

Friends of the Spit

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

Inside:
• Golf Academy:
It's not over!!!
• Spit helps city
to be world's best

Telephone: 699-3143

e-mail your City councillor



Thursday, November 21
Your presence is needed at
Land Use Committee

on the

Planning report for the
Spit baselands

11:00 a.m., Toronto City Hall,
Committee Room 4

- Phone 392-7033 to be put on the speakers list
- Write to your City Councillor and to the Mayor (address and fax #s below)

Read the article below and the Special Insert!

Mayor Barbara Hall:

mayer@city.toronto.on.ca

Council Members:

ward_xx@city.toronto.on.ca

(where "xx" is the number of their ward). For instance, ward_10@city.toronto.on.ca will reach Ward 10 Councillor Tom Jakobek.

Visit Toronto site on the net:

<http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/2cnl/coun.htm>

NEWSLETTER

November 1996

AS AN EDITORIAL

Toronto being named the best city in the world in which to live and work by *Fortune Magazine* (see over), spurred a gleeful gloatfest from local politicians.

Wait a minute!

The real heroes in the piece are the citizens, who, individually and as part of groups (such as Friends of the Spit and hundreds of others) worked tirelessly — and often fought against their politicians — to improve the quality of life in the city.

It is thanks to these "ordinary people doing extraordinary things" that we have a caring city, beautiful parks, vibrant neighbourhoods and the countless other amenities, large and small, that make Toronto a good place to live.

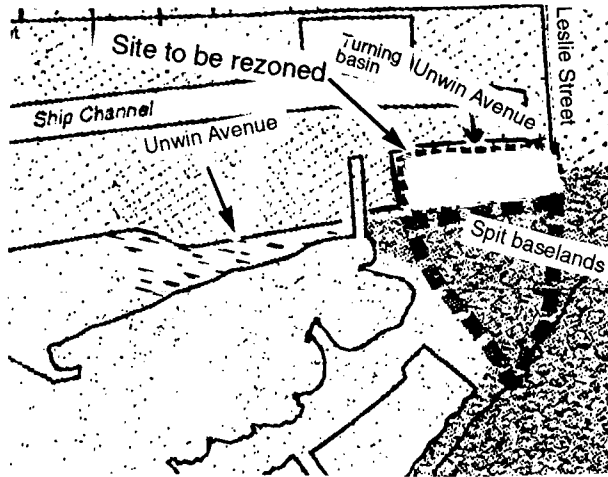
A toast to all of you!

And, let's be fair, thank you to the enlightened and devoted politicians who did help.

If planning report is adopted by Councillors

Base of Spit still in jeopardy to industrial development

The City of Toronto Planning Department recommends maintaining the existing industrial zoning on the part of the Spit baselands where the "Golf Academy" was to be located and not the rezoning of the area to Gr (conservation lands), as was requested by Toronto City Council on May 21. The City staff still thinks projects such as the "Golf Academy" or industrial uses are desirable for this area, in spite of the fact that all Councillors voted for a rezoning to Gr.



This means that we have to fight another battle to protect the Spit, its wildlife and the recreational lands cherished by thousands.

The report says that the 12 hectare parcel that City Council requested to be rezoned Gr:

- Does not have significant natural and environmental attributes
- Is not an important habitat for wildlife
- Is an unattractive wasteland
- Is not needed for the continued existence of the wildlife in the area

(continues over)

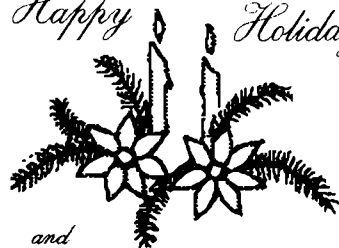
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4 Martin Silva	392-7910	392-0095	13	John Adams†	392-0013 392-1461
5 Dan Leckie†	392-7911	392-1870	14	Howard Joy	392-7912 392-1865
6 Kyle Rae†	392-7093	392-0206	15	Kay Gardner†	392-7017 392-1873
7 Pam McConnell†	392-7916	392-7296	16	Michael Walker†	392-7906 392-1050
8 Peter Tabuns	392-7914	392-1744			

† Member of Land Use Committee — *Chair

Happy Holidays
to all
Friends
and
Best Wishes for the New Year.



