abundant trees in our city and a monarch butterfly symbolizing the many species of wildlife found here ... portrays our identity as an organization that enjoys, promotes and preserves nature in Toronto." (4)

Farragher's design was well-used and much-loved, but as planning for our 100th Anniversary gained momentum this past year, a rebrand seemed very much in order, a symbol and reminder that TFN must grow and evolve if we are to continue to benefit nature, our members, and our city. Our new logo was not arrived at impulsively. TFN's 100th Anniversary Committee reviewed four unique concepts produced pro-bono by marketing firm Off to Market, Inc., whose owners are TFN Members. Multiple rounds of discussion and revision led to two refined concepts being presented to the TFN Board. The design that the Board found most engaging was then subjected to additional rounds of discussion and revision before arriving at the logo you see today. Elements from Farragher's design persist, both in recognition of our roots, and because they are as relevant today as they were in 2007.

For many people, learning about the monarch butterfly is an early and pivotal introduction to the complexities and marvels of nature. The monarch symbolizes transformation, the wonders of evolution, the interconnectedness of all living things, and the inherent balance between fragility and strength ever-present in our natural world. There is also a specific tie-in to TFN history: Fred and Norah Urquhart, whose research helped locate the monarch's overwintering sites in Mexico and gave the world a better understanding of the intricacies of their annual migration, were TFN members and good friends to many in the organization. With the monarch now a

threatened species, its inclusion seems even more representative of our mandate.

A simplified cityscape – with our landmark buildings the most notable elements – grounds us here in Toronto. By increasing the relative size of the monarch, and having it rise from the cityscape itself, we ensure that nature remains the focus.



The most important change is also the most obvious: "Toronto Field Naturalists" has been replaced with "TFN". After all, it's how we're usually referred to, how we most often refer to ourselves, and certainly rolls off the tongue a bit more easily!

Jason Ramsay-Brown

1. pg. 6, *Toronto Field Naturalists' Club: Its History and Constitution*, 1965, R. M. Saunders.
2. pg. 2, <https://newsletter.torontofieldnaturalists.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/1985-04.pdf>
3. pg. 5, <https://newsletter.torontofieldnaturalists.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/1993-04.pdf>
4. pg. 7, <https://newsletter.torontofieldnaturalists.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/2008-12-TFN-Newsletter.pdf>

**The Brodie Club** congratulates the Toronto Field Naturalists for a century of connecting the people of Toronto to nature, most especially through its program of guided nature walks, lectures and the youth program.



## OUR FAVOURITE SPOTS

Most of us have a "favourite spot" in Toronto's wilderness. Maybe it's a ravine we haunted in our youth, or a place of spectacular ecological value, a place we discovered on a TFN walk, or just somewhere convenient for a lunch break. Whatever the reason, it's someplace special.

Starting in a few weeks, we'll be combining members' opinions and quotes, footage from 100th Anniversary interviews, historic materials from the TFN archives, and much more, to craft posts in our public blog that sing the virtues of some of our members' favourite spots in Toronto. But this very special issue of our newsletter seemed like the perfect place to celebrate a particular Favourite Spot that's been meaningful to countless members for almost a full century – Sunnybrook Park!

TFN helped found the first "urban nature trail" in Canada here on June 7, 1930. One of our first tree plantings was here in 1935. With the co-operation of Toronto's Parks Department, we helped ensure protections for wetlands along the Don River that would persist long enough to earn them a contemporary designation of Environmentally Significant Area. The historic cabin near the park's entrance used to be TFN's Nature Information Centre.



Official opening of Canada's first City Nature Trail in Sunnybrook Park, Toronto, by Magistrate James F. Edmund Jones (left). Also in the front row: Professor J. R. Dymond, Stuart L. Thompson and Colin S. Farmer. June 7, 1930

Over the decades, our volunteers have led hundreds of guided walks, plantings and other outings here, and introduced countless thousands of Torontonians to its splendours and secrets. Well, they say a picture is worth a thousand

words – so here are a few that will help illustrate why we feel safe to dub Sunnybrook Park one of TFN's Favourite Spots.

Jason Ramsay-Brown



TFN member Eileen Mayo pointing at sign on the door of the Nature Information Centre, March 1989. Photo: Helen Juhola.



Sketch of cabin interior by Mary Cumming, 1985.



Outing at Wilket Creek/ Sunnybrook Park, October 1977. Photo: Mary Smith



TFN composting demonstration exhibit outside Nature Information Centre, October 1989. Photo: Betty Greenacre



TFN Past-President Jason Ramsay-Brown leads a planting demonstration at Sunnybrook in 2018.



## TFN: STEWARDS BEFORE STEWARDSHIP WAS "A THING"

TFN's mission to help Torontonians "understand, enjoy, and protect nature" has long been understood to mean more than just education, appreciation, and advocacy. Since even our earliest years, it's also meant getting our collective hands dirty, literally, as stewards of the land. From planting trees, to monitoring wildlife, to owning and managing our very own nature reserves, TFN is an organization that believes that to love something fully you must protect it and nourish it with both hearts and hands.



