Fall 1997, Volume Four, Number Three

\$100

## HIGHPARK A Park Lover's Quarterly

Buried alive:

Reclaiming lost Garrison Creek

Torch singer:

High praise for High Park's controlled burns

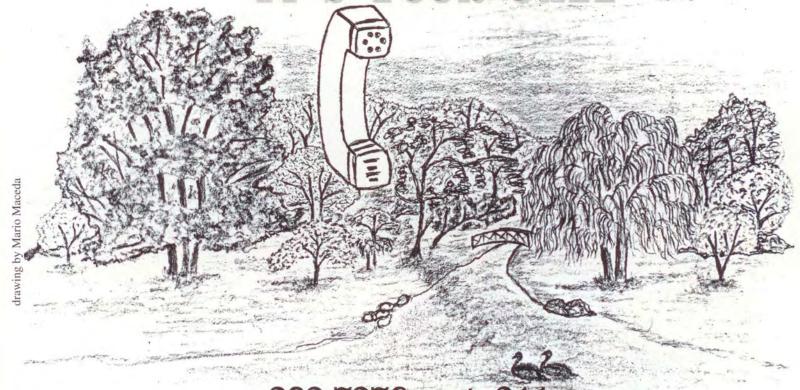
Raptor alert!

winged terrors
 from the skies

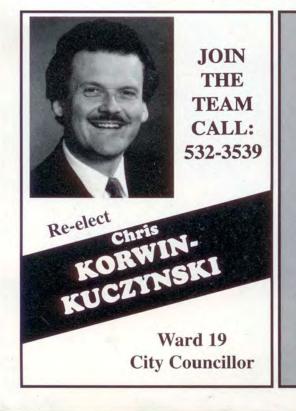
Pumpkin-bobbing for new playground

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#### HIGH PARK

A Park Lover's Quarterly

Editor - Gigi Suhanic

Contributors - D.W. Dorken, Mary Lou Kumagai, Mario Maceda, Joan Miles, Neil Winlaw, Sam Winlaw Cover photo by D.W. Dorken

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#### Letters

#### Racket tackler

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#### **Discovery** is loverly

A series of six self-directed walks allows park lovers to 

**Humble Howard's hidden past tells** 

New artwork of John George Howard, architect, artist and High Park founder, uncovered ......6

Scorching revelations on park's controlled burns

Five months after controlled burns in High Park a naturalist 

The birds of paradise

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#### 'Constant events' in park anger neighbours

High Park used to be and is supposed to be a shrine – a nature lover's paradise, where family and friends could visit and enjoy the

birds, the trees etc.

Please acknowledge that those of us who live around B I o o r / H i g h Park/Quebec Ave. are really pissed off and greatly disturbed by the constant events, demonstrations and concerts taking place at the north end of the park.

There is a total disrespect from organizers who do not realize that this is a community where people live and relax.

This morning around 8:30 a.m. loud music woke us, a DJ was rented for

the Mother Daughter Walk event. Thank God it did not last long. Why do little kids need to walk to loud music? They had a permit and it was published in the papers.

Well, nobody asked us residents if we wanted to listen to blasting music on an otherwise peaceful Sunday. In this society, people must work six to seven days, so when and where can we relax if not in our own homes?

There is a drum group every weekend that occupies a small area in the middle of the park. They beat their drums senseless for hours.

I ask, give High Park back to nature, and *keep* live events that require PA systems, loudspeakers, singers, DJs the hell out of our site next summer.

Csaba L. Jaszberenyi Toronto

• Letters to the Editor are welcome. Respond to the magazine or write about something you saw in High Park or another Toronto park that you like or don't like. Remember to include a phone number with your letter so we can check that you are who you say you are and that you wrote what you said you did!



Visit us at our campaign office at 1655 Bloor St.W. (at Indian Rd.)

531-2226

#### Ahoy! It's a pumpkin armada!

Always wanted to sail, but couldn't afford your own boat? Try a pumpkin.

