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HIGH PARK

A Park Lover's Quarterly



Inside: Test plotting, goosing the Canada Geese,
I'll be dog-gone, oak lore and leaves,
& a summer events calendar

Grenadier Pond, looking east from west bank.



photo courtesy Metro Toronto Reference Library

High Park

A Park Lover's Quarterly

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Publisher's Statement

High Park fulfills the personal needs and interests of many people - expansive backyard and playground for those without a patch of green to call their own; a training ground for cyclists and runners; a bird watcher's delight. While the reasons Torontonians flock to the park are many, what they do share in common is an abiding love and concern for the park's wellbeing. This magazine is intended to keep that community abreast of what the future has in store for High Park's 399 acres.

A special thanks to Tom Hazlitt, my parents George and Michele Suhanic, my siblings Liza, Claudia and West, my brothers-in-law Ian and Joseph and sister-in-law Eduarda. Also thanks to Ken Winlaw and David Cerney.

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photo by Mike Bahan

All looks quiet on the western shore from Grenadier Pond's High Park side.

Grenadier's west slope poised for subdivision

by Gigi Suhanic

Standing at the edge of Grenadier Pond's east shore, the park-side shore, I gaze enviously westward. Majestic homes crest the pond's opposite slope. Windows glint occasionally. Chimneys poke through the treetops. The unmolested shoreline beckons below. From where I'm loitering - on the wrong side of the tracks - life on the pond's flipside looks pretty grand. The envy rises in my throat. I wash the green monster down, and smooth an unbecoming frown from my brow. "In this topsy-turvy world of ours," I remind myself, "the lucky few might get a hot-dam view, but at least they're providing the pond with some stability and security, an insurance policy to hold change at bay."

As serendipity would have it, nothing could be further from the truth. Grenadier Pond's western slope is in for a doozy of a change. Scan the pond's west side from south to north about three-quarters of the way up to a dense patch of forest. A housing development is proposed that would dramatically alter this site. The project that would disturb the 3.92-acre site calls for its subdivision into seven lots. Six new homes would be built at the upper end of the elongated lots, averaging about 20,000 square feet in size. The seventh and existing home fronting on 227 Ellis Avenue would be maintained - a beautiful, long-standing creation with connecting conservatory. The subdivision would be accessed by a private dead-end laneway leading in from Ellis Avenue.

This isn't the first time development has been proposed for this site. In the spring of 1992 a public information meeting was convened at Morningside-High Park Presbyterian Church to introduce neighbours to drawings for a nine-house subdivision. Previous to the meeting, the property's fate had been a source of speculation, following its purchase by Pizza Pizza founder and president Michael Overs. The sixty-odd people at the church gathering hit the

roof. The plan vanished into the night.

But the truth of this latest project is that it may very well stick. And the residents know it. "I understand this is private property and there is not a lot the city can do to stop it," says Tony ten Kortenaar. Ten Kortenaar lives at 245 Ellis Avenue, directly beside the proposed development. He and another neighbour have been representing several of the residents at a series of private meetings with city planners and the project's architect. Immediate residents are having difficulty cozying up to a subdivision in their well-established area. Others have recoiled at the potential for environmental damage.

Jamie Bell, a well-known advocate of High Park also admits there appear to be all too few options. He acknowledges if the site is to be developed this project is probably as good as it's going to get. "There's no question they're trying to do this in the most responsible way possible," Bell says. "Still," he says, "I oppose the development out of the point of spoiling the natural environment. The question is can you limit development to benefit the whole at the expense of the person who sits on the land?"

Apparently not. "This is a profit-making project," says Carson Woods, the project's architect. "We want to be a low-key, exclusive, expensive development," he says. That's why he says he has held back on squeezing two more lots out of the property. With the clock and money ticking away, there appear to be no stumbling blocks at the most basic of planning levels. The houses, the lot sizes and even the distance between the homes more than meet the requirements of the zoning bylaw. "Our intention is to do a first class plan," Woods says. "We're not going to do something that dumps dirt in the pond." Woods says the houses would be built on the property's grassy plateaus. He also says the

homes' footprints have been designed to accommodate the protection of as many native trees as possible.

While Woods is an award-winning architect, most of the work he has done to date involves paving the way for approval of the plan of subdivision. Once that is in hand, according to Woods, it's Overs' intention to sell the lots. Construction of the homes will be left to the individual owners. This has neighbours worried. "We have to make sure the lots are sold with stringent rules. The drawings look beautiful now, but once the lots get into other hands there's a different game," ten Kortenaar says. However, the planning department says the new owners would be bound by any conditions attached to the subdivision's approval.

Certainly, the rules regarding this development are more rigorous because of its location. The City of Toronto's official plan designates Grenadier Pond an environmentally significant area and the abutting ravine lands, natural areas. The plan lays out a series of conditions the developer has so far agreed to.

The official plan calls for the developer to commission an environmental impact study. The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) has reviewed drafts of the study. "I've seen worse and I've seen better," says Dave Simpson of the MNR. MNR staff have concluded while the development won't directly disturb the pond, it has the potential for some impact, erosion and stormwater runoff posing the greatest threats. The developers propose, in the study, to protect the pond from erosion during construction using silt fences. Snow fencing will protect the areas not being built on. Stormwater will be managed on site using porous pavement and soak pits. The pits act as catch basins, filling up and slowly releasing the water into the ground.

Other conditions the official plan calls for include, a shoreline protection plan and a ravine buffer zone. The developer has agreed to transfer a minimum 10-foot-deep strip of the entire property's shoreline to the Parks and Recreation Department for dedication as parkland. That dedication could increase to a maximum width of 20 feet if a property line dispute between the owner and Parks and Rec is resolved in the city's favour. The official plan tacks on a buffer zone of 10 metres past the ravine protection line.

When the present official plan

was finalized in 1993, council made provision for the protection of important Toronto views and vistas. Bell for one, is not satisfied that the developer is adequately protecting the view. So much so, that Bell is circulating a petition that opposes any development on the pond's slopes on the grounds it will harm "the historic vista" from High Park. Bell has so far, collected 500 signatures. He is hoping to score some points with council on the question of views and historic vistas.

There is another outstanding piece of business that could prove to be a complication. A 3,500-year-old archaic burial site was discovered in the 1920s at Grenadier Pond's north end. The Toronto Historical Board believes there's a chance this property could contain significant finds and has asked the developer to do an assessment. The developer has agreed to do so once the subdivision is approved. If a discovery were made the developer would be bound by the rules governing archeological finds. The site could be excavated although the preference is to leave it intact.

The planning department expects to bring its recommendations to the July 28 meeting of Toronto City Council's

Land Use Committee. "Basically if they answer all the concerns of the people they have nothing wrong," says Paul Bedford, Deputy, Community and Physical Planning, Department of Planning and Development. The project could come before council as early as September. From there it will go to the Metro level of government where plans of subdivision are granted by the Commissioner of Planning. According to a Metro planner the decision will be based on the city's recommendation's.

This project has been sifting through the process for a year. Residents say they're is no hurry to see that end. Ward One Councillor Bill Boytchuk has asked that the development's July appointment with the Land Use Committee be postponed to September.

