



HIGH PARK NEWS

SUMMER 2004
VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

*Welcome
to the premier edition
of High Park News.*

This Newsletter is produced by the High Park Community Advisory Council (HPCAC) to acquaint you with the work of the Council and the many activities available to you in High Park.

Read on, get involved.

We'd be delighted to have your support.

In this issue...

About Us	2
High Park Facts	3
Calendar	4-6
High Park Groups	7-8
Colborne Lodge	9
High Park Initiatives	10

High Park Advisory Council

HPCAC, a volunteer group, began as an interim Committee in 1993. It was recognized by the City of Toronto as the High Park Citizens' Advisory Committee in 1995. Its name was changed to the High Park Community Advisory Council last year.

HPCAC is made up of a broad range of Park users, including individuals and representatives of organized groups. These include local ratepayer/residents' associations, recreational stakeholders, long-term interest groups such as the Toronto Field Naturalists, business/park entrepreneurs and a number of members-at-large from the community. The Council meets on a regular basis and meetings are open to the public.

The HPCAC mandate is:

- to facilitate ongoing public input and assistance in the stewardship of High Park for present and future generations of Park users
- to provide public input on Park policies, goals and objectives to the Commissioner of Economic Development, Culture & Tourism, City of Toronto
- to facilitate volunteer involvement in Park initiatives, and
- to promote public awareness and responsible stewardship of the Park

Contributors to this issue

Ron Allan	Brad Chesla
Cheryl Hart	Gillian Smith
James Tomlinson	Jean Vesik

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High Park Initiatives

An affiliated charitable corporation called High Park Initiatives (HPI) was founded recently to raise funds in support of various Park programs and activities. HPI has also assumed responsibility for managing the High Park Nature Centre, an education program operated jointly by staff and volunteers.

HPCAC Committees

The work of the Council is carried on through two standing policy committees, the Natural Environment Committee, and the Built Environment and Safety Committee. Meetings of these committees are open to the public and your participation is welcome.

In addition, the Program Group Committee sponsors six volunteer-led programs in the Park.

- Children's events
- High Park Youth connecting People with the Environment (HYPE)
- K-9 Working Group, dog owners and walkers
- ParkWatch
- Volunteer Stewardship Program
- Walking Tours

This committee also liaises closely with the Nature Centre, and City sponsored programs such as Colborne Lodge Museum and the Children's Garden and Exploring Toronto Program, both located near the south end of the Park.

All activities are conducted on a regular basis throughout the year.

Contact us...infoline: (416) 392-1748 website: www.highpark.org

You can find up-to-date information on the various programs through our infoline and on our website.

HPCAC Executive 2003/04

Chair	Robin Sorys
Secretary	Ken Sharratt
Treasurer	Stephen Mick
Natural Environment Committee	
Co-Chairs	Karen Yukich
	George Bryant

Built Environment & Safety Committee	
Chair	Paul Hindle
Program Committee	
Chair	Ron Allan

Parks & Recreation Ex-officio Representative	Carol Guy
Colborne Lodge Ex-officio Representative	Cheryl Hart
Councillor	Bill Saundercook

HPCAC Members-at-large elected June 2004

	Ron Allan
	Grace Petrucci
	Karyn Morris

HPCAC Members-at-large elected June 2003

George Bryant	Mark Cyr
Susan Flanagan	Stephen Mick
Peter Mulvihill	John Romanov

HPCAC Volunteer Program Groups

Children's Events	Robin Sorys
HYPE	Ray Bielaskie
K-9 Working Group	April Hall
Nature Centre	Eleanor Morton
Park Watch	Gloria Worth
Volunteer Stewardship Program	
	Gillian Smith
	Jean Vesik

Walking Tours	Ron Allan
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Members Representing Residents Assn.

