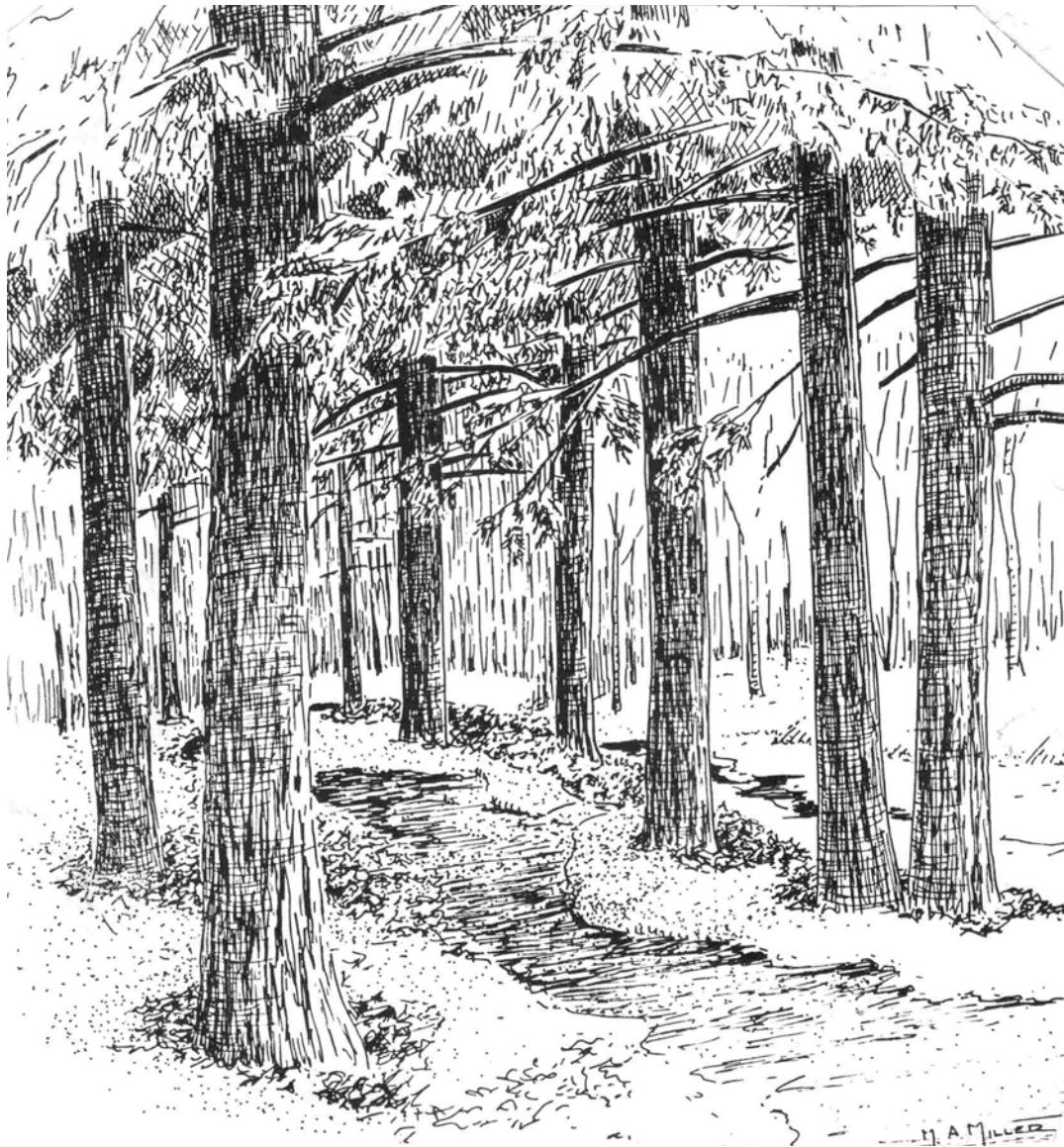


TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

Number 537

February 2006



Coming events	27	Who was Jim Baillie?	8
In the news	22	Winter Wonderland	11
Keeping in touch	19	Toronto's Changing Bird Scene	12
Leaders Workshop	5	Commonplace Miracle	13
Monthly meeting	3	Botanizing in Winter	14
Nominating Committee	6	Of Trees, Groves and Glades	15
Outings	4	The World Discovers Discovery	17
President's Report	6	Walks	
Weather (this time last year)	26		

TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

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MEMBERSHIP FEES

\$50 FAMILY (2 adults – same address, children included)

\$40 SINGLE, SENIOR FAMILY

\$30 STUDENT, SENIOR SINGLE

No GST. Tax receipts issued for donations. Membership fees and address changes should be sent to the TFN office.

Please note: It has always been the policy of the Toronto Field Naturalists not to give out its membership list.

IT'S YOUR NEWSLETTER!

Send us your original writing (up to 500 words) of your thoughts and experiences of nature in and around Toronto. Do you have a favourite natural area in Toronto? Did a TFN outing introduce you to a new park? Tell us about it! Did you see any plants or animals that particularly interested you? Let us know! Tell us what, where and when, and any field guides or other sources consulted.

Also welcome are: reviews, poems, cartoons and sketches, and articles on natural history. If you have a digital camera, we would welcome photos of TFN outings. Remember that they will be reproduced in black and white photocopy.

Please include your name, address and telephone number so submissions can be acknowledged. Newspaper clippings should include source and date.

Unsigned letters or emails will not be read. Attachments to unsigned emails will not be opened.

Note the deadline for submissions of time-sensitive material, e.g., notices of meetings or events. Deadline for March issue: 3 February 2006. Send by mail or email.

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE:

Diana Banville, Jenny Bull (editor), Eva Davis, Karin Fawthrop, Nancy Fredenburg, Elisabeth Gladstone, Siobhan Montague (associate editor), Marilynn Murphy, Toshi Oikawa, Wendy Rothwell.

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TFN PUBLICATIONS

TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB
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Survey No. 4 Wilmore Ravine, 1975
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Survey No. 6 Burke Ravine, 1976
Survey No. 7 Taylor Creek Woodbine Bridge Ravines 1977
Survey No. 8 West Don Valley, 1978

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TORONTO REGION BIRD CHART, 1983.....\$ 5.00

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TORONTO CHECKLISTS (birds, other vertebrates,
butterflies, other invertebrates, mosses, other plants).....ea. 50¢

HUMBER FORKS AT THISTLETOWN, 2000.....\$5.00

Add \$2.00 *per item* for postage and handling; no GST.
Order from the TFN office, see address above.

TFN MEETING

Sunday, February 5, 2006 at 2:30 pm

Ontario Nature's Greenway Project

Mr. Steve Hounsell
President, Ontario Nature

This lecture replaces the previously advertised lecture on honey bees which has had to be cancelled.

VISITORS WELCOME!

SOCIAL HOUR

2:00 - 2:30 pm

Bring your own mug if you wish,
only paper cups provided.

For more information call the TFN office at (416) 593-2656

Room 001, Emmanuel College, University of Toronto,
75 Queen's Park Crescent East

Room 001 is one floor below street level. Entrance at south end of the building, down a few steps on an outside stairwell.

Wheelchair Entrance: Second door south on Queen's Park Crescent E. Door does not have automatic opener. Elevator is inside to the right.



NEXT MEETING:

An Introduction to Evergreen Commons
at the Don Valley Brickworks
Sunday, March 5, 2006.

THE URBAN BEE

In Paris, several dozen apiarists tend their bees – in balconies, parks, gardens and even the roof of the Paris Opera House, says The Christian Science Monitor. The city turns out to grow a wider range of plants than any comparably sized piece of countryside.

From Social Studies, The Globe and Mail, 16 Dec. 2005

TFN OUTINGS

- TFN events are conducted by unpaid volunteers.
- The club assumes no responsibility for injuries sustained by anyone participating in our activities.
- Children and visitors are welcome at all TFN events. Children must be accompanied by an adult.
- If you plan to bring children in a stroller, be aware that there may be steps or other unsuitable terrain.
- Please do not bring pets.
- To get to outings on time, check TTC routes and schedules by calling 416-393-4636.
- Check the weather by calling 416-661-0123 so you will know what to wear on outings which go rain or shine.
- Wear appropriate footwear for walking on trails which may be muddy, steep or uneven.

Thursday CABBAGETOWN – Natural Treasures

Feb. 2 Leader: Helen Juhola
1:30 pm Meet at the northeast corner of Wellesley St. and Parliament St. Afternoon only.

Saturday ALLAN GARDENS – Nature Arts

Feb. 4 Leader: David Andrew White
10:30 am Meet at the entrance to the greenhouses in the park located at Carlton St. and Sherbourne St. Bring what you need for photography, sketching or painting and anything you wish to show the group when we review our morning's work after lunch.

Sunday MONTHLY MEETING

Feb. 5 See notice on page 3.
2:00 pm Social Hour
2:30 pm Lecture - The Honey Bee: The Ultimate Superorganism

Tuesday HUMBER BAY – Birding Walk

Feb. 7 Leader: George Bryant
10:00 am Meet at the southwest corner of Lake Shore Blvd. W. and Park Lawn Rd. Bring binoculars and dress warmly. Morning only.

Wednesday ASHBRIDGE'S BAY – Birds

Feb. 15 Leader: Barbara Kalthoff
10:30 am Meet at the southwest corner of Lakeshore Blvd. E. and Coxwell Ave.
Bring a warm drink and binoculars. Morning only.

Saturday HIGHLAND CREEK – Nature Restoration

Feb. 18 Leader: Steve Joudrey
10:30 am Meet at the McCowan LRT station exit. We will walk a short distance along McCowan to view the Markham Branch Restoration Project of Highland Creek within the area bounded by the 401-Ellesmere-McCowan-Markham Rd. Morning only.

Saturday JIM BAILLIE NATURE RESERVE – Winter in the Country Northeast of Toronto

Feb. 18 Leaders: Jerry Spevak and Barry Mitchell
11:00 am Call Jerry at 705-357-3593 for more information. Carpooling. Bring skis or snowshoes, warm clothing, sturdy footwear, and a lunch. See also page 11.