"If we let this guy go ahead with this, there should be a price to pay, we should exact a price for the loss of the view. I still feel there ain't much in it for me, only for the six people who get homes on the pond." "Ten years from now we'll look back and wonder how we let it happen," Bell says.

Filtering out the facts of Grenadier Pond's sedimentation facility

by Gigi Suhanic

Grenadier Pond is choking on sediment. Nowhere is the pond's dilemma more dramatically illustrated than at its north end. Today, sediment one-metre deep has filled in the remaining wetland. Aerial photos from 1971 to 1989 show the sediments have crept from zero to 100 metres into the pond's north end. The race is now on to halt the sediment's extending reach before it chug-a-lugs the whole pond.

An engineered remedy is in the works that the project's proponents swear will dramatically cut the amount of sediment going into the pond and improve its water quality. A consultant contracted by the City of Toronto Department of Public Works and the Environment says sediment from a major stormwater outfall is

spoiling the pond and has made a case for the construction of an \$800,000 sediment facility at Grenadier Pond's north end.

Consultant M.M. Dillon Limited estimates 63,000 kilograms of sediment dump into the north end every year. In practical terms that equals about three to four dump truck loads of sediment. In its environmental study report M.M. Dillon targets the Clendenan outfall as one of the major sources. The Clendenan outfall represents the tail end of a massive stormwater system servicing 104 hectares of homes directly to the north. M.M. Dillon links the expansion of the Clendenan system from 27 hectares to 104 in 1975, with the separation of the sewage and stormwater systems, to the increase in sediment accumulation in the 1970s and '80s. Also, water quality samples from Clendenan show levels of phosphorous,

copper, iron, lead, zinc, nickel and suspended solids exceeding Provincial Water Quality Objectives. Sediment samples taken from Grenadier Pond's north end show raised levels of lead, zinc, phosphorous and pesticides.

In the ever escalating battle to improve Grenadier Pond's water quality, M.M. Dillon recommends building a 2,600 cubic metre sediment retention pond. "Control/reduction of the sediment/contaminated load to the north end of Grenadier Pond is the logical first step in improving both the overall health of the wetland and Grenadier Pond water quality," the report says. The sediment pond could potentially be built, if the Public Works and the Environment's schedule is adhered to, as early as February 1995. The 90-metre-long and 40-metre-wide contraption would consume two-thirds of the south end of the playground to the north of Grenadier Pond.

It's expected the new facility would catch about 73 per cent of the sediment flowing through it. Basically, what the pond does is it allows sediment that has hitched a ride with stormwater, to settle. The water is then released into Grenadier Pond. A bypass would reroute the remaining 27 per cent, water and sediment, directly into the pond.

Certainly there exists a general agreement that the cumulative effects of sediment are seriously threatening Grenadier Pond's existence. The bone being picked over is M.M. Dillon's theory on the main source of sediment.

University of Toronto professor Ann Zimmerman believes the drastic incline of Wendigo Ravine slope to be the major sediment source at present. Zimmerman is basing this on the work of a fourth year U of T student who monitored Wendigo Creek and the Wendigo Ravine slope from September to March of this year. The student recorded what Zimmerman calls "massive slope failure". The proposed facility is situated to take the slope's runoff into account. But, Zimmerman believes the problem must be addressed at the source. That means stabilizing the slope and re-establishing native plants that would hold the soils in place.

A circular search

One local resident also says M.M. Dillon hasn't made a full accounting of the sediment in the pond. David MacAlpine lives on Wendigo Way, slightly north of the proposed facility, and believes a vacant lot at the corner of Bloor Street and Ellis Park Road was a main culprit in the past. Erosion from the lot was curtailed when retaining walls were placed around the steeply sloping property's borders. He warns the city is proposing a solution to a problem that may no longer exist. He wants further core sampling done. "I'm horrified the process is going ahead without that understanding," he says.

But a senior member of city staff says chasing the sediment source is like trying to catch your own shadow. "This is an engineering method that is proven. We're not trying to define where all the sediment is coming from or we'll go around in circles," says David Crichton, a Senior Design Engineer with

Public Works and the Environment. Zimmerman agrees the project shouldn't grind to a halt over the search for sediment sources. She says the project should proceed and any glaring omissions in logic will come out during an environmental assessment.

Public Works and the Environment is also being stretched in all directions over the new pond's size. Two thousand six hundred cubic metres is a compromise arrived at by the consultants who acquiesced to demands that the local parkette be saved. The optimal size of 4000 cubic metres would have swallowed the parkette whole and captured 82 per cent of the sediment versus 73 per cent. M.M. Dillon calls the tradeoff "reasonable". However, the compromise has irked those who support the project and believe the pond's best interests must come first. Meanwhile, the tradeoff has done little to placate the surrounding neighbours who remain skeptical of the process because a sedimentation facility already exists at the head of Grenadier Pond. This newest pond is just a beefier version of the present one, built in 1983 under the auspices of the Department of Parks and

"People have to keep in mind this is not a small budget item. If the project gets dragged out and it becomes clear the community is not happy, you may see the money disappear. The money battle has been won."

Rob Maxwell

Ward 11 Toronto City Councillor

Recreation. The 400 cubic metre pond is woefully inadequate to handle the problem it was intended to correct. Today it's a, gooey mess with a mucky bottom and islands of sediment breaking through the water's murky surface. It was dredged once, in 1989. Now, the water and sediment rush directly through. Residents wonder if they're courting disaster on a bigger and uglier scale.

Present pond a "cesspool"

"For 12 years we've been living with a cesspool. Now we're being told we're going to live with a cesspool six times as large," says Glen MacArthur. MacArthur who lives across from the present facility was speaking at a June meeting of Toronto City Council's Land Use Committee where the larger sediment pond jumped the first hurdle on its journey to approval. "I prefer to do anything to improve High Park. This is a further devastation. I can't believe you're going to put this in our front yard. Nobody along that stretch supports it," MacArthur says.

"The deputants are correct in describing the present pond as a cesspool," says Nicholas Vardin, the Commissioner of Public Works and the Environment. "It is too small to do the job. This is a proven way to deal with this type of problem." Vardin told the Land Use Committee that the pond will be dredged every five years as part of regular sewer maintenance.

Neighbours lost their case at Land Use Committee. Locals will surely take their arguments to the provincial government which has the jurisdiction to bump the sedimentation pond up to a full environmental assessment.

Many have asked, "What's the hurry?" As Ward 11 Councillor Rob Maxwell cautioned recently, "People have to keep in mind this is not a small budget item. If the process gets dragged out and it becomes clear the community is not happy, you may see the money disappear. The money battle has been won. Keep that in mind."

There's been a whole lot of talk over the past two years about the restoration of the Black Oak Savannah. Now the Department of Parks and Recreation has decided it's time to put the words to work. This summer marks the launch of a series of research plots and demonstration sites intended to provide the department's consultant on the restoration with answers to some unresolved questions, and hopefully, attract public support for the restoration.

Parks and Recreation consultant Steven Apfelbaum unveiled a 16-plot test and demonstration plan to the public on June 16. The plots, the largest of which measure one-quarter of an acre, are scattered mostly throughout the park's wilder areas. The sites will play host to the testing of techniques like controlled burning, herbicide brushing and planting. "We have a few key questions that need to be answered. These test plots are not intended to tell us everything. They are intended to tell us these plots are typical and we can refer to the existing research," Apfelbaum says.

