

# Friends of the Spit

P.O. Box 51518  
2060 Queen Street East  
Toronto, Ontario  
M4E 3V7



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## AS AN EDITORIAL ...

*1992 was a busy year. Belatedly, here is a very brief summary of the most significant events for Friends of the Spit during the past year.*

The first large commotion was a MTRCA proposal to charge admission and to end the bus service at the Spit. Fortunately, the "user pay" principle regarding admission was defeated and transportation service was maintained. However, due to budget constraints, TTC bus service during the summer was discontinued. Instead, the MTRCA van picks up the closest transit stop.

The MTRCA then proposed a drastic change to their Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan — a drastic change in that this new proposal finally seems to understand the concept of "Public Urban Wilderness". What a turnaround! From a development plan involving 6 or 7 sailing clubs, board sailing and 400 parking spaces, plus an interpretive centre out mid way through the Spit, the revised plan only retains Aquatic Park Sailing Club, places the interpretive centre at the base and, in general, provides for a Public Urban Wilderness. Moreover, the MTRCA saves money!!! The revised plan has now been issued (see below).

However, Friends of the Spit remains convinced that Aquatic Park Sailing club is an anomalous use. Retaining a sailing club on the Spit will, in 20 years, appear as a very foolish compromise (echoing the words of one of the Botany conservation Group's speakers at the public meeting). There are other locations (North Shore or THC Marina) for this sailing club. After all, no promises were ever made, and the club has existed on the Spit under a year-to-year lease.

Then the saga of the "Grand Prix" powerboat races took another large chunk of our time and energy. See opposite for more.

**MTRCA ISSUES REVISED PLAN FOR THE SPIT**  
Recently, the MTRCA tabled its Environment Assessment document with the Ministry of the Environment. Comments from the public (that means us!) will be received until June 25. We are preparing a special issue of the Newsletter to help you understand and respond to this voluminous document.

## NEWSLETTER APRIL 1993

### Powerboat races nixed by City Council after protracted struggle by environmental groups

*The whole affair started more than a year ago. It took no less than four sets of public meetings to finally send it where it belongs: limbo.*

A group approached the City with a proposal to hold a "Grand Prix" powerboat race in the Outer Harbour, by the THC Marina. The issue was first discussed at the Economic Development Committee, where Friends of the Spit and other environmental organizations as well as several sailing clubs from the North Shore (who would have been the most affected by the powerboat races) objected to the event.

Objections included disruption of quiet recreational uses, environmental damage, inappropriateness of an event glorifying the burning of hydrocarbons and disturbance of wildlife. Lured by promises ranging from thousands of jobs (for a 2-day event!!) to international exposure (!!!) for our "world class" city, the committee, led by chair Betty Disero endorsed the event.

Then, the matter was discussed at Land Use Committee, then at City Council, than bounced back to Land Use, for a public meeting under the Planning Act, where it was defeated. But it was approved by Council. A new request to hold races for 3 years meant another round of meetings. Again, the proposal was defeated at Land Use.

Finally, on April 20, the motion to allow the powerboat races for 3 years, which was sponsored by Councillor Steve Ellis (the most vocal proponent of the event) and seconded by Councillor Chris Korwin-Kuczinski, lost on an 8 to 8 tie vote at City Council.

#### Friends of the environment

These members of Toronto City council voted AGAINST the powerboat races at the various committee and council meetings where the issue was discussed:

- Liz Amer
- Kay Gardner
- Barbara Hall
- Howard Levine
- Rob Maxwell
- Kyle Rae
- Martin Silva
- Peter Tabuns (the Spit is in his ward)
- Michael Walker

#### Quote from the fringe

"The races are a good thing for the ordinary guy in my ward who doesn't have a cottage. He can bring his wife and kids to the waterfront, pay his \$10, watch the boat races and have a good time."