Continued...

Sunday
Feb. 19
1:30 pm

QUEEN STREET TO THE MARKET – Lost Rivers Walk

Leader: Ed Freeman

Meet at the southeast corner of Bay St. and Queen St. W. Route will be along city streets, along and across Court Creek to end at the Market Gallery. Walk will stress Court Creek and early waterfront along with comments on various buildings. This is a joint outing with North Toronto Green Community.

Thursday
Feb. 23
10:00 am

PROSPECT CEMETERY – Trees in Winter

Leader: Jack Radecki

Meet at the St. Clair Ave. W. cemetery gates (1450 St. Clair Ave. W. near Lansdowne Ave.)
Morning only.

TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS

LEADERS WORKSHOP

Attention walk leaders and future walk leaders (Sure! You can do it!)

A morning of inspiration and insight featuring a guest speaker from Parks, Forestry and Recreation, City of Toronto, and workshop facilitator and TFN walk leader Theresa Moore.

- *to thank walk leaders,*
- *to interest new potential walk leaders,*
- *to review outings procedures,*
- *to reflect on experiences and needs,*
- *to produce a resource package,*
- *to support good walk leadership*
- *to share favourite field guides and other resources.*

Saturday, March 25, 2006, 9:30 – 12:00 noon

Deer Park Library, 2nd floor Activity Room, 40 St. Clair Ave. E.
(just east of Yonge St. There is an elevator and stairwell just inside the library entrance).

Register Now! By phone: 416-593-2656; by email: [REDACTED]
Register early as seating is limited. Refreshments provided.

Workshop committee: Gail Gregory, Theresa Moore, Ruth Munson, Pinky Franklin.

The leaders gather
Park trails and weather suspended
For tea and muffins.

Haiku by Gail Gregory

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

In honour of their enormous contribution and many years of service to the Toronto Field Naturalists, the board is naming our most recently acquired properties (south of the Emily Hamilton Reserve), The Helen and Aarne Juhola Nature Reserve. We will be hosting a dedication ceremony and celebratory party on Sunday, May 28, rain or shine at the reserve. Mark the date on your calendar and plan to join us for this special occasion. If you would like to be part of the organizing committee please call the office. If you would enjoy a winter visit to the reserves, call Jerry Spevak to join him on the February 18 outing to the Jim Baillie Reserve. Please refer to TFN Outings on page 4 for the details.

Another exciting event that we are hosting is the Outings Leader Workshop on Saturday, March 25. For more information refer to page 5. If you are currently an outings leader or have considered becoming one, please join us.

The TFN has made deputations to the Planning and Transportation Committee on January 9 and to the Policy and Finance Committee on the 23rd in support of

recommendations to prevent migratory bird deaths resulting from collisions with buildings. The TFN has long supported the efforts of FLAP (see the November 2005 newsletter) and we are hopeful that the LIGHTS OUT TORONTO initiative will be adopted by Toronto City Council.

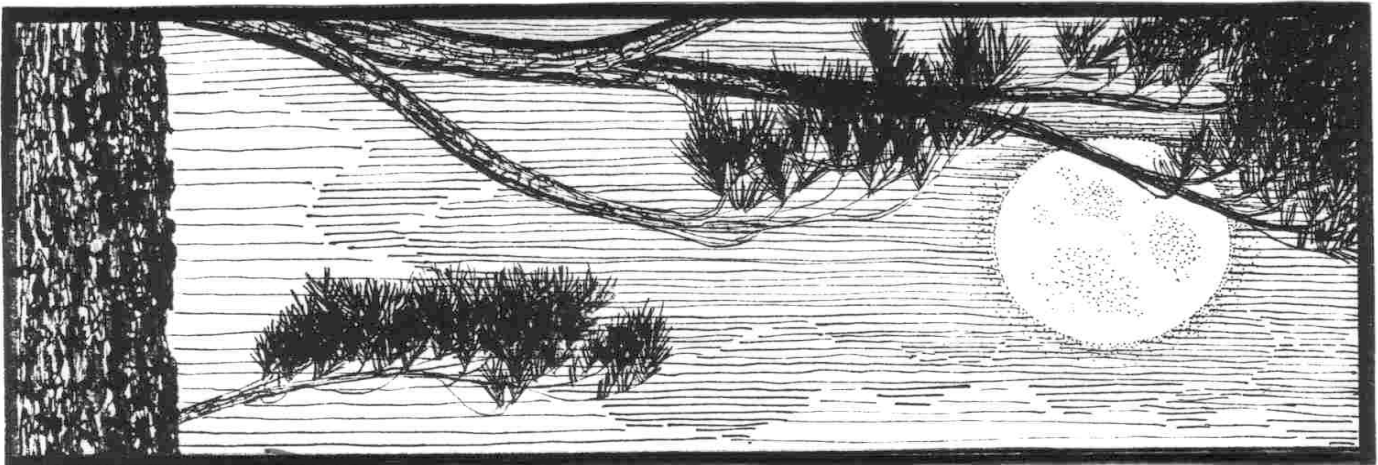
I got my wish of a white winter wonderland - perhaps too much too soon before Christmas. But the dreary days of rain and fog that followed made me long for a snowstorm. When I finally got a glimpse of blue sky out of my kitchen window, I found that I was also staring at the sack-like nest of a pair of Baltimore Orioles that I had thought were just passing through last spring on their way north. It is even decorated festively with a piece of green ribbon woven into the nest.

I sincerely hope that LIGHTS OUT TORONTO is in effect for the spring migration so that our winged visitors will have safe passage and not a final resting place.

Pinky Franklin

TFN BOARD NOMINATIONS INVITED

The TFN is looking for people with initiative who are willing to devote time to working as members of the Board of Directors. Please send your suggestions to the Chairman of the Nominating Committee, c/o TFN, 1519 - 2 Carlton St., Toronto, Ont., M5B 1J3. The report of the Committee will be published in the May newsletter.



Drawing by Owen Fisher

REPORT ON DECEMBER'S LECTURE "THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF TORONTO"

On Sunday, December 4, more than 125 people gathered at Emmanuel College to hear Dr. Mima Kapches, Senior Curator, Ontario Archaeology at the Royal Ontario Museum speak about "The Archaeology of Toronto."

Despite a technical glitch which prevented her from showing us the photos and other visual material she had prepared, Dr. Kapches spoke so eloquently about the evidence we have of pre-European settlement in the Toronto area that we felt no need of video support. Her talk was made especially interesting by references to localities in Toronto familiar to TFN members. Dr. Kapches also shared some of the history of the archaeological collections at the ROM, and gave us an enthusiastic preview of the new ROM facility which is due to open in 2006. The number and quality of questions following the presentation demonstrated the interest which she had stimulated.

We eagerly await publication in 2006 of Dr. Kapches' book, tentatively titled *Toronto's Hidden Past: Archaeology and First Peoples*, at which time we hope she will return to speak to us again, this time with pictures!"

Barry Mitchell and Wendy Rothwell

Memory Book Update

We are continuing to compile the Memory Book for Helen and Aarne Juhola. Our plan is to present the book at the commemorative party for the Juholas on May 28 at the TFN Nature Reserve (see President's Report).

Thanks to everyone who has already signed or drawn or sent messages to be added to the book.

Gail Gregory

TFN PROMOTION REPORT

Before Christmas you may have heard Garvia Bailey announcing our outings on CBC's Metro Morning. This was an unexpected voluntary announcement. It is important for the TFN to be in the public eye in order to attract people to lectures and outings. These people are potential new members who are necessary to sustain our organization.

There is a small number of dedicated members who are responsible for the task of promoting the TFN. For many years Chris Grigulis has regularly and reliably e-mailed notices of our lectures and selected outings to the Toronto Star, community newspapers and radio stations. Margaret McRae has kindly agreed to fax these notices to the media who require hard copy. She also encouraged the board to secure the web domain www.torontofieldnaturalists.org which links directly with our original website www.sources.com/tfn which Elaine Farragher set up through her business at no cost to the TFN. Elaine continues to maintain our website, posting the meetings, lectures and current outings. The posters that announce our lecture series are also created by Elaine. Thank you, Chris, Margaret and Elaine, for your ongoing contribution to keeping the TFN "out there."

In my capacity as president, I am finding it difficult to do justice to my dual responsibility as promotion coordinator. Promoting the TFN is easy. The club has a long and distinguished history, is well organized and is a rewarding experience for the members. But time and energy is required to fulfill the task of taking this message public. I am looking for someone to take on this role as soon as possible. Please call me at 416-488-3226 to discuss this if you think you can help.

Pinky Franklin

WHO WAS JIM BAILLIE?

As most members are aware, the TFN owns several parcels of land near Uxbridge. Beginning with an initiative of the 1970 Board of Directors to ensure that “a piece of land remains free from cultivation or development,” these reserves were purchased over the past 35 years largely through member donations. The different parcels



of land have been named after naturalists who made significant contributions. The first reserve was named after Jim Baillie, an active member of TFN and president from 1952 to 1953. He died in 1970 and in 1996 his family took his ashes to the reserve for burial. There are two memorial plaques on rock piles near the picnic shelter which was partly paid for by a donation from Jim Baillie's daughter.

The following is part of a tribute to Jim Baillie written by TFN past-president Rosemary Gaymer (1972 – 1974) for the South Peel Naturalists newsletter, Spring 2005.

The Jim Baillie Reserve picnic shelter from the back with the cairn. Drawing by Lenore Patterson.

A TRIBUTE:

WHO WAS JIM BAILLIE? AND WHY WAS THE BAILLIE BIRDATHON NAMED FOR HIM?

... Simply stated, because a very large number of people (and Canadian birds) are greatly indebted to him, directly or indirectly, whether they are aware of it or not.

James L. Baillie, 1904-1970, Canadian-born of Scottish descent, worked for the Royal Ontario Museum's Department of Ornithology from 1922 to 1970. Initially hired as a technical assistant, in an era when university degrees were somewhat rare and people without post-secondary education often developed into top-rate professionals by virtue of having learned-by-doing, he was latterly assistant curator.

