

Toronto's Magazine about parks and urban nature

Summer 1996 Volume Three, Number Two

\$1

HIGH PARK

A Park Lover's Quarterly

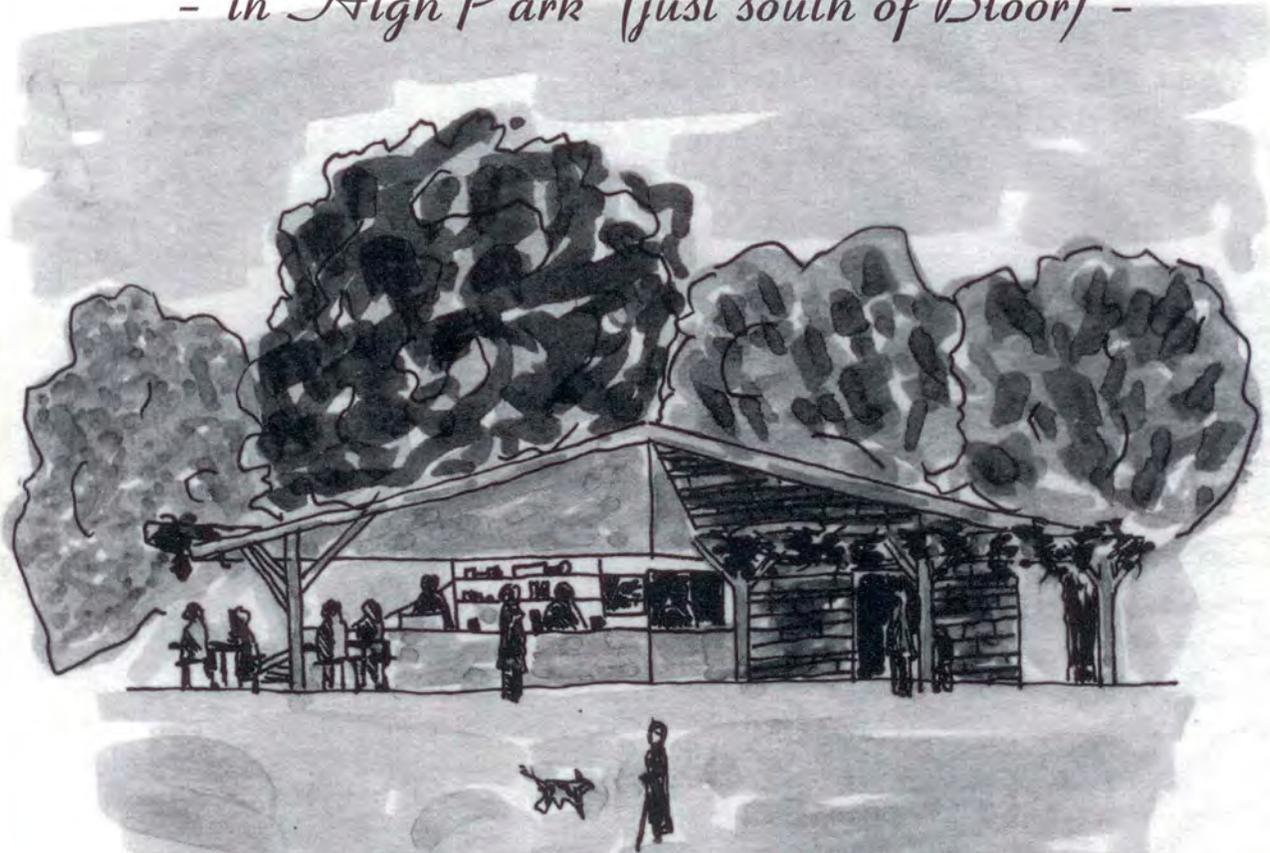
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High Park

A Park Lover's Quarterly

Editor - Gigi Suhanic

Writer - Jill Franklin

Columnists - Mary Lou Kumagai, Joan Miles,
Cover photograph by Gera Dillon of High
Park's Japanese garden.

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Park Politics

- a guide to grassroots involvement in High Park

JUNE 19, 9:30 A.M., neighbourhoods committee, Toronto City Hall, Committee Room 4, 2nd floor. The proposed new off-leash area for dogs in High Park adjacent to the Dream site, is on the agenda. Expect the matter to be deferred to

the July 10 meeting for public deputations. Phone the neighbourhoods secretary Christine Archibald for more information at 392-7039.

JUNE 26, 6:30 P.M. Grenadier Restaurant. The High Park Citizens' Advisory Committee holds its first annual general meeting and picnic. Elections will be held to fill seven positions open on the committee for citizens-at-large. For more information, 392-1954.



David Hutcheon
City Councillor - Ward One

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Ducks Unlimited's 50Gs makes a big splash

Another corporation has opened its pocket book on behalf of Grenadier Pond.

Ducks Unlimited Canada (DU), a non-profit wetland conservation organization, signed, sealed and delivered a cheque for \$50,000 to the City of Toronto at a ceremony at the end of May.

The money will be spent on restoring Grenadier Pond's shoreline to a wetland.

"Our base message is we want to renaturalize the pond," said Rick Maher a biologist with DU.

Maher said Grenadier Pond also offers a high profile opportunity to educate people about the value of wetlands.

Most of DU's work to restore and create wetlands is done on private land, reducing the opportunity to promote the projects to the public.

In its original state Grenadier Pond was a wetland, separated from Lake Ontario by a sand bar. Filling occurred that estranged the pond and lake. In the 1950s approximately three-quarters of the wetland was removed.

DU is the second corporation to fund the pond's rehabilitation.

The Canadian National Sportsmen's Shows led the way with a cheque for \$35,000 in 1994.

This book's a scream

The Scream in High Park has a well-established reputation for attracting a line-up of exciting names to the four-

briefly

year-old July literary event.

Scream producer Peter McPhee has now seen fit to produce a book, *Carnival: A Scream in High Park Reader*.

The book is an anthology and includes readings from all 48 writers who have participated in the three previous years of the Scream.

McPhee said all the writers are in the book in keeping with the Scream's philosophy of inclusiveness. "We never try to promote anyone as a star over anyone else," he said.

The book is \$18.99 and is available at most book stores. Writers have waived any fees and all proceeds go to Frontier College's literacy programs.