Don Valley tree planting, 1955. TFN Archives

Exploring our archives, the first indisputable evidence of TFN stewardship activities arises on May 10, 1935, with the planting of fourteen trees near Canada's first urban nature trail in Sunnybrook Park, which TFN had helped found almost five years previously. TFN took a special interest in Sunnybrook Park throughout that decade. Thanks to friendly ties with Toronto's Parks Department, we also helped to ensure that the wetlands there (now considered an ESA) would be protected long-term, and that "efforts be made to attract birds to the parks by encouraging the growth of thickets for nesting, the placing of more nesting boxes, the planting of berry-bearing shrubs, and the provision of winter food." (*Toronto Field Naturalists' Club, Its History and Constitution*, 1965, page 9)

Over its almost ninety-year run, our newsletter has chronicled hundreds of such discrete interventions throughout Toronto's natural areas: plantings, weedings, garbage cleanups, and more. But the scope of TFN's commitment to stewardship saw a marked change in the late '60s, best represented by a pivotal announcement on the opening page of our October 1970 issue – a call for donations to fund the purchase of TFN's first nature reserve. Then president, Clive Goodwin, positioned the purchase well when he commented that contemporary discourse on environmental protection was largely "... on pollution, but we do not have to look very far to realize that the ultimate pressures will be on land. So one very

direct, very meaningful action open to any nature club is to acquire nature reserves."

And acquire we did. By 1973, we had expanded our Jim Baillie Nature Reserve by buying up an adjoining property. In 1987 we purchased our nearby Emily Hamilton Nature Reserve. In 1997, through generous donations by the Charles Fell Foundation, we purchased our largest property, the Charles Fell Nature Reserve along the Layton River. In 2002, we completed our current reserves portfolio with the purchase of land just south of Emily Hamilton along Uxbridge Creek, a portion of which was designated the Helen and Aarne Juhola Nature Reserve in 2007. In total, TFN currently protects over 175 hectares of provincially significant habitat and environmentally sensitive wetlands, home to many at-risk species.



Butternut planting at Jim Baillie Nature Reserve, 2019.

Photo: Jason Ramsay-Brown

The October 1970 issue contains many thoughtful insights and a little foreshadowing of the intimate complexities of being good caretakers and stewards of the land. Left untouched, destructive influences can fester as easily as the precious can proliferate. On the opposite side, visitation and direct management risks introducing new destructive influences or accidentally damaging exactly what we wanted to protect in the first place. It's an act of balancing caution and wisdom with passion and intent – and you're not always going to get it exactly right.

When we expanded the boundaries of our Jim Baillie Reserve, it was with adjoining land in need of re-naturalization. On May 3, 1975, close to 4,000 tree seedlings were delivered to TFN volunteers for exactly this purpose: white pine, red pine, white ash, red oak, and many other native species that still flourish there to this

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STEWARDSHIP *continued*

day. However, over the last five decades our understanding of nature has continued to evolve, and as modern-day land stewards we now look at some of the other species planted that day – Scots pine, European larch, and black locust, for example – in a very different light.

With TFN's recent surrender of our physical office space, we now find more funds available to help us robustly react to lessons learned. As you read this, our friends at Urban Forest Associates Inc. are formalizing an official stewardship plan for Jim Baillie that will help us apply the very best practices in our care for this reserve's ecological trajectory and the species that call it home. Starting in just a few weeks, TFN's Stewardship Committee will begin a pilot project to deploy weatherproof, solar-powered trail cameras throughout that same reserve, some of which will be internet-accessible. It is our hope that the results of these initiatives can soon be applied to our other reserves as well, empowering us to know more and do more with the least amount of negative impact possible.

In no small part, our new reserve initiatives have been inspired by our continuing stewardship work right here in the city. In 2017, TFN kicked off in-the-field activities for our Cottonwood Flats Monitoring Project (CFMP), a partnership with the City of Toronto's Natural Environment and Community Programs section of Urban Forestry. The data we've collected at Cottonwood Flats since then inspired, in 2022, a new partnership between TFN and the City of Toronto's Community Stewardship Program – the founding of a permanent stewardship team at the Flats. Twice a month from May to October, volunteers now work to improve local habitat and nudge the ecological trajectory of the Flats in a more positive direction by performing tasks like removing invasives and planting/seeding native species, guided by work plans informed by CFMP data and insights. This robust cycle of monitoring, study, and action is exactly the model we wish to apply to all of TFN's stewardship activities ongoing – both here in Toronto and on our own nature reserves.