He wrote *In Birdland*, a weekly column in the Toronto Evening Telegram, which acquired tremendous popularity, exerted influence and appeared without a break from 1931 to 1970, the last written in hospital just before he died. An excellent writer, his style was simple and straightforward, and capable not only of capturing readers' interest but also of raising knowledge levels in the general public, and stirring up action from time to time. On matters of conservation he knew what needed to be said, and said it.

Jim was responsible – by example, by encouraging, inspiring, teaching and mentoring – for fueling life-long fires in young people, many of whom went on to become an awesome “who's who” of Canada's top zoologists, botanists, physical scientists, park naturalists and administrators, school teachers, college professors, outdoor educators, writers, artists and others who possess the joy and happiness to be found in the observation and understanding of natural history, as an essential component of life.

He wanted people to study and learn as much as possible (and enjoy the process) so that they would become knowledgeable enough to raise their voices effectively in the battles to preserve wild places and protect species. “Activists must be accurate, or they'll lose the fight.” He realized only too well that the conservation battles were going to proliferate.

Jim was much involved in the founding and continuation of the Toronto Field Naturalists (1923), the Federation of Ontario Naturalists and the Toronto Ornithological Club (1934). He tirelessly promoted both the TFN and the FON through his weekly column, steering many people to

membership (and to other clubs outside the region if they lived elsewhere). Today, we have so much ease of instant communication by so many methods but in the formative years of both organizations he was the fulcrum of birding information, a one-man rare-bird-alert for the Province, and strict arbiter of accuracy. One May, a sparrow, not recorded previously for Point Pelee, turned up when Jim was not there. His comments later were that reports were “wild, woolly and highly suspect, in some cases.” He needed to be sure about the reporters before allowing the species to be counted. So, once back in Toronto, quite a number of observers of that particular bird were requested (ordered!) to attend the Bird Room at the ROM, one at a time, to pick out Cassin’s Sparrows from large trays full of “difficult look-alike” species with identification labels hidden. You had to tell Jim why each specimen was or was not a Cassin’s, and which seemed nearest to the live bird seen at The Tip! He said nothing to clue the hapless examinees – didn’t say if they were right or wrong, merely recorded their accuracy in silence. He did not get 100% accuracy but, if I remember rightly, accepted the record only when correct analyses exceeded 80%.

Long before Bird Atlassing, Jim had very large maps for each species known in Ontario showing seasonal distribution, breeding records, specimens at the ROM, etc. The American Ornithological Union’s Checklists of North American Birds were updated with the help of these maps and various US authors also consulted them.

In 1935, Jim was elected a member of the AOU, at the time only the eighth Canadian to be so honoured, and served on its Council. He was considered by the upper echelon of ornithologists to be professional among professionals. His meticulous attention to detail and perfection in labeling of specimens were legendary in museum circles on both sides of the border. He was also on the Board and Secretary-Treasurer of the Canadian Audubon Society before it became the Canadian Nature Federation. His reputation was very high.

As a teacher he was amazing. His enthusiasm was contagious without being overwhelming. Nuggets of information seemed to slide effortlessly from him into the minds of whoever were the recipients-of-the-moment, and to stick permanently. On field trips, especially, he was brilliant at answering a question with a question of his own. He made you think; his questions were usually indirect; you worked for the

answers and loved every minute of it! Only much later did one become aware that, in the process, powers-of-observation had increased.

Of course, it wasn’t only instruction about birds. Jim was also greatly knowledgeable about mammals, reptiles and amphibians, insects, botany, and much else. His Telegram column often featured subjects other than birds. He spent a lot of time, particularly, with the once-famous Toronto Junior Field Naturalists (now so sadly defunct). He was the instructor for their bird group for many years – as well as working with the youngest kids as they embarked on their journeys to being general naturalists. He could also engage in serious relevant conversation with earnest teenagers who had already chosen their science specialties (be it ecology, geology, fish, meteorology or any other subject that he would somehow link with birds!).

Just as good at teaching adults, he also taught at the FON’s Summer Nature Camp in Muskoka for about 12 years – and lectured on Natural Science for the University of Toronto’s Extension Department.

Another, and important aspect of “JLB” was his strong belief in “widening the circle” – connecting people with others who shared their interests. His column casually but deliberately “cross-promoted” the Museum with the TFN, the FON, and other clubs and organizations, when relevant. As a result, many people suddenly found a “home.”

Continued on next page.



The Jim Baillie Reserve. Photo by Jenny Bull

Who was Jim Baillie? ..continued from previous page.

I was only one of many to whom he was a revered mentor. He wanted to “see your list”, although I never heard him praise anyone for a “high score” (unless it was for hard work on Toronto Regional Christmas Counts, which he organized and compiled for years). On the other hand, many a birder, beginner or experienced, received firm congratulations from Jim for having “erred on the side of caution” by marking their lists and notebook entries with queries – possibilities – rather than claiming definite rarity. You got the message; he wanted you to develop a “complete package” as an observer and to be precise and exact with your records, by which he meant “at least 100% certainty - preferably higher!” He desperately wanted people to become good scientists, even if only amateur. The “Citizen Science” concept and the huge number of people nowadays involved in such projects would be very dear to his heart.

He did not realize that his influence and inspiration had started to change the tide. Nowadays he would be so amazed and happy if he could know of the greatly increased Canadian research in ornithology, and working opportunities.

The original Long Point Bird Observatory named the BIRDATHON in Jim’s honour for his magnificent contribution over the decades. The birdathon specifically raises funds for ornithological research in Canada by

Canadians ... and the collaboration of amateurs with professionals.

That contribution continues to grow and to gain interest (in both senses of the word), and benefits not only birds and natural science generally, but ourselves as well. His contribution must never be forgotten ... it is part of our social history.

And we can all help it grow even further.

Rosemary Gaymer

ARTWORK FOR THE NEWSLETTER

Do you participate in Nature Arts outings? Are you a nature artist? We are planning a colour issue of the newsletter and would like to include member’s colour artwork of nature subjects.

If you would like to contribute one or more pieces, (max. size 8.5 ins x 11.75 ins), please either:

bring your artwork for digital scanning to the office (2 Carlton St., #1519) on a Friday morning between 9 am and noon (we do not need to keep your original, once scanned),

or,

leave a message at the TFN office (416-593-2656) and we will call you to discuss making a digital copy of your work.

Black and white drawings also welcome.



Photo by Pinky Franklin

WINTER WONDERLAND

There's a foot of fresh snow on the ground and quite a bit more under that. Definitely time for snowshoes. The chickadees and nuthatches titter and flit about as I make my way through the marsh, pushing apart last year's lush growth of cattails. An otter has crossed the trail just ahead, and his tell-tale sliding track leads towards an opening into the water. Marsh gives way to forest where the pungent smell of cedar rides the crisp winter air, while bright sunlight filters through the branches and floods the snowy ground. Each slow step sinks almost eternally into the powdery realm. I loosen my coat as my heavy breath materializes in front of me. All around me the story of the forest is written in the snow. Cottontail and snowshoe hare tracks wind among the birch, grouse trails loop everywhere, deer tracks lead to bedding places under the hemlocks. There's a new chapter around each bend as I make my way towards the river. And then, a clamour in the distance, five or six deer bounding through the undergrowth at lightning speed, just a glimpse and they're gone, the phantoms of the forest. The poplars along the river have been visited by beaver, some are girdled, some felled, some very large trees have been dragged away. There are some fresh cuttings right by the shore. I'm tired, and clearing the snow from a well-placed log I take a seat and pour some hot coffee. There's peace and beauty as far as my senses can reach and I'm so very thankful for this magical day in this very special natural oasis.

Being a TFN member, you may have guessed that "this very special natural oasis" is the Jim Baillie Nature Reserve. This wonderful area is at its best in the winter. All the wet trail sections and cumbersome roots are frozen and covered, and the traveler on skis or snowshoes has a smooth carpet ahead. Much has been accomplished at the reserve this last year, including trail clearing and marking. One of our very industrious members, Jim Allan, has been busy removing all the old ugly nailed markers and has replaced them with small painted blazes. The wildlife has been busy too, especially the beavers. They have built several new dams and an extensive area has been newly flooded.

You are all cordially invited to a winter walk and lunch at the reserve at 11 am on Saturday, February 18. Fowlers Road is ploughed in the winter and only lightly traveled, so one can park just outside the gate. You will need skis or snowshoes, as the snow will most probably be quite deep and walking with just boots would damage the trail for the rest of us. We'll be exploring inside the reserve and probably having lunch at the trail shelter or perhaps down by the river. Please see TFN Outings on page 4 if you would like to attend. We hope to see you there.

Jerry Spevak



Drawing of the shelter on the Jim Baillie Reserve by Mary Cumming

TORONTO'S CHANGING BIRD SCENE

While we often worry (and rightly so) about the decline and disappearance of so many bird species from the Toronto scene, we should also appreciate the arrival of new species. A number of the birds we can observe with some regularity today are relative newcomers to our area. Richard M. Saunders' book *Flashing Wings*, published in 1947, includes a chart showing his own Toronto spring and fall bird records over a 13 year period and James L. Baillie's records over 27 years.

At that time Gadwall never nested in Toronto. Throughout those 27 years Jim Baillie, former TFN president, recorded seeing them during only three spring and three fall migrations. Today the Gadwall is one of our most common year round resident ducks, second in abundance only to the Mallard.

The chart shows Baillie saw Turkey Vultures in the Toronto area only during one spring and never in the fall. Now these majestic birds are often to be seen soaring over Toronto in both spring and fall and some linger around the city all summer.

The Peregrine Falcon was not known here as a breeding species until the 1990's. Baillie sighted them migrating through the area four years in spring and four in fall. Through captive breeding and release programs the endangered Peregrines have established nests on several high buildings in and around Toronto. Under the watchful eyes of The Canadian Peregrine Foundation, local birders and fascinated passersby, the birds have raised and launched their broods at preferred sites including King and Yonge, the Sheraton Centre and Bloor and Islington. Other sites in our area have attracted Peregrines too, so far with varying degrees of success. The watch and hope continue.