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR 1996

Memberships for 1996 are now due and still remain at :

\$5.00 — Individual Save time & postage

\$8.00 — Household/group

Please fill this form and mail it with your cheque to:

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

If you haven't renewed yet for 1996, why not mail your cheque for an amount covering both 1996 and 1997. You will save time and money and make the treasurer happy!

Check here if you are renewing for both 1996 and 1997.

Check your label...

John and Jane Eider
 123 Teal Street
 Toronto, ON M4M 4M4
REN/96

You will see "REN/96" when your membership is up-to-date for 1996.

IMPORTANT: Friends of the Spit do not sell or trade their mailing lists.

Yes, I want to renew my membership in Friends of the Spit

Name _____ Phone _____

ADDRESS CORRECTIONS. Please indicate address/name corrections on the label on the reverse.

Golf driving range... back on the agenda? (cont'd)

It is up to you to contradict these assertions.

Indeed, the MTRCA (Metro Toronto and Region Conservation Authority) has identified the site as part of an ESA (environmentally significant area) encompassing the entire North Shore Park and Base of the Spit, due to the existence of a mix of habitats along with regionally rare plant species. (The City staff counters that these species are also found elsewhere in the Port!)

The City staff also claims that "many of the objections to the golf academy proposal referred to the protection of the entire Leslie Street Spit and the Base of the Spit which are already designated and protected as Natural Area or ESA in the Official Plan". Of course, because the people who wrote the letters know that the Spit is the sum of its parts and that its viability and diversity as a wildlife habitat and its attractiveness as a public park require a large landmass, of which the site in question is a critical part.

It is up to you to make that point!

Friends of the Spit's position

Our group advocates that the entire Spit, including the whole of the baselands south of the present alignment of Unwin Avenue (see map over), should be designated as conservation lands, for wildlife habitat and "passive" recreation.

It is a proactive and positive position, in view of the increasingly large (huge?) number of people who come to the area for a diversity of leisure activities.

Industry

The report claims that the 12-hectare site is critical to the city's industrial strategy and that millions in revenues would be lost if it is not used for industry. This kind of scaremongering calculations leave us quite sceptical, given that there is adequate space on other parts of the Port lands (north of Unwin Avenue) and at the site of Ataritari. **WE NEED YOUR HELP.** Come to the Land Use Committee meeting and bring your friends (numbers do count). Write to your Councillor and to the Mayor, reminding them of their commitment in May, and ask your friends to do so. Post a notice on Internet sites.

The full text of the planning report (16 pages) is available at City Hall, from Land Use Committee Clerk. Title is: *Report on Areas of Environmental Significance or Interest in the Port Area south of the Ship Channel.*

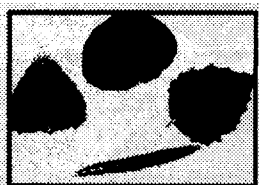
Spit helps boost Toronto to #1

"We're top o' the world", proclaimed *The Toronto Star* when *Fortune Magazine* said it had ranked Toronto the best city in the world in which to live and work.

According to the Star, the Spit contributed "by hanging out there in the lake as an urban attraction."

This is no surprise for Friends, who knew all along how great the Spit is! It's very comforting, however, to be reminded of it by outsiders. Special thanks to the founding members of Friends of the Spit, who, two decades ago, had the vision and foresight to fight for protecting the Spit as a Public Urban Wilderness.

Great stocking-stuffer!



PLANT COMMUNITIES OF THE LESLIE STREET SPIT
 A BEGINNER'S GUIDE

An ideal companion for exploring the Spit, this booklet with colour photos is designed for the general public and naturalists.

