

*Toronto's Magazine about parks and urban nature*

Summer 1997, Volume Four, Number Two

\$1.00

# HIGH PARK

*A Park Lover's Quarterly*

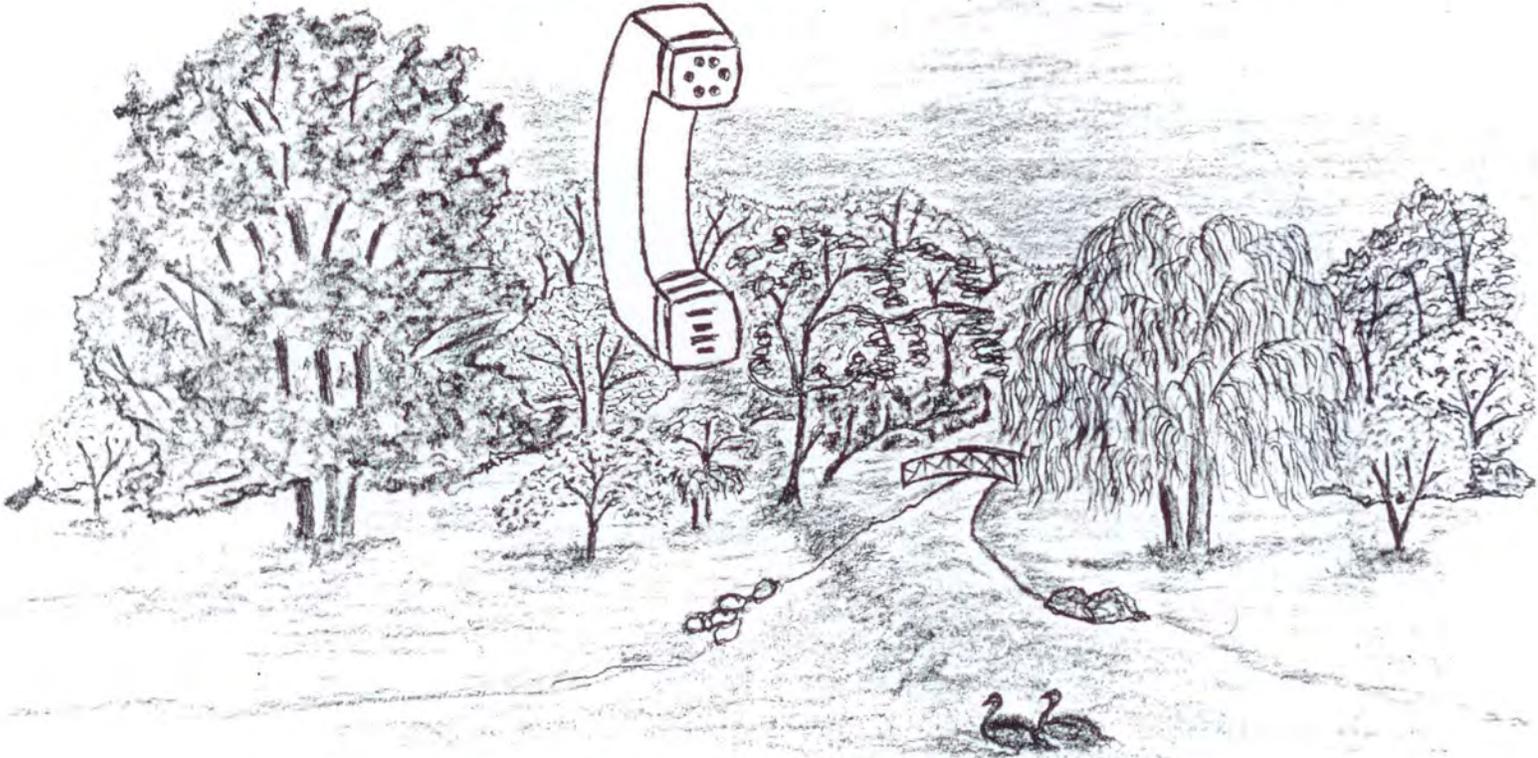
**City targets  
gay sex**

**Toronto's  
last duel**  
A matter of  
honor, or  
bloody  
murder?

**Walking tour schedule • Summer events guide**

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*Sak's Fine Foods is proud to help promote the new Park Watch Line and wishes everyone a safe & happy summer while enjoying High Park.*



# HIGH PARK

## *A Park Lover's Quarterly*

Editor - Gigi Suhanic

Contributors - D.W. Dorken, Mary Lou Kumagai,  
Mario Maceda,

Joan Miles, Ken Winlaw.