Baillie reported Blue-gray Gnatcatchers during only one fall and three spring migrations. Now they regularly nest

in Toronto and can easily be found in such places as Toronto Island and High Park where their distinctive and seemingly ceaseless high-pitched calls alert birders to their presence. Although I don't actively search for nests, I've been lucky enough to see three of their tiny nests, thanks to other birders' sharp eyes.

In only two springs and one fall did Jim Baillie see Northern Mockingbirds. Today they can be found here year round. For several years Toronto Ornithological Club members Winnie Poon (Yung) and Roy Smith have been making a detailed study of this influx. Their article in the September 2002 issue of the TOC newsletter reported 107 confirmed nests that year, with another 126 possible or probable.

An even more recent addition to our breeding birds is the Great Egret. The chart in *Flashing Wings* shows no sighting by Baillie or Saunders during those years. These days some regularly make Toronto's marshes and ponds a stopover in both migration periods. In the last three years a few have begun nesting on the Leslie Street Spit as neighbours to that other newcomer, the Double-crested Cormorant.

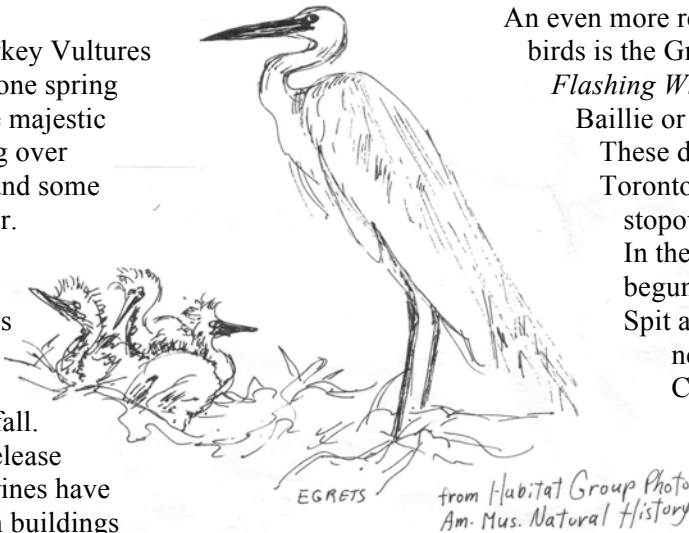
These are just some of the changes to the additions side of the ledger and more are inevitable. Both Tufted Titmouse and Wild Turkey have occasionally been seen in our area. They may be among our next new nesting species. Part of the fascination of birding lies in observing the ever changing patterns and in the endless opportunities to learn and discover.

Marilynn Murphy

Thanks to George Bryant for editorial assistance with this article.

Along the river
White bird flies above black bird
Chasing its shadow.

Haiku by Helen Juhola



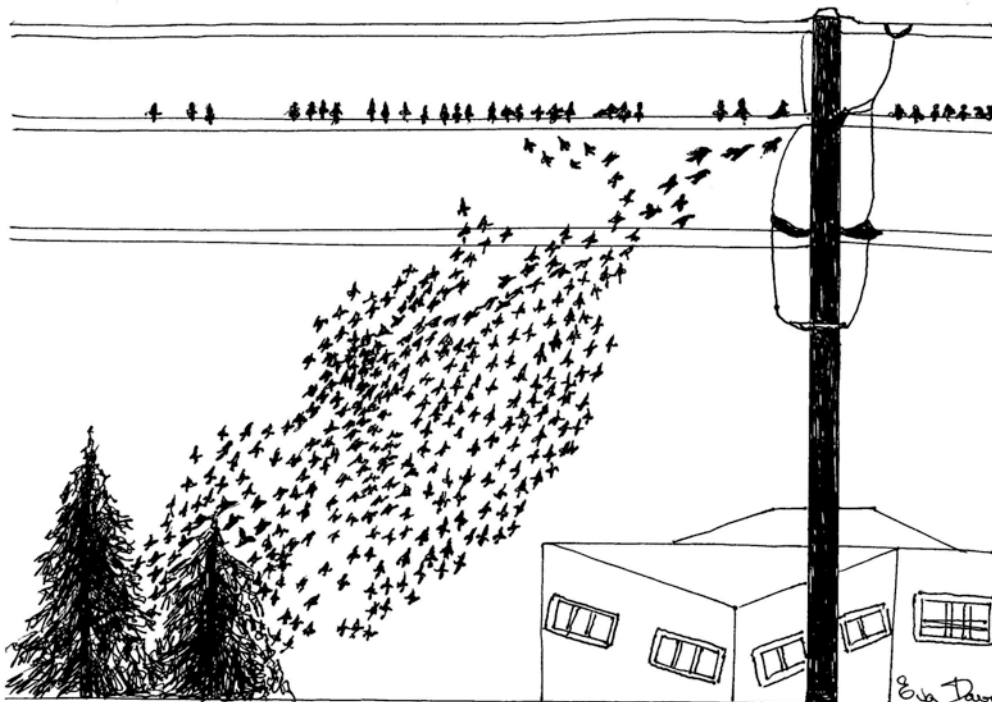
COMMONPLACE MIRACLE

November 18th, 2005, and the first intimation of winter in Brampton: then, white flakes in the wild gusts from – oddly – the South (I always expect, obviously wrongly, cold weather to arrive from the North). The wind, driving huge billows of dead leaves before it in drifts, swoops, and curlicues, seemed to be having a great time, but a closer look brought me to a dead stop. I was suddenly aware of one of nature's least comprehended miracles, for most of those "leaves" were, in fact, birds, specifically starlings, and they were displaying that least comprehended of non-human achievements, the collective mind without benefit of a leader. True, other birds mass. There is the military precision of Canada geese lining up for migration, the haphazard and far from military collecting of blue jays going South, the massings of countless species for arduous travel, but only the "common" city birds – the starlings and sparrows – play swooping games, like a great fall of large, dark hailstones, from field to garden to telegraph wire, across the street to verges

and fences. It really is a miracle to watch. Why the collective drive to move, why *this* tree, or *that* wall? Why are all of them propelled from here to there, high or low, open field or built-up area? I am not knowledgeable about birds, but I have never read an article by a bird aficionado celebrating this "commonplace" seasonal wonderment. (I suspect, being something we cannot explain, that it is dismissed as "instinct," a cover-up for anything we cannot understand. In my youth, after all, one of the all-purpose insults was to describe someone as bird-brained.)

Whatever the "explanation," this mass phenomenon remains for me an endless wonderment. Indeed, passing motorists on that occasion might well have pondered why that slightly dotty looking old woman was gawping skywards. After all, I had to be bird-brained to stand transfixed by the "ordinary" sight of a bunch of birds in flight.

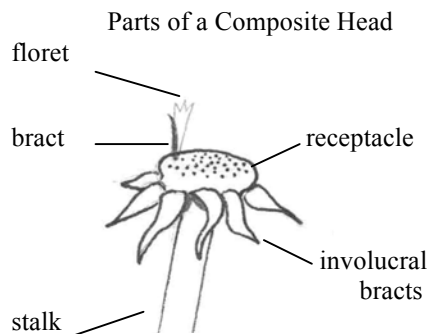
Eva Davis



BOTANIZING IN WINTER: HERBACEOUS REMAINS

With such a long winter, Toronto naturalists may feel that there is no botanizing to be done for almost half the year and that birds provide the only focus. Yet, while many plants have died down by the time cold weather sets in, there is still much to see: trees and shrubs can be recognized year round from features such as twigs, buds and bark; some herbaceous species can be recognized by rosettes of leaves that lie low to the ground and remain green all winter; while others can be identified simply from the dead parts that persist through much of the winter.

The aster family (also known as the daisy or composite family) has many members in this last category. It is distinguished from other plant families by its composite flower head, composed of many tiny florets clustered on a receptacle that together appear as if they are one flower. When the fruits that develop from the florets have fallen or been blown away, the receptacle is left behind looking like a small pincushion. You will have noticed this after blowing a “dandelion clock.” Each depression or “pin prick” on the receptacle held a floret.



Sometimes, the tiny bracts that surround the florets also persist through the winter, giving the receptacle a fuzzy or rough look and hiding the “pin pricks” (as in tansy and black-eyed Susan). Even the fruit may remain into the winter and the fine hairs that help to disperse them give the receptacle a fluffy look (as in goldenrods).

Recognition of the receptacle of a composite flower head, whether naked or not, narrows down your identification of a winter wildflower to the aster family.

Next, check if the receptacles are small and many (like boneset or goldenrods), or larger and few (like woodland sunflower or Jerusalem artichoke). If small and many, do they make a flat-topped cluster (like yarrow), a rounded cluster (like spotted joe-pye weed) or a willowy spray (like

Canada goldenrod)? Is the receptacle flat or cone-shaped or elongated?

Black-eyed Susan has cone-shaped receptacle with rough texture of persisting bracts.

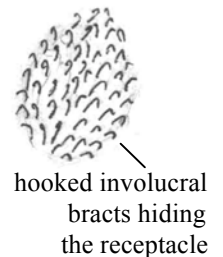
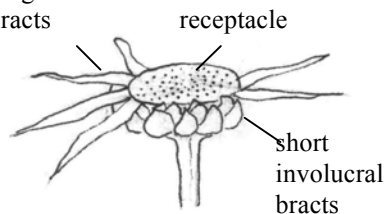


Gray-headed cone-flower is more elongated.

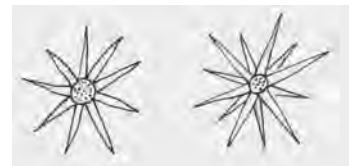


In addition to bracts surrounding the florets, there are also bracts surrounding the receptacle. These are called involucral bracts and may be straight and prickly (as in the thistles), hooked and bristly (as in burdock), or there may be a whorl of long thin bracts over other whorls of rounder overlapping bracts (like elecampane).

long involucral bracts



In asters and goldenrods, the involucral bracts surround tiny receptacles like star points – aster is Latin for star.



Other features of the plant may also persist through the winter. Check the height of the stem. Are there galls present? Are there any persisting leaves to show if they are opposite or alternate or basal? If there are none, look for the scar of the leaf on the stem. Even if shriveled, you can sometimes see if the leaves were short and wide or long and narrow, with stalks or without. Habitat may also help you narrow down the possibilities.