Swansea Area Ratepayers Assn.	Merle Hudson
Dundas West Residents Assn.	Ken Sharratt

Members Representing Long Term Interests

Ontario Insect Association	
	Karen Yukich
Toronto Ornithological Club	Don Barnett
Toronto Field Naturalists	Elaine Farragher

Members Representing Business/Park Entrepreneurs

High Park Food Concessions	Steve Caragianakos
Canadian Stage Company	Paul Shaw
OFVIC	April Cornell

City-sponsored Programs non-voting members

Colborne Lodge	Cheryl Hart
Children's Garden & Exploring Toronto Programs	Christine Klianis

High Park Initiatives

Secretary	Paul Hindle
Treasurer	Michael Still
Dir. Marketing	Brad Chesla
Dir. H.R.	Robin Sorys
Dir. at large	Steve Anderson
P&R Ex-Officio	Carol Guy



HIGH PARK FACTS

- *John Howard*, Toronto's first surveyor, purchased property south of Bloor Street in 1836, and named his estate High Park because of its magnificent view of Lake Ontario.
- Howard deeded his High Park estate to the City of Toronto in 1873; his home, Colborne Lodge, is now a museum situated on its original site.
- *High Park's natural ecosystem* is identified as an oak savannah or oak woodland, which is broadly defined as a discontinuous canopy of tree cover with a ground layer of grasses and wildflowers. A savannah is considered to be a transition zone between prairie and the eastern deciduous forest and the combination of the two habitats is what gives oak savannah its own unique identity.
- Savannah is a *globally endangered vegetation community*. human settlement has reduced it to 1% of its original extent. High Park contains the fourth-largest oak savannah remnant globally.
- The Park offers a glimpse of the variety of habitats that once occurred throughout Toronto and despite the loss of natural areas to make way for other uses, High Park still supports a remarkable variety of rare flora and vegetation communities.
- *Over one million people visit High Park every year*, each one a potential steward of the natural wilderness in our city
- High Park is the last sizeable natural area remaining on Toronto's Iroquois Sand Plain. These coarse, sandy soils (laid down on the shores of glacial Lake Iroquois, the larger version of Lake Ontario) are relatively warm and dry, a feature that allowed savannah plants to successfully colonize in the park.
- The oak savannahs of High Park are considered continentally significant due to the location, size, nature and characteristics of the remnant ecological community they comprise. These ecological features are nonetheless impoverished; the dominant Black Oak trees, over 150 years of age, are not regenerating.
- A function that is characteristic to savannah is fire. The whole host of savannah flora and fauna are in some way fire-dependant: *young Black Oak trees tolerate fire* by exhibiting a unique ability to resprout stems following top kill by fire (its competition cannot do the same); and large Black Oak trees develop a fire resistant, insulating bark which also gives them a competitive advantage.
- The first peoples to originally inhabit the oak savannahs maintained the ecosystem through *controlled burns*. Today, the City of Toronto has resumed these practices, performing controlled burns each spring.
- Forty species of the park's *native plants* are known to occur in only four other places in Metro Toronto. Four of these species (Wood Betony, Shrubby St. John's-Wort, Wild Lupine and Cup-Plant) are known to only occur in four other places in Canada.
- *Today's mighty oak is yesterday's acorn that held its ground.*



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

AUGUST

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 <i>VSP</i> Himalayan Balsam Cutting Along Spring Creek	2	3 <i>Walking Tours</i> Bat Night	4	5	6	7
8	9 <i>Colborne Lodge</i> High Park Discovery Camp	10 <i>Colborne Lodge</i> High Park Discovery Camp <hr/> <i>VSP</i> Himalayan Balsam Cutting Along Spring Creek	11 <i>Colborne Lodge</i> High Park Discovery Camp	12 <i>Colborne Lodge</i> High Park Discovery Camp	13 <i>Colborne Lodge</i> High Park Discovery Camp	14
15 <i>VSP</i> Boulevard Bed Launch & Restoration Crew Tour <hr/> <i>Colborne Lodge</i> Storyteller Lenore Keeshig- Tobias	16 <i>Colborne Lodge</i> High Park Discovery Camp	17 <i>Colborne Lodge</i> High Park Discovery Camp <hr/> <i>Walking Tours</i> Medicinal, Edible & Poisonous Plants	18 <i>Colborne Lodge</i> High Park Discovery Camp	19 <i>Colborne Lodge</i> High Park Discovery Camp	20 <i>Colborne Lodge</i> High Park Discovery Camp	21
22	23	24 <i>VSP</i> Boulevard Beds, Watering & Weeding	25 <i>Natural Environment Committee</i> Meeting	26	27	28
29 <i>VSP</i> Field Trip	30	31				



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 <i>VSP</i> Planting Event	13	14	15 <i>HPCAC</i> General Meeting	16	17	18
19 <i>Walking Tours</i> The Birds of Fall <hr/> <i>Colborne Lodge</i> Storyteller Celia Lottridge	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 <i>VSP</i> Buckthorn Cutting	27	28	29	30		



