

Fall 1995 Volume Two, Number Three

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HIGH PARK

A Park Lover's Quarterly

The High Park Zoo

After one century and a series of break-ins and animal deaths, why is it still here?

A Hanging Offence

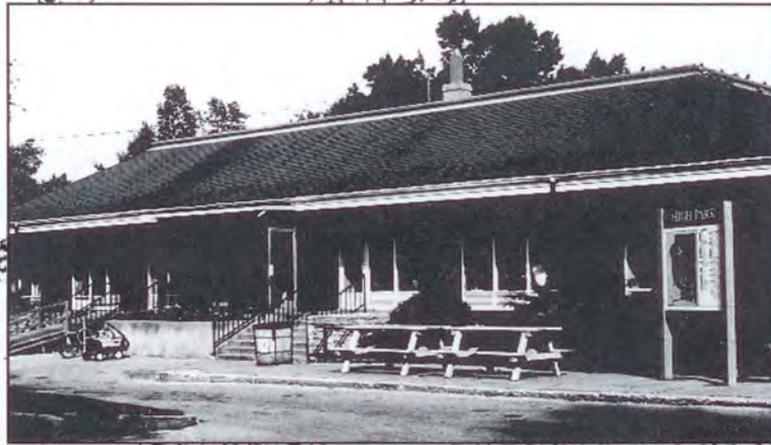
High Park caretaker John Albert was sentenced to hang for the death of a boy he shot on the shores of Grenadier Pond

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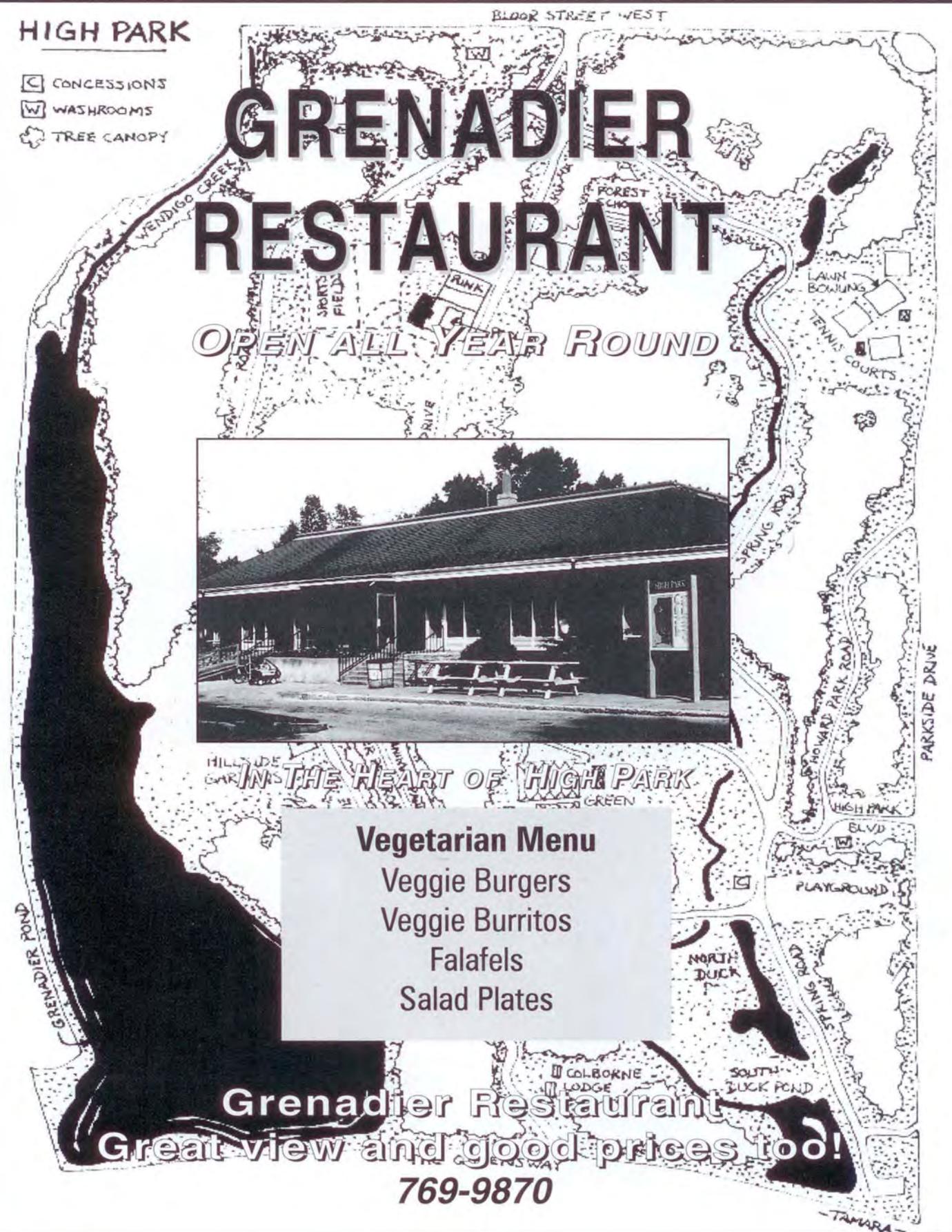
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High Park

A Park Lover's Quarterly

Editor – Gigi Suhanic
 Writer – Jill Franklin
 Columnists – Mary Lou Kumagai, Joan Miles,
 Cover photograph by Gera Dillon
 Page 3 photo by D.W. Dorkin



photo by D.W. Dorkin

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.