With all this information you may be able to use your summer field guide to help you identify the plant. Or take a look at Carol Levine's *Wildflowers in Winter* with descriptions and illustrations of dead and decaying plants! It includes ferns and grasses, sedges and rushes. Happy Winter Botanizing!

Jenny Bull

OF TREES, GROVES AND GLADES

Experiences in Natural Heritage Preservation

Extracted from an address to the AGM of the Ontario Urban Forestry Council made by Madeleine McDowell, Chair, Humber Heritage Committee and TFN member

In natural heritage preservation I have had some successes. I have had a few failures. They simply continue to be works in progress. You cultivate and apply both diligence and persistence. Always keep learning, seek understanding – it is like turning on a light – and spreading light is a joy – most of the time.

As a child, when we walked down the street, it was normal for the sidewalk to curve around the large oak trees that were there when the roadway was a dirt track. The houses were a footprint development and the trees were minimally disturbed. The woods were magical to me then. My father recalled as a boy the last lumbermen culling the oaks in our area in the winter of 1918-19. My parents loved the elm trees which provided shade in most farm fields and lined the highways, including Lakeshore Boulevard from the Humber to Bathurst. These were the huge trees from which the Mississaugas used the bark to make ten-man canoes at the foot of the Toronto Carrying Place, in which they paddled across Lake Ontario to Niagara. The Dutch elm disease in the late fifties was like a physical blow to my parents. They both remembered the loss of the native chestnuts earlier in the century. I was also pained by the loss of the American elms and it has stuck with me. That particularly graceful part of the canopy may regenerate, if not in the woods, at least in isolated or controlled settings. I do not want the remnant oak savannah to meet extinction from “City Disease”, or urban stress, which is as insidious as the little beetle in the elms.

About 1985 the last of the Oak trees which the sidewalk went around came down in a storm. The children at the local school informed me that the tree was two hundred and sixty eight years old. I was delighted to register how impressed they were. It resulted in a tree planting at their school, followed by several more, there and around the district. In 1990 one of the huge oaks at King George School came down in a storm. As the school trustee at the time I persuaded staff to replace it. The tree is now taller than the corner of the building and on its way to shading the corner the way its two-century-old predecessor did. But it is not part of the local gene pool.

In 1997 Gavin Miller and I inventoried 150 mature oak trees along the Toronto Carrying Place between the old shoreline of Lake Ontario and Dundas Street, all of which were over 120 years old. Most were black, red or black-red

hybrids, with the occasional white. As Chair of the Humber Heritage Committee, I approached the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation for permission to name this ancient Grove after Tuhbenahneequay, the daughter of Wahbanosay, their Chief at the time of the Toronto purchase and the mother of Kahkewaquonaby / Sacred Feathers or Peter Jones, also their chief.

The Grove was proclaimed on May 3, 1997, by Metro Chairman Alan Tonks and the dedication ceremonies were conducted by Chief Larry Sault of the New Credit First Nation. They jointly planted a bur oak in Cashman Park near the site of an old spring as a symbol of the rejuvenation of the Grove. The portion of the Grove located in the City of York was proclaimed by Mayor Frances Nunziata, but the City of Toronto did not participate.

This project was aimed at protecting ancient trees, by drawing people’s attention to them, and their historic links; using them to help define a legendary aboriginal trail; reconnecting the Mississaugas with their Toronto roots and Toronto with them after two centuries, and promoting the designation of the Humber as a Canadian Heritage River. Two years later, a block to the south we conducted the Canadian Heritage River dedication ceremonies for the Humber with Mississauga Chief Carolyn King and an assortment of dignitaries including Councillor David Miller, but not the Mayor of Toronto.

One of the trees in the Grove, a great white oak, is located where the Toronto Carrying Place crosses Jane Street at Weatherell and right opposite St Pius 12th elementary school. It is about three hundred years old and a particularly beautiful, well scaffolded example of its type. As a living witness to history it is of particular interest.

Continued on next page.

The white oak (<i>Quercus alba</i>) on Wetherell	
Height	75 ft.
Spread	79 ft.
Circumference	13 ft. 1 in.
Diameter	4 ft
Age	Approx. 300 years

Continued from page 15.

This was a sapling when the French built their second trading fort, Fort Toronto, in 1749 at the foot of the portage on which the tree stands – the fort from which Toronto takes its name. It was part of the forest canopy by 1764 when Alexander Henry passed by on June 19th with a group of Mississaugas on his way to Fort Niagara from Mackinac, where he had been taken prisoner the previous year in the Pontiac wars. His account of the journey may be seen in Percy

Robinson's *Toronto during the French Regime*. It was a mature tree when Benjamin Frobisher passed by, recommending in a 1784 report that the Northwest Company use this as the preferred route to the West. It witnessed the passage of Lieutenant

Governor Simcoe on September 25th, 1793, on his way to Penetanguishene. The feet of the war party dispatched by General Brock in 1812 to capture Fort Mackinac trod over the roots of this tree. Their assault on Fort Mackinac was so successful that when they later approached Fort Detroit it surrendered. Chief of the Mississaugas, Peter Jones, whose father Augustus Jones drew the 1792 map of the Toronto Carrying Place which appears in Percy Robinson's book, passed by with his people, the Mississaugas of the New Credit, on their way to a treaty meeting with the Inspector General, Jacques Baby, on his estate in 1828.

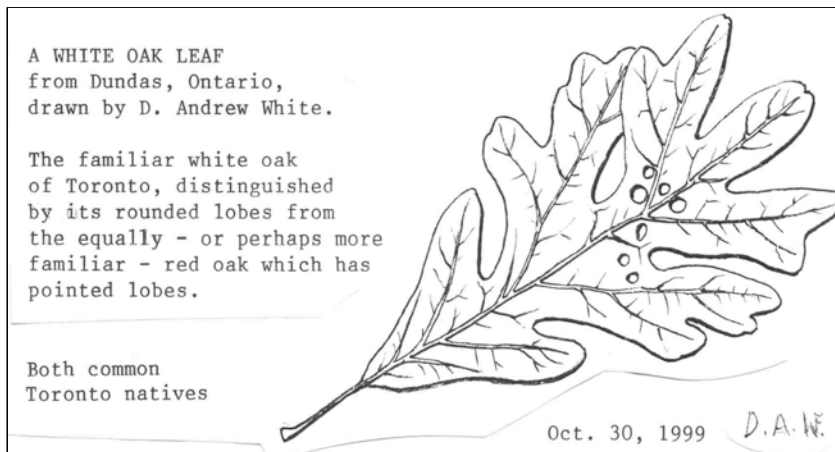
These whisperings of history rose through the living branches which overhang Jane Street now, in 2005. The spirit of this tree had contact with those spirits when they were lively people. It is clearly visible from the Jane Subway station. On this heavily trafficked site a historic plaque would raise people's consciousness of the rare remnant forest and catch the imagination of hundreds of school children. David Orsini has been cultivating the tree's progeny and I have been pursuing its designation under the Ontario Heritage Act. The people on whose property part of the tree is located are fascinated by its

history and have no objections. The City Arborist thinks it to be a good idea. It would raise public consciousness of the rare remnant forest within the City and its living link to the past making it equal to, or in the imagination even surpassing built heritage, as a bond with and evidence of our past.

Children are amazed and fascinated by the presence of trees that were not planted but are part of the forest that

was here before us.

Many adults are equally impressed. They do not realize that there are individual bits of virgin forest scattered through Toronto and in need of protection and assistance in regeneration. *These trees are not cultivated trees but an intact part of a gene pool dating back over six thousand*



years on this site. This particular tree is going to be re-presented for designation. It is now fairly widely known. It has appeared in NOW magazine, the summer edition of The Blazing Star and on the OUFC web site. I manage to include it, and its story, in many of the walks that I do for Heritage Toronto and other groups. There is growing political support for the designation. It will be difficult for bureaucrats to deny the proposal this time, even in the absence of a Natural Heritage Policy in the City.

If you are a Toronto resident, please contact your councillor about the tree's designation and if you reside elsewhere contact Councillor Joseph Pantalone, the City's tree advocate or Mayor David Miller asking for their support of the tree's designation under the Ontario Heritage Act. This tree's designation will support the creation of a facility/project for the propagation of Heritage Trees in Toronto and/or the GTA. At this time the City buys its trees, which will and should continue, but the remnant gene pool has to be identified, propagated and planted, with appropriate records for the future.

I'm collecting acorns!

"As the old proverb from India has it: 'Forests precede civilization; deserts follow it.'"

Quoted by Margaret Atwood in the foreword to *Toronto Tree Portraits*, a calendar published by Toronto Parks and Trees Foundation. www.torontoparksandtrees.org 416-397-5178

THE WORLD 'DISCOVERS' OUR DISCOVERY WALKS!

The City of Toronto, Parks, Forestry & Recreation's Discovery Walk program was recently highlighted at the 2005 Taipei International Healthy City Conference held in October 2005 in Taipei, Taiwan. The conference showcased innovative and successful urban programs and initiatives from around the world that promote healthy lifestyles and improve quality of urban life.

The Discovery Walk program is a series of self-guided walks strategically located throughout the city that links ravines, parks, gardens, beaches and neighbourhoods. Discovery Walks is a marketing strategy to promote the exploration and discovery of Toronto's outstanding natural, cultural and historical attractions. Informative signage along the way interprets the area's heritage, environment and special features. Currently, there are 10 walks, ranging from 1.5 to 11 kilometres.