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OCTOBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3 <i>Colborne Lodge</i> Storyteller Norman Perrin <hr/> <i>High Park Harvest Festival</i>	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17 <i>Walking Tours</i> Restoring High Park-A Work In Progress	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 <i>VSP</i> Seed Collection in Greenhouses & Buckthorn Cutting in High Park <hr/> <i>Children's Event</i> Pumpkin Float	25	26	27	28	29	30
31 <i>Walking Tours</i> Ghosts and Legends of High Park						

HIGH PARK GROUPS

Volunteer Stewardship Program

For the last eight years the Volunteer Stewardship Program (VSP) has, with the help of the City of Toronto, worked toward restoring the natural areas of High Park to presettlement conditions. Before settlers arrived the local environment was made up of large areas of oak savannah; although much of the previous oak savannah ecosystem in Ontario is now rare, there are still remnants of it in High Park. There are 54 hectares of land in High Park to be restored. The VSP attracts people of all ages, sizes and backgrounds year-round who love both nature and working with plants.



2001 Prescribed Burn in High Park on VSP Adopt-a-plot

So far this summer we have had a successful planting event on some of the Adopt-a-plots on the Tablelands which are located between the Grenadier Restaurant and baseball diamonds. There are many plants blooming there right now like Black Eyed Susans, Wild Bergamot and Showy Tick Trefoil. We have also been concentrating our efforts on invasive plant removal. In June we cut Japanese Knotweed at Wendigo Creek, in July we cut Tall Sweet White Clover on a site just west of West Road near the baseball diamonds. This area already had native plants such as Woodland Sunflower and we hope that the removal of the clover will allow the native plants more room to flourish. In August we will be cutting Himalayan Balsam along Spring Creek.

We have a special event happening on Sunday August 15th. There will be an official public launch of the Boulevard Beds which are plant beds located around the perimeter of the Grenadier Restaurant parking lot. The Boulevard Beds are an example of a display of native plants in a conventional landscape design. It is a thriving example of a Black Oak Savannah community situated in a high traffic area so that the public can see what native plants look like and acts as a showcase for the restoration work the VSP and City of Toronto Restoration Crew are doing in other areas of the Park that may not be as visible or accessible. The launch will be followed by a Restoration Tour led by the Restoration Crew.



HIGH PARK GROUPS

Here are *some ABC's of the VSP...*

Activities – There are many hand-on events to choose from throughout the year, such as...

Buckthorn Cutting - As an herbal remedy, buckthorn is used for hemorrhoids, as a diuretic, laxative, for colon, fissures and more. This may explain why our feathered friends have been so prolific in depositing buckthorn seeds, harvested as berries in neighbouring gardens, throughout High Park. Every other Sunday in spring and fall you will find a small brigade of tireless stewards—armed only with pruning shears and small saws—laying waste to a dense underlayer of shrubs and small trees that give our oak savannah the look of an impenetrable jungle. No, they're not an advance party of marauding property developers. They are High Park's very own Buckthorn Busters!

The two buckthorns that are aggressively invading High Park, Common Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) and Glossy Buckthorn (*Rhamnus frangula*), can both grow as tall as 20-25 feet, but are usually much smaller in High Park. The masses of black berries and shiny green leaves are attractive, but this shrub/tree, originally from Himalayan regions, takes over from native plants rapidly. The Buckthorn Busters try to control the invasion.

Cleaning Seeds - Seed cleaning is generally done in the winter months in the High Park greenhouses. Cleaning seeds involves removing all stems, leaves and chaff, producing clean seeds for planting. Some of the plants, like Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*), produce many tiny seeds and a sieve must be used to separate chaff from seed. Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) has tiny parachutes like dandelions—do not sneeze!



The *ABC's* do not end with our activities. A few species we grow are an integral part of the Oak Savannah Woodland...

Asters - Several species of asters (*Aster spp.*) grow in the park like Sky-blue Aster, Heath Aster, Smooth Aster, Large-leafed Aster and New England Aster, showing clouds of blue, purple and white. Of 250 species of Asters in North America, 30 grow in Ontario. Some, such as the New England Aster, can get quite tall, 3-6 feet, and bushy with numerous long-lasting blooms, with ideal growing conditions. Asters generally flower from summer through the fall and attract bees and butterflies.

