




HIGH PARK

A Park Lover's Quarterly



Inside: Victorian mores and John Howard's mistress, High Park Foundation raises the stakes; wildflower prairie song; drumming to a different beat; a cultured landscape; and, a summer events guide

HIGH PARK

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High Park

A Park Lover's Quarterly

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Cover photograph by Gera Dillon



Contents

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.

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Park News

Briefly	4
AGRA Earth and Environmental and the Running Room sponsor a road race to benefit the High Park Foundation	5
Feelin' groovy at the drummer's knoll	6

Features

John Howard had three children – but not with his wife	8
Warabe Aska sees High Park like nobody else	10

Columns

ParkPundit	12
Ecotones	13
High Park in History	14

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They say the art of baking is lost. We still practice it.

Grenadier Pond photo comes to life

When this 1939 photograph was taken by Parks and Recreation photographer James Salmon, fishing line was made of silk and Grenadier Pond's wetlands were still intact.

As work begins to restore the pond's shoreline, the Toronto Department of Parks and Recreation, Canadian National Sportsmen's Shows, and Grenadier Pond rehabilitation consultants Gartner Lee have turned to this photograph time and time again to convey their goals.

The photograph came to life at a Victoria Day weekend ceremony on the shores of Grenadier Pond to christen work in progress at the pond's south-east corner.



As waterfront commissioner David Crombie made the connection between a healthy waterfront and healthy headwaters, a parks staff mem-



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briefly

ber hoisted up a larger-than-life reproduction of the 56-year-old photograph. A woman suddenly yelled out, "Jack that's you. That's Jack sitting on the rock".

Jack Townsend was nine-years-old when he was photographed along with his friend William Hogg, his father John, and Teddy the dog.

Townsend's happenstance presence at the ceremony was sweet serendipity. He was applauded and cheered.

Townsend still lives at his childhood home at Parkside Drive and Garden Avenue. During the summer he and his friend William were practically permanent summer residents at the pond, he says. According to Townsend, William and John Hogg would supplement the family income in the 30s by selling fish caught from the pond.

"It's important to have a natural pond where inner city kids can come," Townsend says. "On a morning like this you would hear the blackbirds chirping and sitting on cattails, and see turtles on the logs with the sun shining on their shells."

Townsend says the time he and his friends spent fishing at Grenadier Pond imbued them all with a sense of respect and admiration for the natural world. "All my friends are outdoors persons because of their connection to the pond."

Free events guide

High Park is bursting at the seams with a host a free activities and entertainment.

July 11 - 25 – Join free Tuesday evening walking tours and explore the natural and human history of High Park. Meet outside the Grenadier Restaurant at 7 p.m. Tours organized and presented by the High Park Citizens' Advisory Committee, Colborne Lodge, the Department of Parks and Recreation.

July 9 - 30 – Join free Sunday afternoon walking tours and explore the natural and human history of High Park. Meet at 1:30

p.m. outside the Grenadier Restaurant. Tours presented by the High Park Citizens' Advisory Committee, Colborne Lodge, the Department of Parks and Recreation.

July 15, 22, 29, 30 – Croquet on the lawn of Colborne Lodge. Every Saturday during July and August, 12 noon to 5 p.m. Croquet free with admission to the house.

August 2 – The High Park Natural Environment Committee meets at 6:45 p.m. at the High Park Training Centre to discuss the final report on strategies for the rehabilitation of Grenadier Pond. All members of the public are welcome. The training centre is located on Colborne Lodge Drive south of the sunken gardens.

August 5, 12, 19, 26 – Croquet on the lawn of Colborne Lodge. Every Saturday in August, 12 noon to 5 p.m. Croquet free with admission to the house.

August 8 - 29 – Join free Tuesday evening walking tours and explore the natural and human history of High Park. Meet outside the Grenadier Restaurant at 7 p.m. Presented by the High Park Citizens' Advisory Committee, Colborne Lodge, the City of Toronto Department of Parks and Recreation.

August 13 - 27 – Join free Sunday afternoon walking tours and explore the natural and human history of High Park. Meet at 1:30 p.m. at the Grenadier Restaurant. Presented by the High Park Citizens' Advisory Committee, Colborne Lodge and Department of Parks and Recreation.



David Miller

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An easy sell

– *The High Park Foundation was the recent beneficiary of a road race sponsored by AGRA Earth and Environmental* –

by Gigi Suhanic

The City of Toronto Department of Parks and Recreation has a masterplan for High Park that proposes all kinds of meaty stuff like the restoration of Grenadier Pond, the Black Oak Savannah and improvements in traffic and safety. A \$20,000 donation from the Canadian National Sportsmens' Shows (CNSS) has made possible the rehabilitation of the south-east corner of Grenadier Pond. In order to realize the High Park wish list to its fullest extent, a lot more good samaritans like the CNSS will have to come out of the woodwork.