Councillor Steve Ellis, several times, extolling the benefits of powerboat races. We wonder on which planet Mr. Ellis has been living. The "ordinary guy who doesn't have a cottage" (you mean people - men and women - shurely Mr. Ellis!) has been going to the Spit and the Outer Harbour for more than 15 years. And for free. And has not needed any made-up entertainment to have a good time.

**MEMBERSHIPS ARE NOW DUE – PLEASE RENEW PROMPTLY (and make the Treasurer happy)**

Memberships for 1993 are due. We hope you will renew your commitment to continue the fight for the Spit. Please mail this slip with your cheque to:

**Friends of the Spit  
P.O. Box 51518  
2060 Queen St. East  
Toronto, Ont. M4E 3V7**

**Membership: \$5.00 (individual) \$8.00 (family)  
Additional donations welcome.**

Are your name and address correct? If not, please check here and write corrections on your label on the reverse of this slip.

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE NOS** \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: FRIENDS OF THE SPIT DOES NOT EXCHANGE ITS MAILING LIST WITH ANYONE

**TIP OF THE HAT TO...**

The Metro Toronto Waterfront Coalition for fighting the fixed link to the Island Airport.



To Michael Walker, chair of the THC, for opposing the powerboat races. "I like boats", he said, but the Outer Harbour is not the place to hold powerboat races."

To the other 7 City Councillors who also opposed the powerboat races.

**Park vehicle schedule on the Spit**

***This summer again, the MTRCA mini van is being used instead of a TTC bus.***

The vehicle leaves the parking lot on the hour and the half hour and goes to the end of the Spit. It will also pick up and let off at the TTC stop on Leslie at Commissioners Street at approximately 10 minutes to and 20 minutes after the hour.

To go to the Spit by TTC, take the Jones Avenue bus from the Donlands subway station and get off at Leslie and Commissioners. For more information, call the TTC.

**WE HAVE MOVED  
Please note our new address**



**Friends of the Spit**

P.O. Box 51518  
2060 Queen St. East  
Toronto, Ontario  
M4E 3V7

Tel. 699-3143

Cut out and paste in your address book for future reference

**PLANT COMMUNITIES OF THE LESLIE STREET SPIT** **ORDER FORM**

Price: \$5.00 per copy + \$1.00 postage & handling

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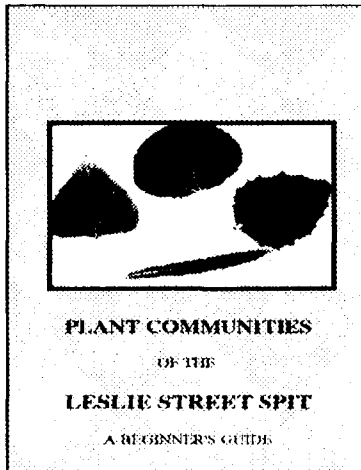
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**DON'T FORGET YOUR PLANT GUIDE**



This 44-page booklet describes the varied plant communities that are found on the Spit. Written in clear language, it will be helpful to both beginners and the more experienced plant spotters.

The booklet has 5 pages of colour photographs and contains a location map.

Makes a great little present for the naturalists on your gift list.

Use the handy form above to order your copy.

**FOCUS ON COLONIAL BIRDS**

***Viewing Day to take place on Sunday, June 6, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. All welcome — and bring your friends. Volunteers needed.***

This event is held in cooperation with the Canadian Wildlife Service of Environment Canada. There will be two viewing stations, one at the Tern rafts and the other at the Gull colony. Scientists Hans Blokpoel and Gaston Tessier will be on hand to explain the lifestyle of these birds and others nesting on the Spit such as Cormorants and Herons.

We need volunteers for the morning (10 to 1) and the afternoon (1 to 4) to direct people to the viewing stations and distribute material. **Absolutely no experience necessary — this is an easy and fun job.** Special invitation to our new members. This is a good opportunity to meet people. To volunteer, please call us at 699-3143. See you there!