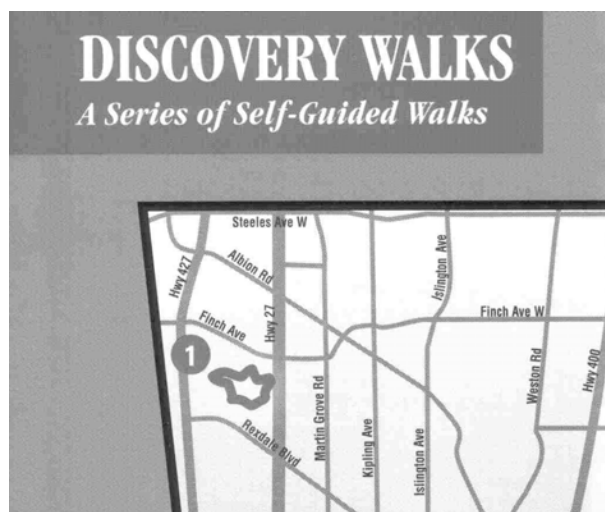
As the program's originator and developer, I was invited by the conference organizers (all expenses paid by the conference) to participate as a guest speaker. The majority of conference speakers lived outside Asia while participants were health-care and urban strategy professionals and government officials from large urban centres in Japan, Korea, China, Indonesia, Australia, Malaysia and Philippines.

In my presentation to a full house, I shared the development and evolution of the Discovery Walk program, including its guiding principles, partnerships, interpretive messages, signage and marketing materials. Judging by the extensive and animated question and answer period that followed, it became apparent that participants were most intrigued that a sense of exploration and discovery could be incorporated into walking. Our Discovery Walk concept was being 'discovered' by professionals and strategists half a world away!

As awareness of our Discovery Walk program increases in other countries, I'm pleased to announce that the program will be welcoming our newest Discovery Walk in spring 2006. The 'Humber Arboretum & West Humber River Valley Discovery Walk' (# 1 on Map) is the result of a multi-level partnership between Parks, Forestry & Recreation, Humber College, Humber Watershed Alliance, Toronto Field Naturalists, Humber Arboretum, Toronto Public Health, Toronto and Region Conservation, Canada Millennium Partnership Fund and the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation.

The Discovery Walk program is being embraced by Toronto residents and partners as well as by the international community. Universally, everyone recognizes the physical and mental benefits of walking. Discovery Walks make it fun!

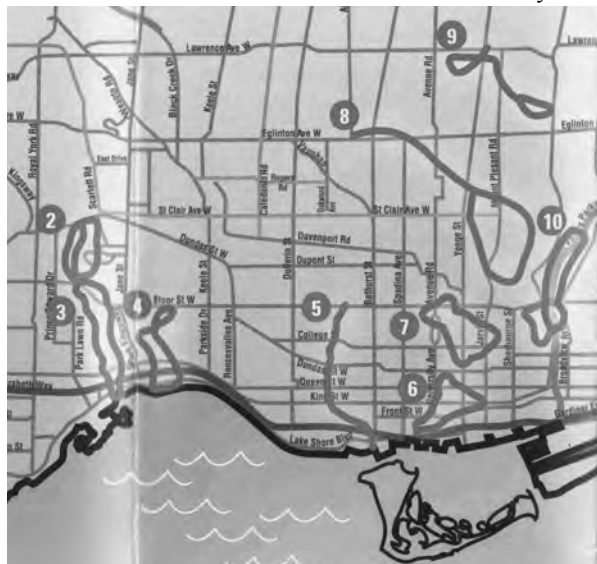
The new Humber Discovery Walk



Pick up the series of 10 existing Discovery Walk brochures at a civic centre near you, or call Access Toronto at 416-338-0338 or download from http://www.toronto.ca/parks/recreation_facilities/discovery_walks/discover_index.htm. The new Humber Arboretum brochure will be available later in 2006.

Jerry Belan, City Parks, TFN member

Central Discovery Walks.



IN MEMORIAM

Walter Massey Tovell, past-president of the TFN (1957-1959), died recently. The notice in *The Globe and Mail* (Jan 2, 2006) states: “Dr. Tovell found careers and interests throughout his life that turned his love of nature, the environment, and history into usable skills. He was Faculty member at the Dept. of Geological Sciences at U of T; served the ROM for 35 years, finally as its director; member of the Metropolitan Toronto Region Conservation Authority; author of the *Guide to the Geology of the Niagara Escarpment*; member of [several] naturalists groups; former member of the Niagara Escarpment Commission and former director of Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment (CONE); founder and board member of the Dufferin County museum.”

From TFN newsletter # 208,
December 1964.

After lunch I walked to a point on the island and looked out to sea; it was around 2:00 pm and the birds were coming home to roost after their morning's fishing. The cormorants were flying in groups of from 5 to 50, and as I scanned the open ocean with binoculars they were coming from all directions. My viewing field was filled at all times with untold numbers of birds – it was like looking at mosquitoes over a swamp. I estimated I had seen a million birds! Anyway, it was many more than I had ever seen or expect to see again for a long time.

Walter Tovell in Peru

Former TFN member, **Henry Kock**, horticulturalist at the University of Guelph Arboretum for almost 25 years, died on December 25, 2005 at age 53. Henry specialized in growing native trees and shrubs from seed for ecosystem restoration and backyard wildlife landscapes. In response to the

devastation caused by Dutch elm disease, Henry founded the Elm Recovery Project. He gave talks around Ontario, and his presentation to the TFN on November 1, 1992 was entitled *Putting The Wilderness Back Into Our Way Of Thinking*. He believed that, through wisdom and creativity, we can resolve our conflicts with nature by creating interconnecting webs of native vegetation to accommodate wildlife.



Drawing of smooth rose
(*Rosa blanda*) by Diana Banville.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

This is just a note to let you know how much I enjoyed the December-January newsletter, especially the back articles from World War II. We often read about the horrors of that time and the TFN articles show a gentler side; that in the midst of chaos, men can stop and still admire a small bird and appreciate nature. I grew up during those war years with books by Thornton W. Burgess (stories of birds and animals of the forest) and movies such as *Bambi*.

Thank you very much. I hope you will print more articles from the back issues of the Newsletter. Keep up the good work. All the best.

Nancy Anderson



“Waiting for Dinner” Smyth Park. September 2005.
Photo by Nancy Anderson

Re: Your wartime articles on milkweed. I remember my older brother talking about collecting milkweed pods in the early 40s. He attended Runnymede Public School. The children got bags from school and were to fill them and then bring them back to the school to help the war effort.

Another thing he mentioned was collecting grease and bacon fat and getting free admission into the movie theatres if you brought them a jar. Lucky guys! We had to pay a whole dime for a double feature, a couple of cartoons, a serial, and a news documentary item and sometimes a free Sad Sack comic book.

Roger Powley

The Toronto Field Naturalists is a great organization and I’ve been encouraging my friends to join too.

Anne Wong

I have enjoyed many walks with the group and the Sunday lectures have been excellent. I met many interesting, informed and gentle people. I hope Kitchener-Waterloo has a similar group.

Lynda MacLeod



Keeping In Touch...continued from previous page.

What fun getting newsletters I haven't read before. I am really enjoying them. After 29 years of knowing every word it is fun watching the changes as the newsletter takes on a new life.

The photo on the back page brought back some memories for me. I think it was taken by Mary Smith, along Taylor Creek. The person with the plant field guide looks like Isobel Smith who always had her "Peterson" with her; the person kneeling looks like Ken Cook, who was a new



member at that time – the early eighties. I don't know the others in the photo.

In case anyone is wondering – Aarne and I are enjoying our retirement very much. We have been traveling a lot and getting on with our lives. It's fun running into TFN members everywhere we go. We are still keen members and are delighted and impressed by the work volunteers continue to do.

Helen Juhola

BREAKFAST WITH THE CHICKADEES

7:00 a.m. The wind is blowing the last of the yellow leaves off the linden tree next door. It is a dark, rainy morning, but it is light enough to see the chickadees perching on the empty feeder bracket outside the window. It is time to hang out the feeders. I can't leave them out overnight because the raccoons will knock them off the bracket. But it is a simple matter to open the window and hang out the three feeders as soon as I wake up.

Why three feeders? Two of them are regular rectangular sunflower seed feeders, each with six perches. One holds shelled sunflower seeds (I don't want sunflower shells all over the front porch below). The other has safflower seeds which I discovered at the bulk food store last week. Safflower is cheaper than sunflower seed, but I want to know which the birds prefer. So far they seem about evenly divided. The third feeder is a little cage with a block of fat liberally laced with millet. The downy woodpeckers love it.

7:30 a.m. The chickadees have been joined by white-breasted nuthatches and house finches. The red-breasted nuthatches, which were common two

weeks ago, have disappeared. Have they moved south? Usually they stay with us all winter. They always spill a few seeds on the ground before choosing the one they want. The ground feeding juncos, white-throated sparrows and house sparrows have been finding the pickings a little thin since they left.

7:45 a.m. What's this? A goldfinch – the first one to try out our winter feeders!

We get some species that can best be described as "spectators." When a feeding frenzy of small birds builds up, other birds that do not use the feeders come over to see what the excitement is about. We have had a pair of cardinals, a blue jay, a mourning dove and, surprisingly, a red-eyed vireo.

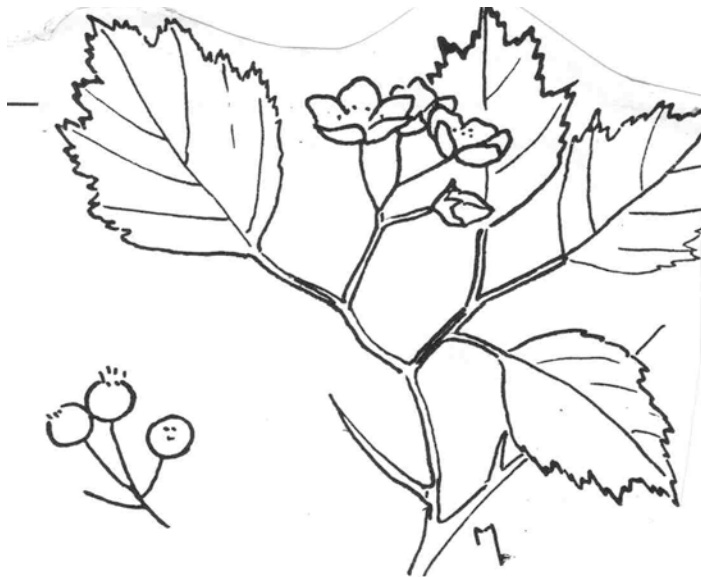
8:00 a.m. I am propped up in bed with a coffee and Tom Allan on the CBC has chosen a Mozart symphony for my listening. The birds are coming to the feeders at a distance of about one meter from my nose. Can life get any better than this?