New cafe named for oaks

High Park is shrugging off at least one of the old-style outdoor food concessions in favour of a new cafe.

The Black Oaks Cafe, named for one of the species of trees the park is famous for, opens at the end of July. The cafe is located on West Road just south of Bloor Street.

The eatery is being paid for by the Caragianakos family. They have run the concessions in High Park and the Grenadier Restaurant for the past 15 years.

According to Sam Caragianakos the cafe will cost around \$200,000 to complete.

"It was time for a change,"

Caragianakos said.

Dream lingers longer

The Dream in High Park is one of those essential summer activities in Toronto.

In fact, the play is so popular that the Canadian Stage Company has seen fit to extend the Dream's run an extra two weeks.

"We had to turn away a lot of people last year," said Marty Bragg, general manager of the Canadian Stage Company.

According to Bragg, last summer 100,000 people attended a *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

A *Midsummer Night's Dream* runs from July 4 to August 25.



David Miller

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Oak woodlands project back on the front burner

High Park's oak woodlands project has been given a new lease on life.

Toronto City Council has given its approval for the Parks and Recreation Department to go ahead with a test plot program for the oak woodlands.

"I'm very willing to see them try this experimentation," said ward 1 councillor David Hutcheon. "You only know if something works if you try it," he said referring to the test plots.

The 16-plot program is intended to test techniques and provide research information to regenerate the woodlands. Oak woodlands are a rare ecosystem in Canada, and have been reduced to 0.01 per cent of their former range, according to the World Wildlife Fund. High Park has been identified as one of the few remaining stands in southern Ontario.

Some of the techniques traditionally used to bring back woodlands include controlled burning, cutting down shrubs, doing plantings of native wildflowers and grasses. A detailed work plan to carry out the test plots is being developed by Parks and Recreation. It will be reviewed by the High Park Citizens' Advisory Committee, and the councillors whose wards surround the park.

Hutcheon's willingness to let the test plot program go ahead appears to represent a significant reversal on his position regarding the woodlands.

But Hutcheon says he hasn't changed his mind. "My concern (about the woodlands project) was for the removal of existing trees. I'm still not convinced about that," he said. "That's not being proposed at this time."

Last April, the test plot program was put on hold by city council's neighbourhood's committee at the request of an organization called the Mother Earth's Centre.

While Hutcheon's mood may have mellowed, the Mother Earth's Centre's opposition to the oak woodlands project remains stalwart.

In a letter to the neighbourhoods committee, spokesperson Bill Luttrell condemned Parks and Recreation's request for approval of the test plot program as undemocratic.

"...this department is attempting to circumvent that full

public review which we urged the Committee to accept last spring...and which the Committee subsequently agreed to at its April 5, 1995 meeting," Luttrell wrote.

Luttrell said in his letter if Torontonians knew all the details of the proposal they would oppose it too, and that the project needs to be examined by "independent environmental groups".

Spokespersons for the High Park Citizens' Advisory Committee are anxious to see the woodlands study go ahead.

"...Since we first became aware of the significance of High Park's oak woodlands, we have recognized the urgent need to provide responsible stewardship to this rare ecosystem," wrote Jamie Bell, advisory committee chair, in a letter to city hall.

The oak woodlands project has been lobbed from court-to-court since May 1993 when the proposal first appeared in a management plan for High Park which looked at the natural environment, as well as transportation issues and safety.

Public meetings were held on the report and a revised version was released at the end of the same year.

— Gigi Suhanic

Dogs always make for hot debate

Mention dogs off-leash and in High Park, and everybody has an opinion.

Dogs have been at the top of the High Park agenda recently with park staff and dog owners hammering out a new designated area where people can let their animals run free.

The new off-leash location goes to the neighbourhoods committee for approval (or not) on July 10 as a deputation item. The area chosen encompasses the Dream site and east down to Spring Road.

The nature trail that parallels Wendigo Creek, south of Bloor is the the old off-leash area.

Rising complaints about dogs in the park prompted the move to re-locate the area.

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Goose bylaw should go after the big buns, city official says

Sure Toronto, and just about every other city in North America, has a Canada Goose dilemma; of course one way to look at it is it could be a lot worse.

We could be in Monterey, California's shoes.

Monterey is one of southern California's exquisite coastal towns, lying within a hair's breadth of Carmel, another gem-of-a-place that once boasted Clint Eastwood as its mayor, and where taxpayers lived in fear of being challenged to "make my day". Yikes.

Monterey came to the attention of major news services when hundreds of sea lions descended on the pacific town's marina. Footage showed the slippery animals piled on top of each other on boats and on the docks.

Happily the coast guard didn't resort to the Dirty Harry solution to hoist out the .52 Magnum. The coast guards' efforts mostly made for some good laughs. They tried hosing them down. But what sea lion doesn't like to be hosed down? A rescue dummy failed as a scare crow, and instead turned into a sea lion teddy bear.

A coast guard spokesperson hopefully predicted the herd would leave sooner than later to follow its food supply.

Once the comedic relief had subsided though, the piece left behind some unsavory issues to grapple with.

Many animals that collide with human development are being forced into the role of urban vermin. So what solutions can humans bring when wildlife's infallible instincts to survive get in the way?

In Toronto the most recent response has been legislation – a new bylaw to stop people feeding the geese.

The bylaw proposed by west end coucillor Chris Korwin-Kuczynski allows for a fine of \$500 awarded to anyone caught feeding Canada Geese in Toronto parks.

Reaction has been swift and polarized.

"Some people think it's cruel and others are saying it's about time," Korwin-Kuczynski said.

Still others wonder how the bylaw will be enforced. Couldn't an offender claim he was feeding the ducks? Is there a bylaw officer zealous enough to slap a hefty fine on a mother and child tossing a few crusts to a hungry bird?

Korwin-Kuczynski said people like this will probably be given a warning.

At the City of Toronto Animal Control nobody is anxious to tangle with mother and child. Director James Bandow said he has advised the city that it would make more sense to go after bakeries that are dumping bread where the geese are.

There's lots of sport of this kind in High Park. Park staff regularly report bakery trucks pulling up to the corner of Ellis Avenue and the Queensway and dumping huge amounts of bread into the pond.

Korwin-Kuczynski (K-K) said the bylaw is with the province for approval and it could be in place in July. According to K-K it will probably be enforced by Animal Control, the Board of Health and the Toronto Department of Parks and Recreation.