Jason Ramsay-Brown



Cottonwood Flats Volunteers, 2018. Photo: David Barr



Jim Baillie Nature Reserve, 2007. Photo: Wendy Rothwell

**Bird Friendly Toronto** would like to congratulate Toronto Field Naturalists on their 100th Anniversary! For a century, TFN has been an organization that brought Torontonians together to celebrate the nature that makes our city so special. TFN has also fought hard to protect and expand Toronto's green spaces and to preserve its unique biodiversity. Bird Friendly Toronto owes its existence thanks to the support and organizational skills of TFN and its members. We look forward to working with TFN in making Toronto a better place for its wildlife and its citizens.

## LET THE RECORD SHOW – ADVOCACY

Nature advocacy has been baked into TFN's mandate from the start – that much is clear. The first Toronto Field Naturalists meeting in October 1923 confirmed that the group's Purposes should include:

*To cooperate with Governments in the protection of wild life, the preparation of exhibits and the compilation of natural history records.*

*To encourage the establishment of wildlife sanctuaries.*

The following sketch merely scratches the surface of TFN's advocacy record and will hopefully entice a historian to do a proper excavation. There are rich veins of information to mine. TFN's newsletters – dating back to the 1930s with roughly 670 issues available – are digitized and [online for the public](#). Huge thanks to Jason Ramsay-Brown for this. There is also a helpful overview of TFN's first 40 years by Dr. R. M. Saunders, who ran TFN's newsletter for over a generation.

By the late 1920s, TFN had joined a drive to better protect eagles, pelicans, herons, and cormorants, and later hawks and owls as well, under the presidency of Prof. J. R. Dymond. After the war, TFN remained active in a province-wide campaign to protect hawks and owls, directed at the Ontario Legislature. At the time, birds of prey were widely regarded as pests, and were sometimes killed by cruel traps atop high poles. TFN also stressed the need for natural habitat for birds – or the “value of underbrush”, as it was called then – in High Park and elsewhere. The [March 1948 newsletter](#), almost entirely devoted to those two causes, is a good illustration of TFN's work.

Energy for civic engagement naturally ebbed and flowed over the decades. With changing leadership, TFN's focus sometimes shifted more towards education and public awareness. For example, in the 1960s, TFN had a part in setting up a Nature Study area on Toronto Island, and worked to establish a wildflower garden in the James Gardens Park.

By 1971, however, TFN President Clive Goodwin was happy to point to a resurgence of advocacy in his [Annual Report](#): “Another relatively new phase of activity for us

*has been in what people like to describe as “political action”: letting our views be known to those responsible for decision-making in our city. Over the past year we have submitted briefs or made presentations on the Belt Line Railroad, Quetico Park, Harbour City, a waterfront airport, and both Inner and Outer Waterfront Plans. We have also been involved in correspondence with offices and local agencies on an even more varied range of issues – from selling tiger skins to the plans for Pickering Atomic Plant, in fact!”*

Snapshots of the 1970s and 1980s reveal the ferment enveloping environmental issues by that time – all over the world, and in Toronto too. The [March 1975](#) newsletter featured a letter campaign on returnable cans and bottles. Recycling remains a contentious topic to this

day. The same newsletter issue highlighted the need to better understand and protect Toronto ravines, and also launched a letter campaign on duck hunting in Point Pelee National Park.

A landmark achievement was TFN's publication of [Toronto the Green](#) in 1976; in essence a green vision statement for the city and far ahead of its time. Among other points, it recommended that eight protected areas be established, that municipal official plans explicitly speak to conservation of natural areas, and that a ravine protection bylaw be established. With astute

activist instincts, TFN then promptly polled 240 candidates for local political office on their support for [Toronto the Green](#), and published the results.

At the time, TFN's membership of 1500 included amateur naturalists as well as scientists, educators, planners and other professionals involved with natural resources. TFN was the main group in the city undertaking field surveys. Data collected were published as ravine studies, newsletter articles, or scholarly articles in TFN's [Ontario Field Biologist](#) series. In 1982, TFN's Environment Group also developed criteria for designating sites as Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) and proposed 37 sites for designation (an additional 39 sites followed soon after). This document (May 1982 newsletter, pages 9-18) contributed to MTRCA (now TRCA) designating 47 of Toronto's first ESAs that year.



Red-tailed Hawk with rabbit.

Photo: Theresa Moore.

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ADVOCACY *continued*

By the late 1980s, TFN's monthly newsletter was brimming with advocacy updates. A typical (February 1989) issue revealed that TFN President Helen Juhola was requesting – and receiving! – detailed updates on Toronto's ravine strategy from the Parks Commissioner at the time, Herb Perk. From then to the current day, TFN leaders and membership have been active constantly, speaking up for ravines, bird habitat and wetlands.

With maturity, TFN's focus has sharpened to emphasize local nature issues rather than tiger hunting, say, or tropical biodiversity. Similarly, we now tend to leave topics such as recycling legislation to groups with that expertise. Even for provincial nature issues, we mostly rely on Ontario Nature and other provincial voices these days. Over the decades TFN's public voice has also followed a world-wide shift to plainer language, reaching a broader public than the academic wordy styles of yesteryear.