High Park – A Park Lover's Quarterly is published four times a year by High Park Quarterly Inc. Editorial enquiries and letters to the editor are welcome and should be sent to: High Park Quarterly Inc., 53-C High Park Boulevard, Toronto M6R 1M9. Telephone 588-5678. No part of this publication may be reproduced in whole or in part without the written permission of the publisher. Canada Post second class mail registration number is 0248419698. High Park Quarterly Inc., is an independent publishing organization.

Contents

Departments	
Letters to the Editor.....	4
Park Politics.....	4
Park News	
Briefly.....	5
Bea High Park big brother or sister.....	6
Features	
With a dour-looking bunch of beasties and a string of late-night acts of vandalism and animal slayings to its name, it's a wonder the High Park Zoo is still around. <i>by Gigi Suhanic</i>	8
The murder of a 17-year-old boy on Grenadier Pond by High Park's caretaker and civilian constable was big news in the Toronto of 1882. <i>by Jill Franklin</i>	10
Columns	
Park Pundit.....	12
High Park in History.....	13



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Park Politics

- a guide to grassroots involvement in High Park

SEPTEMBER 26, 6:30 p.m., High Park Training Centre. The High Park Transportation Work Group meets to discuss and finalize changes to the Howard Park Avenue entrance to High Park.

OCTOBER 11, 6:30 p.m., High Park Training Centre. The High Park Citizens' Advisory Committee holds its first general meeting to inaugurate the committee's permanent status as the park user's advisory group to the Toronto Department of Parks and Recreation.

GRENADIER POND consultant Gartner Lee has completed a final draft report of the problems in Grenadier Pond and the possible solutions. For an executive summary phone the Dept. of Park and Recreation at 392-7251. The report will be going before Toronto City Council's Neighbourhoods Committee. Submissions on the contents of the report are welcome. Mail them to David McCluskey, High Park Project Co-ordinator, Toronto Dept. of Parks and Recreation, Toronto City Hall, 14th Floor, 100 Queen Street West, M5H 1N1.

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Letters.....

Men count too in safety concerns

As a new occasional user of High Park, I read belatedly but with interest your article "Securing Park Safety" (Spring 1994). Before reading the article I had already been warned of the park's reputation as a place of "gay cruising" and been informed that it was probably safer for women than for men.

Thus I found your article irritatingly unbalanced. While you mention a male murder and male assaults on other males in the opening paragraphs, your article seems - as do municipal officials and citizens' groups - overwhelmingly concerned with the safety of women and children in the park. Has political correctness so distorted people's views of victims in society? Why is the Metro Action Committee on Public Violence Against Women and Children not renamed the Metro Action Committee on Public Violence PERIOD.

Of course I can speak only from my experience. To get to work I have to walk across the park from north to south, then back again afterward. Sometimes in good weather I have a quiet lunch on a bench before starting work and I deeply resent being

leered at by passing men. No doubt, others share this experience.

In future I hope your magazine will reflect evenly the safety concerns of both men and women - indeed, of everyone.

**David Keenleyside
Toronto**

Thanks for llamas

Thank you for your first edition specially on page 4 about the llamas in the High Park Zoo (Spring 1995). I enclose a snapshot taken by me two days after the birth of the llama baby.

**Judy Unterman
Toronto**



Letters to the editor are welcome and should be sent to the attention of: Editor, High Park: A Park Lover's Quarterly, 53 High Park Blvd. Unit C Toronto M6R 1M9. Please include your name and telephone number. Letters may be edited for space.

High Park on TVOntario
Great Lakes Alive is a three-hour programme on North America's Great Lakes, Lake Superior, Lake Huron, Lake Michigan, Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. The show airs in three segments Sept. 28, Oct. 5 and Oct. 12 at 7 p.m. on TVO. The final installment *Restoring the Balance* features footage from ecotours held in High Park during the summer of 1994.

Where there's ducks there's money

Most proposed techniques to clean up Grenadier Pond are seriously expensive. Sure, some are cheaper than others. But the difference is sort of like buying a pair of \$800 pants on sale at Harry Rosen's for \$400. At either price they're out of reach.

When consultant Gartner Lee presented a final draft of proposals for the pond, this past summer, a new player, was present at the discussions that could make the price tag a little more palatable and the goals that much more possible.

Ducks Unlimited Canada (DU) is a non-profit organization working to preserve and increase wetland habitat. Revenues in the 1995 annual report of \$56,794,000 have made it possible for DU to be involved in many projects.

According to representative Rick Wishart, Ducks Unlimited was first contacted by the office of Toronto Mayor Barbara Hall regarding wetland projects in Toronto and the possibilities of DU providing funding and scientific expertise.

"Grenadier Pond is a high profile area. From that standpoint it's very attractive," Wishart says. Some potential areas of interest Wishart says could be in efforts to improve wetland vegetation and control of the numbers of geese flocking to the pond.

Until solutions are selected and a final concept for rehabilitation evolves, Wishart says he doesn't know what Ducks Unlimited's role, if any, will be in Grenadier Pond.

Wishart also says Ducks is investigating participating in projects at the Leslie Spit and Greenwood Racetrack.

A winning combination

The Swansea Horticultural Society and the High Park greenhouses were a winning combination at the Canadian National Exhibition this past summer.

briefly

The west end society created a woodland/prairie display chockablock full of varieties of native trees, grasses and wild flower species grown in the High Park greenhouses to capture second place in the horticultural society class of the horticultural competitions at the CNE.