There's a group of High Park aficionados that believes enough goodwill exists to secure a liquid future for the 127-year-old public park. To tap into this fluidity the group has established a non-profit foundation to raise funds for High Park. "Just think of us as the Cadbury snackbar of funding shortfalls," says Kristina Guiguet, director of the foundation. "There's a limit to what government can do. The High Park Foundation is an anti-catastrophe panacea. It is a safety net to make sure when things start to fall something is in place to catch it," Guiguet says.

According to Guiguet, the foundation is the logical next step in a series of events that began in 1993 with the formation of a group called Environmental Dialogue (ED). Co-founded by Guiguet and another west end resident Alison Neilson, Environmental Dialogue organized High Park Day in 1993 and '94 and presented free eco tours last summer. Now disbanded, ED found that there exists a tremendous will on the part of people to donate time and money to the park, but no obvious place to channel the resources. A small working group including Guiguet, and other Environmental Dialogue members Joanne Fisher, Anne Frances and Peter Burns got together and are developing a structure for the foundation.

The paperwork isn't even dry and already, the corporate sector has confirmed the foundation's potential.

On June 25 AGRA Earth and Environmental was the lead sponsor in a charity run to benefit the High Park Foundation. The 10-kilometre Enviro Run held in High Park is one of three charity races organized and hosted this summer by AGRA, an engineering and environmental consulting firm, and the Running Room. The race attracted about 350 runners and walkers who paid anywhere from \$12 to \$20 to give a tough course, that started and ended at the Grenadier Restaurant, their best shot.

At the time this story was written the amount to be turned over to the foundation had not yet been finalized. Running Room spokesperson Kevin Smith says once the costs of the race are covered any profit will go to the foundation. Smith says, on race day direct donations were also collected on behalf of the foundation.

With a plethora of environmental groups out there in

need of a benefactor why did AGRA and the Running Room focus their fundraising zeal on High Park?

Mike MacDonald is the Eastern Marketing Director for AGRA and a High Park resident. "I came to Kevin a year-and-a-half ago and we put together this series," MacDonald says. "I run in High Park three times a week. It's probably the nicest park in the whole region. I'm quite concerned with the keeping up of facilities." In fact, so keen were MacDonald and Smith to benefit High Park that they went looking for the foundation.

If the business world wants to raise money for High Park Guiguet believes corporate sponsors would prefer to donate it to a foundation. "People are looking to contribute in ways that make it special. There is nothing high-profile about re-paving roads. But the other stuff – the quality of life stuff – that's the kind of enhancement that is attractive to them," Guiguet says.

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Private non-profit corporations are a tried and tested way of raising big money for public facilities. New York City's Central Park Conservancy is a non-profit corporation that contributes more than half the operating budget of Central Park. Presently, it is in the middle of a three-year campaign the "Wonder of New York" to raise \$71.5 million to complete the landscape restoration of Central Park.

Obviously the Central Park Conservancy is a good idea taken to its logical New York City extreme. It may not be what Torontonians want for their park. The Parks Department and the community should set the agenda and the foundation will gear its activities accordingly, Guiguet says.

Guiguet can't say yet what the foundation will do with the money raised from the race. There are a number of projects in the park that could benefit from fundraising; the Grenadier Pond shoreline rehabilitation, the park's out-of-date playground equipment, or creating a land trust to purchase the site proposed for development on the west shore of Grenadier Pond. However, the amount from the race is likely to be small. In which case it might be better used to run a modest promotional campaign for the foundation, Guiguet says.

Or maybe, the foundation will just listen to the park.

"The park will provide the right place for this money to go," Guiguet says.



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The magic of drummer's knoll

by Gigi Suhanic

You hear them long before you can see them. The drummers on drummer's knoll pound out a beat that reaches far beyond the boundaries of High Park; a deep throbbing primeval pulse that says, "Come and join us".

Follow the insistent vibrations and they will eventually lead you to a small clearing just north of the allotment gardens. There drummers, professional and beginning, tall and small meet every Sunday from 2-5 p.m. and move to their own beat.

There's a sort of a love-in atmosphere in the air that could be a bit alienating to more staid passersby. Woodstock and the 60s are apt analogies. The humanness and colour of each drummer is crisply etched into the scene. They're a magnetic group and they exude a "hippiness" in appearance and spirit. One woman's silky hair flows down her back. Her nut-brown skin glows and her cheeks are gloriously flushed. Another wears a pretty green gingham dress; sequins in the bodice glint occasionally and the skirt is full and frilled.

A few of the men have foresaken shirts. Drumming is hard work and the sweat glistens on their foreheads and chests. There are tattoos, long hair and lanky bodies.

The sensuality of the day cannot be mistaken.