As much as the sites were selected for their research potential, they were also chosen for their public relations and outreach value. "Really, we're targeting education, acceptance, and consensus building," Apfelbaum says. The savannah restoration has gotten a rough ride over the past year. According to Apfelbaum it's absolutely necessary and time is of the essence. He says the savannah is a degraded ecosystem populated by old oak trees at the end of their life span. Bird communities like Bluebirds and Fly Catchers have shrunk. "The bird species associated with oak savannas are not dominant or not present," Apfelbaum says. Introduced species of trees and shrubs are shading out native plants and causing soil erosion. The test plots represent the tiniest of first steps in a project that could potentially see the restoration of 125 of High Park's 399 acres. Below is a discussion of the plots, and what they are intended to show. Refer to the facing map for the plots' locations. If you go into the park to find the plots, expect to have to ferret them out, at least until some promised signs appear.

Plots A, C, M, G - These plots harbour the most intact stands of savannah in the park. According to Apfelbaum, what is missing from these sites are baby oaks and a diverse understory of wildflowers. It's Apfelbaum's theory that the acorns and oak seedlings are falling prey to the squirrels. He hopes to validate his theory by trapping acorns under wire mesh boxes, out of reach of the squirrels probing paws, at plots A and G. Wildflower seed and plants will be scattered and planted to test their abilities against the dominating lawn grass. Ground fire will also be used to suppress the grass and stimulate seed banks

Controlled burning will also be used at plot M to make life more favourable for the Blue Lupine. Plot M is considered one of the richest sites in the park because of the variety of rare plants found there. The lupine, a small blue flower and one of the biological cornerstones of the park, is now limited to isolated clumps at plot M. To increase the flower's territory, it will be re-introduced at plot A.

Plots D, H1, H2, I - The focus of these plots is public education with plot D the centrepiece of the demonstration plan. Located behind the Grenadier Restaurant, the plot revolves around one White Oak. It's proposed to start a savannah garden under the oak using native plants, the goal being to introduce the public to the wildflowers and prairie grasses that once flourished in High Park. At plot D, people will also get a first-hand look at the "exclosures" used to protect baby oaks from squirrels. Plots H1 and H2, on Hillside Gardens, are flowering shrub beds. The shrubs will be removed and native plants put in their place. Plot I, also a teaching site, will be used for seed production. The plot is located on a grassy knoll just north of the greenhouses and will be planted with savannah and prairie species. The seed will be harvested for future restoration works.

Plots B, E, F, K, L, N - These plots are representative of what's ailing the savannah. At most of these sites non-native species of trees and shrubs have taken over spreading dense shade. The low light is starving out the native plants and causing soil erosion. Plot B is thickly shrouded with Green Ash saplings. Fire is proposed to push the ash back. Sassafras and Tartarian Honeysuckle are also shading out plots K and L. Cutting back and selective brushing with an herbicide are proposed at K and L to let light reach the ground to stimulate the seed bank. It's hoped that will halt some serious erosion. Controlled burning is proposed at N. While most of the plots are intended to confirm existing research, plots E and F were chosen to provide solutions to the mysterious Swallowwort Vine, also known as Dog Strangling Vine. The vine is a new plant to the region that is rapidly spreading. "Nobody knows how to manage it," Apfelbaum says. The creeping plant wraps its sinewy branches around another, choking it out.

Plot J - This plot was the site of an accidental fire in 1991. Once the smoke had cleared, park staff discovered the flames had brought to life a long-dormant seed bank of savannah and prairie plants including Big Blue Stem, Little Blue Stem, Indian Grass, Bush Clover, Sky Blue Aster, Blue Bells, Blazing Star, Gray Goldenrod and several regionally rare sedges. The burn-site which is remotely located will be used to study the fire's effects by comparing with nearby unburned areas

Testing, testing.....



The oak savannah project
launches
into test mode

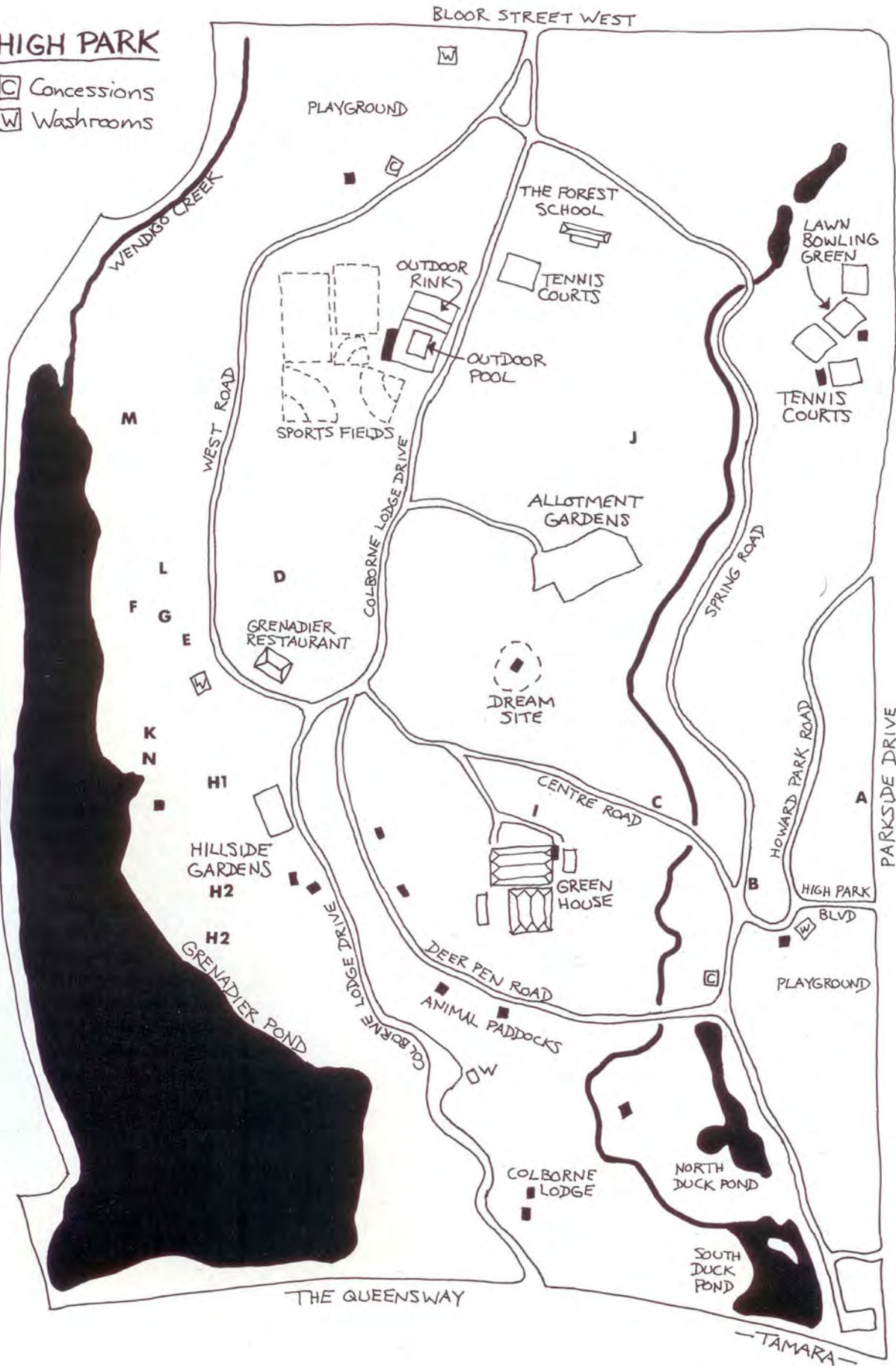
by Gigi Suhanic

The plots were laid out and mapped in June. Plant inventories have been taken to give the research results some context. But what about a work schedule so people know where and when to go to peer over the consultant's shoulder? The only confirmed date is a public event on August 14 at plot D. A question mark remains beside the herbicide brushing, best done in the winter. The controlled burning, could start in the