The goal K-K said is to reduce the food supply and make the geese move on with the ultimate goal of reducing their numbers.

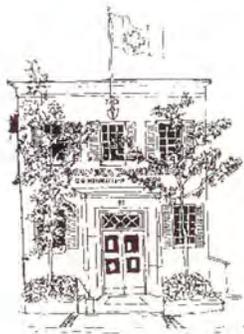
"We're not putting all our eggs in one basket," K-K said.

It's a good thing. In one goose expert's opinion the bylaw is "doomed".

"You can alter their distribution with preferred foods but you won't be able to reduce the numbers of geese," said Dr. Howard Savage who worked with the Ministry of Natural

Continued on page 16

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The Ridout suicide

by Jill Franklin

Before John G. Howard bought his property at High Park, the long established Ridout family owned the land on the east side of the park extending from the Lakeshore to Bloor Street. While maintaining their homes in the city, the family farm was built on the land now occupied by the Howard Park Tennis Club. The street south of Bloor, running east from Parkside Drive was named in their memory.

After Howard arranged for his Lot 37 to be a public park in 1873, the City of Toronto purchased Lot 36, the 170-acre Ridout property in 1876 for \$15,000 – less money than was eventually paid to Howard for his conditional “gift”.

For more than 50 years, the Howards and Ridouts had been acquainted through business transactions and charitable interests, but the Howards never attained equal standing in the social life of the growing city. By the time the Howards arrived in York in 1832, the Ridouts were already carrying an illustrious past with tales of Indian capture, military standing in the war of 1812 and losing the last duel fought in the city between John Ridout and Samuel P. Jarvis in 1817.

During the 1830s and 40s, the Ridouts employed Howard to survey their land, build their homes on Front Street and their stores at King and Yonge Streets. As Howard became more financially resourceful, he purchased Ridout property in Yorkville and Sherbourne Street and leased some of their acreage at High Park. From the time he bought Lot 37, sharing the property line with the Ridouts’ Lot 36, they bickered over Howard’s plans for subdivision. By 1864 Percival Ridout was frustrated enough with Howard to take up a petition against him regarding the road allowance between their properties.

The history of these early settlers to York was well established by the 1880s and it did not go unnoticed by the ageing Howard when news spread that a son in the second generation of Ridouts and born in Toronto had mysteriously disappeared.

Trevelyan was the youngest of 11 children born to Thomas Gibbs and Matilda Ridout in the house that still stands today at 252 Adelaide Street East – the original Bank of Canada building, where T.G. Ridout was Cashier. At the time of Trevelyan’s disappearance he was 27 years old, a barrister with offices at 15 Toronto Street. His father had died when he was only five years old; his mother passed away in 1881. Until Matilda’s death, he shared a house with his unmarried sister Augusta, across the street from their mother, then rented a room

at 288 King Street West until Oct. 9, 1883 when it was rumoured that he fled the city in shame.

Two months later, on Dec. 10, Howard wrote in his diary that Trevelyan’s body had been found by his caretaker. The following day, the Globe reported in its most graphic style, details that would not make it into print today.

TREVELYAN RIDOUT

The Missing Barrister’s Body Found at High Park.

Having Committed Suicide by Shooting Himself

A GHASTLY SPECTACLE

Yesterday morning about nine o’clock as County Constable Wise was walking through the park, on coming to a hill near Bloor Street, the most lonely part of the park, he beheld a body lying on the ground almost hidden from sight by the copse and bushwood. He went near enough the body to see if it was lifeless and, on going back to the Village of Parkdale, called at the house of Constable Smith, acquainted him with what he had seen, and asked him to accompany him back to High Park, a distance of a couple of miles. Constable Smith at once set out west-ward for the park. On coming to the body a horrible sight met the gaze of the two constables. The body had apparently been lying there several weeks, and was so shockingly decomposed that identification was altogether impossible. The face was black as ink, the eyes had sunk back in the head, and the features were utterly eaten away, the flesh of the hands also being quite gone. The clothes on the body were full of vermin and the boots were covered with a blue mould. Altogether a more

GHASTLY AND SICKENING

sight could not well be imagined. Constable Smith was, however, equal to the occasion. He at once commenced the horrible, yet necessary, task of searching the body to find means of identification, the only spectators being Constable Wise and a young man named Seth Farley who had just appeared upon the scene. Smith also sent a messenger to Dr. Lynd, of Parkdale. A five chambered revolver was found on the body of the dead man in such a condition that Smith, who is an old volunteer, saw at once that the case was self-murder. The articles found on the body were a gold watch and chain; a pair of gold sleeve links; a black mourning handkerchief marked “w.29”; \$7.50; and a business letter dis-



Trevelyan's father Thomas Gibbs Ridout

coloured and covered with mould; the writing being almost illegible, and a prayer book. The book was opened, and on the fly leaf were the words

FRANCIS RIDOUT*

Then at once, the truth flashed upon the minds of the constables that the body was that of the young barrister who was missed from Toronto two months ago. He had presumably got into financial difficulties, and chose self-slaughter as the way out of them. Various conjectures were rife as to the time of his supposed flight from the city, but none of them anticipated a revelation as horrible as this. The clothes upon the body consisted of a shirt, a pair of striped trousers, black corded coat and vest, a blue pilot overcoat, black necktie, black felt hat, with a mourning band, black stockings and low shoes. A pair of brown kid gloves and a black silk umbrella were found lying beside the body. The two constables remained with the body until the arrival of Dr. Lynd about three o'clock, who instructed them to wait till the coming of the undertaker. Mr. Nolan, of Queen Street West was sent for and arrived at a quarter past six with a shell for the body and two assistants. At the moment of elevating the body into the shell a horrible incident occurred, which showed how far advanced the decomposition of the body was and how must have been the sight to those around. In raising the body

THE HEAD ROLLED AWAY

from the trunk, and the limbs of the body threatened to fall asunder. The shell with its contents was then carried from the valley to the top of the hill by the two constables and the undertaker, where a covered wagon was in waiting, which took the corpse to the undertakers...The discovery was not unnecessarily noised abroad, very few persons knowing anything of it till late last night. It will banish the uncertainty as to the fate of the dead man which has hitherto filled the minds of his friends, but it reveals also a tragedy of a fearful and awful character.