Cover photo by D.W. Dorken

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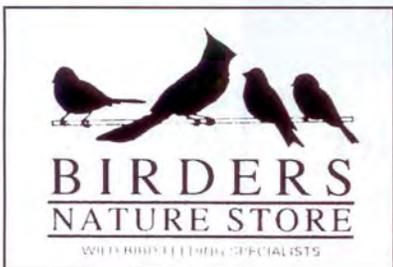
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# SUMMER guide

## JULY

**Flights of Fancy** – Flock to Colborne Lodge to learn about the Howards' interest in wildlife. Enjoy some refreshing mint tea. Children can make a nest starting kit to take home.

**July 1-Aug. 24** – Dream in High Park. *Romeo and Juliet* presented by the Canadian Stage Company. 8 p.m. Tuesday - Sunday. Suggested donation \$5.

**July 20** – The High Park Volunteer

Stewardship Program hosts a series of outdoor events including planting, seed harvesting. Meet south entrance Grenadier Restaurant, 10:30 a.m. 392-7276, ext. 301.

**July 30** – The High Park Volunteer Stewardship Program hosts a series of outdoor events including planting, seed harvesting and cleaning. Meet south entrance Grenadier Restaurant, 6:30 p.m. 392-7276, ext. 301.

**July 31** – The Ukrainian Canadian Women's Committee literary gathering at the statue of Ukrainian poet Lesya Ukrainka. Colborne Lodge Drive north of Grenadier Restaurant. 6-9 p.m.

## AUGUST

**Homebrews.** Preserving was important to keep food and medicines available through the winter months. Visitors can

enjoy a refreshing, relaxing cup of camomile tea as they take a stroll around the herb garden at Colborne Lodge. 392-6916.

**August 6, 20** – The High Park Volunteer Stewardship Program hosts a series of outdoor events including planting, seed harvesting and cleaning. Meet south entrance Grenadier Restaurant, 6:30 p.m. Call 392-7276, ext. 301.

**August 10** – Run for Alpha Charitable Foundation. 6-11 a.m.

**August 10, 24** – The High Park Volunteer Stewardship Program hosts a series of events including planting. Meet south entrance Grenadier Restaurant, 10:30 a.m. 392-7276, ext. 301.

**August 16-17** – Artists in the Park. Art exhibit at Bloor Street entrance to High Park.

**August 24** – Give to the Earth Foundation 10k Walkathon. 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

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**David Hutcheon**  
Toronto City Councillor

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*Call me for assistance regarding any municipal issue*



**Ward 2 Councillor**  
**Chris Korwin-Kuczynski**  
392-0202

## Hey pal, take a walk!

Walking tours are a great way to enjoy Toronto in the summer. Below is a list of walking tours being offered throughout the city. For a schedule of the High Park walking tours, turn to the back page.

•The **Toronto Field Naturalists** hosts tours year long. Tours are accessible by TTC and are free. This is a partial list of the summer schedule. For more information phone (416) 968-6255.

**July 23**, 10 a.m. Humber Carrying Place. Meet at the north-west corner of Bloor Street West and Jane Street. Follow the original Indian trail on the east side of the river. Three to four hours duration. Bring lunch.

**Aug. 3**, 10 a.m. Hike on Toronto Island. Meet at the ferry docks at the foot of Bay Street. Length, 9-11 kilometres. Bring a lunch.

•The **Taskforce to Bring Back the Don** hosts some late summer tours through the Don watershed.



**David Miller**  
Metro Councillor  
Suite 228 – Metro Hall  
55 John Street  
Toronto ON M5V 3C6  
392-4072

**Aug. 14**, 8:30 p.m. Night-time Walk. The Don Valley is a beautiful place to stroll at night. Listen to night-sounds, admire the flowers and nightbirds, and feel the cool air of this beautiful refuge in downtown Toronto. Meet outside Broadview subway station.