"Our sole purpose was educational, not competitive. We weren't out to win. All we wanted to do was get people to see native plants," says Bill Roberts, one of a six-member team that designed and assembled the display.

The Swansea group doled out an eye-full of species that all grow in High Park, including Woodland Sunflowers, Grey Goldenrod, Brown-eyed Susans, Pennsylvania Sedge, Little and Big Bluestem, Upland Bent Grass, Cinque Foil, Sumac, New Jersey Tea and White Oak.

"As I recall the Swansea entry looked as if it grew there," says Kevin McMillan a judge at the CNE.

Natural displays using native plants were in the majority in all the classes, says McMillan, also Editor of *Toronto Gardens*. The first prize winner in the horticultural society class was a bog created by a Knobelton-based group.

Roberts says the Swansea Horticultural Society wanted to introduce people to the possibilities of native plants in a natural garden.

The other team members include Fred and Mary Patterson, Gene and Alex Gallagher, Sue Krac, and Donna Durham.



The Swansea Horticultural Society's winning entry at the CNE used plants grown at the High Park greenhouses.

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VOLUNTEERS

job thieves or ecological trust

"Stewardship is the latest buzzword where High Park is concerned. Toronto politicians, or at least local ones, and the Parks and Recreation Department want us to steward High Park – to cherish it, care for it and look after it.

People are channeling their ideas and energies into programming and policy through the High Park Citizens' Advisory Committee. But there is a growing keenness to tend to the park with their hands.

Having those feelings of stewardship can be frustrating. To be sure, on daily walks one might see a blade of this askew or some ragweed poking out there and want to make things right. Looking over one's shoulder one might pluck. Most stewards want to be actively involved in something's care. In High Park there's nowhere – yet – to put those feelings.

There has been a measured and increasing desire on the part of the public to do outdoor volunteer work in High Park. Some has already taken place on an ad hoc basis and more is planned for the future.

At the end of August posters asked people to, "Help weed High Park". On Aug. 23 a group of about a dozen met at

the Grenadier Restaurant to remove two species of plants considered invasive. First the group tackled a pretty purple flower on a tall stem known as Purple Loosestrife, down at Grenadier Pond. Terry Fahey, plant specialist and technical support person told the group when Purple Loosestrife gets a toe in the door everything else goes out the window. Many river mouths are infested with the European native to the exclusion of all other plants, he says. The same week as the pull in High Park, Ducks Unlimited had flown a *Toronto Sun* photographer over Metro rivers to show the way the plant has taken over.

Weeders donned gloves, and clippers and Fahey warned of red ants, nippy creatures, that lurk at the edge of the pond where the loosestrife likes to grow.

Everyone bent and clipped and avoided the ants, working hard on a late summer weekday.

"I use the park a lot and I think I should do something to help," says Apollo Tang a student at York University in atmospheric pollution.

"I moved into a house on the pond and I feel its an extension of my new home and I felt if the pond is threatened I wanted to be part of it," says Jane Marvy.

With the loosestrife stuffed in bags, the weeders moved up the hill. Black Swallowwort, alias Strangling Dog Vine was next. The group started in on a thick patch across the road from the Grenadier Restaurant. Some jokingly called the plant "killer dog vine". Black Swallowwort, is also a native of Europe. Its sinewy vines twine themselves around anything they can find. When the pods are ripe they bust, and squirt out highly-mobile, feather-like seeds.

It was a happy but tired bunch that walked back to the Grenadier afterward. Everyone sat quietly around the table. No nervous chattering, just satisfaction.

"We see volunteerism as a form of recreation," says Don Young, Parks Regional Manager, Western District with the Toronto Department of Parks and Recreation. "People can get

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involved as a recreational opportunity but it also helps us promote programmes and initiatives that we couldn't do ourselves," Young says.

In High Park's case that means the oak woodlands or Black Oak Savannah restoration. Although the project was approved in principle by the previous council, following last year's municipal elections the restoration has been thrown into a political vacuum and has no status in terms of a plan and timetable and no place in the budget.

Although the woodlands restoration is in no-man's land presently, the project has stirred the interest of people who want to contribute time and effort to looking after the park. The evening weed was an example of the possibilities the restoration can create.

The Parks and Recreation Department hasn't gone out and actively recruited volunteers. Instead an interest has created itself, says Young. "We will respond and support it and work with the community." One way of responding is by creating a volunteer job description for work not being covered by paid staff, one example of that being a co-ordinator for interpretive activities like ecotours, Young says.

There has always been an interest on the part of the public in outdoor work in parks. Balancing the enthusiasm of volunteers against the best interests of a unionized workforce is a delicate juggling act. Certainly those looking to get some dirt under their nails in a fantastic setting like High Park don't want to step on the toes of unionized staff and be seen as a threat to well-paying and decent jobs.

Non-management employees of the Parks and Recreation Department are represented by the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 43. Volunteers cost jobs, is the union's assessment, says Danny Mamczur, President of Local 43. "My feeling is our jobs are well-paid and if we see more volun-

teers those jobs will disappear," Mamczur says. "There was always a volunteer movement for outdoor work. That will eliminate full-time jobs."

Thus far in High Park the union "has closed its eyes". During the summer of 1994 the Parks and Recreation Department invited the community to plant a variety of woodland and prairie species of grasses, wildflowers and trees. Local 43 has of yet not received any complaints from outdoor workers regarding the handful of volunteer events. But Mamczur says the union has been known to "grieve" efforts by volunteers.