Continued on Page 10

HIGH PARK

-  Concessions
-  Washrooms



map by Tamara Kure

Goosing th

by Jil

Canadians and the Canada Goose have more in common than merely a shared nationhood. Both are ardent migrators whose yearly southern winterings are in rapid decline. Harsh economic times have kept the humans at home, while an overabundance of food has meant the geese are content to forgo their annual journey.

Not that long ago three million birds were migrating from Canada each year. From the Tundra, James Bay and Hudson's Bay, at least 10 subspecies of Canada Geese would instinctively follow one of four flight paths south to the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. These flyways have been described as the superhighways in the sky with the geese traveling in formation as high as 9,000 feet, at a consistent speed of 40 miles per hour. They would make the return flight to the same wintering and breeding grounds year after year. But times are changing and many geese no longer migrate any further south than the urban areas where their loyal extended families are producing new members each year.

Approximately 300 Canada Geese have now made High Park, specifically the south west corner of Grenadier Pond, their year-round home. According to an environmental consulting firm hired by the Toronto Department of Parks and Recreation, the birds' prodigious numbers are taking a toll on the pond's frail ecosystem. A recent study of Grenadier Pond by environmental consultants, Gartner Lee Limited, found that the feces from waterfowl, particularly Canada Geese, is a major contributor to high levels of phosphorous in the pond. While phosphorous occurs naturally in the environment, it becomes unnatural in great amounts, upsetting fish populations and plant life. It also causes excessive amounts of algae - the unsightly greenish-yellow mass floating on the water's surface. Part of the solution in restoring the pond to health is to reduce the number of geese in residence. "It's as though we think the goose is king and should be allowed to rampage through town," says Deborah Martin-Downs, Senior Fisheries Biologist at Gartner Lee.

But there's no easy answer to - **GOOSE CONTROL.**

How Canada Geese became such a problem in urban areas can only be blamed on humans. Fifty years ago, the large bird was on the verge of extinction throughout North America. The development of urban areas basically saved its bacon. Barry Kent MacKay, a Director of Animal Alliance of Canada points out that these birds are grazers, by nature. "We have done everything possible to make Canada Geese a problem, creating an oasis, giving them an ideal habitat with the vast open spaces in parks and golf courses, and keeping them well fed," Kent

MacKay says.

Canada Geese are not stupid. Despite their genetic programming to migrate, they also have the ability to learn that their yearly pilgrimage is unnecessary. In fact, it may be safer for them to avoid it. Their size and V-flying formation make them easy targets for hunters who stalk migration routes.

So Grenadier Pond has become a dream habitat...the open spaces they need to take off and land, a marshy area and shelter to build their nests, grass covered lawns for grazing, people providing an endless supply of food, and park employees who break up the ice for them in winter. "We would rather leave the ice in the pond, then they might be forced to migrate. But if we don't break it up, we get harassing phone calls from the public," one park employee admits. The Canada Geese have trained the humans well.

The residents of the area are not amused. The geese also graze their lawns, and defecate in their yards. Moldering bread, being dumped in the pond's southwest corner for the geese and ducks, is attracting the startlingly large Norway Rat.

The geese are also

becoming traffic hazards. They like to go back and forth between Grenadier and Catfish Pond on the west side of Ellis Avenue, especially during morning rush hour. It's not just a matter of waiting for them to cross to the other side. They also lie down in the middle of the road to absorb the pavement's heat. Cars honk. The geese honk back. "It's become a showdown," says a psychiatrist who travels Ellis Avenue on his way to work. "They'll just stand there - often on one leg - and stare at me, hissing. They won't move and I can't drive by them. I'm late for appointments. They're driving me crazy!" His solution? Serve them on the menu at a restaurant!

From cities across the country there are reports of people catching and eating Canada Geese - although it's against the law. It's also illegal for restaurants to serve wild game. These days, many hunters claim that they don't eat the geese they shoot because the meat is too tough. But originally, the Canada Goose was part of the settler's diet. It was the pioneers who coined the term "wild goose chase" after trying to catch the clever birds for dinner, and coming home empty-handed. In the

Canada Goose Facts
Fact: Unlike most other animals, Canada Geese are not born knowing what they are. They will adopt as parents whatever they see first - be it goose, man or horse. The naturalist Konrad Lorenz became father to an entire clutch of goslings that followed him everywhere, even when they were adult birds.



The feces of to
Grenadi

e Canada Geese

Franklin

late 1800s the geese were bred in captivity as a lucrative business competing with poultry farmers. In 1895, nearly 50,000 geese, both wild and domesticated, were sold at markets in San Francisco and Los Angeles, placing goose populations in a perilous position.

Hunting then became regulated and now the Canada Geese live in a new kind of wildlife refuge - the urban sanctuaries created by the Migratory Bird Act. Even the Toronto Humane Society protects them with winter feeding programs. Is it any wonder that these birds have lost their urge to leave town? Governing bodies are scratching their heads, trying to figure out what to do with what some call a menace to society.

The Ministry of Natural Resources is involved in a relocation programme that sends young Canada Geese off to places that actually want them. A few years back, New Zealand thought it would be a novel idea to introduce Canada Geese to their small island, and now the birds are beginning to outnumber the sheep. This year the lucky recipient is New Brunswick. The round-up happens in

Toronto Harbour over two days in June. But animal rights activists complain that the government is sending the birds to certain death. "These places only want the geese to attract hunters into their areas," says one concerned goose lover. "Canada Geese don't belong in Eastern Canada," says Barry Kent MacKay. "Sending them there interferes with the integrity of their genetic subspecies. They aren't programmed to migrate from New Brunswick." Kent Mackay also expressed concern that wildlife translocation may spread diseases and parasites from one area of the country to another.

In contacting other cities to find out how they manage their Canada Goose population, my queries were met with moans and groans. Many places have implemented a sterilization programme. To do this, very brave souls have to get by the gander guarding his life-time mate sitting on the nest. Once the goose is chased away from her nest the eggs are quickly "addled" (shaken up), and sprayed with baby oil or dipped in kerosene to prevent further development of the gosling. If the eggs are removed from the

nest the goose will just lay more. Animal rights activists complain the addling practice is inhumane, especially if these methods aren't done soon after the eggs are laid. They also claim that if the eggs don't hatch, the goose will remain on her nest long after the normal 24-28-day incubation period, causing her to weaken and die. Biologists say the latter is untrue.