George Fairfield

DOING IT FOR OURSELVES

Today it snowed for the first time this year, enough so that my balcony urns look like ramekins of French onion soup with a puff pastry lid. This year I am thrilled with the early snow cover and hope for more, because this time the urns are not just empty reservoirs of lifeless soil but a nursery for hawthorn, beech and New England aster seeds that I am trying to propagate.

And “trying” is the operative word. But that’s the fun of it, and it adds a little zip to the spring, especially since hawthorns are notorious for their quirky antics to avoid germination. Lots of information can be



Drawing of a native hawthorn by Mary Ann Miller.

found to get around that, but it’s clear that only experienced nursery people can be fairly certain of what they will find in their propagation beds in spring. Considering that the hawthorn nutlets are as hard as Bakelite, if just one of the 50 makes it I will be ecstatic. If you would like to see the trees, which are especially beautiful specimens of what ornithologists consider “nesting” hawthorns, they can be found at their blooming best in May at the Humber Arboretum, by the meadow path to the west of the buildings.

Why bother trying to grow seeds of native plants? Because local plants are hard to come by. If you want to reintroduce local native plants into your back yard, you really have to take the next step and do something with the beautiful flora one just typically passes by. That is what the High Park Nursery does. All winter long, volunteers prepare and propagate the seeds collected in the park, to make them available in spring for restoration work and for sale to local residents who want to reintroduce them into their former range.

Certainly, if nothing else, the undertaking ‘inclines me to gaze more kindly upon the ever-colder and ever-whiter winter scene,’ as it works its magic to break dormancy. Anything that can accomplish that for me is totally worth it, no matter what the outcome.

Marita Dreger

Editor’s note: Please note Marita Dreger’s tip that native plant seeds can be bought from the High Park Nursery. The following is extracted from Environment Canada’s website www.on.ec.gc.ca/wildlife/docs/doc-planting-prairie-e.html#acquiringseedsandplants.

Collecting seed can provide an opportunity to learn more about local plants and ecosystems, but it can also threaten the health and vigour of the few remaining wild stands. As the need for seed grows, wild stands may not be able to continue to satisfy the demand. Furthermore, removing seed from wild plants removes food that would otherwise be available for insects, birds and small mammals. Consider purchasing most of the seed for a project from a reputable native-plant nursery. These companies use small quantities of wild seed to grow plants in a nursery setting; the plants in turn produce large quantities of seed. This approach relieves the collection pressure on plants in the wild.

IN THE NEWS

SWEDEN: THE LINNEAN TRADITION MARCHES ON

extracted from an article by Torleif Ingellog in Plant Talk, April 2005

"What use is the knowledge of things if you know not their names," exclaimed Carl Linnaeus in 1734. He estimated that his native country harboured some 3500 species. Today about 50,000 species of multicellular organisms are known to occur in Sweden. Some groups of organisms are very poorly known, which means that there may be several thousand additional Swedish species.

Globally, fewer than 20% of all species are estimated to be described and named. There is a huge worldwide lack of taxonomists. The lack of taxonomists and knowledge of species is a major obstacle in the path to sustainable development. The Swedish Taxonomy Initiative will entail the education of a large number of taxonomists who will then continue their work throughout the world. In Sweden as well as many other countries the overall level of species knowledge among the general public

has fallen. Ecology and genetics have been promoted at the expense of taxonomy. Swedish scientists have been given the mission of making Sweden the first country to scientifically describe all its species of animals, plants and fungi.

Biological collections are fundamental to taxonomic research. Museum collections are an irreplaceable natural and cultural heritage that must not be allowed to decay. They are vital not only to science, but also to the promotion of species knowledge among the general public. In Sweden, as well as globally, museums suffer from a severe shortage of resources. The new funding from the Swedish Taxonomy Initiative for maintenance of museum collections is therefore invaluable.

For some 90% of all Swedish species, handbooks are lacking. Now, through one of the largest events of publishing

and popular education ever, *The Encyclopedia of the Swedish Flora and Fauna* will comprise over 100 illustrated volumes, presenting all Swedish multicellular species. The first volume, treating the butterflies, has just been published. The intention is that these books should be written so that they may be understood and used by the vast majority of people. There are also plans to issue other kinds of information and education material and eventually, an increasing amount will be accessible on the Internet.

The Swedish Taxonomy Initiative is planned to continue for 20 years, and has now attained its full subsidy levels with annual funding set for the encyclopedia, taxonomic research and the collections of biological museums. The decision to undertake this daunting enterprise was taken by the Swedish Parliament.

FUTURE OF GERRARD/CLONMORE QUARRY LANDS NOW UP FOR DISCUSSION

Extracted from an article by Ritchard Findlay, Chair, Concerned Citizens of Quarry Lands Development in Beach Metro Community News, 13 December 2005.

...the working group aimed at articulating a vision for the Quarry Lands [has met twice], with quite a few members of the community... as well as a good representation from various city departments. Some feel that the Quarry should be left as is - a rustic grassland setting rarely found within a huge modern city. Others feel that various levels of development on the property are not

inappropriate. Either way, opportunities to shape the future of a community are rare. Equally rare is having some 50 acres set smack in the middle of a huge city to dream about.

What can you do? The Concerned Citizens of Quarry Lands Development is very interested in knowing your opinions on the future

of the Quarry. For 2 years we have been acting as a committee to represent the views, interests and concerns of our membership and the community as a whole. At our website, www.gerrardclonmore.com, you can read a lot more about the issue, both present and past, you can contact us to let us know what you think about future Quarry development, and you can join our group.

Editor's note: The Quarry is also known as Gerrard Prairie.

RESIDENTS PUSH FOR GYPSY-MOTH SPRAYING

Extracted from an article by Mike Funston in the Toronto Star, January 3, 2006

A Mississauga neighbourhood has been invaded and residents have launched preparations for a counterattack this spring. The enemy is the gypsy moth caterpillar that's posing a threat to mature trees in the Mineola West area and several other pockets in the city.

Members of the Credit Reserve Association have gathered about 500 names on a petition requesting that council approve a helicopter spraying program this spring to prevent the defoliation and destruction of trees by the pest. It's expected to go to council this month.

City forestry officials were

unavailable for comment, but according to a city report on the infestation, trees on some streets will be hit hard unless control measures are taken. The gypsy moth has been seen in the area since 2003, its numbers have been growing and based on the large

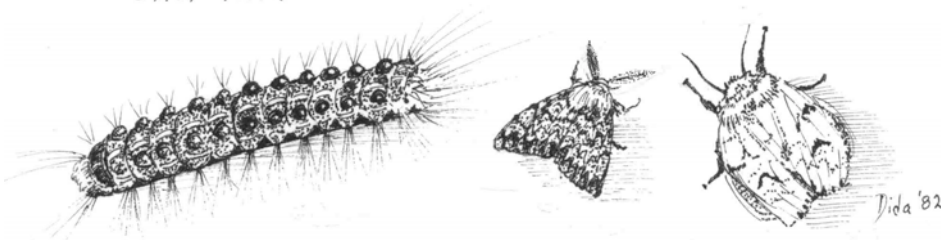
agencies must also approve any aerial spraying.

Gypsy moths can be controlled using the biological insecticide BTK that only affects moth and butterfly caterpillars and is safe for use on crops, forests and near

wetlands, according to the city report. It doesn't affect humans, animals or other insects. Bacteria attack the digestive

tract of the caterpillars and kill them. BTK is sprayed in spring after the caterpillars hatch. It can be applied at ground level but is more expensive and less effective than aerial spraying, because many of the egg masses are near the treetops.

Gypsy Moth



numbers of egg masses seen on trees this year, the situation could be much worse next summer according to the report. One egg mass can result in up to 1,000 caterpillars. The report notes that in addition to municipal approval, regional, provincial and federal

From Natural Resources Canada website: Of European origin, this defoliating insect is regarded as an important major pest due to its wide range of hosts (over 500 different plant species) and its capacity to kill or severely damage trees. Gypsy moth has established itself in Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. It has also been found on the west coast. Preferred tree species are oak, white birch, larch, linden, willow, Manitoba maple, poplar, apple, and speckled alder, along with beech, hemlock, pine, and spruce (the latter when larvae are half-grown).

SCARBOROUGH'S BOB HUNTER MEMORIAL PARK ADDS TO GREENBELT

Extracted from an article by Mike Adler in the Scarborough Mirror, October 28, 2005.

Toronto's new greenbelt will bring the city and its suburbs relief from pollution and wasteful use of land, supporters said this week. Larger than Prince Edward Island, the 1.8 million acre greenbelt is a connected system of farms and forests stretching around the city from Niagara Falls to lakes Scugog and Simcoe.

Environmental Defence, a group that

marshalled conservationists last year under the banner called the Greenbelt Alliance, recognized Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty, Municipal Affairs Minister John Gerretsen and MPP Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth) as "decision-makers that made this green dream a reality".

Churley, environment critic for the Ontario New Democrats, called the

greenbelt "a tremendous achievement" in spite of the "tremendous forces allied against it," which she later said included powerful land developers. "Compromises were made (on the greenbelt) that shouldn't have been made," Churley said, but the government still acted to stop urban sprawl in Toronto's suburbs.

Continued on next page.

In The News continued from previous page.

Land development in those suburbs had gone out of control, contributing to traffic congestion and smog days and covering farms, she argued. "We're losing our prime farmland, source of much of the food we eat." Stopping sprawl with greenbelt means Torontonians must accept more redevelopment in the city, said

Churley, but said it must be done carefully "to stay within the ambiance" of neighbourhoods.

The greenbelt strengthens the Rouge Park's management plan to protect the Rouge River and its tributaries north of the city, said Gord Weeden, chair of the Rouge Alliance that runs

the park. "What it does is ensure cleaner water, cleaner air, will be coming into Toronto." McGuinty also announced a 500-acre Bob Hunter Memorial Park, named for the late Greenpeace co-founder and Toronto broadcaster, will expand Rouge Park just north of Steeles Avenue.