Folks will be floating their own orange gourds in one of the High Park duck ponds on Sunday, Oct. 26 from 3-6 p.m. Kids will be able to carve their favourite faces on the pumpkins before launching them. The pumpkins will be sold at the fire pit near the zoo in the park's south-east end.

Money raised by the jack-'o'lantern flotilla goes to the new High Park playground.

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Organized by Heritage Toronto, the High Park Citizens' Advisory Committee and the City of Toronto - Parks & Recreation

### Discover parks – take a walk

The city of Toronto's new Discovery Walks program gives people the choice of at least six self-guided tours through some of T.O.'s best-loved neighbourhoods and parks.

The routes follow established trails through neighbourhoods and parks, and are signed with information panels and trail markers. The information panels focus on the cultural and aboriginal her-

itage, and the natural environment of each of the areas.

"We're promoting it as community building and a way to get to know other neighbourhoods," said Jerry Belan, of the city's Parks and Recreation Department.

"This is going to be really well-received by the public," Belan said.

There are six approved routes so far, with possibly more to follow. The Western Ravines and Beaches Walk includes High Park; the Garrison Creek Discovery Walk, also in west Toronto, traces the path of buried Garrison Creek. Other walks include the Eastern Ravine and Beaches Discovery Walk, the Don Valley Hills and Dales Discovery Walk, the Northern

Ravine and Gardens Discovery Walk, and the Central Ravines, Belt Line and Gardens Discovery Walk. This walk follows a lost historic rail line and passes through Mount Pleasant Cemetery.

All the routes are connected by the TTC, and most of them have direct access by sub-

way.

The main features of the High Park route are the park's oakwoodlands, and Grenadier Pond, Lake Ontario and the Sunnyside Pavilion, and the mouth of the Humber River. Also included on this walk is Rennie Park and Catfish

Pond, directly west of Grenadier Pond. Catfish and Grenadier Ponds were orignally connected before the construction of Ellis Avenue. Catfish Pond has a spring-fed marsh at its north end.

The walk takes about two-and-a-half hours and is 6.7 kilometres long. The Parks and Rec Department has created fun sheets for children to complete during or after the walk. The sheets will be available at community centres. For more info call Jerry Belan at 392-7264.



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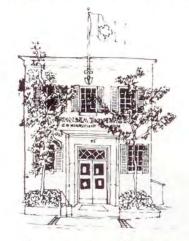
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### High Park founder's treasures unearthed

It was a banner summer for new historical finds related to John Howard, the founder of High Park.

Two watercolour sketches of Howard's, at least 130 years old, were discovered in a sealed cupboard in the coach house of Colborne Lodge. Colborne Lodge is the home Howard designed and lived in until his death in 1890.

According to Richard Gerrard, a historian with Heritage Toronto, which runs Colborne Lodge as a museum, one watercolour is an architectural sketch, possibly of an addition planned for a house. The second was of a landscape. Gerrard said the location of the landscape hasn't been determined. "They were obviously preparatory sketches for finished paintings," Gerrard said.

The condition of the watercolours is very poor. "They are filthy and you can hardly tell what the sketches are," he said. The paper, glued to a sketching board, has torn along stress lines.

It's not clear yet whether anything can be done to improve the condition of the watercolours. Kate Frame, a conservator at Heritage Toronto, said saving the sketches depends on whether they were painted on paper made from cotton rags or from wood pulp. "Conservation treatment is tricky, maybe not possible," Frame said.

The sketches will be on display at Harvest Festival at Colborne Lodge on Oct. 5, 12-5 p.m. in the park's south end.

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#### Reap harvest festival benefits

The tradition of celebrating the harvest is alive and well in High Park on Sunday, Oct. 5.

The annual celebration of the fall season features food, fun and activities in the manner and spirit of harvest celebrations over a century ago. There will be hikes, entertainment, a marketplace, and a Victorian Harvest picnic. There will also be rope making, cider pressing and corn shucking.