TFN's advocacy contributions have often been indirect, supportive and far from the spotlight. It's highly relevant that TFN leaders (especially Prof. J. R. Dymond) helped create Ontario Nature (then called Federation of Ontario Naturalists) in 1931. The recurring pattern was for TFN to bud off and nurture new groups, who then found their own strengths and delivered their own advocacy and public education. Similarly, TFN nurtured countless young naturalists through the Junior Naturalists program, including not a few who later became prominent nature advocates. Rosemary Speirs (1940-2022) was an excellent example, as described in a recent tribute in *ON Nature*. As a junior member of the Toronto Field Naturalists, she would hide her binoculars in a paper bag while riding the streetcar to field trips, lest other kids poke fun at her. Her later career as journalist included stints as Queen's Park bureau chief for the *Globe and Mail*, and Ottawa bureau

chief and national columnist for the *Toronto Star*. In retirement, she was also President of Ontario Nature 2006-2008.

Looking back at TFN's first century of advocacy prompts reflection. Protecting nature remains a huge challenge to this day, and our remnant patches of urban nature face some of the biggest challenges imaginable. Protecting nature requires a mix of skills, strategies and tactics. It takes a big team – people who work together and support each other. We need educators and inspiring voices. We need artists to celebrate nature's beauty. We need taxonomy experts who know the Latin names of everything. We need field ecologists who are perceptive in interpreting small changes on the ground. We need people who are willing to care for ravines with gardening gloves and pruning clippers. But they are not enough on their own.

To offer a counterweight to the enormous development pressures in a big city, we also need people who can speak up at planning meetings, write effective submissions, and ask probing questions. Those folks also need to keep track of facts, files and names of people. They need political instincts. Often, we're playing a long game on a very wide field, with rules that keep changing. Patience and persistence are required. Activists also have to be willing to push back, and to have good judgement on when to act in partnership and when to push – not to be confused with being pushy.

Protecting urban nature is once again a hot topic for the city, and TFN's voice remains key. Over the last decade, TFN volunteers have poured innumerable hours and abundant goodwill into advisory committees and

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**Friends of The Spit** extend our best wishes and our profound appreciation to Toronto Field Naturalists on the hundredth anniversary of their founding. Since the establishment of Friends of The Spit in 1977 to advocate for a public urban wilderness at Toronto's Leslie Street Spit, Toronto Field Naturalists have provided unwavering support for our mission. That support manifested itself in the many individuals who supported Friends of The Spit at countless public planning meetings and in the positions that the organization took as a whole to ally themselves to our cause. This support carried weight and, we are certain, influenced the decision-makers! We have been, and continue to be, tremendously grateful for the support we have received from the Toronto Field Naturalists. The role of the Toronto Field Naturalists in the history of Toronto has been very important, and critical. Our situation is just one example of the respect and influence that this city-wide organization can bring to bear on an issue. Best wishes for the next hundred years, and thanks again for your support.

## VOLUNTEER PROFILE: DR. DICK SAUNDERS

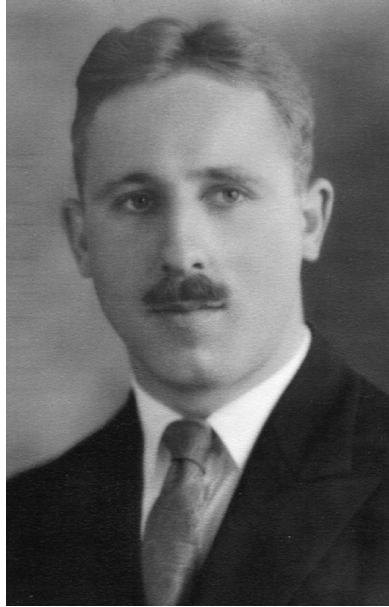
For its entire history, TFN has been shaped and sustained exclusively through the generosity and volunteer efforts of our members. Everything we are we owe to a chain of actions, freely given, now stretching back one hundred years – each link a walk led, a lecture held, a newsletter article written, a donation made, a deputation given, or a tree planted.

Rummaging through the TFN Archives while pondering ways to celebrate this remarkable continuity, it was hard not to be reminded of a member whose contributions seem particularly "on point" in this regard: Dr. Richard (Dick) Merrill Saunders, a TFN member of several decades, and the author of the last-published "official" history of TFN (available at <https://tfngo.to/history>), a condensed and highly-edited version of which is included in this issue (see page 4).

Born November 16, 1904, in Gloucester, Massachusetts, Dr.

Saunders studied European history at Clark University and received his PhD from Cornell in 1931. A stint at the American University in Beirut, Lebanon, led him to meet Anne West, whom he married in June of 1929. Faced with the realities of the Great Depression, Dr. Saunders

accepted an associate professorship at the University of Toronto in 1931, which brought him and his family far from home and into TFN's orbit during the first decade of "club" operations.