The Telegram further reported that a "Smith & Wesson .32 calibre central fire revolver was in one hand and a bullet hole in the left side of the forehead telling the horrible tale"; the letter was addressed to the deceased from a firm in St. Catharines, and that George

Ridout came to the scene for positive identification of his younger brother. The report concluded that coroner Dr. Lynd did not consider an inquest necessary and that, "Insanity was doubtless the cause of the crime being committed".

A short paragraph in both papers the following day reported the burial of Trevelyan Ridout in a plain rosewood coffin at the family plot in St. James' Cemetery. There was no cortege; the burial service of the Church of England was read at the graveside with only officials, near relatives and friends of the deceased attending. The cause of death on the burial certificate was listed as "Pistol Shot in High Park on October 9, 1883".

From shortly after his birth Trevelyan's mother learned about her son from letters written by his father while she took numerous lengthy trips back to England to visit her family, accompanied by one or two of the older children. A letter survives in the Ridout Family papers to Trevelyan from his mother in England, written 10 days after his 11th birthday that gives some insight into the relationship that must have affected the young boy:

My dearest Trevelyan, You cannot imagine how disappointed I have felt when every mail arrives and no letter from you. I really thought you cared more for your mother...in fact if you don't write back I shall soon forget I have a son named Trevelyan. The other day my hopes were raised by receiving a letter... for which I had to pay one shilling, it turned out to be your college report, who directed it I don't know but as you got no prize I wish they had paid the postage...You will I hope remain in the third form for another year, it will give you a better chance of getting on in the fourth..."

Your loving mother Matilda A. Ridout

Despite the lofty political, legal, financial and charitable positions held by his many relatives in Toronto, Trevelyan Ridout could not find another solution to his problems other than dressing in mourning clothes and taking his own life on the High Park property that his family no longer owned.

*Francis Ridout – Trevelyan's uncle.

Trevelyan was born at 252 Adelaide Street, the original Bank of Canada.



photo courtesy Metro Toronto Reference Library

drawing courtesy Public Archives of Canada

Citizen involvement critical to reclaim abandoned parks

A recently released report on park safety reads like a how-to manual on reclaiming public parks from intimidating ne'er do wells and from our own private fears.

The Toronto Department of Parks and Recreation should have borrowed from Woody Allen's film *Everything You Wanted To Know About Sex But Were Afraid To Ask* and called the report, "How to take back your local park and be proud you did, too".

Of course, the authors of the report called "Planning, Designing and Maintaining Safer Park", make it clear that their intention was not to provide people with a recipe to take back neglected and abused parks.

The contents are useful: case studies, and an extensive safety audit, plus useful tips for people to involve themselves in their local park.

What the report does make clear is that community participation is essential to reclaim parks and keep them.

"Without public ownership and pride in what they've got communities risk losing a park to whoever wants to take it," the report said.

Woody Allen or not, the report's contents are timely considering personal safety has never been higher on people's agendas.

Like personal safety, park safety is also a murky subject.

According to the report's authors Leslie Coates, David Orsini and Connie Guberman parks should be assessed for safety based on park users' perceptions – how safe they feel a park is, and how safe they feel, in a park.

Statistics, noted Coates, Orsini and Guberman are an inadequate barometre, especially considering crimes like sexual assault often go unreported.

"Increasing numbers of people are expressing concern for their personal safety in urban settings. People feel afraid to use public spaces and public facilities. This fear of violence and the perception that an environment is unsafe is, in fact, a barrier to many people's use and enjoyment of public space," the report said.

"Previous research indicates that attracting and creating greater opportunities for park use by women, children and seniors in particular, is an important first step for enhancing safety. Generally speaking the demographics of park use should reflect the demographics of the larger urban context."

According to Coates, Orsini and Guberman there are a number of controllable factors that go into creating parks that are safer and that people believe are safer.

Some of the items on a 14-point list in the report include: surveillance; lighting; good maintenance; signage; activity and recreational programming; and citizen involvement.

According to the writers, parks often go bad and get taken over by a group because the design failed the litmus test in many of these areas.

Ritchie Parkette in West Toronto was a little park with a lot of problems. The small park had been taken over by a group of teenagers as a hang-out. A safety audit done two years ago revealed local residents felt intimidated and had abandoned the park.

Comments collected during the audit showed a park out of step with the pulse of the neighbourhood:

"I thought this would be a great park for my kids. In reality I don't bring my kids here. It is intimidating at night. I would rather not have a park here at all because of the noise. I recommend locking it at night."

The report has a happy ending. It highlights stories where locals moved in to reclaim a park, instead of calling in the cavalry.

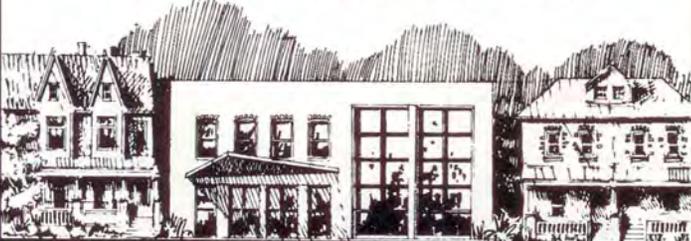
Melbourne Park in Parkdale was a quarter-acre park that had been "forgotten by residents" and had become a haven for drug dealers and prostitutes.

A call from a resident resulted in a year-long effort to resuscitate Melbourne Park.

"By taking the time to reestablish public ownership and pride in Melbourne Parkette, it is unlikely that local residents will easily give up what they have worked so hard to rebuild."

– Gigi Suhanic

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Bruce barks up the wrong tree

“But I can’t leave him with just anybody,” pleads my vacation-bound friend, “Bruce is family. Besides, you two already know each other.” Bruce wags his tail in agreement, knocking over a small chair. Bruce may well be the mysterious missing link between the dog and the Shetland pony.

He and I are acquainted, alright. which is reason number one why I should refuse to accept this particular mission impossible. Bizarre things happen when Bruce is around. All of them turn out eventually to have perfectly logical explanations, of course – sort of like doggy X-Files. The last time Bruce and I spent the afternoon together, for instance, I could have sworn I heard him talking. Later, I realized with relief that I could blame this little fantasy on the fever and flu I’d been coming down with at the time. Perfectly logical. Still, I am not in the mood for weird today. I gently explain this to my friend.