At Grenadier Pond, Gartner Lee has proposed a number of goose management and control methods. This summer signs will be erected around the pond and brochures distributed to educate the public about the pond's condition, how it got this way, and what is going on to clean it up. "People need to know that by feeding the geese they are contributing to the problems in Grenadier Pond," says Martin-Downs. "We're not saying 'no' to feeding Canada Geese. The seniors and parents with children who get great enjoyment from feeding them small amounts of food are not the problem. It's the people who drive up in their cars and dump large amounts of stale bakery goods and restaurant leftovers that need to stop what they're doing. We're asking the public to feed them in a manner that's much more sensitive."

Canada Goose Facts

Fact: By flying in V-formation, a flock experiences at least 71 per cent greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own. As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. When a goose gets sick or is wounded by gunshot and falls out of formation, two other geese fall out with it and follow it to lend help and protection. They stay with the fallen goose until it can fly or until it dies.

Another option identified by Gartner Lee is to change the habitat and make it less convenient for humans and geese. A fence erected at Ellis Avenue would give them less access to the pond in that particular area. Geese also dislike bushes breaking up their grazing areas. Shrubbery could be planted along the southern lawn of the park.

Each Canada Goose eats approximately half-a-pound of food a day, but in the balance of nature, who eats the geese? Raccoons, Snapping Turtles, the Great Horned Owl still nesting in the park, and the Northern Pike being re-introduced to the pond are all natural predators that help to keep the population down. But it's not enough.

Despite all efforts, it can't be ignored that the Canada Geese at Grenadier Pond often go out to dine. In the fall, as they take off from the pond in great numbers it appears they're migrating. Instead they are heading north. They have been followed to farm fields where they feast on left-over corn stalks and grain. As the moon rises, they can be heard honking their way back over the houses to the safety of Grenadier Pond.

On those nights, it can be clearly understood why the Cree Indians called Canada Geese, "the hounds of heaven".



ny geese are fouling pond's waters.

photo by Gizi Sahanic

Unlike the Black Oak Savannah, Grenadier Pond's troubles are plainly evident. A whiff of the pond's 'eaux' and an eye-full of algae, are all it takes to know this "ain't" no pristine nature reserve. A couple of projects are in the works that will hopefully balance the elements in the pond's favour.

One of the projects involves the vast herd of Canada Geese presently hogging the pond's south-west end at The Queensway and Ellis Avenue. According to Gartner Lee, the consultant hired by the Toronto Department of Parks and Recreation, the feces from 300-plus geese is overloading the pond with phosphorous. Gartner Lee estimates that forty-one per cent of the total amount of phosphorous going into the pond annually comes from the geese and other waterfowl. Phosphorous is a fertilizer. One of the things it does in Grenadier Pond is feed the algae growth in the summer. The algae adversely affects plant and fish populations.

Geese are attracted to Grenadier Pond for several reasons. Expansive lawns surrounding the pond allow the grazing birds to eat all the grass they want. Humans provide another constant source of food. To cut into the geese population Gartner Lee is going to first try cutting into their food supply. Two signs will be posted at the south west corner and south end of the pond asking people not to feed the geese. Also, a summer student hired by Environmental Dialogue, a west end environmental education organization, will distribute pamphlets and talk to people about what's wrong with the pond.

Complete habitat change

But what would really make the geese move on is a complete habitat change at the south end, says Deborah Martin-Downs, Senior Fisheries Biologist with Gartner Lee. Martin-Downs says planting wetland at the south end and shrubbery on the adjacent lawns would make the pond less attractive to the geese. During the end of June and early July, the city played a dirty trick on the geese and planted Dogwood, Alders and Pussy Willows along Ellis Avenue just north of the pond's south corner. Once lawn, the area has been picked clean by the geese who have left nothing behind except muck and feces. The native shrub planting isn't actually part of the Gartner Lee goose project. It was done by Parks and Rec in response to complaints from residents that the corner was unsightly. Residents also complained the geese were moving onto their lawns and interfering with traffic on Ellis Avenue. Besides appeasing upset neighbours, Parks and Rec will also take advantage of the opportunity

Continued from Page 6

spring of 1995, once Parks and Recreation has satisfied the Ministry of Natural Resources guidelines for controlled burning. "Prescribed burning is a contentious issue. We've laid out guidelines as in a paramilitary operation," says John Riley, an ecologist with the Ministry of Natural Resources. "The idea is if you have all that planning you're not going to have a problem." Before it can burn, Parks and Rec must develop a communication

Out with the geese and in with the fish

The slow task of mending Grenadier Pond begins

to test the birds response to the planted barrier.

The second pond project involves predator fish stocking. Fishing pressure and lack of habitat have socked it to the carnivorous fish communities in Grenadier Pond. In the absence of thriving predator communities, Pumpkinseeds are on the upswing eating a type of plankton, called zooplankton, that controls the algae.

It's expected but not confirmed that the fish stocking will happen on September 25 in conjunction with High Park Day, sponsored by Environmental Dialogue. Gartner Lee will release about 200 6-9-inch Largemouth Bass, transported from a hatchery. Northern Pike of a similar size will be caught from the Orangeville Reservoir. Like the geese programme, two signs will be posted asking fishermen to leave the bass and pike in the pond. Two posters will be put up in the display cases at the pond. The poster asks people to practice catch and release, to fish for other species and to fish for bass after the end of June when their spawning season is over.

Fish stocking a stop gap

Fish stocking is considered a stop-gap. "The monitoring program will need to be repeated in the following years. More importantly, is the need to improve other habitat conditions for these species in the pond as a whole. Stocking the fish will be insufficient to bring about significant change to the water quality within the pond in the short term. The other measures are outlined in the Rehabilitation Strategy for the Pond," says Gartner Lee in a draft report on the fish stocking programme.

Certainly this is a point of view strongly shared by Walter Oster. Oster is the Publisher of Outdoor Canada and President and Chairman of the Board of the Canadian National Sportsmen's Shows (CNSS). The CNSS is sponsoring the projects to the tune of \$15,000. Oster says more money will be forthcoming from CNSS if these two projects prove successful. Oster also believes shoreline improvements, namely creating suitable nesting areas for the bass and pike, should be done in tandem with the stocking. Parks and Recreation has applied to the Great Lakes Clean-Up Fund for money to do shoreline rehabilitation. There's been no word on their application. A Parks and Rec spokesperson expects the money can be found elsewhere in the department to do the shoreline work.

plan for the community and bring the Toronto Fire Marshall into the picture. The logistics of the burn must also be carefully choreographed, with specific tasks assigned to specific people. "Looking at that my professional advice was, 'You're not going to get that done this year.'"

“Woof, woof.”

Sniff. Lick.

Welcome to dog hill

by Sam Eller

I grew up on a farm, a very long way from Toronto, a long way in fact from paved roads or streetlights. My first recollections of Dog Encounters comes through the waning light and rustling leaves, tramping home after school. The bus would drop me off, alone, at the end of the road. Home was another mile or so through the trees and across the fields. September's long evenings weren't too bad for a five year old, but after the time change with the chill November wind rattling bare bare branches, the retreat toward supper was traumatic.