For the kids, you will find pumpkin decorating, appleeating contests and lawn

And the High Park greenhouses will be selling savannah plants, grown from seeds of plants native to the park.

The festival runs from noon to 5 p.m. For more information, call 392-6916.



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## Things growing 'berry' well in 'fire country'

High Park is already reaping benefits from the controlled burning of two quarter-acre plots in the park last spring.

A survey of one of the plots with a naturalist from the Parks and Recreation Department's High Park greenhouse shows "subtle but dramatic changes". Those changes are characterized by new and vigorous growth of a number

of native plant species.

"It's slow process. It's not going to be instant. Already we're seeing in subtle ways some dramatic change," said Terry Fahey of the High 를 Park greenhouse. "Clearly there's a strong regeneration in the first year," he

said.

SMOKIN': Ministry of Natural Resources staff monitor a controlled burn in High Park last April.

At the end of April, a speciality team from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources set a low ground fire with naptha gas (camping fuel) mixed with diesel, at two sites - one between West Road and Grenadier Pond, and another slightly north of Centre and Spring Roads.

There was more smoke than flame with the fires never reaching more than one foot in height. When the flames burned out or were doused by ministry staffers, the patch of ground was left blackened and bare.

The burn had been six years in the coming. It was one of many techniques recommended to promote the preservation and restoration of High Park's oak woodlands. The oak woodlands is an ecosystem made up of trees and plants that are fire-resistant and thrive in the growing conditions produced by fire.

Out on the West Road site with Fahey on a

sunny late September day, his knowledgeable eye spots some encouraging signs. fire improved ground, light and soil conditions.

A clump of low-bush blueberry is sprouting numerous new shoots. "They're fire dependent," Fahey says. "Next year we

should have a blueberry crop." Commercial blueberry producers burn every two years. When their crop production drops off they burn again. Other berry bushes that are renewing themselves include huckleberry and serviceberry. A black cherry seedling has also

False Solomon's seal and starry false Solomon's seal provide some splashes of red amidst a sea of green - the plant's brilliant red berries hanging from the tallish stems. "We've noticed really robust growth there," Fahey says. Cylindrical blazing star - High Park's own native blazing star, and regionally rare in the Greater Toronto Area - has been spotted post fire. Plus there are pussytoes underfoot and soft new fronds of sweet fern waving in the breeze.

"In one summer we've really done well." "Over the long haul it will be identical to a garden with defined patches of things. You have no idea how beautiful it's going to be."

- Gigi Suhanic

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## Honouring Garrison Creek with green

Ever walked by a manhole and heard the vigorous sound of rapidly rushing water, even though it hasn't rained in days?

If you haven't, press your ear down to the ground and give a listen. That sound may be coming from one of Toronto's many buried creeks.

Toronto is a city of numerous deep ravines that before the turn-of-the-century had creeks and rivers running at their basins. Just prior to the 1900s, many of these water systems were entombed in sewage pipes, their ravines filled in to flatten the landscape to accommodate a growing city.

Garrison Creek in west Toronto is one such water system. The Garrison Creek Linkage Project is a huge community/municipal government undertaking to establish a continuous green belt along the Garrison Creek's former river bed.

In its natural state, the creek rose north of present-day St. Clair Avenue, poured down

the steep slope to Davenport and onward south into Lake Ontario. The creek was named for the military garrisons of Fort York built in 1792 by then governor of Upper Canada, John Graves Simcoe. By 1880 the creek was buried in a sewer deep below its original bed. The final remnants of the creek in the Christie Pits disappeared in 1912.

Garrison Creek is long gone, but one of its legacies is a system of parks in west Toronto strung out along the creek's original path – Christie Pits, Bickford Park, Harbord Park, Dufferin Grove Park, Ossington Old Orchard Public School, Fred Hamilton Park, George Ben Parkette, Trinity-Bellwoods, Stanley Park, Fort York, Gore Park, Coronation Park and Little Norway Park.