I count more instruments than people. Everybody brings extras and trades. The assortment of percussion instruments assembled is rich, *bodran*, *djembe*, *conga*, *ashika*. They are surprisingly loud, especially the congas. Their timbre surges through the ground like an electrical current, travels up the spine and fills any empty space in your head. I wonder how long I will be able to last in the clearing. The beat is relentless, but not in the way traffic is – more like a heart beat – part of you, part of life.

"It is a heart beat. It's what we spend nine months with," says one drummer, a teacher who prefers her name not be used. "It's the first experience of life," she says. "It's become an addiction," she says.

Obviously the drummer's knoll has struck a vibrant chord. People have been meeting here since 1986.

Even such an apparently easy-going tradition has a pre-meditated beginning. Michael Uytterbroek is the generally acknowledged founder of the drummer's knoll. During a visit to Montreal in 1985, Uytterbroek happened upon a similar gathering on Mount Royal. "It inspired me – the connection people had with each other. I felt part of something powerful in terms of energy, celebration and connection," Uytterbroek says. He got the ball rolling when he returned.

On this temperate July afternoon the beat plunges ahead. Drumming is a group activity. Still, each person insists on her individuality every time hand meets taught deer skin.

The cathartic properties have not been lost on several of today's musicians.

"For me it's therapeutic. During the week you go through this process, carry this stuff. Letting it out, letting loose,

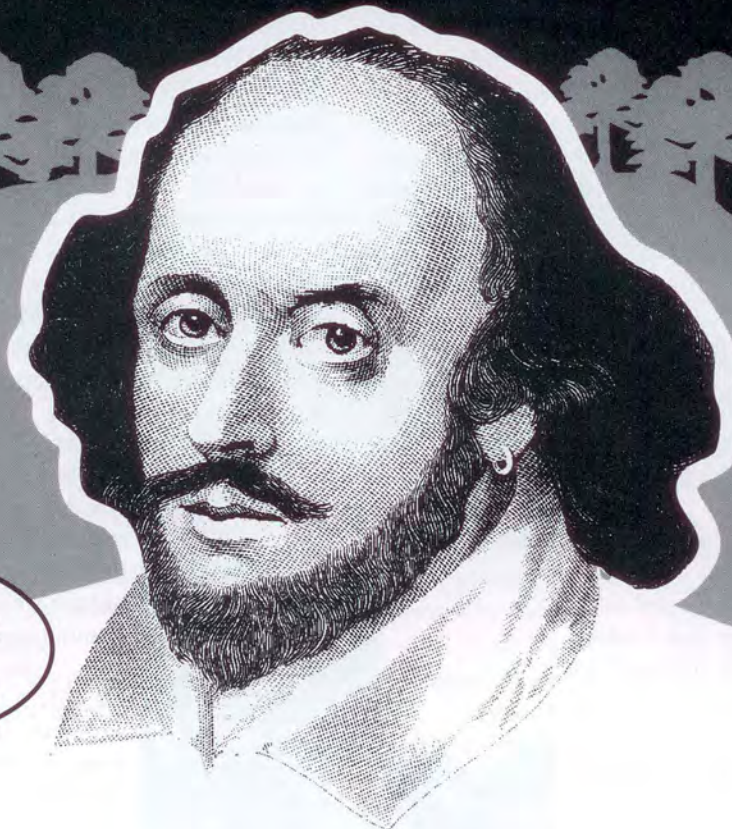
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John Howard's secret children

by Jill Franklin

We know him as the man who built Colborne Lodge and left High Park to the City of Toronto, a city whose growth he literally laid the foundation for with the first sidewalks and sewer systems.

His diaries from the time of his arrival in 1833 until his retirement to Colborne Lodge in 1855 are filled with commissions for surveys and architectural renderings for private, religious and government contracts as York expanded into Toronto. At the same time, he taught drawing at Upper Canada College; was a Justice of the Peace, Associate Judge, and participated in the Rebellion of 1837.

Toward the end of his life, an article appeared in *The Globe*, July 8, 1885 written by Alderman Frankland who had gone to visit Howard at High Park, "...if the character of Mr. Howard is studied by our youth, they will learn that industry, energy and perseverance can accomplish great results".

But Mr. Howard could not view his private life in the same way. He was lonely after the death of his wife Jemima in 1877, and wrote to her sister, "Now I have no one and it cannot be but a few months and years before I am called away, my time shall be spent in doing all the good I can to my fellow man".

He threw many of his personal papers into his fireplace in 1886, but a poem in his handwriting remains:

*Now all is gone and left alone
My trust must be in Christ our saviour
To hope and pray thy will be done
And mercy shown a repentant sinner.*

As he approached his death, he could look back on a life of great adventure and accomplishment, shared for 50 years with his wife Jemima, whom he writes of with great love and respect. He had been a man who took great pride in a public persona. But John Howard had his private secrets.