I became aware of the dog in the same manner one becomes aware of a fog moving in off the lake. The eyes start to discern something that isn't quite there, something you can't see until the instant of looking away. The dog was tracking me, alongside and paralleling my progress through the trees. This ritual was repeated for several days before my canine shadow actually showed himself. He looked like a cross between Cujo and Jack Nicholson, big, mean....hungry. Three days after that first sighting he came so close he brushed against me. I think I had an accident. Two days later he stopped me dead in the middle of the path and rose up on his hind legs, resting his forelegs on my shoulders, he stood there for a moment, just looking down at me. Cocking his head sideways he opened his jaws and, well, slobbered me all over.

When the dog I own today stands up on his hind legs he can look down at my knees. It isn't very impressive, but it is somehow reassuring.

My dog and I do not go to High Park to walk. Apparently, I am a bad dog owner. If I partook of this ritual, my dog probably wouldn't suffer from a lack of discipline, inadequate socialization and general bad manners. I like to think my dog has an 'attitude'.

However, the folks that gather on Dog Hill, right behind The Dream in High Park, take the raising of their dogs quite seriously. There is a loosely knit and vast community of perhaps several hundred pets and their owners. Dogs that eat squirrels, or

other dogs, are frowned upon, as are owners that do not pick up their dog's business.

I was out on a darkly threatening Wednesday afternoon recently to get a feel for life on the hill. All of the dozen or so people that I spoke to were out with their dogs, a varied crew of slobbering mutts and purebreds, gamboling, playing in that oh-so-doggie-way that humans refer to as biting. On any given day a group congregates between about 4-7 p.m., as well as around 6 a.m. They discuss dog issues, mutual friends, politics, just like any neighbourhood in any community. "We need more space to let the dogs run free," remarks the owner of a glossy German Shepherd. Others voice assent. "And dog fountains. There is no water out here except the (Spring) creek and that makes the dogs sick."

"Mountain bikes should be banned on the trails, my dog has been run over twice." The owner of a Golden Lab nods agreement. His pet had recently been T-boned by a mountain bike. I have a suggestion of my own; the area should be more plainly posted as a dog run, witness the surprised picnickers suddenly surrounded by frolicking, and, hungry pets. Somebody suggests bag dispensers similar to those in Vancouver's Stanley Park. Several people pull out pockets full of spares in case of the ill-prepared. I check the garbage cans in the area as well. They all



Dog Hill, where dogs and doggie people meet, rests in the nook of a hill above the Dream in High Park.

contain several tightly-knotted grocery bags. One owner brushes his pet, as well as any others that will submit to the ministrations. He and several others discuss the merits of various kinds of flea collars and shampoos.

All is not idyllic on dog hill, however. Last year a frisky Dalmatian was threatened by a knife-wielding man concerned for the safety of the park squirrels. For the most part though, people of differing loyalties are able to enjoy the park side-by-side with their neighbours. That after all is what really makes a park and a community, even a doggie community, great.

A dream of a summer night

Shakespeare in High Park

Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* performed in a park - lovers, fools, cross-dressing, mistaken identity - and all under a canopy of trees and stars! What more could you possibly ask for? Oh, plenty, if you're a true Shakespeare-in-High-Park buff.

For starters, the buff wants the best seats in the house, understanding of course that the seats in question are terra firma lumps on a grassy hillside. This is sometimes a shock to the fundament of first-timers, who have been heard to whine anxiously, "When do they set up the chairs?" The buffs, however, have been here before. Suave and in-the-know, they arrive with padded nests of blankets and cushions. Buffs who have had their nether parts moistened with dew on previous occasions also remember to bring a plastic groundsheet. And, of course, the buffs arrive well before the rabble, so they can arrange their nests in the choicest locations.

All this early nesting activity whets the appetite, so of course they must bring the perfect picnic supper, to be nibbled delicately or scarfed whole while they wait for the opening scene. This is where the show actually begins, as buffs and novices alike check out other playgoers' victuals, and make mental notes for next year. Sneaking glances at picnic baskets, take-out orders and brown bags from home being unpacked around the hillside, you realize the possibilities are breathtakingly endless.

A party with kids in tow has brought peanut butter sandwiches and sushi. You try not to imagine this as a combined flavour fest. From somewhere down the hill comes the tantalizing perfume of Thai basil beef and noodles. The neighbours to the right are busily laying out a spread of cold poached salmon, baby salad greens and fresh brioche, to be washed down discreetly with a pale vinous beverage that may or may not conform to Ontario liquor laws. The party to the left is chowing down on a bucket of the Colonel's finest extra-crispy, with a side of fries and gravy. You are caught in the aromatic crossfire, virtuously munching on the tomato-cheese-and-sprouts on whole wheat you brown-bagged from home. In your heart you lust after the salmon, or maybe the basil beef, or yes, dammit, even a few fries. Just a few. Oh,

well, maybe next year. Already you are thinking about returning, and the play hasn't even started. You have become an apprentice buff. Seeking solace, you make a quick trip to the snack bar for something containing serious carbohydrates.

Full and content, everybody settles back for the pre-play warm-up - audience-watching. It's all there - lovers, fools, and who knows, perhaps some cross-dressing and mistaken identities - drama unfolding everywhere on the grassy slope. Shakespeare-in-the-park buffs soon come to recognize the classics - the hillside Hamlet who soliloquizes his date into a stupor; the fastidious Lady Macbeth who spends 20 minutes trying to wash the barbeque stains from her hands with handy wipes; the Romeo and Juliet wannabe rehearsing their lines (Do you come here often?). Two elderly buffs regularly smuggle in their aging miniature poodle, a beast with exquisite audience manners, if you don't count the night a couple of years ago when live Nubian goats were led onstage. You wonder if livestock are included in this year's production.

Finally the sun sinks slowly into the treetops, the haunting perfume of Deep Woods Off drifts across the clearing, and the last stragglers return from the deep-woods adventure of the trek to the washroom. Lights flood the stage and the trees around it, casting eerie shadows. Your pulse races. (You swear off snack-bar brownies.) Soon actors appear, inhaling bugs between lines. Some crazy magic is happening on stage - medieval costumes mix it up with twentieth-century high fashion; tipsy Sir Toby Belch has finally found a fantasy wine bottle to match his thirst; and, ohmygawd, what is that motor that has just roared to life? No critters, though, unless you count the cow cushions in Count Orsino's wild west (!) court. You are enthralled. This is how Shakespeare might have done it, you think, if he'd had an Alice-In-Wonderland setting like this.

When Olivia astutely points out in Act III, "Why this is very midsummer madness," you agree wholeheartedly. In fact, you decide, that's exactly why you'll be back next year for more. Congratulations! You are now officially a full-fledged Shakespeare-in-High-Park buff.

Lady MacBeth spends 20 minutes trying to wash the barbeque stains from her hands with handy wipes.