Really, can volunteers rob workers of paid jobs when officially the jobs and the work don't exist? Unless the status of High Park's woodland project changes, the work won't get done and the landscape and the diversity of plants and animals that live there will deteriorate.

New York City's Central Park is run by the New York City Parks and Recreation Department and the Central Park Conservancy. The Conservancy has actively recruited volunteers – with a roster of 1200 names to date. "They significantly contribute to the maintenance of the park," says Conservancy volunteer co-ordinator Rowina Saunders, to the tune of 25-30,000 hours of service each year worth an estimated \$250,000.

In the beginning stages of restoration work on the Central Park's woodlands, manager Dennis Burton says all he had was volunteers to help him do the work. Now Burton has a staff of six, a happy reversal of the predicted scenario of volunteers stealing jobs.

People thirst for outdoor experiences, just check out the queues at the Mountain Equipment Co-op.

Organizers of the weeding event are hoping it will be the first of many. For next year's growing season they are hoping to put into action a series of regularly scheduled pulls and plantings.

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Weathered by time and events the High Park Zoo keeps on keeping on

by Gigi Suhanic

Superbowl Sunday, January 1994: Despite all predictions the Buffalo Bills fail to capture the National Football League's first prize, losing in Baltimore to the Colts of the same name. Bills fans far and wide and those suckered by the pre-game hype, weep bitterly. In Toronto some football guys – how many, who, and their blood/alcohol levels all question marks – take the loss a little more seriously. That night at 1 a.m. then High Park Superintendent Harry Moffitt, other Parks and Recreation staff members and the Metro police are out trying to find and herd three North American Bison back to their pen in the High Park Zoo.

The psychology of the gesture, releasing the great hulking creatures, is interesting. The conversation amongst the lads could have gone like this: "The Superbowl is just a shallow measurement of the worth of a group of individuals. It's nothing more than a blink in time," says one. "But the unfettered freedom of a beast that once roamed the vast plains of this country in numbers resembling a great storm cloud, now that's something beyond the baseness of winning and losing," chimes in another. In unison they crow, "Free the buffalo. Free the buffalo. Free the buffalo..." Once down in High Park our lads ignore the fairly large sign at the pen saying, "Bison", clip the padlock and rustle the mythical quadrupeds out of their cosy straw beds.

One of the park's staff recalls the hefty shape of one of the animals silhouetted against the night sky, the breath bursting from its nostrils as it galloped across an open field. If the prank wasn't so stupid it would be funny and oddly appropriate. Besides disturbing people on a bloody cold night, there was a real fear the animals would find their way to Bloor Street and have to be tranquilized. Dosages are hard to gauge. Accidental death by overdose can and has happened.

It's far from the first time residents of the High Park animal paddocks have been released from their cages. The

Superbowl caper is benign compared to some of the vicious acts of violence that have been perpetrated against the zoo's inmates.

November 1982: Vandals release nine animals including llamas and spotted fallow deer out of their pens in the High Park Zoo. One of the deer is euthanized by fatal injection after breaking its leg. A Toronto Star story of the following day says a similar and earlier event also cost the lives of two buffalo.

January 1990: A dog is hoisted into the pen of the Mouflon Sheep. One is found dead.

February 1992: The pavilion housing the roosters, rabbits, peacocks and turkey vultures is broken into. Eight animals, three roosters, three hens, one rabbit and one pheasant are slaughtered. Some have broken necks and their eyes are poked out. The pheasant's throat is slashed. The rabbit is left hanging by a wire. It's left foot is missing and it's body gutted. The Toronto Humane Society likens the gruesome scene to a "massacre". Police say the animals' "injuries are consistent with satanic cults".

The zoo is one of the most popular attractions of all that High Park has to offer. On any given day in the summer Deer Pen Road is packed, mostly with families. The collection of species is bewilderingly varied. Llamas, American Bison, Barbary Sheep, Mouflon Sheep, Yaks, Scottish Highland Cattle, Whitetailed Deer and an assortment of brightly feathered roosters, Turkey Vultures, peacocks, and rabbits.

Zoocheck Canada is an organization that monitors the conditions of animals in captivity. The last time it visited the High Park Zoo was in May of 1993. It got a clean bill of health for what it is. "We've seen a lot worse, in terms of small-scale operations," says a Zoocheck representative.

In 1994, as part of some promised upgrading of the zoo the Toronto Parks and Recreation Department did some much needed work on the facility. Fencing was replaced, a new water system was installed to ensure the animals would have running

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water all-year-round, security alarms were installed on some of the buildings. A 'creche', a metal chute used to constrain animals to give them shots, was purchased. A perimeter fence was also installed around the zoo's entirety and high wooden gates, that are locked at dusk, at each end of Deer Pen Road. If a prankster ever gets the bright idea to release some animals then at least the fence and gates will stop them from straying away from the zoo and possibly onto a busy road.

"The animals are as safe as they are going to be living outside," says Don Young Manager for Parks West with the Toronto Parks and Recreation Department. The work Parks and Recreation has done on the facility came about in part from community meetings it held in 1993 to finalize a High Park master plan. Still, the improvements don't mask what the zoo is. A random collection of frustrated animals with nothing to live for.

What is the genesis of an attraction that dates back to a time when Toronto Parks and Recreation was called Parks and Exhibition?