John George Howard wrote that he "had the misfortune to be born an illegitimate child" in 1803. He was named John Corby and grew up in a boarding school, away from any family. He believed that he was a descendent of Lord William Howard, immortalized as the

'Belted Will' in a poem by Sir Walter Scott. Lord William and Lady Elizabeth Howard's home was Corby Castle, and as the story goes, they had an irate grandson named John Howard, who disowned the family in 1623, moved to France and changed his last name to Corby. This was the man who the later John Corby believed to be his direct ancestor. Prior to coming to Canada in 1832 he changed his name to John George Howard.

He had married Jemima Frances Meikle, whose sister and brother-in-law, Franny and Sidney Mountcastle had preceded them to Canada. The Mountcastles settled in Goderich, then Clinton, raising a family that was of great comfort to Jemima throughout her life. She missed the London society and the children she could not have.

In letters that still exist from Jemima to her family, it's revealed that she spent her time working alongside her husband, assisting him with his drawings, keeping him organized in his office and their homes near King and York Streets; then helping him plan Colborne Lodge. It was Jemima who gave the name "High Park".

As the staff in Howard's office grew, his wife's involvement lessened. She wrote to her sister in 1847 of her loneliness; "What I want is a little companion to take a walk with me or ride."

By this time, the Howard's had a number of servants and young boys who would stay for lengthy periods to train under John Howard. The Mountcastle children also came to visit, and their oldest son lived with them while attending Upper Canada College.

The Howards had an active social life as they gained prominence in the growing city. They entertained a lot in their homes, attended the most lavish parties and balls, and took numerous trips together and with friends.

Despite his exhaustive social and business demands, John Howard somehow found the time for a mistress – a woman named Mary Williams who had come from County Sligo in Northern Ireland. Little is know of Mary Williams, but it is probable that she was one of the many servants the Howard's had trouble keeping.



Mary Williams is buried in St. James' Cemetery, designed in 1842 by her lover John Howard..

Mary was 20-years-old, half John Howard's age, when their first child, George Corby Howard Williams was born on Aug. 19, 1843. Their second child, Douglas, was born in November, 1847, then a daughter, Anne Jane born September, 1852.

It is likely that Jemima knew about her husband's family, but like many wives of prominent men during the 1800s who found themselves in her situation, she quietly remained his constant and loyal companion.

On the dates of his children's births marriages or deaths, there is no mention of the events in his diary which Jemima helped to write. But there are pencil notations, in Howard's hand, scattered throughout that appear to come after the fact. Beginning in April 1840, there are brief references to a Mary, possibly Mary Williams, such as "Mary came", "Mary went away today ill", "Spent the day with Mary and the boy", "Gave Mary one pound being one month's wages up to Sept. 25".

How much time John Howard spent with his family is purely conjecture. Around the approximate time when his last child was conceived there are numerous entries where he would go out at 7 p.m. to a Mr. Wakefield's and return at 11 p.m. On Christmas Day of that year, he writes that Mrs. Howard went to church with the Roswells, while he went with Mr. Wakefield to lot 35...or maybe he spent that morning with Mary and their children at the house he had built for them off of Portland Street.

In the year after the first grandchild arrived, Jemima's health began to fail. For three years she suffered physically and mentally and when she finally died in September, 1877, it appears that Howard felt tremendous grief. He composed a poem for her burial, *The Tomb in High Park* which cried out his personal despair in the last verse:

*And why should he now cling to life –
Now all worth living for is gone;
With nothing left but care and strife,
But man, they say, was made to mourn.*

There are no records that John Howard's children or grandchildren, ever visited Colborne Lodge or enjoyed High Park in his company. Even after Jemima's death, his presence in the Williams' lives remains unclear. But the relationship continued. In a November 1877 diary entry, the first reference to George Williams by name is made when Howard appoints him his agent at the university. A letter he wrote on Aug. 21, 1886 to Mary Williams informs her that if he is well, he will call and see her the next week.

When John Howard died in 1890, his daughter Anne and son Douglas had already been buried, as were three of his eight grandchildren. The remainder of his family was mentioned in his will – by name only, not by their relationship to him.

George Williams was 57 when his father died. A dealer in china and lamps with a store on Queen Street, he later went into real estate. He was left his father's gold watch and chain, gun collection, carpenter tools, work bench and the cottages, lot and premises on the east side of University Avenue. He also left an amount of money to George in trust to be passed on to Anne's children, the interest to go to Mary Williams. She was also to receive an annuity of \$200 a year until the division of the estate.

Mary Williams died from paralysis in 1900 at the the age of 77. She is buried in St. James' Cemetery at Parliament and Bloor Streets, in a family plot owned by her son George, on the grounds John Howard designed in 1842.