**Aug. 23**, 10 p.m. Wildflower Walk. In August the Don Valley comes alive with wildflowers. Join a representative of the Todmorden Wildflower Preserve on a walk to identify wildflowers, and discuss efforts to restore wildflower meadows. Meet at Todmorden Mills Museum.

# City wages traffic war on gay cruising

The crackdown on gay sex cruising in High Park is a quiet and politic bit of business that involves road closures, traffic tickets, and swing gates, instead of video cameras and police charges.

High Park's south end, near The Queensway and Lakeshore Boulevard, is an acknowledged hangout for men looking for park sex. At different times of the day the two parking lots in the area can be jammed with cars, with men wandering around the area.

The city of Toronto's Parks and Recreation Department has come up with two scenarios it hopes will curb gay cruising, and other activity deemed "offensive". One proposal involves road and parking lot closures; the other involves a signage campaign warning that areas in the park are being monitored for certain types of behaviour.

Most cruising men drive into the park from The Queensway or Lakeshore Boulevard, following Colborne Lodge Drive to the south-end parking lot. The traffic proposal, recently approved by Toronto City Council, will see swing gates block Colborne Lodge Dr. just north of the parking lot.

Parking will be eliminated in the lot and it will be used as a turn-around back to the Queensway. Parked cars will be ticketed. A second lot will be designated for use by the nearby historical house and museum only.

Parks and rec staff have said the changes are meant to curb commuter traffic in High Park.

In a Parks and Rec memo, staff also say, "This parking area, which has historically been used as a meeting place, has burdened the vicinity with inappropriate activities. Its removal and the designation of the south parking lot as 'facility use only', would be an important phase in the deterrence of such activities, while revitalizing the area."

## Hypocritical

It was west-end councillor Chris Korwin-Kuczynski who first put park users on notice that the city was working on a plan to oust gay cruising. At a meeting of the High Park Citizens' Advisory Committee last winter, Korwin-Kuczynski said he had been consulting with staff about possible strategies.

He said it is "hypocritical" to go after flashers in the park and ignore the fact that people

are having sex openly in a public place.

"Let me just say this is not directed specifically at one community, but yeah, it relates to them (gay men)," Korwin-Kuczynski said.

Part two of these efforts is already under way. Signs have been erected at certain locations, reading, "This area is being monitored by police, Park Watch, and Parks and Recreation staff". A media sheet says the signs "are intended to discourage behaviour that might be offensive to many of the people who use the park." The "offensive" behaviour includes alcohol consumption, drug use and selling, illegal exposure, and sexual activity. The media sheet also talks about Park Watch and its role, "to model the kind of behaviour that creates a safe and welcoming atmosphere".

Park Watch is a safety group that trains volunteers and sends them out with cell phones to patrol the park. At Colborne Lodge, High Park's historical house, staff say that the group's presence is having an impact.

Park Watch has its offices in the south end beside the lodge. Bridget Wranich says she and other Lodge staff have seen fewer men cruising near the house since Park Watch started.

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# A folly of honour

The short life and brutal death of a member of one of High Park's founding families

by Ken Winlaw

The two men faced each other across 50 feet of open field. Each held a deadly duelling pistol in their right hand.

As mist from an early-morning rain rose slowly into the summer air, the count was sounded.

"One, two..."

But before the call to fire, one of the duellists raised his pistol – a common, 10-shilling flintlock – and pulled the trigger. The crack of the shot rang out across the open field and over the cool morning air.

It was the morning of July 12, 1817. The premature shot was fired by 19-year-old John Ridout. His intended target was Samuel Peters Jarvis. The shot missed by a mile.

Sam Jarvis and John Ridout were not strangers to each other prior to their meeting of honour in that remote farmer's field. The Jarvis and Ridout families had clashed before.

The bitterness between the two families went back much further than the morning Jarvis threw a humiliated John Ridout out of his office on his ear a week before the duel. There had been earlier disputes about perceived slights of honour and incurred debts.

Both families had also crossed paths – and figurative swords – with John George Howard. Howard, of course, assured himself a place in west-end history when he 'donated' his High Park estate to the city. What is less known is that part of what is now High Park was owned by the Ridouts, who feuded with Howard over his one-time plans to subdivide the property in the 1830s.