#### Using river's spirit

Four to five years ago, different environmental and community groups arrived at the same conclusion that the creek should be honoured and its spirit put to work to improve the local environment.

A series of ideas have emerged, the product of community meetings and a brainstorming workshop this summer. Some of those ideas that have emerged include uncovering two bridges that crossed the creek, one at Harbord that would link Bickford Park and Harbord Park, and another at Crawford Street that would link Trinity Park and Bellwoods Park.

Another possibility is to increase the amount of green space by converting publicly-owned land to parks. Working with private landowners has also been suggested. Community groups are eyeing a Miracle Mart on College Street near Bathurst Street and the feasibility of improving the site, possibly turning it into a town square and linking it with nearby Fred Hamilton Park.

To find out how you can get involved in the Garrison Creek project call 392-1316.

#### Park meets galore in the works

The High Park Citizen's Advisory Committee meets on Wednesday, Nov. 19 at 6:30 p.m. at the Keele Rec Centre.

The park's natural environment sub-committee meets Oct. 7, also at 6:30 p.m. at the Keele Rec Centre, and then every second Tuesday after that. (To confirm the

Nov. 11 meeting, call 392-7276, ext. 301.)

The High Park Citizen's Advisory Committee's latest project – an archive of information about High Park – is available at the Runnymede Library.

The archive contains meeting minutes, clippings and reports.

## Humber's health to be discussed

Following the release of an important new report on the Humber River, there will be a public meeting on options for fisheries management of the river Oct. 7 at 7 p.m. at Swansea Town Hall, 95 Lavinia Ave.





#### Watching raptors like hawks

The Greater Toronto Raptor Watch has so far recorded a "very successful" 1997 season from its hill in High Park, where the group keeps track of raptors — birds of prey — during fall migration.

As of Sept. 22, the group had recorded a total of 8,658 birds funneling south overhead. High Park is a recognized migration route because it is a significant island of green close to Lake Ontario.

"The High Park Hawk Watch is a continentally recognized monitoring site with numbers that surprise most people when you consider that High Park is the only site with an urban location," said Don Barnett, a spokesperson for the group.

The group experienced the first big flights Sept. 3-4 when it counted 689 sharp-shinned hawks during those two days. A second wave on Sept. 13-14 saw 2,147 raptors flow through. Some species of particular interest includ eight bald eagles.

A third major wave Sept. 21-22 brought huge number of broadwinged hawks bringing the count for that group to 4,777. Group members track weather to predict migration patterns. The best weather for hawk migration involves north/north-west winds and an oncoming cold front. The counts for Toronto are published in the journal of the North American Hawk Migration Association.

Hawk Hill, located just north of the Grenadier Restaurant, will be staffed daily from 9a.m.-5p.m. until Nov. 30. Anyone is welcome to join and learn more about the birds flying overhead.

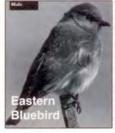
High Park Pundit......Page 13



#### Facts of flight

- Migrant birds generally have longer, more pointed wings that nonmigratory species — a feature which minimizes air resistance.
- Birds' large, four-chambered hearts proportionately weighs six times more than a human heart.
- The resting heart rate of a small songbird is 500 beats per minute; a hummingbird's is 1,000 beats per minute.
- Birds' lungs remain inflated at all times to provide a constant supply of fresh air.
- Source: Wild Birds Unlimited

#### Songbird migration continues in October







September is peak migration season for songbirds. However there are still lots of unique species of birds passing through High Park and maybe stopping at your birdfeeder as they head south. Some October migrants include:

- · Palm warbler
- · White-throated sparrow

- · Purple finch
- · White-crowned sparrow
- · Hermit thrush
- · Cedar waxwing
- · Eastern bluebird
- · Common grackle
- · Ruby-crowned and golden kinglet
- · Yellow-bellied sapsucker

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Colborne Lodge, the home of High Park founders John and Jemima Howard is a restored historic house museum reflecting gracious country life in the 1870s. From its summer and winter kitchens, these period recipes from 19th century cookbooks are typical of what is produced for demonstrations of historic cooking. For museum hours and additional information about the recipes, please call 392-6916.