My friend understands. Bribery is in order: “I will bring you back the wildest Hawaiian shirt I can find.”

It’s a done deal. Weird, schmeird – I can handle Bruce for a measly two weeks.

We start out innocently enough, a jog through the neighbourhood, frisbees in the local parkette, but Bruce seems restless. “Park, park, park!” he insists as we set out one day. I feel my forehead. Nope, cool as a cucumber. Must be my imagination. Still, I notice we’re heading in the direction of High Park. A happy coincidence – I’ve been thinking of going there anyway.

Bruce seems to know where he wants to go. I let myself be pulled along as if I actually had a choice. Soon we find ourselves on a hill near the pond where scores of others exactly like ourselves – cavorting canines, and humans bearing fistfuls of baggies – are also converging. I look up, expecting to see the mother ship hovering, ready to beam the faithful aboard.

“Nah,” says a nearby gentleman, “this is doggy hill. Kinda like an informal social club for dogs and their owners. You looking after Bruce? Hey, everybody, she’s looking after Bruce.” The others give me a pitying “there-but-for-fortune” look and herd their charges away from us. Bruce, it seems, needs no for-

mal introduction. Already, he has spotted a likely-looking blond, a purebred Afghan hound, and is polishing his pick-up lines.

“Wow, wow, wow!” he remarks, admiringly. The Afghan and her owner give us glacial stares and leave.

“Cool it, Casanova,” I hiss, but he doesn’t hear me. He is busy winking at a sultry chocolate Lab. Suddenly I remember a previous engagement elsewhere – I’d promised my friend I’d mind her peas and carrots, too – so we head for the allotment gardens in the park. Amazingly, Bruce seems eager to come along. I can’t imagine why.

The gardens are lush and jungle-like, sun-warmed and buzzing with bees. The rhythm of pulling weeds is hypnotically soothing. Suddenly I am jolted out of Nirvana by loud, enthusiastic crunching. I look up to find Bruce grinning at me through the bean poles, his muzzle festooned with soil and vines. Bruce has been mining for carrots, and it seems he has struck gold. Oops. I had forgotten his passion for root vegetables. Luckily, he has confined himself to my friend’s crop. Once again, we beat a hasty retreat.

In the evening, there is the Scream in High Park, the annual al fresco poetry and prose reading. Bruce insists on coming with me. He does mournful Leonard Cohen impressions until I give in, then offers to carry my picnic basket to the park. I suspect him of ulterior motives – is it the hot literature or the cold fried chicken he’s after? But Bruce seems to enjoy both (the latter with bones removed), and although he takes up most of the blanket, I’m glad he’s along – he spends much of the evening snapping up mosquito coils like after-dinner mints.

Lulled into complete gullibility, I decide to take him along a few nights later to The Dream in High Park, an evening of Shakespearian drama in the same grassy outdoor amphitheatre. This is a mistake. Unlike the reading event, this one frequently includes fowl and livestock, on Actors Equity waivers for the occasion. Tonight, there are goats. Bruce loves goat – especially when it’s in a spicy Jamaican curry. Tonight, the aroma wafting on the air spells “Memories of the Caribbean” to Bruce. “Goats, goats, goats!” he shouts excitedly. People are turning to stare, and the goats are getting stage fright. Believing that discretion is the better part of valour, I haul Bruce up the hill and we head for home.

Another week and a half to go. That had better be one heck-of-a-Hawaiian shirt.

by
Mary Lou
Kumagai

Naturalist's notebook



New raptor watch group flying high

High Park is establishing itself as a major migratory route for raptors, according to a new birding group in High Park

Raptors doesn't refer to the basketball team – but to a variety of species of birds of prey that could slam dunk any NBA star in the flight department.

According to Don Barnett of the Greater Toronto Raptor Watch large numbers of raptors are flying through during fall migration between Sept. 1 and Nov. 30 because High Park is a

significant island of green.

In a North America-wide raptor publication, "High Park is listed as a significant hawk viewing point on a continental basis," Barnett said.

The raptor watch established itself formally one year ago. In the fall for the 90 days of migration the group will staff a hill in High Park just north of the Grenadier Restaurant to watch for, count and identify raptors.

"The numbers are encouraging," Barnett said.

Last year the raptor watch counted 10,000 hawks and 15 different species; 290 turkey vultures; 22 golden eagles and 10 bald eagles.

All of the data collected from High Park will be sent to the Hawk Migration Association of North America, and published in the journal of sitings in the U.S. and Canada.

But with many of the birds flying overhead at 75-100 feet, and a few at 1,000 feet, how is identification possible?

Barnett said most of the members of the watch are also members of the Toronto Ornithological Club and can identify the birds by shape, size, behaviour, and how frequently they beat their wings.

The raptor watch group can look like some pretty rare birds themselves with their heads cranned up to the sky pointing at objects most of us can't see.

Besides counting birds, the other objective of the raptor watch is to create an opportunity for the public to find out about the birds overhead.

Barnett said anyone is welcome to ask questions and join in the observations.

Visitors to the hill might witness some pretty spectacular sights.

Barnett recalls a day last fall when migrating bluebirds "literally dropped like snow" from the sky. One hundred and thirty-two landed on the hill and rested for about 20 minutes. "They were very tired so it was easy to count them," Barnett says.

The bluebird is a songbird whose numbers are in decline. Barnett said it was encouraging to see so many all at once. "It was just like adrenaline flowing – it was wonderful."

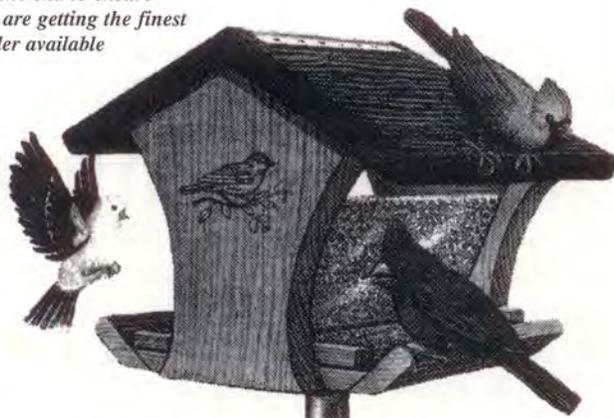
Bald eagle in flight



photo by Gary Bortolotti

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New World roots of ancient, royal golf grown in High Park

by Joan Miles

In Victorian Toronto the royal and ancient game of golf, like tennis and cricket, was reserved for the social elite and upper middle class. The first golf club in Canada was at Royal Montreal in 1873. The Toronto Golf Club opened in 1876 on land later occupied by the Greenwood Race Track, while the Rosedale Club opened in the north end in 1893. Three years later a group of West Toronto sportsmen formed the High Park Golf Club Limited, leased 50 acres on the west bank of Grenadier Pond, and laid out two nine-hole courses – one for the ladies, and one for men. Annual membership was five dollars.