Reading the very first issue of TFN's newsletter (Sept 1938), one need only get to the second paragraph before being introduced to Dr. Saunders, reporting on a White-eyed Vireo observed in High Park. By our fourth issue (Dec 1938), his name would become synonymous with our newsletter. For twenty-seven years, minus a brief sabbatical from 1961-1962, Dr. Saunders volunteered as chief editor and was responsible for ensuring the creation and delivery of over 200 issues to our members! Of his retirement as editor, then TFN President R. F. Norman wrote, "... the Newsletter has given a continuity which is invaluable to the membership ... Our gratitude to Dr. Saunders is profound ..." (Issue No. 213, Sept 1965)

In April 1940, less than two years after accepting responsibility for our newsletter, Dr. Saunders agreed to serve a one-year term as president. WWII raged across Europe, with no small number of our members out on

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### ADVOCACY *continued*

consultations, building towards key new policies: *Toronto's Biodiversity Strategy* (2019); the *Pollinator Protection Strategy* (2018) and the *Ravine Strategy* (2017). Translating the lofty aspirations of those documents into actions on the ground is now part of our challenge.

TFN is always looking for volunteers with skills and mindsets leaning to advocacy, and keen to protect Toronto's nature for future generations, whether in the Don Valley, at Ontario Place or at the Toronto Islands. We'd like to hear from you.

TFN's century-long track record as an independent, credible voice for urban nature has resonance today. We're only as good as our name, and TFN has patiently built up a good name for itself. That means TFN gets asked to participate in issues and TFN's opinion has influence. Decisions don't always go in favour of nature, which is frustrating of course, but we know we are engaged in a long, long campaign, and that it's enormously worthwhile work. TFN has made a difference, and there's wonderful potential to do more.

Ellen Schwartzel with Jenny Bull

*I want to thank TFN and Ellen Schwartzel for her March 2023 presentation on the need for nature in urban environments. The talk was both entertaining and informative. The passion for nature came out loud and clear, in a style that was clear and concise. I know that those in attendance appreciated and learned from the talk. It definitely resonated with many of us who work in the landscape and horticultural industry here in Tkaranto.*

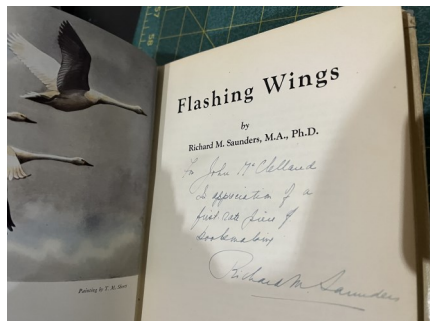
**David Milne, Past President,  
Toronto Chapter,  
Landscape Toronto**



SAUNDERS *continued*

active duty, but Saunders remained steadfast to TFN's promise at the outbreak of the war that, "Now is the time, if ever, to remind ourselves of the constancy of nature, of eternal beauties, of unchanging truths. So far as we possibly can we should keep ourselves from the contemplation of hostility, horror, and hatred." (Issue No. 8, Sept 1939). As both editor and president, Saunders encouraged respite, publishing reports about Pileated Woodpeckers and Cedarvale Ravine (his local haunt, where he frequently led bird walks on Wednesday mornings) instead of reminders of war. Such decisions proved especially meaningful when, due to paper shortages, "... the Wartime Prices and Trade Board inquired seriously into the right of the club to continue publication of the Newsletter ...". Permission to continue publication was duly granted "... to use the Newsletter to help its members who were abroad to keep in touch with home, by sending copies to them and other interested naturalists who were on active service". (*Toronto Field Naturalists' Club: Its History and Constitution*, R.M. Saunders, 1965)

Outside of TFN, most people would be familiar with Dr. Saunders thanks to the publication of his first book, *Flashing Wings* (McClelland and Stewart, 1947). This outstanding



source of local natural history combines much material from his newsletter contributions with entries from his personal journals. So prolific were the latter that some 14 volumes were presented to our friends at the Toronto Ornithological Club (TOC) in 1992. *Flashing Wings* is often cited as the first authoritative publication of arrival and departure dates for migratory birds in the Toronto region and should prove interesting reading for even fledgling birders. A first edition of *Flashing Wings*, signed to his publisher, is a valued part of the TFN Archives.

Dr. Saunders lost his hearing in his 60s which caused him to reorient his appreciation of nature, adopting a greater interest in both plants and photography. Subsequent collaboration with noted naturalist Mary Ferguson led to the publication of two other quite notable books, *Canadian Wildflowers* (Van Nostrand, 1976), and *Canadian Wildflowers through the Seasons* (Van Nostrand, 1982). I would be remiss were I not to mention also his book *Carolina Quest* (University of Toronto Press, 1971) which describes, amongst much else, a sighting of the now extinct Ivory-billed Woodpecker.

Dr. Saunders died on June 25, 1998, just several months shy of TFN's 75th Anniversary. A tribute to him in the Sept 1998 *TOC Newsletter* was republished in our December 1998 newsletter (Issue No. 480). Those interested in a much deeper dive into Dr. Saunders' life might also wish to check out *A Naturalist for all Seasons: Richard Merrill Saunders* by Philip Collins (*Canadian Field-Naturalist* 128(3): 289–294).