Inscribed on her tombstone above the fading words, "She was a good mother", are also the names of her son Douglas who died of pleurisy at age 38; daughter-in-law Sarah Wright (George's first wife) and their three children who died at the ages of 21, 19 and 4. Mary and John's daughter Anne Jane (Armstrong), who died in an accident in 1887, and two of her children

who died of diphtheria in 1889, are buried nearby.

George Williams died at the age of 81 in 1925, and is buried in Prospect Cemetery with his second wife Amy Brown. They had no children. Buried with them are Anne's son, William George and his wife. But their names do not appear on the tombstone.

The descendants of Mary Williams and John Howard only lived on through one granddaughter, Ada Jane (daughter of Anne) who married Joseph Liddell. They had two sons, one who died at the age of five from diphtheria, but the other lived to marry and have children: great-grandchildren are still alive today.

There is no inscription at Howard's grave to say, "He was a good father". But on brass plates attached to the gates leading to the tomb, he had engraved prior to their deaths, on one side, "Sacred to the memory of John George Howard and Jemima Frances his wife..."; on the other side, the epitaph he shares with the surrounding railing:

*"St. Paul's Cathedral for 160 years I did enclose,
Oh! stranger, look with reverence;
Man! man! unstable man!
It was thou who caused the severance."*

Nov. 18, 1875

J.G.H



John George Howard in 1835. Background by John George Howard. Portrait of Howard by Dalmain.

photo courtesy Toronto Historical Board

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The sunken gardens in High Park from Warabe Aska's 1984 book Who Goes to the Park?

THE

Warabe Aska takes flight

by Jill Franklin

For most of us visiting High Park, our vision exists in a time and space that excludes a world of wonder and mythology as seen through the eyes of artist Warabe Aska.

Aska's paintings show us familiar areas of the park, depicting the traditions that frequent visitors enjoy year-round, but there's something more. Trees and animals are given individual expression – the grand old oak raises its branches as concertmaster; skaters on Grenadier Pond leave trails of misty lily trumpets in their breaths; cherubs rest in trees above children playing and angels dance in the sky.

"Many Torontonians didn't think of High Park being the subject of a book," Aska says. "Seeing it through the eyes of someone who grew up somewhere

else gives a different vision, a different point of view."

Fifteen years ago, Aska moved to Toronto from his native Japan and stumbled across something he hadn't experienced while living in Tokyo – people of all ages, playing and relaxing in a natural setting in the centre of the city.

Aska spent a year observing life in High Park throughout each season, then the following two years painting his impressions of the cultural diversities and pleasures people derived from using the park. He transformed commonplace scenes into magical interpretations full of wonder, romance and joy.

In 1984, Tundra Books published *Who Goes to the Park?*, a collection of 14 oil paintings, each accompanied by a poem written by Aska.

"There are no city parks in Japan," Aska says. "There are beautiful gardens but signs everywhere to keep off the grass. People can't touch the nature like they do here. In Tokyo, we don't even see the sun rise or set because of all the high rise buildings."

Who Goes to the Park? won the 1985 Toronto Book Award and permanent recognition for Aska with a plaque embedded in the Authors' Walk of Fame on Queen Street West in front of Edward's Book Store.

Unlike most children raised in Japan, Aska was fortunate to have been exposed to the playgrounds of nature when he was young. He grew up south of Osaka

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on a small island the size of Lake Ontario, with a population of 4 million people. As a child he climbed trees and played in rice fields.

A career in graphic arts eventually led him to Tokyo and an environment where people have little time or space for recreation.

"Even on weekends, the Japanese children have lessons. They cannot relax, they have no free time," Aska says, appreciating the different lifestyle his three children have in Canada.

Dissatisfied using his talent in commercial work, Aska left to expand his vision through travel. He spent time in Europe and Spain, where he was first introduced to the city park, painting the scenery, people and new experiences he encountered.

Contact with a Toronto gallery first brought him to North America, where everything looked so different – "My imagination expanded because of the scenery. I went up north and everything was so wide and huge. I was shocked. There was no object to sketch – just the sky and land. Then I began to see something else – it was minus 20 and I could see my breath over the clouds, clouds that might be in conversation, many laughing voices..."

After the success of *Who Goes to the Park?*, Aska produced a similar book on Stanley Park, *Who Hides in the Park?* – with children dancing on lily pads and human totem poles. His technique of disguising animals and cultural legends into familiar landscapes began to emerge.

In 1990, Aska's next book *Seasons* was published and short-listed for a Governor-General's Award. This time, the poetry complementing each painting was selected from around the world by Alberto Manguel.

Although he wrote the poetry to accompany the paintings in his books on High Park and Stanley Park, he found it very difficult to write in English or translate from Japanese.