One story has it that a flamboyant character called Harry Piper and a dead whale were the zoo's predecessors. Piper was born in Toronto on Oct. 29, 1839. He opened a small zoo which was eventually located at the corner of Front and York Street in 1879. His 'collection' included two elephants, and two lion cubs purchased from the Central Park Zoo. The centrepiece of Piper's "zoological garden" was a long dead whale, apparently purchased in 1881. When the whale began to decompose Piper was given the boot from Front and York Streets and eventually ended up displaying his menagerie in High Park and the Exhibition Grounds. There is a school of thought that Piper's collection formed the beginnings of the High Park Zoo, although there's no documentation to prove the theory. Eventually, Piper would parlay his talents for spectacle into political success. From 1877-1880 and 1883-1888, Piper was the City of Toronto Alderman for the St. John's Ward bounded during his tenure from University Avenue to Yonge Streets and from Bloor Street to Queen Street.

Harry Piper during his tenure as alderman.

Sadly or not, the City of Toronto's archival information shows a much less colourful beginning for the zoo. In the handwritten ledgers of the 1897 minutes of the city's Board of Control, an entry refers to an offer of deer from a Mr. Strother. "A Mr. Strother having generously offered to give the City a number of deer to be placed in High Park it was ordered that the Council be recommended to accept the offer and that a space be fenced off in High Park for placing them in, the cost of the fence being estimated at \$300 for which funds were reported," the minutes say. The next entry in 1904 refers to an order for the detailed costs of running the Riverdale, High Park and Island Park Zoos, and erecting permanent structures.

Besides these slim entries these documents contain no paper trail detailing the early growth of the collection of animals

in High Park although turn-of-the-century photographs show deer, elk and bison.

In 1945 the Toronto Humane Society produced a report on the High Park Zoo. The inventory accompanying the report shows many of the same kinds of animals living there 50 years ago as today. Notable differences included a camel, water buffalo, elk and four European wild boars. The report, completed by a veterinarian with the Toronto Humane Society, recommended enlarging the High Park Zoo and removing the Riverdale Zoo "from its present poor crowded location to High Park which with its natural beauty could be made into a beautiful garden. The birds and a majority of animals could have more freedom in more natural surroundings....If animals and birds are to be kept in captivity for people to admire or see, it is more humane to keep them in as natural a surrounding as possible," Leeson writes. The Toronto Humane Society report resulted from a series of complaints regarding the conditions of the animals and pens.

Sept. 19, 1940

I visited High Park yesterday and I was appalled when I saw the condition of the white deer. One of the animals has a large running sore on its left side...

I do not think animals should be imprisoned just for people to gaze at but if they are prisoners then they should be given proper care and attention...

Mrs. M. Duuster(?)
New Toronto

Continued on Page 14



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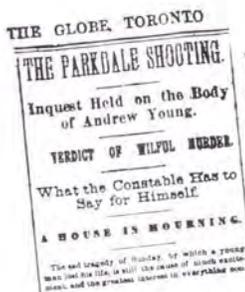
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John Albert & the High Park Case

In 1882 High Park's caretaker and civilian constable narrowly escaped the rope

by Jill Franklin



The tranquility of Grenadier Pond was shattered on Sunday in the summer of 1882, and the lives of the area residents were shaken to the core.

What began as an adventure for a group of Parkdale boys, ended with the death of 17-year-old Andrew Young, and the arrest of High Park's caretaker and

constable John Albert.

Andrew and his 11-year-old brother, along with two friends, one described as "coloured", had taken a boat to the east side of Grenadier Pond and landed on the beach to gather wood for a raft. According to newspaper reports following Young's death, the trio were approached by John Ellis, a prominent business person of the time, who told them to get off his property. As Ellis described it to an inquiry, the "coloured" boy jumped into the boat and asked, "Who owns the pond?" Ellis said that he owned 40 feet from the shore and told the boys to leave, or else he would call the constable. The boy answered that he would leave when he pleased.

Ellis then got in his boat and rowed across to the west side of the pond for assistance from John Albert. He found the shirtless constable lying on the grass outside the farmhouse, and told him that "insolent" trespassers were now heading toward John Howard's property. By 1882 Howard, the founder of High Park, had long reached an agreement with the City of Toronto to transfer to their ownership land which today occupies the core of the park. As part of the agreement Howard would continue to live in the park and use some of his bequest, including a part of Grenadier Pond, until his death. Albert, hired by the City of Toronto as a civilian constable was under strict orders from Howard to keep the local boys off his estate and out of the pond.

One of Albert's sons ran back to the farmhouse, retrieved a belt with the revolver, and took it to his father who had gone to the edge of the pond. As the boys approached John Howard's boat house, Albert called out that they were trespassing, and ordered them to shore to be arrested. One of the boys asked if they were on private property. Albert answered, "I'll show you", then pulled out his revolver and shot into the air.

The boys quickly paddled away to the south end of the pond, with Albert pursuing on shore, whistling to get the attention of the residents in Colborne Lodge. The boys abandoned their boat and ran to hide in the ice house at the south end.

An excited Albert shouted, "Stop or I'll shoot". He grabbed Andrew Young by the shoulder just as he was going through the door. The boy spun around, the gun went off and the bullet entered below his left eye, lodging in his brain. Within minutes, he was dead.

Ellis, three other men and Howard's chambermaid arrived on the scene to find Albert in shock, wiping blood from the boy's face and saying it was an accident. The coroner was called, the body examined then taken to the Young home on Roncesvalles Avenue.

Back at the farmhouse, Albert was questioned by a senior constable and arrested. The following day, an inquest was held at the Parkdale Town Hall. John Ellis, the other boys including Andrew Young's brother, and those who arrived at the ice house after the shooting all testified. They reported that Albert had said, "I didn't intend to do it, but I'm a constable and can stand by it." High Constable Jones also testified, speaking highly of John Albert as an appointed county constable who was allowed to carry a revolver.