Howard also had his problems with the Jarvises. Years after the duel, the same Sam Jarvis would contract Howard to survey a piece of land. Howard pursued Jarvis for years to be paid for the work.

It isn't too much of a stretch to wonder how the future of High Park might have been affected if the Jarvis-Ridout bitterness hadn't come to such a bloody head that morning back in 1817.

The seeds of the duel at Elmsley's field – at the corner of what is now Bay and Grosvenor Sts. – had been sown years earlier, fertilized with the bitterness between the two families. But they blossomed the morning of July 5, 1817, when John Ridout, a young articling student, finally tracked down Sam Jarvis, a lawyer, in his office. The Ridouts had been after Jarvis for days to sign some papers related to the muddled financial affairs of Sam's father, William.

By all accounts, Sam Jarvis was in a crummy mood. His father was skirting bankruptcy, and Sam was saddled with the job of saving his hide. He was also pressuring his father to quit his post as provincial secretary, so that he could have a run at the job.

When John Ridout cornered Sam in his office, something untoward must have been said. The brief exchange ended with Jarvis giving Ridout the heave-ho, in front of an office full of clerks – a humiliation for the young man.

Ridout stewed in his embarrassment for four days. Then on the following Wednesday, Ridout attacked Jarvis as he promenaded along King St. The two men had to be physically restrained by friends and passers-by.

That clash pretty much set the stage.

History fails to record who issued the call to honour. Some reports have it that Jarvis' second, 27-year-old Henry Boulton, approached James Small, Ridout's second, and issued the challenge. Others have it the other way 'round.

Regardless of who issued the challenge, a site and time was chosen. The duel was to be three days hence, July 12. The time – in keeping with romantic duelling traditions – was dawn.

Weather cares not a whit for romantic traditions however, and on the morning of the duel it was raining buckets. The four men – the two duellists and their seconds – huddled in a small barn for hours making, one would assume, decidedly awkward conversation.

When the rain subsided, the four men took to the field. A distance of 12 paces was chosen, but young Ridout, figuring his older rival was probably a better shot, asked that the distance be reduced to 8.

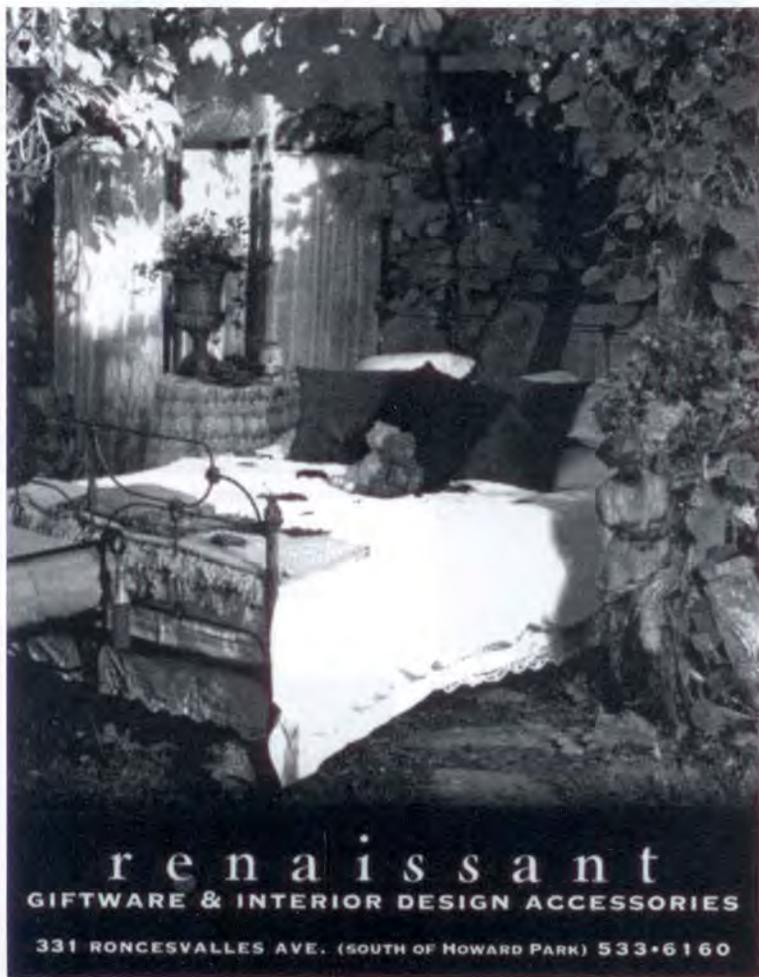
Jarvis noticed they had positioned themselves in front of tree stumps, and suggested they choose new locations..