#### Soft Gingerbread with Fruit Original recipe

- · One pound and a half of flour
- · Half a pound of sugar
- · Half a pound of butter
- · One pint of molasses
- · Four eggs
- · One teacup of milk
- · Two teaspons of pearlash
- · One ounce of ginger
- · One ounce of cinnamon
- · One ounce of nutmeg
- · One pound of currants

From: Anonymous, The Cook Not Mad; or, Rational Cooker (James MacFarland: Kingston, Upper Canada 1831; The Cherry Tree Press; Toronto, 1972 and 1982), page 42, number 127.

This recipe for soft gingerbread follows an American innovation of the late 18th century in which milk and eggs were added to the traditional European hard gingerbread biscuit doughs to make a cake batter instead.

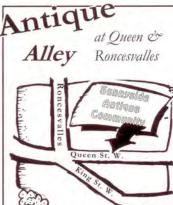
Like most of the recipes in this book, the author assumed the cook was already knowledgeable about basic baking techniques. One assumption was separation of the eggs so that the yolks and whites could be beaten separately to incorporate as much air as possible for a lighter cake texture. Prior to the invention of chemical leavening agents it was common to need at least eight eggs and often many more for even the most basic cake. Since this book in one of the earliest to use chemicals as a supplement to the eggs, there are fewer eggs necessary for the final result of the cake.

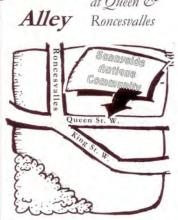
Pearlash (refined potash, or potassium carbonate) was the first chemical leavening agent. It is still available in some delicatessens specializing in German foods, because the Germans still use it extensively. It needs to be dissolved in milk or water, otherwise it is not distributed throughout the dough well.

#### Our Modern Fauivalent

Our Model	rn Equivalent	
125 ml	soft butter	half cup
125 ml	white sugar	half cup
2	medium eggs	2
250 ml	molasses	1 cup
5 ml	pearlash	1 tsp.
	dissolved in 10 ml (2 tsp.) milk	
	OR	
5 ml	baking soda	1 tsp.
10 ml	ginger	2 tsps.
10 ml	cinnamon	2 tsps.
10 ml	nutmeg	2 tsps.
250 ml	currants	1 cup
	plumped in hot water	er
750 ml	white flour	3 cups
125 ml	whole milk	half cup

Cream butter and sugar until very light. Whisk egg yolks to a pale yellow cream, about 5 minutes. Blend yolks into butter and sugar. Add molasses, baking soda, spices and plumped currants. Blend in flour, one cup at a time, alternately with milk. Whisk egg whites until stiff. Fold whites into batter. Turn into a well-buttered or greased 9x9 cake pan or about 15 muffin tins. Bake in a moderate oven, 180 degrees Celsius, four about one hour or until a tooth pick inserted in centre comes out clean.









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of your loved
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memory
through the
growth of
new life.





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## It was a dirty job – but somebody had to do it

by Joan Miles

Invisible, massive sewage storage tanks were installed in the north-east corner of High Park 80 years ago. The J.H. McKnight Construction Company was awarded the contract for building this vital piece of public infrastructure – the lowest of seven bids at \$48,7000 – in 1914. The

structures were built above ground, and then covered with fill. There were two major sewers feeding into this local network, one from Woodville Avenue (now Indian Grove) between Annette and Bloor Streets and on Clendenan Avenue.