Albert spoke at the inquest, telling the packed room, "The pistol was a self-cocking one, and I do not know how it went off. I wish I had stayed at home. I blame Mr. Ellis for it all; it would not have happened if he had not come. I did not know the boy and had never seen him before. I had no malice".

The issue of whether malice was involved would make the difference between the charge of murder or manslaughter. The jury deliberated for nearly four hours and brought in a unanimous verdict of "willful murder". Albert was remanded in custody.

A series of editorials and reports were published in *The Globe* newspaper in the days following the murder. The question was raised as to how a man such as Albert, with an "incredible recklessness, hastiness of temper and excitability" could be selected for the position of constable?

One writer commented, "...apart from the question of trespass the lad was a law-breaker in desecrating the Sabbath nor can his parents be altogether excused from blame. Indeed it is really to their very culpable neglect in thus allowing their sons to break the laws of both God and man."

The Editor agreed that, "the parents should discourage in their children aimless idling on Sunday", but went on to say that the "action of the constable in producing a revolver was wholly unwarranted", since the act of trespass was not clearly established, and the boys had not committed any damage or threatened any violence.

A reporter described the Youngs' house in mourning, with the open casket just inside the door, the body's face disfigured and bruised by the "death-dealing bullet", and "strange to say that neither eyelashes nor eyebrows were singed". The victim was of a quiet and peaceable disposition...much looked upon by his family".

For the previous six years, Albert had lived in the High Park farmhouse, still standing today atop Hillside Gardens, with his wife and six children, the youngest being four-months-old.

Mrs. Albert had helped care for Jemima Howard prior to her death in 1877. At the time of the murder, the newspaper accounts described Mrs. Albert as being "much affected", "in deepest distress and agony" and "breaking down" at the time of the inquest verdict.

In John Howard's diary, he wrote that Mrs. Albert asked if he would be the bondsmen for her husband, but he refused. He did note that he sent his housekeeper into town to buy clothes for one of the Albert daughters.

There were eight murders in Canada in 1882, five of them in Ontario. In those days, justice was swift and in Albert's case, severe. His trial was held Oct. 12, less than three months after the shooting.

The trial lasted one day. The accused were not allowed to testify in Canadian trials until 1893, but Albert's lawyer informed the jury that the revolver was one that easily discharged. He further stressed that the gun was held in the left hand, when Albert was right-handed, therefore proving that there was no intent to shoot, and no malice present.

A number of character witnesses, including John Howard, testified on behalf of the prisoner's good character.

In reviewing the evidence, the Judge said that, "the killing was an unlawful one and that the prisoner had no right to lay his hand upon or touch the boy...it was not even shown that the boys were trespassing". He instructed the jury to bring in a verdict of murder if they believed the killing was prompted by malice either expressed or implied; or if they believed that the shooting was unintentional, then it was their duty to find the prisoner guilty of manslaughter.

The jury deliberated for just over three hours and brought in the unanimous verdict of "guilty of murder, with a strong recommendation to mercy". Albert stood up in the courtroom and said he had not intended to kill the boy. He was then

sentenced to jail until Nov. 10, "when he should be taken to the place of execution and there hanged by the neck till he was dead, and might the Lord have mercy on his soul."

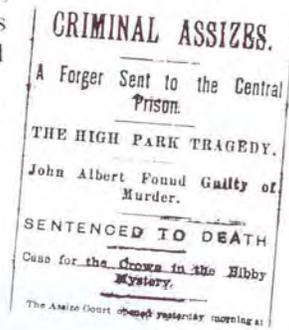
Appeals of criminal cases were not introduced in Canada until 1892, but for John Albert, many petitions were sent to the Minister of Justice in Ottawa asking that his sentence be commuted. These were signed by all the jury members, Toronto Aldermen and MPs, police officers and citizens, including John Howard who also wrote a personal letter to the Judge. Just days before the execution, the sentence was commuted to 20 years in the Kingston Penitentiary.

Howard advertised for another caretaker and Thomas Wise moved into the farmhouse with his wife and two young children. Mrs. Albert refused to leave. Howard wrote in his diary that the Albert's little boy died at the "Boy's Home", and that he received a letter from John Albert asking that his family be allowed to remain in the farmhouse.

Mrs. Albert asked Howard to sign a petition to help her stay on as tenancy in building was by then up to city officials, but he told her to bring it back once other signatures were on it. He would not sign his name on the same piece of paper where the signature of John Ellis appeared. The City of Toronto finally gave Mrs. Albert notice to vacate as of April 1884.

For years, Mrs. Albert continued to write to the Minister of Justice asking for her husband's release, claiming hardship for her family. But Andrew Young's sister countered with her own letters, one published in the newspaper that said, "I hope the public will not forget the cruel way in which he deprived my mother of a son and an honest support".

It would be unlikely for John Albert to be convicted of murder today. The trial judge was the main reason Albert was not released. Justice Armour later declared, "If ever there was a case of murder this was one and deserved the extreme penalty of the law."



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The invisible insect tour of '95

Everyone knows that High Park is a buggy place. It's only natural. Park picnickers fully expect to share their chicken with wasps, and watch ants parade-drill in the chocolate cake. Cyclists nonchalantly floss gnats from between their teeth. Tennis players perfect their backhands swatting at mosquitoes. Anyone could be excused for thinking it would be a great place to hold a nature walk about bugs. You can even imagine how the conversation might have gone...