After the four men shuffled around in the wet grass choosing new places to stand, it was decided the shooting would commence on a count of three.

For reasons unclear to this day, Ridout pulled the trigger before the call to fire. The other three men watched as his shot sailed off into the ether. Ridout then started to walk off the field.

Perhaps Ridout was nervous or misheard the count. Some historians

Summer issue



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## The seeds of the duel had been sown years earlier, fertilized by bitterness between the two families

have suggested that Ridout deliberately shot wild and early, in the hopes that Jarvis would return the favour. It had happened in other duels where both shootists fired wide. Honour satisfied, the duellists could heave a shared sigh of relief and then retire to a local public house to get properly snookered.

But if that was what poor John Ridout had hoped for, he was wrong – dead wrong.

After a brief discussion, it was decided that Ridout would have to allow Jarvis his shot. (I suspect Ridout was the odd man out when the vote was taken, but there you go.)

Ridout returned to his position, his empty pistol at his side. When the call to fire was issued, Jarvis raised his pistol and pulled the trigger.

The crack echoed across the field, and the acrid smell of gunpowder drifted away in the smoke from Jarvis's muzzle.

The bullet slammed into John Ridout's shoulder and passed through his jugular vein and throat. The force of the blast spun Ridout part-way 'round, but according to the other three, Ridout did not fall.

"My God, what have I done?" Jarvis is reported to have cried as he threw his smoking pistol on the ground.

Later, the three men would claim that Ridout, still on his feet, shook hands all around and declared the duel fair and honour met before falling over in a bloody heap.

It is probable that Ridout's last words were a fiction, and that in fact, the poor guy died instantly. But all three surviving members of the duelling party were lawyers, and knew that the dying words of Ridout declaring it a fair fight would go a long way to saving their necks if murder charges were laid. It's probable the three made up Ridout's declaration to save their butts.

While Jarvis and Boulton strolled back to town, Small ran ahead to get help. The deputy sheriff seconded a carriage and rode out to Elmsley's field, where he found what was left of John Ridout, soaked in blood – and rain, which had resumed shortly after the duel ended.

A coroner's inquest was quickly convened later that same day, and it was decided that Jarvis "feloniously, wilfully and of his malice aforethought" killed Ridout. The inquest also decided that the seconds, Small and Boulton, had aided and abetted Ridout's murder.

Jarvis surrendered to authorities and was charged with manslaughter. Both Small and Boulton made themselves scarce.

Jarvis languished in a King Street jail until October. In the meantime, his father died virtually bankrupt, and Sam's dreams of succeeding him as provincial secretary were dashed when Duncan Cameron was named to the post.

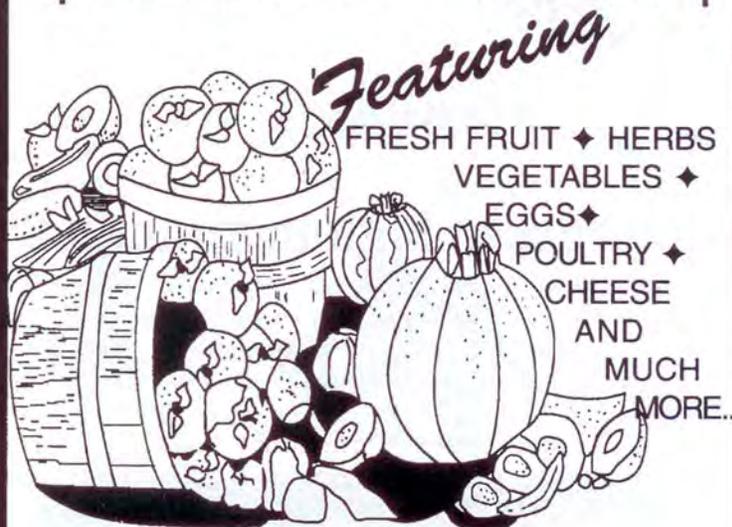
That fall Jarvis pleaded not guilty at his trial. A coroner testified that Ridout had probably died instantly from his wound and that his 'final words' probably weren't.