ECOTONES

Valued by the Druids as places of worship, by military strategists of yesteryear for shipbuilding, and by carpenters throughout the ages for the strength and trueness of the wood, oaks are a much revered group of trees. There are about 450 different species of oaks distributed worldwide. Sixty-eight species are found across North America, three of which - Black Oak, Red Oak and White Oak are indigenous to High Park. The park has always been known for the magnificent, wide-branched oaks scattered



throughout it. The oaks of High Park are well-adapted to the dry and nutrient-deficient soils of the park. These sandy soils were laid by Lake Ontario's prehistoric predecessor Lake Iroquois which covered the park 12,000 years ago. It is the sandy soils of the central upland plains of the park which have led to the evolution of the present-day savannah. A savannah is broadly defined as a plant community containing a discontinuous canopy of trees and a groundlayer of grasses and wildflowers. This plant community has been described as island-like stands of trees in a sea of prairie. A prairie is a grassland-herb ecosystem. Poor, well-drained soils and periodic, naturally occurring fires appear to be responsible for the presence of savannas. Tree species naturally occurring in savannah areas are deep-rooted to maximize moisture intake and have thick bark to protect them from fire. Savannas occur throughout the world and contain many different tree species. In the savannah areas of High Park the predominant tree is the Black Oak. The average life-expectancy of the Black Oak is 150-

200 years, this is less than the Red Oak which is 250-300 years, and White Oak which is 500 or more. The scientific name of the Black Oak *velutina* derives from the velvety surface of the shoot, leaf, and leafstalk. The fuzz on the upper side of the leaf falls off, leaving it stiff and parchment-like. This leaf-coating helps to minimize moisture loss through transpiration. The Black Oak was once called the Yellow-bark Oak for its inner bark is a bright orange-yellow and can be used fresh or dried to produce a yellow dye.

The oaks of High Park

by David Orsini

A study of the oak savannas of High Park conducted by Applied Ecological Services in 1993 found that most of the oaks in the park are nearing the end of their life expectancy. In their botanical inventory AES found very few young oaks to replace the older ones. With so little regeneration of oaks and with so many of the existing ones in a geriatric state, there will soon be a sharp decline in the health and number of oaks in High Park. Reasons for the alarmingly low reproduction of oaks in High Park include human disturbance, squirrel predation of acorns (the seed of oaks), aggres-



siveness of introduced plant species, and the absence of fire. With approximately one million people visiting High Park each year, impacts of human use of the park are quite substantial. With no natural predators the squirrel population in the park has continually increased over the years. Due to the imbalance created by a rising squirrel population and a decreasing number of oaks which produce one of their major food sources - the acorn - few oak seeds remain for reproduction. Introduced plants from Europe and

Asia such as Norway Maple, Tartarian Honeysuckle, Multiflora Rose and Common Buckthorn have no natural controls and proliferate at an alarming rate. Their rapid spread increases competition and shade which inhibit oak germination. With the absence of fire comes the build up of leaves and other organic debris. Acorns must reach the mineralized soil layer to germinate. Ground fires eliminate the leaf layer and create a nutrient release for the oaks and the other fire-dependent flora of the savannah.



Repairing ecosystems has been compared to fixing a clock. In order to repair it you first have to save the pieces. But time is running out. While High Park has the most significant oak savannah ecosystem in the Metropolitan Toronto area, other areas with noteworthy savannas include Lambton Park by the Humber River and the Dundas Street Bridge, Ryding Avenue by George Bell Arena, and Kew Gardens in The Beaches. These fragments are a clue to just how vast the oak savannas once were.

drawings by Tamara Kure

Prominent Toronto family sold eastern lands to city in 1876

by Joan Miles

John G. Howard is a familiar name to many. In 1873 Howard offered his 165-acre estate to the City of Toronto for use as a public park. Today, those lands form High Park's core and Howard is considered the park's founding father. But Howard's involvement in establishing High Park didn't end there. Howard led the City of Toronto through negotiations en route to the purchase from Joseph Davis Ridout, in 1876, of 172 acres of undeveloped land east of High Park's original 165 acres. Ridout's price was \$15,000 at \$88.25/acre.

The Howard Park Tennis Club, Parkside Lawnbowling Club and TTC streetcar loop are public amenities built before

1925 on the former Ridout lands. It was not until a Toronto bylaw was passed in 1956, however, that the lands were dedicated for use as a public park.

Like Howard, Ridout held a prominent place in early-Toronto's history. Joseph's great uncle, Thomas Ridout, appointed surveyor-general of Upper Canada in 1810, had settled in York in 1797. His 18-year-old son John attained legendary stature when he

was killed by neighbour Samuel Peters Jarvis in the last fatal duel fought in York in 1817. It was left to the surviving members of the influential family to maintain the Ridout reputation for business acumen combined with the spirit of public service. Thomas' son Thomas Gibbs became cashier (general manager) of the Bank of Upper Canada, and also ensured that a major downtown street be named Sherbourne after the family birthplace in Somerset, England. The English-born Joseph exemplified the Ridout tradition when, in 1831, along with brother George, he established a Canadian base of operations for the British iron

High Park in History

firm, Tarratts, in York, having set up two branch plants in America. The next year, expansion was underway with partners James Aikenhead and Alex Crombie. This enterprise evolved into the wholesale and retail hardware empire, Aikenheads', from which Joseph retired in 1876.

In 1834 - the year of incorporation of the City of Toronto - George, who had worked on the amended draft bill for the municipality, became a director of the pro-government British American Fire and Life Assurance Company. George was elected president of the newly-formed Toronto Board of Trade. Joseph served as an officer in the East York Militia during the McKenzie Rebellion, and retired with the rank of Major when it was disbanded in 1867.

It's believed Joseph sympathized with MacKenzie's Reform movement.

Joseph was also a founding member, and became president of the Mechanics' Institute, the forerunner of the public library. Joseph was vice-president of the Farmers' and Mechanics' Building Society, until it merged into the Canada Permanent Loan & Savings Co., in 1853. He continued to hold office until shortly before his death in 1884.



Joseph Ridout



Thomas Gibbs Ridout

sources - Archives of the Toronto Dept. of Parks & Recreation, Toronto Historical Board, Toronto Star, Toronto to 1918 by Donald Jones and James Lemon, History of Toronto & County of York, 1885, Volume II.

photos courtesy Metro Toronto Reference Library

SUMMER

guide

july

July 5 - The Dream in High Park returns for its 12th season when the Canadian Stage Company presents Shakespeare's *The Twelfth Night*. Tuesday to Sunday at 8 p.m. \$5 suggested donation. Continues to August 21.

July 10 - The Toronto Field Naturalist Club hosts a High Park nature walk, another in a series examining the seasonal changes in the flora and fauna. Meet at the Bloor Street gate opposite High Park Avenue at 11 a.m. Free.

July 10 - History & natural vegetation walking tour of High Park's west side led by a staff member of Colborne Lodge. Leaves High Park's Bloor Street entrance at 1:30 p.m. Finishes at Colborne Lodge. Free.

July 10, 17, 24, 31 - Summer Music Festival every Sunday from 2:30-4:30 p.m. on the barge at Grenadier Pond.