From the outset, the women had their own executive and both hosted tournaments on the Morningside Links and travelled to other clubs in Toronto and southern Ontario. The magazine *Toronto Saturday Night* chronicled their every move. In late October 1898 buses were arranged to pick up 15 visiting ladies from Rosedale at Sunnyside, to transport them to their temporary clubhouse. On June 25, 1899 the ladies of Morningside Club a.k.a High Park were advised by a fellow member to schedule their best players against the second class ladies of Rosedale to “put the chances of a fairer footing and make a much closer and interesting match.” On June 23, 1900 the paper not only noted that the High Park Club competitors had travelled to Peterborough and won, but also described the luncheon and tea which they were served.

A substantial clubhouse designed to meet the expectations of a growing and enthusiastic membership was completed in May 1904. That year the club hired its first professional, Alex Barnes, and Lorne A. Flaws emerged as the Mens’ Champion. By 1905, with 250 members, High Park was the most active of the Toronto golf clubs.

Increasing residential development in the vicinity of the golf course lead to the decision to dissolve the Club and relocate in the winter of 1906-07. A separation then occurred along religious lines, with the Roman Catholics forming the High Park Golf and Country Club. President J. A. Kammerer negotiated the purchase of 98 acres of farmland west of Long Branch Park at \$200 an acre. The Protestants formed the nucleus of the Mississauga Golf and Country Club.

High Park Golf and Country Club had the distinction of hosting the Canadian Open in 1923 and 1934. Pro golfer and Swansea native Gordon Brydson played in the ‘34 Open.

In 1940 the club was renamed Lakeview Golf and

Country Club and rescued from financial ruin in the wake of a disastrous fire, by Bill Purtle and Harry Phelan, who ran it as a semi-private club until 1956. A series of lease agreements with Toronto Township were negotiated through 1965, when the City of Mississauga acquired the amenity.

Today 50,000 rounds of golf are played annually on the municipal course north-west of Dixie and the Lakeshore.

Sources: *Toronto Saturday Night*; Archives, *Lakeview Golf Course; Toronto to 1918* by J.M. Careless.



Opening of the High Park Golf Club, Saturday, May 21, 1904 on the west shore of Grenadier Pond as shown in a photograph that appeared in the Toronto Saturday Night, May 28, 1904, one week after the event.

photo courtesy James Barclay.

Joan Miles is the editor of West Toronto Junction Revisited, and Pentlake published by Boston Mills

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Archeological dig turns up Howard garden

An archeological dig at Colborne Lodge in High Park has turned up some exciting information about the home of John Howard, the founder of the park.

The dig has uncovered the location of Howard's Victorian garden and also the layout of the paths and carriage ways in front of the house at High Park's south end.

"The garden is showing up very well," said John Triggs of Historic Horizons Archeological Company. Triggs's findings refute testing done in 1990 of soil samples from which historians concluded there had been no gardens in front of Colborne Lodge.

Based on what Triggs took out of the earth, he also said it appears that the garden was used to dump household garbage into.

"There are a lot more artifacts than we thought we would find," Triggs said.

The excavation site gave up the bones of pigs and sheep, nails, pieces of window pane glass, an oyster shell.

A fragment of porcelain taken from the dig was identified by Triggs as spongewear. Triggs said the bright blue pattern was popular in the 1830s-40s.

The excavation site was a 24-foot-long trench, about one foot deep. Triggs said he stopped digging when he reached the original sandy layer left 10,000 years ago by receding glaciers.

Triggs said he chose the location of the dig based on maps drawn by Howard in 1875 of the roadways in front of the lodge. "We now know that Howard's maps were accurate," Triggs said.

According to Cheryl Hart site manager of Colborne Lodge, 19th century maps are notorious for being inaccurate. "Howard had all the right training," Hart



This 1875 map drawn by John Howard was used to locate the dig sites.

said.

The dig was completed in anticipation of the construction of a new pathway and ramp for people with disabilities. Triggs said the Toronto Historical Board wanted to complete the excavation before construction disturbed anything.

The long term goal is to re-create the original carriage ways and paths and the garden that once graced the lawns of Colborne Lodge.

Mayday Morris dancing another High Park surprise

Being a regular visitor to the park, I have seen people doing many weird and wonderful things here. At 5:30 a.m. on a weekday morning however, I expect only to meet a few early dog walkers.

But on May 1 as I walked north up the hill towards the restaurant, I heard joyous laughter, singing, pounding of dancing feet, and the melodious voice of the fiddle. I joined a crowd of 100 people watching the Mayday Morris dance. Many people in the crowd were dressed in their Morris team dress, feudal-era blouses, skirts and breeches with colourful ribbons and bells. The teams took turns performing boisterous dancing with sword and handkerchief waving, clogging and hitting of sticks.

Mayday has been a traditional day for celebrating spring in European agrarian societies since ancient times. Each year teams of colourful Morris dancers gather across North America to enact this fertility rite. Morris dancing emerged from the old dance traditions of feudal England. Some dances came from small villages and were danced by only those town folk. By the turn of this century, Morris dancing was done by only a few in rural England. After World War I, Morris dancing gained in popularity. There are now 150 Morris teams in Canada and the U.S. and nearly 500 in England.

You can see Morris dancing at the annual Toronto Morris Ale on Labour Day weekend. The Ale ends at 4 p.m. with a mass dance on the lawn of the R.C. Harris water filtration plant.

- Alison Neilson



Morris dancers in High Park re-enact the Mayday rites

SUMMER guide

JUNE

June 23 – Help weed High Park. Bring gloves and appropriate shoes. Volunteers also needed for trail maintenance. Phone the High Park Volunteer Hotline at 392-7276, ext. 301.