But not having been there, he couldn't say it was impossible that Ridout hadn't declared the duel a fair one. So the jury, with one eye on the noble tradition of duelling and the other eye winking furiously, jumped into the loophole with both feet and acquitted Jarvis.

Summer issue

**'The crack echoed across the field, and the acrid smell of gunpowder drifted away in the smoke'**

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*The site of the market was first established as a church in 1888.*

*In 1930 the present building was erected and served the community until 1977 when it was deconsecrated. On July 2, 1996 restoration began. What some people saw as an impossible task was carried out to create a unique destination.*



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## From the Greenhouse

### Wintergreen high in vitamin C

Native plants, many of which are steeped in aboriginal and medicinal history, are the rage in gardening and environmental circles. The High Park greenhouses is a major new source of native plants, and is presently growing 150 species from seed for re-introduction in High Park. This column features two species per issue "from the greenhouse".

Wintergreen's dark green, shiny leaves and bright red berries contrast beautifully against winter's stark landscape. Wintergreen can be found growing naturally in High Park's ravine areas where proper soil and moisture conditions for the plant exist. Found mainly in the Great Lakes region, Wintergreen's major characteristics include dark, glossy leaves, that are oval in shape, toothed along the edges, and have a leathery appearance. Newshoots poke out in early spring. Tiny, white bell-shaped flowers bloom in mid-summer, with the berries eventually taking the flowers place.



Many medicinal uses have been recorded for wintergreen. It is high in vitamin C and was used to treat scurvy. The leaves were steeped to make a tea that was reported to have many beneficial side effects. Wintergreen oil is a traditional ingredient in massage oil, although only tiny amounts are used. The oil is toxic if swallowed. Six millilitres can kill an adult. Salicylic acid, the main ingredient in aspirin, was derived from salicylic ether, a byproduct of the oil. People who are allergic to aspirin avoid wintergreen products. Wintergreen's common names are teaberry, winterberry, partridge berry and mountain tea.

### False Solomon's Seal berries inedible



False Solomon's Seal grows on a single stalk one to two feet long. White flowers cluster at the end of the stem, eventually turning into red berries which go whitish with red speckles. The berries are inedible and can cause diarrhea. The plants' rhizome, a rootlike stem growing under the ground, is poisonous. Preferred habitat includes moist woods, bogs and along roadsides throughout eastern North America. False Solomon's

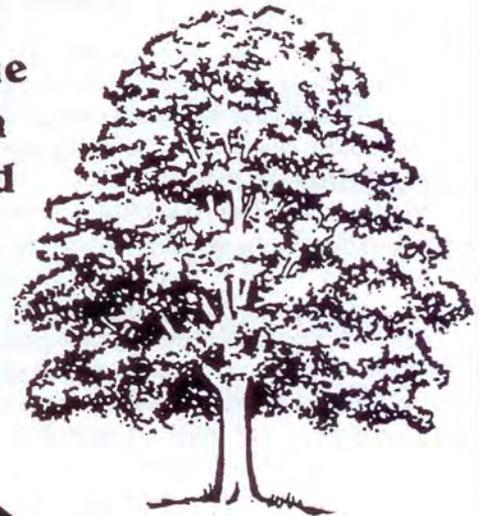
seal is found in limited numbers in High Park's ravine areas. Common names include wild or false spikenard, small or zigzag Solomon's seal.

Sources: *Identifying and Harvesting Edible and Medicinal Plants* by "Wildman" Steve Brill with Evelyn Dean; *Use of Plants for the Past 500 Years* by Charlotte Erichsen-Brown.