Wild Bergamot – This is a native wildflower that we plant in High Park. Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*) grows 2-4 feet in most soil conditions and prefers full sun. It has purplish-pink jester hat-shaped flowers bloom in early summer and last for several weeks. It has a fragrance resembling Early Grey Tea and attracts humming birds, bees and butterflies.

Canada Wild Rye – Sounds cool eh? On ice, maybe? *Elymus Canadensis* is a tallgrass prairie species; a native perennial which grows in bunches 2 to 6 feet tall. The gold/brown coloured grass has a long plumed head often bending with its weight, with coarse thick bristles that curve outwards. Canada Wild Rye grows over most of the North American continent, except the extreme southern and eastern regions. It acts as a native nurse crop, growing on disturbed sites, but not competing with other species, and provides erosion control. Birds and small mammals use it for seed and forage and as cover.

Wildlife and humans both appreciate the flavour and nutritious benefits of Canada Wild Rye, as rye can be used in rye whiskey, bourbon or vodka (or even bread).



Colborne Lodge Events

August

Sunday, August 15, 2 pm, FREE
Tales from Nature's Garden with Lenore Keeshig-Tobias.
Lenore Keeshig-Tobias of the Chippewas-Nawash First Nation is an award-winning author and traditional storyteller. She is a naturalist, cultural interpreter, oral history researcher with Parks Canada and part-time professor at George Brown College.

September

Sunday, September 19, 2 pm, FREE
The Apple Tree Man: Tales and Folklore from an English Garden with Celia Lottridge.
An award-winning author, Celia Lottridge has told stories across Canada for over twenty years. She was a founder of the Storytellers School of Toronto and a founder and former Director of the Parent-Child Mother Goose Program.

October

Sunday, October 3, 2 pm, FREE
Heather and Wild Haggis: or Most of What I Will Tell You is True with Norman Perrin.
Enjoy tales and plant lore from the Scottish traditions. Toronto Storyteller Norman Perrin has told stories everywhere from Whitehorse to Edinburgh to Batticaloa, Sri Lanka. He is the founder of the Four Winds Storytellers Library.

High Park Harvest Festival

Sunday, October 3, Noon to 4:30 pm,
FREE admission to the grounds.
SPECIAL ADMISSION to Colborne Lodge for \$2.
In celebration of the Harvest we have arranged for lots of family activities at Colborne Lodge and the Children's Garden!
Take a horse and wagon ride from the Grenadier Cafe, then participate in storytelling, face painting, historic tours, nature and garden crafts, pumpkin carving and so much more!
Visit the marketplace for foods, crafts and community displays.

The event is organized by:

- City of Toronto Culture Division
- Toronto Parks and Recreation
- High Park Children's Garden
- High Park Community Advisory Council.



Colborne Lodge Facts

In 1873, John and Jemima Howard deeded their 165 acre country property, named High Park, to the City of Toronto. As part of the deed, the City also agreed to acquire and preserve Colborne Lodge, the Howards' home, and their nearby tomb. Now a museum operated by the Toronto Culture Division, the Lodge contains many original furnishings, artifacts, and some of John Howard's watercolours of early Toronto. Colborne Lodge conducts many public programs and community events on the lives of the Howards and their legacy of High Park. Visitors can discover the experience of 19th century life within the intimacy of the restored rooms, learn about John and Jemima Howard and their contributions to the development of Toronto, and discover the story of the park and its enduring connection to the citizens of Toronto.

General Public Tours

General public tours are conducted Tuesday – Sunday from Noon – 5:00 pm.

General admission is \$4 for adults, \$2.75 for seniors and youths, and \$2.50 for children.

Contact Colborne Lodge

For more information:
call: (416) 392-6916
or visit our web-site at www.toronto.ca/culture.



we support
ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATION
in High Park



www.hpiCHARITY.org
416-600-4HPI (4474)

Currently supporting the Nature Centre, High Park Initiatives is eager to start raising funds for all other programs and projects within High Park. Along with several other strategic Public Relations campaigns, HPI was on the front page of the Bloor West Villager newspaper on Friday June 25th.

High Park Initiatives is taking shape having assembled a full operating board complete with Directors of Human Resources, Marketing, Operations, Secretary and Treasurer. The Charity is currently in a recruiting mode, building a team of volunteers to accomplish their marketing initiatives.

Interested in volunteering?

Contact us at www.hpiCHARITY.org or 416-600-4HPI (4474).