"I want to give my priority, my imagination and ideas to my paintings," Aska says. His publisher Doubleday, sent his images to poet David Day – who spends his time between homes in Vancouver and England.

Aska had decided to do a series of books based on the alphabet – beginning with *Aska's Animals* in 1991, followed by *Aska's Birds* and *Aska's Sea Creatures*. Even though artist and poet have never met, Day's expressions of fantasy and mythology have been a perfect blend with Aska's stunning and brilliant depictions of nature.

Before Aska puts brush to canvas, he sits and observes his subjects. "I just watch the nature. Then my imagination expands, I get ideas and I start to sketch. Observation is very important for me. I get wonderful ideas from nature so I made up a new word – "imaginature."

In preparation for *Aska's Animals* the author went on safari in Kenya for three weeks. "I didn't want to sketch the animals in the zoo because they're getting lazy."

What he saw in the wild became a series of enchanting compositions, revealing the mysteries of the animal kingdom. Poetry and painting produce images of animals that evolved directly from their interactions with their environments – camel humps in the dunes of shifting sands; shaggy lion manes blend in with hot grasslands; hippos are monuments to the glories of mud.

The publication of these books in both North America and Japan has furthered Aska's career and life experience. He was commissioned to design the poster for 1993 Earth Day celebrations – painting some 50 species of animals and trees all within the circle of our planet.

Aska is not the only artist whose inspirations come from the celebration of the world we live in. The students of an elementary school in Wichita, Kansas were fortunate enough to have the artist guide them in their Earth Day drawings last year.

Each year the American Library Association gives out the Caldecott Medal, a national award for the children's book with the best illustration. Carol Hirsh, an elementary school teacher in Wichita asks her primary students to search through book stores and libraries to find other books worthy of the award, and then a winner is picked from their discoveries

In 1992 Warabe Aska was cho-

sen for *Aska's Animals*, and a home-made medal, named the Caldecott-Hirsh Award was mailed to the artist, along with drawings and letters. Aska felt so honoured that he also enclosed a photograph of his family presenting him the award in their own private ceremony.

An unusual correspondence developed between artist and students, culminating in a student-run used book sale that raised money to fly Aska to Wichita.

Further appreciation for Aska's work came recently from the Imperial Family in Japan when Aska exhibited his original paintings in Tokyo for the first time in over 20 years. It is a Japanese custom for artists to offer their work as a gift to the prince and princess, but in Aska's case, they purchased two of his paintings.

The name 'Warabe' means 'child'. 'Aska' means 'bird of flight'. This artist has given the wings of butterflies to babies, wings of swans to children, and never stops dreaming.

For the letter 'D' in the alphabet series, Aska's creativity is being further expanded with his own unique expression of 'imaginature'. What will it be – dragons? dwarfs? dinosaurs? dogs?

Warabe Aska's eyes light up. "Doorway!" he exclaims. "Just imagine all the different doorways in the world that open onto beautiful scenes."



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Soaking up the summer fun

The change-room floor feels wet and grotty under your bare toes. You can't even see the pool yet, and already you're spacy from the chlorine fumes. Then comes the first icy plunge, followed by the heart-stopping moment when your swimsuit reaches maximum saturation. You're a kid up to your nostrils in the High Park pool in a heatwave. Could it possibly get any better than this?

You could, of course, cannonball your friends until your nose stings, or make underwater shark attacks on your little brother's ankles, or float face-down to scare the life-guards. And during the course of a long, hot afternoon you will do all of those things at least once. But that will just be gravy. Purist that you are, you prefer to savour the true essence of the swimming pool experience. You wade toward the deep end until the water is lapping at your upper lip, and you stay there, half-floating like a weightless astronaut, until your nailbeds are blue and your fingers are raisin city. Then you shinny up the ladder, wrap yourself in a sun-warmed towel, and shiver. Excellent.

But there is more to come. You and your friends dress at mach speed and head for the snack bar, while mom and the little guy are still toweling off. Quarters jingling in pockets, you inhale the aromas, deciding. A hot dog? Barbeque chips? Neon glow-in-the-dark frozen treats? Everyone shivers. No contest – it's the cold stuff all around. Eat fast so mom won't find out, because it's nearly dinner, and she'd have a cow, for sure. She will anyway, because you've just remembered it's baseball night, and you're due back at the park in 20 minutes. You utter, with practiced authority, a word your mother thinks you don't know, and run for the parking lot where she's happily waiting for you, NOT.

A frantic 30 minutes later, you are holding down third base, punching the pocket of your glove which you have spit into to soften it up. At least, that is what you think the spit is for, although you mostly do it because you think it looks cool. Which is how you feel in you serious ball-player's uniform – seriously cool. You flick a glance at the

sidelines to see if anyone's admiring, but it's just the usual collection of parents and babies. Your mom waves, and you studiously focus on the batter and pretend you didn't see. It must be your dad's turn to take your brother to the swings and stuff.