In 1908 Toronto voters had approved a

budget of \$2.4 million for the construction of intercepting sewers and a sewage treatment plant, and \$750,000 for a water filtration plant. The project was completed in 1913. The main sewage treatment plant was located at Ashbridges Bay.

All the sewage from the West Toronto system was directed to the High Park site. The sewage settled in the tanks, while the water was carried in the storm sewer extending down Keele Street – now Parkside Drive – to Lake Ontario. Sludge was drawn

from the tank into the sanitary sewer laid under the storm sewer, which connected with the Sunnyside Pumping Station. From here it was pumped to the plant at Ashbridges Bay.

The impetus for this major commitment of municipal funds came from the resolve to tackle serious



**DIG IT:** Building the sewage storage tank in High Park in 1914.

health problems arising from the practice of dumping raw sewage into Lake Ontario. Sewers had existed in Toronto since 1835. Raw sewage was still being dumped between the shore and the Island. Meanwhile, Lake Ontario remained the source of drinking water for Torontonians even as the link between polluted water and water-borne diseases such as typhoid was being substantiated.

Sources: "Toronto Above and Below" Market Gallery, City of Toronto Archives. "Pipe Dreams", Metro Archives.

#### Econotes

GREEN BACK-TO-SCHOOL TIPS (BY MOLLY CREALOCK): Bring your lunch in a reusable cotton luch bag; carry around a recycled plastic mug to avoid disposable cups, write on both sides of a sheet of paper; use refillable pens; walk, ride your bike, or use public transit instead of driving to school; do a school project on the environment; use tupperware or an empty yogurt container instead of plastic baggies or aluminium foil; buy products that require little or no packaging; bring

your teacher an organically grown apple. (reprinted from Grassroots Environmental Products newsletter)

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HOT GREEN WEB SITE. Evergreen Foundation: http://www.evergreen.ca.

EcoNotes is a community service from the Bloor West Eco-Village. Contact us c/o Swansea Town Hall, 95 Lavinia Avenue, box 107, Toronto On M6S 3H9.

## Hunting the hunters high atop Hawk Hill

High atop windswept Hawk Hill in High Park, they scan the skies with their binoculars, ever searching, searching. Are they looking for UFOs? A polar invasion of stealth

bombers? Nope. They are looking for raptors to count. But not, as some might think, those seven-foot millionaires in purple nylon underwear who slam-dunk basketballs downtown. The kind of raptors these people are looking for wear feathers and eat rodents for lunch. We are talking birds of prey, here - eagles, hawks, ospreys and (I am not making this up) turkey vultures. The folks with the binoculars are part of the Greater Toronto Raptor Watch.

It seems that every fall, like many other birds, winged predators get the urge to travel to sunnier climes. And being creatures of habit, they always take the same route, which just happens to pass directly

over High Park.

When this intrepid reporter arrived at Hawk Hill on a recent Monday afternoon, she found everyone gathered around the picnic tables, chatting under a brilliant blue sky. Little sulphur-yellow butterflies fluttered nearby, and the sun poured down like warm honey. On the tables, thermoses containing beverages of

with necessities and comforts, a small portable radio tuned to a weather report. Clipboards with checklists and pens sat at the ready. Everyone kept glancing at the sky to the north, occasionally raising binoculars to check on some distant dot.

Some of these watchers were interested members of the public, said the unofficial leader of the Raptor Watch, Don Barnett, while others were volunteers who signed up for regular shifts! Such dedication to duty! And, said Barnett, they work for free - "No money changes hands," he assured. Intrepid reporter found herself thinking that some of us might actually pay to spend a day under such lovely conditions. Ignorance is bliss.

Her only encounter with a feathered raptor had happened one previous fall in High Park. A bird more than a foot tall, with a hooked bill and fierce eyes, had fluttered down from a pine tree six feet away and stomped about on the ground, stalking a fullgrown squirrel. But gormless reporter had failed to note the right distinguishing characteristics, thereby making a precise ID impossible. Apparently, there's more to this bird identification thing than one might think.