...BUT MONARCH BUTTERFLIES REAPPEARING

Extracted from an article by Will Weissert in the Toronto Star, November 12, 2005

As many as 200 million monarch butterflies may migrate to Mexico this year, a nearly tenfold increase over 2004, when unfavourable weather, pollution and deforestation caused a drastic decline in the population, environmental officials say. Last year fewer than 23 million butterflies survived long enough to leave habitats in the United States and Canada for sanctuaries in the state of Mexico, which borders Mexico City. That was at least 75 per cent lower than expected, but should usher in a monarch resurgence this year, officials said.

After especially cold weather reduced the butterfly population to 28 million during the 2000-2001 migration period, the number of monarchs swelled to 93 million the following year said Jose Bernal of Mexico's environmental protection agency, Profepa. The 2005 estimates will be aided by a new counting system that better determines the tens

of thousands of butterflies on each acre of territory.

The butterflies began reaching Mexico last week and usually

Drawing by Eva Davis.



continue to stream south until early December. The spectacle of millions of butterflies carpeting fir trees attracts 200,000 visitors a year.

Authorities plan to open four major sanctuaries to tourists on Nov. 19.

Hector Gonzalez, Profepa's deputy prosecutor for natural resources, said officials have significantly reduced the rate of deforestation, which has for decades devastated the areas where butterflies winter. He said the number of people arrested for illegal logging is on the decline, as is the amount of timber seized from butterfly habitats. Satellite imagery of the sanctuaries also confirms the drop in deforestation, he said, though officials failed to provide concrete data to support the claim.

Police officers and federal agents have for years patrolled monarch wintering grounds in an effort to stop illegal logging and authorities have set up checkpoints along nearby highways to seize timber as it leaves the area. This year, a new 15-officer police force will patrol butterfly areas. In the past, armed logging gangs have responded to anti-deforestation efforts with violence.

BOOK REVIEW:

Secret Lives of Common Birds – Enjoying Bird Behavior Through the Seasons

by Marie Read, published by Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005

As a relative newcomer to birding, I am eager to go beyond simple identification and learn more about how birds behave, and why. So I was delighted to discover this recent book. It is giving me so much pleasure, I feel compelled to share it!

Marie Read has combined her knowledgeable enthusiasm for birds, incredible photographic skill and an engaging writing style to produce a real gem. In short pithy chapters, and with a delightful sense of humour, she describes the seasonal activities of birds commonly seen in our part of North America. While containing a wealth of information, it is easy reading. I get a kick out of this passage in the chapter entitled “Staking a Claim.”

“The diminutive male Marsh Wren’s strategy is real estate development in a big way! First he sings to claim a small patch of marsh. Then the construction boom starts. Bursting with energy, the male begins building nests – lots of nests. He lashes last year’s wet cattail leaves around stems, weaving them into softball-size nests. The tiny workaholic makes a dozen or more nests, often working on

several at once. Between tasks he hops up onto a cattail to sing his buzzy, rattling song.

When a female arrives, she inspects each of the male’s “courting nests” while he displays. Feathers fluffed out and tail cocked over his back, he sways to and fro. If he and his property make a good impression, the female chooses one of the nests and adds a dense waterproof lining of cattail fluff before laying eggs.”

The photography is superb - not only beautiful, but illustrating in a remarkable way the types of behaviour described in the text. It must represent many hours of watching and waiting for the right moment.

This book will give me enduring pleasure as I browse and re-read, and I’m sure the knowledge it imparts will add much to my enjoyment of watching birds. I hope it will do the same for you.

Wendy Rothwell

WANT A GOOD READ?

Canada’s Boreal Forest (2002) by J.D. Henry

- lots of information about bogs and fens, etc.

Ambassador to the Penguins (2003) by E. Mathews

- based on diaries of Robert Cushman Murphy’s visit to the south Atlantic on a whaling vessel (he became an authority on seabirds)

The Urban Cliff Revolution (2004) by D. Larsen et al

- all about us and the plants and animals that thrive in our company

Explorers’ House (2004) by R.M. Poole

- the story of the National Geographic magazine and our changing opportunities for knowing the world

A Natural History of Ferns (2004) by R.C. Moran

- much about the strange distribution of ferns (many of our species also grow in Asia)

Collapse (2005) by J. Diamond

naturalists will understand why various civilizations have failed

A Guide to Wildlife Sounds (2005) by L. Elliott

- mammals, amphibians and insects are included

Rock Watching (2005) by M. Gordon

- caves and other interesting landscape features are described and locations given (lots of great photographs)

Submitted by Helen Juhola, December 2005

WEATHER (THIS TIME LAST YEAR)

FEBRUARY 2005

Winter appeared to ease off as the global circulation pattern switched to a strong high-latitude jet stream that kept Arctic air far to the north. There was a secondary jet stream that periodically brought in weather from the south. Thus, we were relatively mild with a few episodes of heavy precipitation. Total precipitation was in the 75-100 mm range, the highest since 2001. It was approximately evenly divided between rain and snow. Mean temperatures were -2.2°C downtown and -4.0°C at Pearson, just

over a degree above normal and close to the values for 2004. There were no extremes. Sunshine of 109.8 hours was right in the average range – long sunny spells being offset by a few soggy systems.

The most notable and disruptive weather system brought 10-15 cm of heavy wet snow on the 20th - 21st. This was followed by a subtle trend toward a colder weather pattern again.

Gavin Miller

"The Dreamwork of Whales"

Some of Toronto's Forgotten History

Once a year I lead a walk for the Toronto Field Naturalists starting at Little Norway Park at Bathurst and Queens Quay. Being part of the local community, I began to learn about the totem pole in the park. Thanks to a local dog walker who searched the Arcadian Archives, I discovered the totem pole is actually called a cosmic maypole entitled "The Dreamwork of Whales".

In the mid 70s a group of wood carvers in Vancouver, BC, banded together to form a guild, called Ne Chi Lu, inspired by the Nootka phrase "to see oneself in the eyes of another." After the successful first cosmic maypole [incorporating the carving techniques of the Northwest Coast Indians and that of the traditional European maypole] made its way to New Westminster, April 15 1980, the guild acquired another large 700-year old cedar tree which found its way to an empty field at the foot of Bathurst Street. The 15 ton log was carved by a group of guild carvers each taking a section. A jacking system was used to rotate the pole so it could be carved on all sides. The basic forms were blocked out with chainsaws, adzes and axes with final refinement by hand chisels.

Thousands of curious onlookers viewed the course of the carving which was dedicated on Thanksgiving Day 1980. It became Harbourfront property. The empty field became a children's adventure playground and in 1987 the area was developed by the City's Parks Planning division as Little Norway Park, remembering "Little Norway" in a memorial at the northeast corner.

Most of the carvers have long since returned to BC but all are delighted by what has transpired in the course of time. They all had complete confidence in the earth power generated by the "Dreamwork of Whales."

Peter Iveson, City Parks, TFN member

COMING EVENTS

Toronto Ornithological Club – Jim Baillie Memorial Bird Walks

Saturday, February 4, 2006 - Winter Birds, Durham Region (all day) led by Garth Riley.

Meet at 9:00 am at Pickering GO station to car pool if necessary. Dress warmly and bring a lunch.

North Toronto Green Community – Lost Rivers Walks

For more information call 416-781-7663 or visit www.lostrivers.ca.

- February 11, 2006 – Lost Amphibian Wetlands of Leslieville
Meet at northwest corner of Queen St. E. and Jones Ave. at 2:00 pm. Led by Ian Wheal. Free.
- February 18, 2006 – Bathurst Street: Country Lane to Military Place d'Armes
Meet at northwest corner of Bathurst St. and College St. at 2:00 pm. Led by Ian Wheal. Free.

High Park Walking Tours

Walks begin at 1:30 pm just south of the Grenadier Restaurant. Donations of \$2.00 accepted.

For information phone 416-392-1748 or 416-392-6916 or visit www.highpark.org.

- Sunday, February 5, 2006 - Winter Landscapes (Photo Opportunities – bring your camera)
- Sunday, February 19, 2006 - Identifying Trees in the Winter

University of Toronto Centre for Environment – Seminar

TRCA's Regional Watershed Monitoring Program: research initiatives & project opportunities

Jeff Borisko, Scientist, Toronto & Region Conservation Authority

February 15, 2006 at 4:00 pm, Rm. 1210, Bahen Centre for Information Technology, 40 St. George St., north of College St.

Royal Canadian Institute – Science on Sundays ... live!

J.J.R. Macleod Auditorium, Medical Sciences Building, University of Toronto, 1 King's College Circle.

Sundays at 3 pm. For information phone 416-977-2983 or visit www.royalcanadianinstitute.org.

- February 5, 2006 - Groundwater Contamination and Bioremediation: Myths and Realities – Elizabeth A. Edwards
- February 12, 2006 - The MOST Space Telescope: Big Science on a Small Platform – Robert E. Zee
- February 19, 2006 - Know Your Genes, DNA Diagnostics for Everyone – Ulrich J. Krull
- February 26, 2006 - Making the Molecular Movie: The Great Thought Experience Becomes Reality – J.R. Dwayne Miller

Orchardviewers – Icelandic Holiday

February 23, 2006, 2 pm at Northern District Library, 40 Orchard View Blvd., 2nd floor. For information, phone 416-393-7610. A slide travelogue presented by Ed Freeman, retired geologist and TFN member.

Toronto Bruce Trail Club – Urban Hikes

For more information, phone 416-763-9061 or 1-800-665-HIKE or e-mail information@torontobrucetrailclub.org.

Sunday, February 26, 2006 - High Park. Meet at High Park subway station at 1:00 pm Exit towards High Park Ave.

Rouge Valley Conservation Centre – Hikes in the Rouge Valley

Start and finish at the RVCC, 1749 Meadowvale Rd., Scarborough.

For more information, phone 416-282-0453.

Toronto Entomologists Association

For further information, visit www.ontarioinsects.org.

Mycological Society of Toronto

For information, visit www.myctor.org.

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Steady going on the White Circle Trail, at TFN Nature Reserve, Christmas Day, 1991. Drawing by Joanne Doucette.