You used to like the swings. Dad would always push until you were sure it'd go right over the crossbar on the next swoop, or you'd fall off and fly through the air into the woods. Pure fear – awright! Or you could sit by yourself on the swing seat and turn around and around until the chains were all twisted, then let go and twirl so fast it made your stomach dizzy-sick. Totally cool. Sometimes, if nobody's watching, you still do it.

You miss an easy pop-up, and some kid in the crowd boos. You slip a gesture your mother thinks you don't know. She sees you. You are toast, for sure. Probably no TV for a week. You wonder if your dad took the kid to the park zoo, instead. You always liked that too.

Once, when you were a little kid, they bought you an ice cream cone at the restaurant, and when you stood beside the fence a goat ate it. They had to buy you another to shut you up. They didn't know you'd actually fed it to the goat. It was strawberry, and you'd changed your mind and wanted chocolate. At least, you think that's how it happened.

Your turn at bat again. If you strike out once more, you will die of embarrassment. The ball bounces through the infield, great relief, and you run like the wind but it's waiting at first when you arrive. Someone yells good try, and you're embarrassed anyway.

Maybe dad took the little guy to play in the sand. that was always good for finding buried treasure – little cars with no wheels, or old combs. Stuff little kids get excited over. Once you found a real silver spoon that you gave to your mother, but you don't know what happened to it after that.

The game's over, but your parents have to practically drag you away. You're too busy making plans with your friends for a major waterfight – tomorrow, two p.m. sharp, in the pool.

by
Mary
Lou



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Treasures of High Park

by Joanne Doucette

My Acadian and Micmac ancestors needed to know their environment intimately in order to survive. But mere survival isn't good enough for anyone. In order to thrive humans need to value or treasure something.

Native peoples valued what many Europeans thought was "waste land". They set fires to burn the grasslands and, so, helped to preserve them by destroying invading trees. Oak savannah, grassland with scattered trees (such as black oak and red oak), contains plants native people needed for medicine.

I'd like to introduce you to three wild flower treasures found in High Park's oak savannah on the west side of the park above Grenadier Pond.

In June, **Blue or Wild Lupine** forms purple-blue carpets on open areas. Lupines grow 30-60 cm. high and bear flowers in showy upright clusters or *racemes*. Lupine leaves have seven to nine segments like the spokes on a wagon wheel.

Lupines produce poisonous hard, pea-like seeds. Humans learned what was poison and what was good medicine through trial and error. Native people drank a cold leaf tea from lupines to treat

nausea and internal hemorrhage. They fed lupine leaves to horses to make them fat and "spirited". Native healers became elders in part because they successfully figured out just how much "medicine" people (and horses) could handle without dying from it!

Round-headed Bush Clover grows from about 15 cm. to over a metre tall and blooms from late July to September. Like lupines, bush clover improves the nitrogen content of dry soil. The silvery-hairy plant has leaflets in threes. The bristly flowers are creamy with reddish-brown markings.

Round-headed bush clover was another valuable plant for native healers who spat on dried pieces of stem, stuck it to the patient's skin, lit it and allowed it to burn — just as shiatsu therapists burn moxa today. Modern researchers have extracted chemicals from Bush Clover which are effective against some tumours and in lowering blood cholesterol levels.

Common Milkweed grows up to two metres tall and bears pinkish to purplish star-shaped flowers in a fragrant domed cluster about eight cm. wide. Its leaves are 10-25 cm., in pairs, broad-oblong, and light green with a downy

underside. The stem is stout, downy, and grey-green, with a white sticky sap or "milk". The fruit is a rough, pointed pod that splits open on one side to release seeds. Each seed is covered with silky hairs which act as a parachute in the wind. Milkweed flowers all summer long.

Milkweed contains poisons, related to digitalins used in treating some heart diseases. Native healers used milkweed root tea as laxative and diuretic and as wart-remover. Pioneer physicians prescribed it for asthma and rheumatism. Settlers used the silky seed tassels in their pillows and feather beds. Milkweed is also the sole food source for monarch butterflies.

Look for these treasures the next time you are in High Park. But, please do not pick any plants or flowers. Leave them for others to enjoy. My ancestors turned to wild plants for food and medicine, but they thought they had an endless supply. We know we do not. As well, native people and European herbalists had a wealth of knowledge and hands-on experience. We don't — but we can learn to appreciate and value the treasures of High Park even though we no longer have to rely on them for medicine or food.

Drummers

Continued from Page 6

it's a wonderful process," says Rasool Madhavjee.

Madhavjee has been coming to the knoll on and off for four years, and his hands look it — peeling skin and split callouses. He sits on the picnic table and pounds away ecstatically. His drum is home-made: a piece of sewer pipe with deer skin stretched over one end. Madjavee isn't the only one who has improvised. Another man works over an 18-litre water bottle with the top cut off of it.