Indeed there is, says Don Barnett. The regular members of the Greater Toronto Raptor Watch team, while not professionals in the

field, have a good deal of expertise among them. They need to have. While the sky may be blue and empty one minute, the next minute it may be filled with hundreds of birds beating their way along the migration route. It takes a keen eye (dare we say an eagle eye?) and sound knowledge of what 17 species of raptors look like in flight to identify and count them as they pass overhead. On the previous Sunday, Hawk Hill watchers had logged over 4,000 raptors.

So what are they looking for, anyway, as they train their binoculars on something flapping high above? For this purpose, says Barnett, colour and plumage are not usually important. Because the birds are mostly silhouetted against the sky, they're looking more for shapes of wings, tails and bodies, and the speed and style of the wing beat. If the birds fly lower, watchers may be lucky enough to see an underwing colour pattern that can also help identify the species. On very rare occasions, the birds will actually land in nearby trees, making identification a walk in the park, so to speak.

If you'd like to try for an unforgettable experience, too, you're more than welcome to join the watchers, they say. Weather permitting (birds don't like to be out in lousy

weather, either).





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New fall hours Tues-Thurs 7:30am-7pm Friday 7:30am-9pm Saturday 9am-9pm Sunday 9am-6pm

Weekend brunch hours extended Sat-Sun 9-4

## Make a date with High Park



#### Volunteer for outdoor work

Upcoming dates and activites are: Sunday, Oct. 12

Planting & seed harvesting Sunday, Oct. 26

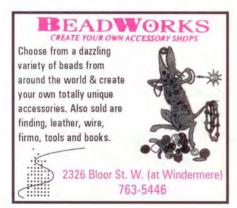
Wetland planting & seed harvesting Sunday, Nov. 9

Seed harvesting & seed cleaning Sunday, Nov. 23 Seed cleaning

Meet at the south entrance to the Grenadier Restaurant in High Park at 10:30 a.m. This program is run by the High Park Volunteer Stewardship Program which works to restore the park's native and natural environment.

- phone 392-7276, ext. 301 for more information

#### This message appears in the Quarterly courtesy of:

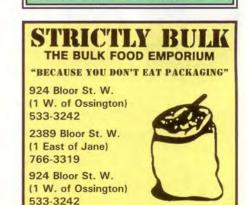




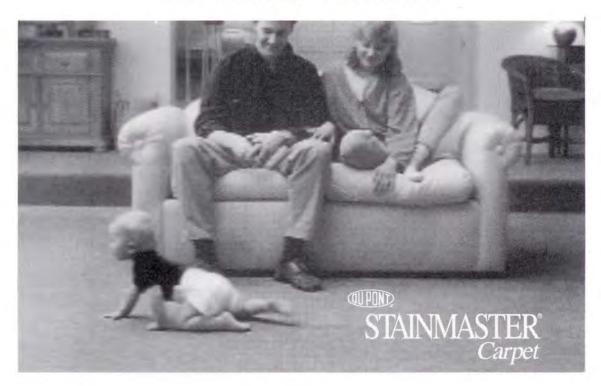








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## Western Ravines and Beaches Discovery Walk

Follow scenic footpaths and a beach boardwalk. Experience natural ponds and marshes, oak woodlands, and lakeshore parks.

Get ready to spend an hour or two discovering how west Toronto's ravines, parks, gardens and beaches are linked by this Western Ravines and Beaches Discovery Walk.

Discovery Walks is a new programme that promotes a series of existing linked walking trails in public parks and open spaces throughout the City.

Interpretive and directional signage along each walking route will assist in self-guided discovery of an area's natural environment and heritage.

Working with local community centres, programmes are being developed to augment the learning experience about interesting historic, life/earth science and cultural features found along each route.

For more information about this future programme, please call Jerry Belan at 392-7264