July 12, 19, 26 - *Lighting the lamps at Colborne Lodge*. A regular Tuesday evening tour of High Park's human and natural history sponsored by Environmental Dialogue. An expert naturalist leads a twilight tour of the oak woodlands and Grenadier Pond. The tour ends at Colborne

Lodge with iced mint tea. Tour guides will lead the group out of the park. Meet at the Grenadier Restaurant at 6:45 p.m. Start time is 7 p.m.

July 9, 16, 23, 30 - Croquet at Colborne Lodge every Saturday at 1 & 3 p.m.

July 17, 24 - Eco tours of High Park. A regular Sunday afternoon tour sponsored by Environmental Dialogue. An expert naturalist leads an afternoon tour and discussion of the woodlands, birds, and insects in High Park. There will be a short workshop on gardening with native plants. An aboriginal story-teller sheds lights on the area's aboriginal history. Meet at the Bloor Street gates at 1:15 p.m. Start time is 1:30 p.m.

august

August 2, 16, 30 - *Lighting the lamps at Colborne Lodge*. A regular Tuesday evening tour of High Park's human and natural history sponsored by Environmental Dialogue. An expert naturalist leads a twilight tour of the oak woodlands and Grenadier Pond. The tour ends at Colborne Lodge with iced mint tea. Tour guides will lead the group out of the park. Meet at the Grenadier Restaurant at 6:45 p.m. Start time is 7 p.m.

August 3 - Toronto Fire Department Kids' Summer. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. South of the Bloor Street entrance. Fire safety games. Prizes. Fire trucks.

August 7 - History & natural vegetation walking tour of High Park's east side led by a staff member of Colborne Lodge. Leaves High Park's north entrance at Bloor Street at 1:30 p.m. Finishes at Colborne Lodge.

August 7,14 - Summer Music Festival every

Sunday from 2:30-4:30 p.m. on the barge at Grenadier Pond.

August 6, 13, 20, 27 - Croquet at Colborne Lodge every Saturday at 1 & 3 p.m.

August 21 - A Sunday afternoon eco tour of High Park sponsored by Environmental Dialogue. An expert naturalist leads a tour and discussion of the woodlands, birds and insects in High Park. A short workshop on gardening with native plants follows. High Park's aboriginal history as told by an aboriginal story-teller. Meet at the Bloor Street gates at 1:15 p.m. Start time is 1:30 p.m.

september

September 6,13 - *Lighting the lamps at Colborne Lodge*. A regular Tuesday evening tour of High Park's human and natural history sponsored by Environmental Dialogue. An expert naturalist leads a twilight tour of the oak woodlands and Grenadier Pond. The tour ends at Colborne Lodge with iced mint tea. Tour guides will lead the group out of the park. Meet at the Grenadier Restaurant at 6:45 p.m. Start time is 7 p.m.

September 11 - Sunday afternoon eco tour of High Park. An expert naturalist leads a tour and discussion of High Park's woodlands, flowers and insects. A short workshop on gardening with native plants. High Park's aboriginal history told by an aboriginal story-teller. Meet at the Bloor Street gates at 1:15 p.m. Start time is 1:30 p.m.

September 25 - The second annual High Park Day kicks off Healthy City Week. Nature tours, square dancing and entertainment for the whole family. Noon to 5 p.m.

High Park

A Park Lover's Quarterly

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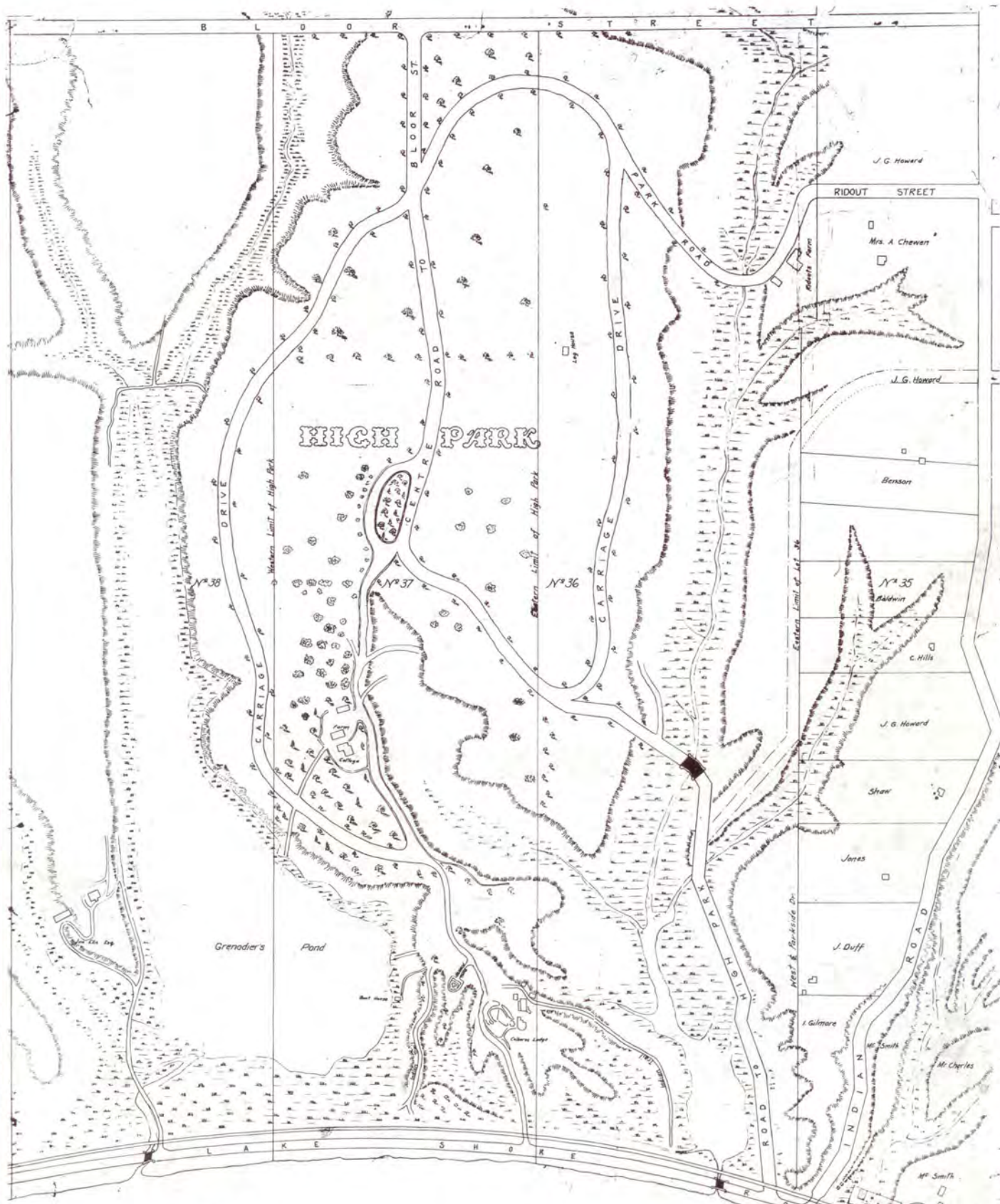
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ONTARIO

Note - Copied from Office Copy of J.G. Howard Plan - Wadsworth, Unwin & Brown Dec. 1875

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