June 23, July 28, August 25 – Open-air service, 5 p.m. Sponsored by High Park Baptist Church. 534-4225.

June 26 – High Park Citizens' Advisory Committee Annual General Meeting and Picnic, 6:30 p.m. Election of committee members, 7:30 p.m. Grenadier Restaurant. 392-1954.

June 30 – Poetry in the Park. Poet Sheila Hyland reads from her work at Colborne Lodge. Free. Pay-what-you-can admission to tour of Lodge. 392-6916.

JULY

July 1 – Canada Day, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. High Park, High Park Avenue entrance. Live entertainment, free hot dogs, refreshments. Sponsored by Toronto Department of Parks and Recreation, Metro Toronto District Canada Day Committee and Councillor Chris Korwin-Kuczynski. 392-0202.

July 3 – Help weed High Park. Bring gloves and appropriate shoes. Volunteers also needed for trail maintenance. Phone the High Park Volunteer Hotline at 392-7276, ext. 301.

July 4-August 25 – The 14th Annual Dream in High Park. A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare. 8 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday. Presented by the Canadian Stage Company. 365-1400.

July 7, 14, 21, 28 – High Park Sunday Afternoon Walking Tours. Butterflies; medicinal uses of plants, flower folklore; hear, smell, touch the forest. South entrance Grenadier Restaurant. 1:15 p.m.

July 9, 16, 30 – High Park Tuesday Walking Tours. Nature photography; Native vs. non-native trees;

Cleaning the ponds and streams.

Meet south entrance Grenadier Restaurant, 6:45 p.m.

July 15 – The Scream in High Park. Literary talent takes to the Dream stage for the fourth annual Scream featuring Karen Connelly and Russell Smith. 532-4899.

July 23 – High Park Tuesday Walking Tours. Moths. Meet south entrance Grenadier Restaurant, 8 p.m.

July 28, August 25 – Open-air service, 5 p.m. Sponsored by High Park Baptist Church. 534-4225.

AUGUST

Continues to August 25 – The 14th Annual Dream in High Park. A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare. 8 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday. Presented by the Canadian Stage Company. 365-1400.

August 6, 13 – High Park Tuesday Walking Tours. Sculpture tour; Lost waterways of the High Park area. Meet south entrance Grenadier Restaurant, 6:45 p.m..

August 11, 18 – High Park Sunday Afternoon Walking Tours. Nature and the story of fire; Spiders. Meet south entrance Grenadier Restaurant, 1:15 p.m.

August 20 – High Park Tuesday Walking Tours. Bats & Bat houses. Meet south entrance Grenadier Restaurant, 7:30 p.m.

August 25 – High Park Sunday Walking Tours. Fall migration. Meet south entrance Grenadier Restaurant, 9 a.m.

August 25 – Open-air service, 5 p.m. Sponsored by High Park Baptist Church. 534-4225.

August 27 – High Park Tuesday Walking Tours. Tour of the Stars. Meet south entrance Grenadier Restaurant, 8:30 p.m.

SEPTEMBER

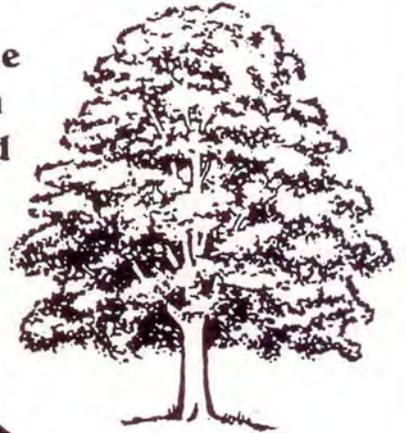
September 8 – High Park Sunday Afternoon Walking Tours. Mushrooms. Meet south entrance Grenadier Restaurant, 1:15 p.m.

September 15, 22, 29 – High Park Sunday Afternoon Walking Tours. Grasses; the Howards of High Park; Fall flowers. Meet south entrance Grenadier Restaurant, 1:15 p.m.

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Continued from Page 7

Geese keen protein sleuths

Resources and the Canadian Wildlife Service to re-locate 17,000 Canada Geese to the United States. "We exported our problem and we still have it," he said.

"We have to accept that geese are here to stay. Parks, golf courses are marvelous to geese," he said.

The die was cast when people settled into a cozy relationship with turf grass, Savage said.

By now it is common knowledge that geese are grazers; that they will shave a lawn closer than any lawnboy could, and that they poop every four minutes.

One thing Savage discovered in his work with the birds is that they are also extremely proficient at detecting the protein level in grass to within a three percentage point. If a goose comes upon a blade of grass that has a protein content of 25 per cent and another whose content is 22 per cent the goose will go to the former first.

Savage has given serious thought to grass and geese. He grew a variety of

grasses in a chessboard pattern in his backyard, and put a flock of birds to work to test their preferences.

The only ground cover the birds turned their beaks up at Savage said was black maddock. It is considered a noxious weed and its seeds aren't available.

Unless we completely re-think the way we treat the landscape and move away from turf grass, the general consensus is that a pot pourri of approaches are necessary but that any victories will be slim.

K-K has said alternative plantings, similar to those around Grenadier Pond are planned for the western beaches. It's true that wetland plantings at the south-east and south-west corners of the pond don't seem to appeal to the birds.

K-K also mentions removing the birds' eggs. "I don't want to hurt the geese," K-K said.

In Vancouver worse than that has been done. The eggs have been dipped in kerosene. The coating cuts off the oxygen supply to the fetus and the chick dies.

Over in Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion has proposed much more than

egg snatching.

McCallion has called for the geese to be rounded up and for the creation of legislation to allow adjacent band of Mississauga Aborigines to "process" the birds for food.

Mississauga staff took the mayor seriously and were investigating the logistics.

McCallion got the notion from a pilot project in Minneapolis-St. Paul where last summer 500 geese were rounded up, fattened up, slaughtered and their meat distributed through food banks.

The Canadian Wildlife Service is following the project with interest

This year's crop of goslings has hatched in High Park. They are beautiful with their fluffy, yellow coats and delicate black beaks. They will learn to fly in High Park, and that is why they will return every year.

While the goslings nibble on the grass, the adults stand guard and trust their instincts that this is the place where survival is guaranteed.