IDEA PERSON: "We'll bring in a bug expert from the Royal Ontario Museum, invite the public along to ask questions, and then we'll all take a stroll through the park together, checking out our vast supply of insects! Can't lose, eh?"

ASSISTANT IDEA PERSON: "Hey, genius idea, J.B.! It's foolproof!"

Unless, of course, someone forgets to invite the bugs.

Certainly, the rest of us did our part. The public (about 20 hardy souls) showed up ready for insect action – two small boys even came equipped with plastic nets for catching butterflies. And the visiting 'bugologist' was as advertised, and more. Tanned and toned Nick sported denim cut-offs and long, wavy hair à la Fabio (one hiker suggested sending him around to high schools to encourage more girls to take an interest in science). And we all obligingly climbed up and down like mountain goats, poking about in the shrubbery and examining pond muck with fearless gusto. But alas, most of the insect population of High Park had apparently bugged off.

The ones that were left were a sorry lot, but we weren't fussy. The small boys spotted a moth, tucked into the bark of a tree, and decidedly deceased. We subjected it to a close inspection. Someone claimed to have seen a large insect fly out of a patch of goldenrod – we scanned the area in vain for others of its kind (whatever that was). Squirrels snickered down at us. Eventually we arrived at the pond. Here, said Nick, we were almost certain to find critters.

Some tiny black spider-like items obligingly ran across the surface of the water. Not spiders, but waster-striders, said Nick, and something about oily hairs on their feet and oil not mixing with water. He fished one out with his net. It could have sat on the head of a pin and still left room for the Lord's Prayer

and everything our housing minister says he knows about housing. Several people stepped back. "I hate spiders," said one. The small boys got busy trying to catch one.

A turquoise damsel fly was spotted, and deftly captured by Nick, who reminisced fondly about one he'd caught on a field trip to Costa Rica. Apparently there are perks to being an entomologist. There'd have to be, said one tour member drily. The small boys switched their attentions to damsel flies.

The conversation turned lightly to botflies, which apparently have the loathsome habit of laying their eggs under the skin of animals, thereby giving the hatching larvae a handy food supply. Nick related, with some relish, the story of a colleague who'd been infested by botflies on a field trip to Africa (so much for perks). So devoted to entomology was the fellow, that he'd let the things grow to maturity *on his face*. The small boys were impressed. The rest of us tried to think of something else. Anything.

A question about insect populations brought the mind-numbing news that studies are conducted by gathering hundreds of a species, then sorting the males from the females by looking at each one for male genitalia. Do entomologists ever get bug-eyed?

"Why do fireflies glow?" someone asked, trying vainly to change the subject. (The answer, we began to think, pretty much summed up the insect world: sex and violence.) The females are signalling to

males to mate with, explained Nick. But sometimes one species will fake the signal of another species: when the male arrives, hot to trot, they eat him.

Somewhat deflated by the thought we headed up the hill toward Colborne Lodge. There, in the flower garden, we hit pay dirt. First, a handful of iridescent scarab beetles – nasty characters, they eat everything, said Nick. Too bad – they looked like antique jewellery. Then the *piece de resistance* – suspended in a web above the flowers was a humongous spider the size of a ripe grape. Even the spider-hater was admiring. Not really an insect, sniffed Nick. But six legs or eight, we didn't care. On the Invisible Insect tour of '95, any creppie-crawlie you could actually see was fine by us.

"The conversation turned to botflies which apparently have the loathsome habit of laying their eggs under the skin..."

by
Mary Lou
Kumagai

Stelco in Swansea claimed riverbank rights over Grenadier Pond

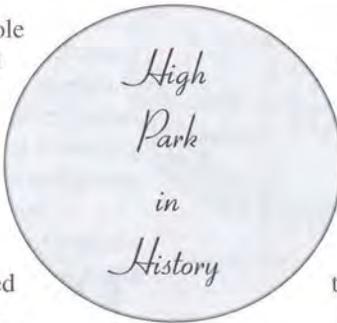
Swansea's first and major industry played a key role in controlling the water levels of Grenadier Pond before the company closed in the early 90s.

Stelco in Swansea, in its modern incarnation was an amalgamation of two companies Stelco and the Dominion Bolt Works.

Dominion started out as the Canadian Bolt Company, founded in Perth, Ontario in 1868. By 1879 it had changed ownership and was renamed the Dominion Bolt Works. It was relocated to a parcel of land south-west of High Park and near the Grand Trunk Railway line. Dominion President James Worthington named the area after Swansea in Wales, built workmen's houses on Windermere, and donated land for a public school. After a complete shutdown during the Depression of the 1890s, full operations resumed.

By 1910 the expanded facility, now the Canada Bolt and Nut Company Limited, had subsumed a local rolling mills and merged with the Steel Company of Canada Limited (Stelco).

The industrial giant proceeded to negotiate riparian i.e. riverbank rights with the City of Toronto to the waters of Grenadier Pond, which flowed through its property to Lake Ontario. Water was essential, and used continuously in Stelco's operation as a coolant. The water was received through a culvert under the tracks. Men removed debris daily.



by Joan Miles



Swansea Stelco (date unknown) controlled Grenadier Pond's water levels.

The "de facto" authority exercised by Stelco in this matter was demonstrated in 1968, when the city approved the construction of a weir at the north side of Queen Street, to control the water level of the pond. This was agreed to by Stelco, on condition that it retain the right to an undiminished flow of water through its property. Stelco was also entitled to open a valve in the permanent dam, in the event that the water flow cease, as long as the level was not lower than the minimum shown in the plan mutually agreed upon.