# In memory of the one you love.

**Cardinal Funeral Homes has joined with Toronto Parks and Recreation by sponsoring the planting of trees in parks and throughout the city. We do this because we care about our community and protecting the environment.**

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# School for visually impaired plans arts and crafts auction

The Ontario Foundation for Visually Impaired Children is planning an arts and crafts auction and sale for Sat., Oct. 18.

The sale – to be held at The High Park Forest School – is to raise funds for the foundation, which provides essential early education to infants and preschoolers who are blind or severely visually impaired. Without the services of the foundation, these children would be less prepared for integration into schools and the community.

If you're a craftsperson or artisan looking to expose your work to a new audience, the foundation would like you to donate some of your finer masterpieces to the cause.

The foundation needs contributions of painted furniture, birdhouses, pottery, dried flower arrangements, quilts, calligraphy, paintings, preserves, wood carvings, glassware, stained glass, hats, baby items, stocking stuffers, garden furniture, earrings, Halloween masks, needlepoint, jewelry, wooden toys, knitting, ceramics, metalwork, Christmas crafts, homemade chocolates, papier mache, and a whole host of other crafty items.

## Farmer's market a good thing

The Market on Roncesvalles, housed in a former Catholic church, opened July 19.

This new shopping destination sells prime aged beef, baked goods, breads, mueslis, foccacias and sourdoughs, imported cheeses and pates, organic and fat free foods, and has a gourmet deli. Market hours are Mon-Fri 8a.m.-9p.m. and Sun-Sun 8a.m.-8p.m.

Contributors are asked to include a written biography on themselves. Donations can be made up to Oct. 10. For more information phone Rai Fisher at (416) 699-9377 or fax at (416) 699-2536.

The Ontario Foundation for Visually Impaired Children is a registered charitable organization. The High Park Forest School is located in the park's north-east corner.

## ECONOTES

**COMPOSTING:** Did you realize that much of the everyday garbage that you throw out is actually re-cycleable and ideal for your lawn and garden? All of those vegetable and fruit wastes that you toss out makes wonderful compost. So do lawn clippings, hedge trimmings and tree leaves. In fact just about anything organic can go in the composter. By adding all of these waste materials to your composter you will be reducing the amount of garbage you throw out, re-using it instead to make nutrient-rich soil for your garden. When mixing these wastes remember to regularly add some soil to the mixture and make sure to keep it damp. This helps to break down the organic waste faster. If you find that when you dig up the soil

from the bottom of your composter that it smells like manure – don't worry. It just means that the organic material is still decomposing and that it needs more time and air to break down. You can still add it to the garden at this point but make sure to mix it in well with other soil.