Throughout the afternoon everyone trades instruments. My anonymous teacher has her djembe with her. Usually, she says, she brings an assortment of shakers which she hands to chil-

dren to play. She offers me her djembe to try. This time I won't get away with being an observer. I settle myself on the outskirts of the core and start hitting the head of the West African drum. My hands are soon tingling. But I feel happy, maybe a little stupid, maybe a little proud.

"I'm the kind of person, when I'm stressed out, doing something physical definitely helps out," says Geri Solomon. "There's something about the beat that just grabs me. It's relaxing."

As the afternoon slides gently into evening, I take my leave. The merriment is in full swing.

"I love it out here," the teacher says. "This is where it's meant to be; this is perfect, absolutely perfect."

Ukrainian poetess' classical reign



"By own hands freedom gained is freedom true. By others freedom given is a captive's true doom."

This inspiring quote from the writings of Lesya Ukrainka appears on the base of the statue erected in her honour on Colborne Lodge Drive in High Park

on Oct. 19, 1975, during International Women's Year.

Born Larissa Kosach Kvitka in Novohrad Volynski, Ukraine in 1871, Lesya Ukrainka was an influential late 19th century literary figure in Ukraine and Europe. The poetess and dramatist was fluent in West European and Slavic languages, as well as Greek and Latin. Afflicted, and frequently bedridden with tuberculosis, she travelled widely in Europe and to the Caucasus, in search of a cure. While her literary oeuvre was far-ranging, she is especially revered as a



champion of human rights, and of the rights of the Ukrainian Nation. In her 1913 work, *The Stone Heart*, she adapts the Don Juan theme in a thought-provoking way, in a presentation of the conflict between social conformity and personal freedom and responsibility.

The foresight, dedication and finances of the Women's Council of the Ukrainian Canadian Committee, Toronto Branch, led to the establishment of the monument. Renowned Ukrainian emigre sculptor, Mykhailo Chereshniovsky, was commissioned to execute the work, to commemorate both the centennial of the birth of Lesya Ukrainka, and the 25th anniversary of the committee. Chereshniovsky, who had designed a monument to Ukrainka in Cleveland, Ohio, was one of several Ukrainian painters and sculptors who went to the

United States after the Second World War. He became president of the association of Ukrainian Artists in America, and was one of the group known as the Monumentalists.

The subtle classical lines of the bronze sculpture found broad public acceptance, adding, as the committee had noted, "...the touch of human intellect to the natural beauty of High Park".

As a symbol of the "humanitarian and freedom loving spirit of Ukrainians," the statue of the fervent literate has been the locale for commemorating a recent human tragedy. Since 1993, the Children of Chernobyl Canadian Fund has held an evening service in High Park on April 26, the anniversary of the explosion and meltdown at the nuclear plant situated 100 miles from the capital of Ukraine, Kiev.

The cultural landscape of High Park has been immeasurably enriched by the presence of this fine work of art. Lesya Ukrainka died in Surami, Georgia on August 1, 1913 and was buried in Kiev.

Sources: Children of Chornobyl, Canadian Fund; Encyclopedia of Ukraine; Parks and Rec., Archives; Toronto Civic Sculpture, 1985, publ. Planning Dept; The ukrainian Weekly, Sun. Apr. 30/95.



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photo by Gera Dillon

Tuesday Evening Tours

Meet outside the Grenadier Restaurant at 6:45 p.m.

- July 4..... Christine Tu
Restoring Grenadier Pond
- July 11..... Alison Neilson
Raccoons
- July 18..... Ann Zimmerman
Ecology of Grenadier Pond
- July 25..... Kim Bilous
Ecology of High Park
- August 1..... John McAndrews
Identifying Plants
- August 8..... Deborah Martin-Downs
Restoring Grenadier Pond
- August 15..... Solomon Boye
Growing Native Plants
- August 22..... Solomon Boye
Growing Aquatic Plants
- August 29..... Nick Tzovolos
Insects

Sunday Afternoon Tours

Meet outside the Grenadier Restaurant at 1:15 p.m.

- July 9..... Steve Varga
Park Plants – Past and Present
- July 16..... Brett Griffin
Birds
- July 23..... Joseph Paquette
Nature and Native Stories
- July 30..... Mel Tintpolver
Butterflies
- August 13..... Rob Guthrie
Ontario Tree Atlas Project
- August 20..... Dagmour Baur
Mushrooms
- August 27..... Terry Fahey
Oak Woodlands Restoration

Tours organized and presented by the High Park Citizens' Advisory Committee, Colborne Lodge (Toronto Historical Board) and the City of Toronto Department of Parks and Recreation