Jason Ramsay-Brown

*Toronto Field Naturalists (TFN) has been an integral part of Toronto's conservation landscape since its inception. For a hundred years, they have been instrumental in promoting an appreciation of nature in the city and beyond. Through the efforts of dedicated volunteers, TFN has organized countless field trips, lectures and workshops, and provided opportunities for Torontonians to explore and learn about the natural world. Our city is also vastly improved through TFN's conservation efforts, including habitat restoration, preservation, and crucial advocacy. By fostering a love of nature among its members and the wider community, TFN has inspired countless individuals to become advocates for conservation and environmental stewardship in turn.*

*Today, TFN continues to be a leading voice in Toronto's conservation landscape, and its legacy is felt throughout the city. We at the Toronto Ornithological Club (TOC) have greatly benefited from the trailblazing work of TFN for decades, and have looked to TFN as a source of inspiration and guidance. As such, the TOC is honored to share members, and resources, and mandate with the TFN, and hopes to continue collaborating with them in the future for a greener Toronto. By working together, our organizations can amplify their impact and inspire even greater appreciation and stewardship of Toronto's natural heritage.*

**Toronto Ornithological Club**

## NATURE ARTS

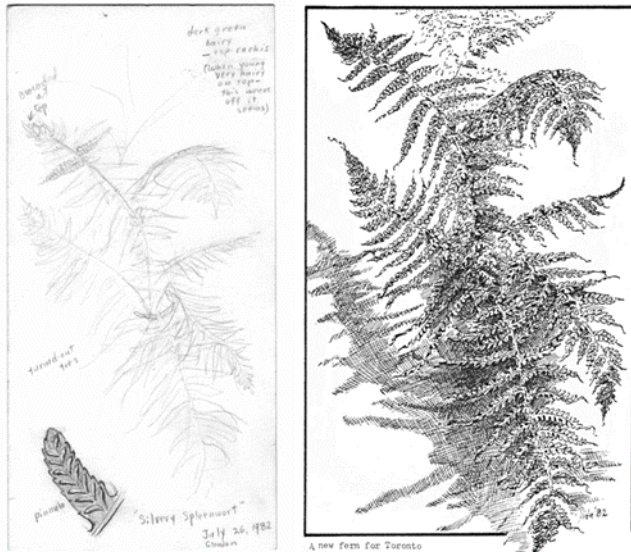
“Sketching makes naturalists more observant.”

Diana Banville, 1979

Although sketching observations was an integral part of nature outings from the beginning of the TFN, an official Nature Art Group didn't start until 1979.

Founded by friends Diana Banville and Mary Cumming, the group formed after a successful *Sketching from Nature* event in Ernest Thompson Seton Park on September 8th, 1979. Participants at the event expressed the need for budding nature artists to get together to sketch or paint while helping and encouraging one another.

The group started with the nine members getting together on an ad hoc basis but, by 1981, dedicated sketching events were included in the outings list almost monthly. Events were either in the field, where rough sketches were captured to be refined later, or somewhere that displayed natural history (like the ROM) where subjects stayed still for easier drawing.



Field sketch versus image on cover, by Diana Banville, 1982

The sketches began to have a profound effect on the newsletter. Prior to 1979, artwork in the newsletter was rare. Starting in 1980, sketches created by members of the Sketching from Nature Group increasingly made it onto the pages of the newsletter, either as illustrations for an article, or just on their own.

The group's work was also collected at the office by the newsletter committee, creating an extensive archive of nature drawings which is still being used by TFN. The

bulk of this collection was produced by Diana Banville, Mary Cumming, Eva Davis, Geraldine Goodwin, D. Andrew White and Joanne Doucette.

The group went through several name changes through the years. Starting with “Nature Art Group” in 1979, they changed it to the “Nature Sketching Group” in 1982 to sidestep the association of Art as meaning just fine arts like painting. There was a final name change in 1985 to “Nature Arts Group”, with “arts” signifying that the scope of the group had expanded with the addition of photography, needlework, and other creative activities. There was no name change in 2009, when Joe Bernaske added a writing section, which included poetry, short stories, journals, or any other nature-based writing.



Nature Arts Outing, 1988, by Mary Cumming

Outings typically started with the leader suggesting guidelines for the day and confirming the meeting place for lunch. Then the group would split up, with participants working either individually or with others, depending on their preference. After meeting again for a group lunch, the work of the morning would be discussed, and constructive critiques would be available to encourage participants to improve their techniques. The goal was to be supportive rather than critical.

Other ways the group helped aspiring artists was by running creative sessions, either through informal workshops, or directed instruction like Joanne Doucette's *Drawing Waterfowl from Life*. Either way, supporting emerging talents was a fundamental part of the group.