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

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

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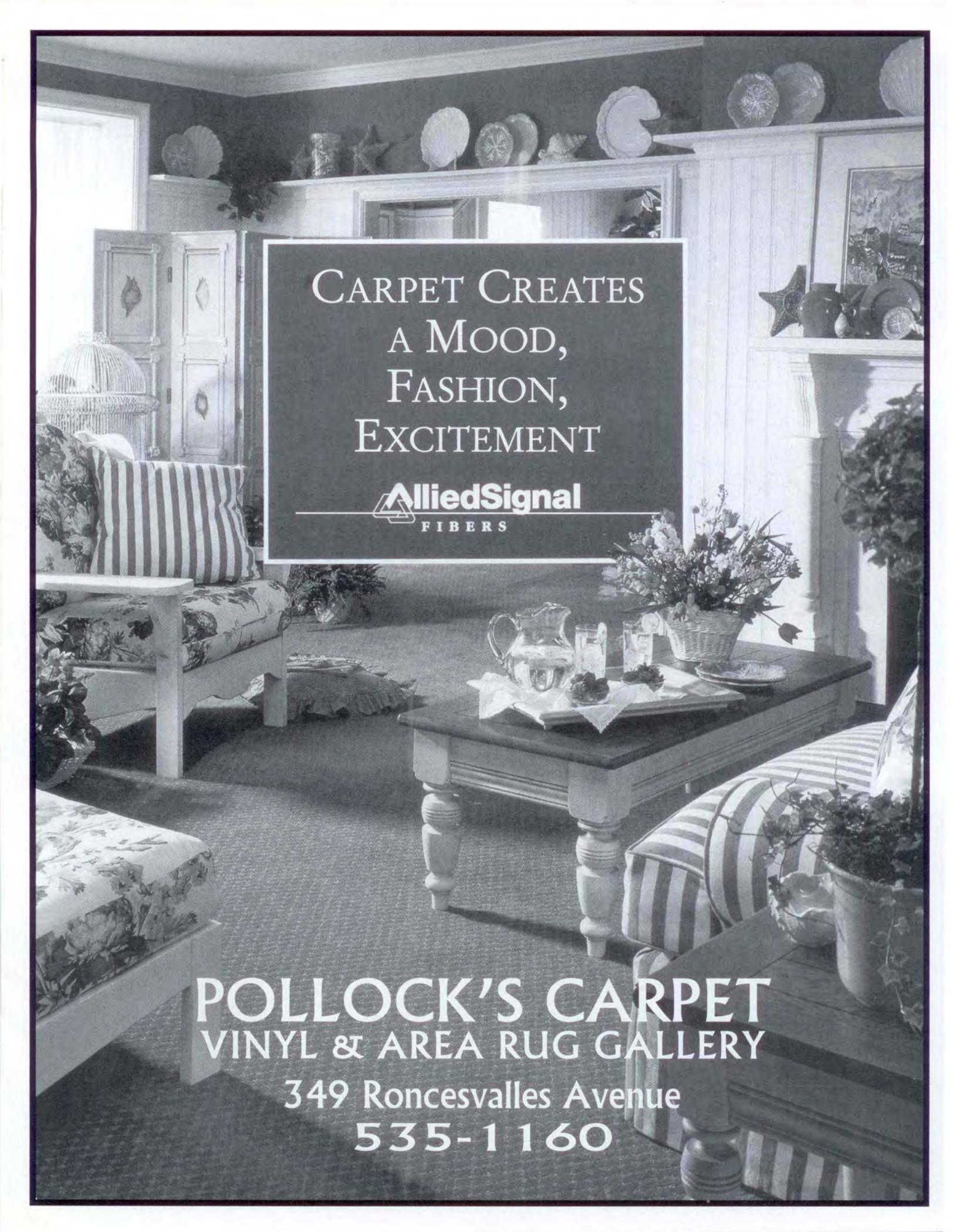
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## High Park in Summer

Join in an informative walking tour in High Park this summer and learn more about this valuable community resource! Most Sunday tours end with a visit to historic Colborne Lodge for a refreshing drink. Tours take about two hours.

A \$2 donation is suggested. Walks are moderately paced and may go on rough trails.

*Meet just south of the Grenadier Restaurant. \*Especially recommended for families*

### Tuesday Evening Tours

ON TUESDAY EVENINGS, YOU WILL BE ESCORTED TO THE PARK EXIT TO SAFELY COMPLETE YOUR WALK.

- July 8 6:45p.m. 4000 Years of Geology
- July 15 6:45p.m. How Plants Got Their Names
- July 22 8:30p.m. Tour of the Stars\*  
(BRING BINOCULARS)
- July 29 6:45p.m. The Origins of Spring Creek
- Aug. 5 8:15p.m. Moths\*  
(BRING A FLASHLIGHT)
- Aug. 12 6:45p.m. The Influence of High Park  
on Canadian Art
- Aug. 19 8:15p.m. Bat Night\*
- Aug. 26 8:15p.m. Tour of the Stars\*  
(BRING BINOCULARS)

### Sunday Afternoon Tours

MEET AT 1:15P.M. UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

- July 13 Insect\*
- July 20 High Park - 1900 and Today
- July 27 Identifying Savanna Plants\*
- Aug. 3 Explore High Park\*
- Aug. 10 Edible and Medicinal Plants
- Aug. 17 Native vs. Non-Native Trees
- Aug. 24 Recreation in High Park\*
- Aug. 31 The Early French Connection  
(BILINGUAL TOUR)
- Sept. 7 Fall Migration (birds) \*MEET AT 8A.M.
- Sept. 14 Fungi
- Sept. 21 Fall Flowers\*
- Sept. 28 Grasses

*Organized by the High Park Citizens' Advisory Committee, Colborne Lodge (Heritage Toronto) and the Depart. of Park and Recreation (City of Toronto). For more information about tours and programs call 392-7276, ext. 301.*