An ecological study of Grenadier Pond and High Park undertaken in 1976, however, stresses that a lower water level is key to the resuscitation and enlargement of the depleted cattail marsh, and to sustaining interdependent wildlife species. This broad-ranging account of viable remedial action for the ecology of Grenadier Pond is the foundation of today's ecological restoration efforts.

While the importance of Stelco in the local and national economy is undisputed, the long-time practice of maintaining artificially high water levels has been one more threat to the fragile ecology of Grenadier Pond.

In 1991, for economic reasons, Stelco in Swansea was closed down permanently.

Sources: Toronto Dept. of Parks and Recreation Archives; Board of Control Report, 1968, Ecological Study of Grenadier Pond and High Park, 1976; Parks Commissioner's Report, 1978; Gordon Sykes.

Photo courtesy Swansea Historical Society

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High Park Zoo

Continued from Page 9

Oct. 11, 1943

Having visited the animals in High Park on many occasions, I am of the opinion they are not properly cared for.

The first thing that strikes one when visiting the place is a state of neglect...

C.E. Elms
Toronto

Sept. 16, 1945

...But I want to bring to your attention the neglect of the animals at the High Park and Riverdale Zoos.

...Two of the white deer I noticed were lame; one had large sore on its side...

C.E. Elms
Toronto

On the cusp of the 21st century the animals may be decently cared for in properly maintained pens, but the air is thick with the smell of a tradition that has outlasted any imagined benefits.

Many zoos the world over have sprung out of the development of the urban park and have closed. The Riverdale Zoo coincided directly with the development of Riverdale Park. When the East Toronto zoo closed in 1974, Riverdale Farm sprang up

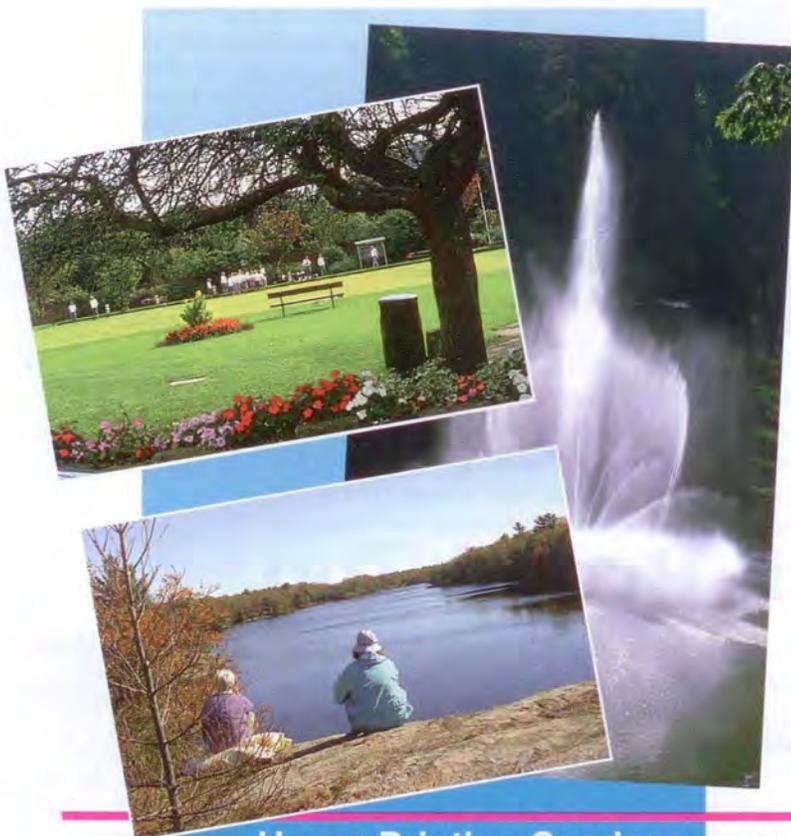
in its stead. More recently the zoo in Vancouver's Stanley Park has fallen by the wayside. Vancouverites voted it closed in a 1993 plebiscite. Most of the animals have been relocated but a polar bear too old to move and some Humboldt Penguins are turning the zoo's extinction into a slow and painful process.

During planning for the 1995 budget the High Park Zoo was put on the table for elimination, according to Ward One Councillor David Hutcheon. The zoo survived that budget round. Hutcheon says he would like to begin a series of community consultations aimed at steering the zoo in another direction. One suggestion is to turn it into a Victorian farm and link it through programming to Colborne Lodge.

In a day and age when the purpose of zoos is under attack why should a facility like the High Park Zoo be allowed to swallow up precious park space?

November 1994: *Globe and Mail* writer John Bentley Mays, in his Citysites column, set his sights on the Metro Zoo and the great ape Charles.

Mays writes: "...Charles is in the zoo, after all, because he, or his ancestors were overwhelmed by irresistible force, kept caged by force – the same boundless force, and will to subdue and control, that is at the heart of modern war, persecution, the devastation of the environments from which the crazed or stupefied animals at the MTZ have come. Thus, the bitter irony in all the signs at the Metro Zoo whimpering about "vanishing species" and saving this or that animal from human depredation: The zoo, as idea and historical institution, is itself an excellent instance of the will to subjugate that is laying waste the earth."



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The High Park Citizens' Advisory Committee is now the permanent advisory body to Toronto City Council and the Department of Parks & Recreation on a variety of issues affecting the park and people who enjoy it. All park users are welcome to the first general meeting:

Oct. 11 at 6:30 pm at the Training Centre in High Park