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ARTS *continued*

At the beginning, along with seeing each other's work at outings, the group would occasionally meet at a group member's home to share their art. This led to a request for participants to display their artwork at TFN monthly meetings, starting in 1988. Twenty years later, in 2008, Peter Money and Margaret McRae arranged a special event, separate from the monthly meetings, to showcase members' art and photography and called it the Nature Images Show. This show would become a popular annual event and was even able to continue through the COVID-19 pandemic by switching to a virtual format in 2021.

The most prominent display of the group's artwork was during the TFN's 85th Anniversary Celebration in 2008, when Gail Gregory, Nancy Anderson and Anne Byzko arranged a two-week public show and sale of TFN members' art. The exhibit was held at The Papermill Gallery, Todmorden Mills Heritage Museum and Art Centre, and featured a silent auction of a framed print of Robert Bateman's *Canada Geese with Young*, donated by the artist.

The decline of the Nature Arts Group followed the rise of accessible cameras, particularly digital cameras. For the first twenty years the group had outings at least twice a month. In 1997 that changed to the first Saturday of the month. And on Saturday, August 1st, 2015, the Nature Arts Group met for the last time at the Music Garden, where Joe Bernaske and Yoshie Nagata led participants in a morning of sketching, photography and writing.

Of course, the Nature Arts group could start again if dedicated volunteers are willing to lead the outings.



Pileated Woodpecker,  
Diana Banville

Lynn Miller



Eastern Meadowlark,  
Geraldine Goodwin



Silverweed, Centre Island,  
1998, D. Andrew White



Hygrophorus mushroom, 1993,  
Joanne Doucette

Gull River Aug. 2, 1992



Northern Saw-whet Owl, Eva Davis

Eva Davis



## THE ART OF NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography has long been associated with the TFN. The earliest newsletter reference to photography was in September 1940 when a Field Day announcement noted that “Mr. Hugh M. Halliday has consented to give some practical hints to those interested in photography of natural history subjects”. Photography was back in the spotlight in 1952 when TFN meetings included displays of nature photography by members of a local camera club, displays of equipment for nature photography, and a Kodachrome Night with presentations such as *A Naturalist takes up Photography* and *A Photographer takes up Natural History*. With each passing decade, the number of newsletter references to photography increased and a vast collection of slides (over 12,000!), photographs, and digital images accrued.

Official recognition of photography as one of TFN’s Nature Arts occurred in 1985, while in 2005 the TFN acquired a computer which allowed colour artwork and photographs to be scanned for the newsletter. Robin Powell, a TFN Photo Librarian, was one of the first members to have a photograph included in the newsletter. By 2023, up to 40 images were being included in each newsletter.



Deer crossing creek. Photo: Robin Powell

The prominence of photography in the TFN mirrored the rising popularity of photography in society. In large part

this was fuelled by advances in technology. The move from film to digital, and the availability of telephoto lenses, cell phone cameras and, most recently, social media all made nature photography more accessible. The popularity of photography among TFN members has been evident by the robust participation and attendance at the annual Nature Images Show.

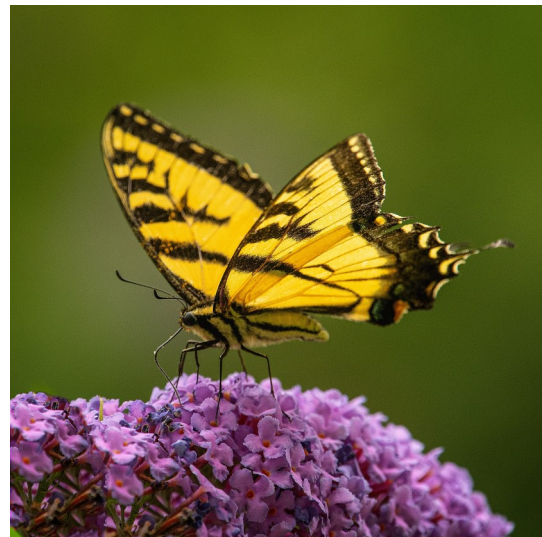
These developments have brought some challenges – with more photographers there is a greater chance of disturbing flora and fauna. In 1979 the TFN began searching for a suitable Code of Ethics and reprinted an article by the Federation of Ontario Naturalists advocating responsible photography of plants and animals. More recently, in 2021, Zunaid Khan launched a Nature Photography Group for TFN members, open to photographers of all skill levels. This group provides an opportunity for members to share their photos. It also seeks to promote the values of TFN by fostering and advocating the practices of ethical nature photography. The group, now facilitated by Lynn Miller, has 24 members and has monthly photo challenges, outings and online meetings. In addition, members contribute images for TFN’s Instagram account, which also serves as a vehicle for sharing messaging about ethical nature viewing. A sub-group of the main photography group, facilitated by Theresa Moore, helps interested members improve their capture and editing skills by giving and receiving feedback on image strengths and areas for improvement.