- Gigi Suhanic

The City of Etobicoke's First Waterfront Kite Festival

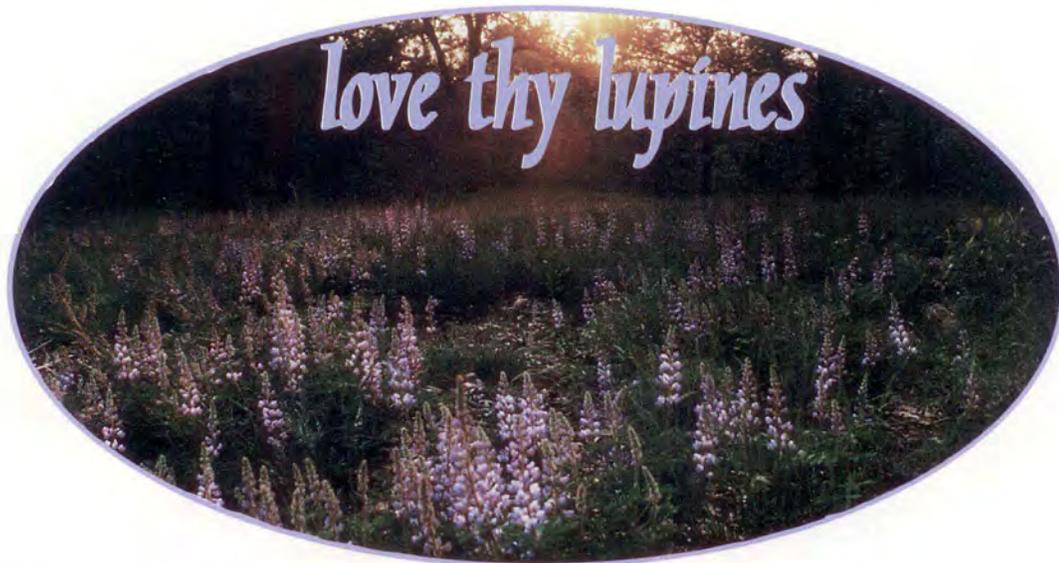
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photo by Gera Dillon & courtesy Toronto Parks and Recreation

High Park Walking Tours Summer '96 Schedule

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

Tuesday Evening Tours

Meet outside the south entrance of the Grenadier Restaurant at 6:45 p.m. unless otherwise noted

- July 9.....Nature Photography
- July 16.....Native vs. Non-Native Trees
- July 23.....Moths *Meet at 8 p.m.
(bring a flashlight)
- July 30.....Cleaning the Ponds and Streams
- Aug. 6.....Sculpture Tour
- Aug. 13...Lost Waterways of the High Park Area
- Aug. 20....Bats & Bat Houses * Meet at 7:30 p.m.
- Aug. 27....Tour of the Stars * Meet at 8:30 p.m.
(bring binoculars)

Sunday Afternoon Tours

Meet outside the south entrance of the Grenadier Restaurant at 1:15 p.m. unless otherwise noted

- July 7.....Butterflies
- July 14.....Medicinal Uses of Plants
- July 21.....Flower Folklore
- July 28.....Hear, Smell, Touch the Forest
- Aug. 11.....Nature & the Story of Fire
- Aug. 18.....Spiders
- Aug. 25.....Fall Migration
*Meet at 9 a.m.
- Sept. 8.....Mushrooms
- Sept. 15.....Grasses
- Sept. 22.....The Howards of High Park
- Sept. 29.....Fall Flowers



The walking tour schedule appears in the Quarterly courtesy of:



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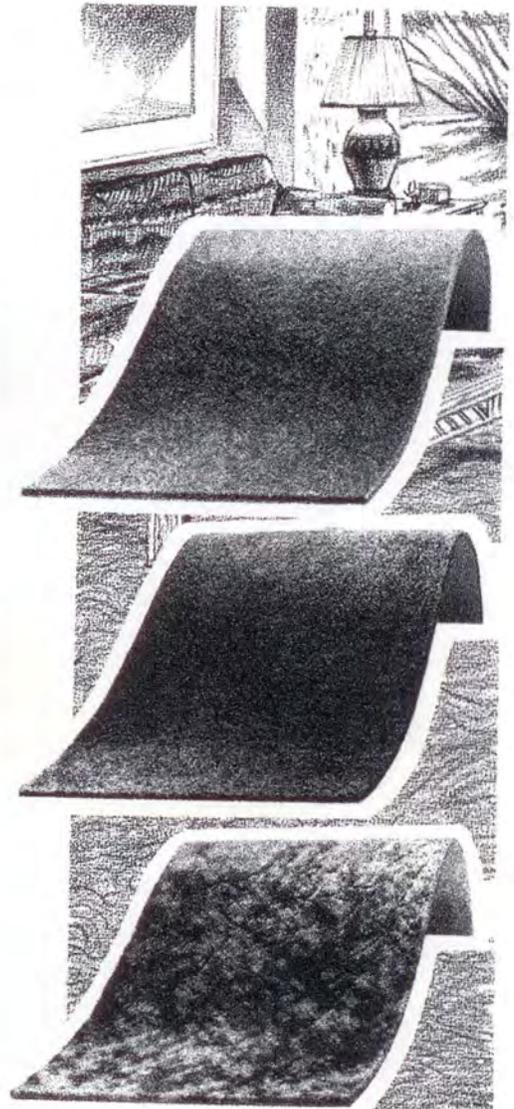
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HIGH PARK CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
FIRST ANNUAL ELECTIONS & PICNIC

*Wednesday, June 26, 6:30 p.m.
Grenadier Restaurant, High Park
(rain or shine - inside or outside)*



ELECTION DETAILS

There are 7 spots open on the advisory committee to individuals who want to help shape High Park's future.

Elections start
at 7:30 p.m.

For information call 392-1954

Agenda for meeting

- 6:30 p.m. - welcome, picnic
- 7 p.m. - '95-'96 in review
- 7:30 p.m. - elections
- 8 p.m. - visions of '96-'97

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*Please join
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High Park
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Program*

Weeding, planting, & monitoring are just a few of the activities hosted by the High Park Volunteer Stewardship Program.

Upcoming scheduled dates

- June 23
- July 3

Meet at the Grenadier Restaurant, 6:30 p.m. & bring gloves

CALL THE VOLUNTEER HOTLINE AT 392-7276, EXT. 301