Much of the joy in photography comes from learning, being outdoors, and sharing the beauty of nature images with others. TFN offers photographers many such opportunities as well as the chance to model ethical nature photography practices.

Theresa Moore



Feathers in a nest. Photo: Lillian Natalizio



Tiger Swallowtail. Photo: Max Skwarna

## RENEWING YOUR TFN MEMBERSHIP

As reported in the last two newsletters, TFN volunteers have been busy preparing a much more valuable online experience for our Members. As this also impacts our renewal process for this year, we ask that you carefully review the following for a complete picture of things to come.

On June 30th, the *Members Only* section of our website will be replaced by an entirely new website accessible just to TFN Members. This transition will be announced via email on that day, and will invite you to create your own unique password to access the site. Once you've done this, you'll have immediate access to all of your TFN membership benefits.

For those of you who joined TFN after February 15, 2023 or have chosen to renew your membership early this year, you can safely disregard the remainder of this article, as your membership is valid until June 30, 2024.

If you have never provided TFN with an email address, and manage your membership via physical mail, you will

receive a complete renewal kit in the mail sometime in early July. Please note: effective immediately you can no longer drop cheques off at our office address. They must be sent via physical mail. You must renew by August 10th to ensure that you receive a printed copy of the September issue of the newsletter. Exceptions cannot be made this year.

For all of our other Members, your Membership will be extended, cost-free, until sometime between July 9-28. You will be alerted via email a week before it lapses. This staggered schedule is designed to help ensure that our Member Services volunteers can be as attentive as possible in providing support to those who may require renewal assistance. Please note: if you wish to receive a printed copy of the September issue of the newsletter you must renew no later than August 10th.

Questions, comments, queries or concerns? Please reach out to [membership@torontofieldnaturalists.org](mailto:membership@torontofieldnaturalists.org).

Jason Ramsay-Brown

### ABOUT TFN

TFN is a volunteer-run non-profit nature conservation organization  
We connect people with nature in the Toronto area, helping them to understand, enjoy,  
and protect Toronto's green spaces and the species that inhabit them.

<p><b>BOARD OF DIRECTORS</b></p> <p>President, Walks and Promotions &amp; Outreach: Zunaid Khan</p> <p>Past-President, Lectures, Take Action: Ellen Schwartzel</p> <p>Secretary-Treasurer: Fatima Abrar</p> <p>Vice-President: TBD</p> <p>Stewardship: Lillian Natalizio</p> <p>Volunteers: Lynn Miller</p> <p>At large: Donata Frank, Jessica Iraci, Philip Jessup, Laren Stadelman, Diana Wilson</p>	<p><b>NEWSLETTER</b></p> <p><i>Toronto Field Naturalist</i> (ISSN 0820-636X) is printed on 100% recycled paper. Printing: Digital Edge Printing &amp; Media Services.</p> <p>Views expressed in the newsletter are not necessarily those of the editor or Toronto Field Naturalists.</p> <p>Members are encouraged to contribute letters, short articles and digital images. Please email to: <a href="mailto:newsletter@torontofieldnaturalists.org">newsletter@torontofieldnaturalists.org</a></p>
<p><b>CONTACT US:</b></p> <p>Telephone: 416-593-2656      Email: <a href="mailto:office@torontofieldnaturalists.org">office@torontofieldnaturalists.org</a>                  Website: <a href="http://www.torontofieldnaturalists.org">http://www.torontofieldnaturalists.org</a>                  See email addresses for specific queries at: <a href="https://torontofieldnaturalists.org/about-tfn/contact-us/">https://torontofieldnaturalists.org/about-tfn/contact-us/</a>                  Address: 2 St. Clair Avenue West, 18th Floor, Toronto, ON M4V 1L5</p>	



## THEN & NOW PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT

As part of our 100th anniversary celebration, we have embarked on a photography project entitled *Then & Now*. The inspiration behind this project was to showcase a number of green spaces of historic importance to us.

We began by selecting photographs from our slide collection archives, which were digitised in the last couple of years. The selection criteria included a combination of location diversity, ease of finding the photographer's viewpoint, historic importance, and age of the photograph. Some consideration was also given to varying the contributing photographers. We ended with a diverse selection of 40 photographs showcasing green spaces across our city, including Lower Don, Scarborough Bluffs, the Rouge, High Park, Mimico Creek and Burke Brook Ravine.

The next step was to engage volunteers from our photography group to recreate these depictions. This is currently underway and will continue during early summer. The outcome will be to showcase these photographs on our website and in a photo exhibition later this year.

To give members an insight into this project we share below *Then & Now* photos of Jack Darling Park and the Scarborough Bluffs.

Stay tuned for announcements, via email and on our website, of when this project can be viewed on our website and at the photo exhibition.

Zunaid Khan



Jack Darling Park, 1991. Photo: Robin Powell



Jack Darling Park, 2023. Photo: Lillian Natalizio



Scarborough Bluffs, 1968. Photographer unknown



Scarborough Bluffs, 2023. Photo: Theresa Moore