To order, send \$6.00 per book (includes postage) with your name, address and phone number to Friends of the Spit at the address above.

To ensure delivery for Christmas, we must receive your order by November 30.

Super Gift Idea: The Spit Kit



A meaningful but inexpensive gift that will keep on giving all year. And one size fits all!

The Spit Kit includes:

- * 1 year membership in Friends of the Spit
- * Plant Communities of the Leslie Street Spit (our plant book - see below)
- * Bird checklist
- * Come, explore (brief intro with map)
- * Spit poster (mailed in a tube)*
- * A seasonal card announcing the membership**

For each Spit Kit: send \$15 per individual membership or \$18 per household (2 persons or more at the same address) to Friends of the Spit at the P.O. Box address above.

Include: name, complete address and phone number of the new member(s) and your name, address and phone number (unless otherwise requested, Kit will be mailed to you). To ensure delivery for Christmas, your order must be sent no later than November 30.

* **Posters are free.** An amount of \$4.00 in the price of the Spit Kit covers the cost of the tube and postage. Posters are available at the Spit from the MTRCA (who designed and produced them) from their trailer at the gate or their vehicle. If you want no poster, send \$11 (individual membership) or \$14 (household) per Spit Kit.

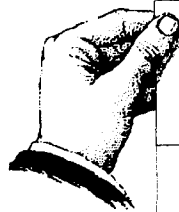
** If the recipient has never been to the Spit, a nice extra would be to offer a guided tour, with snack and beverage your treat.

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SPECIAL INSERT



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NEWSLETTER

November 1996

On May 21, when City Council voted unanimously to reject plans for a Golf driving range on the Spit baseland and to rezone the area Gr (conservation lands), it was hailed as a great victory for citizens. Unfortunately, that victory may be only of short duration. The City Planning staff recommends maintaining industrial zoning on that part of the baselands.

The article reproduced below appeared in *Eye Magazine* of June 6, 1996. We feel it makes a very eloquent case for the area being indeed part of the Spit, therefore that it should be rezoned Gr.

ENVIRO

BOB HUNTER



You win some. You lose some.

Here's the win: the nutty idea of a driving range on the Leslie Spit has been shat upon

mightily from a high at Toronto City Hall.

A driving range is an ecological dead zone whipped by a hailstorm of golf balls, the ground soaked with poisons and shaved relentlessly to keep it "trim."

The argument used by The Proponents, as the hustlers are always called, was that the area where they wanted to hack out a driving range "wasn't part of the spit." It was to be located between the First Gate, at Unwin Ave., and the Second Gate, just beyond the meadow and before the embankment begins.

Technically, the spit doesn't begin until the Second Gate, you see. It had been zoned differently — as if ecosystems, even interesting, evolving new ones like the spit's, had precise borders, like municipalities.

e-mail your City councillor

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No home for the range

In reality, the meadow and young forests that have grown up in the space between Unwin and the Toronto Harbour Commission marina are every bit as much a part of the spit bioregion as the ponds and the cottonwoods out by the lighthouse where the redwing blackbirds are nesting in the tall grass.

The spit has a special place in the hearts of Toronto-area birders, hikers, joggers, inline skaters, bicyclists and wildlife lovers. Planned in the '50s as a breakwater for a superport for increased Great Lakes shipping that never materialized, the barren pile of rubble from office tower excavations, demolition and street repairs has become our Paradise Regained.

Its spine is a layer of concrete, brick and other construction material with silt and sand dredged from the bottom of

Lake Ontario piled on top, forming beaches and wet meadows, with mixed scrub and immature woodlands taking root.

The five-kilometre peninsula serves as a showcase for spontaneous ecological regeneration. Seeds blew or washed over from the Toronto Islands, or else were carried by birds and animals. The landfill being dumped there contained enough life itself, no doubt, to trigger its own eventual restoration, but the combination of nature and industry fashioned something astonishingly rich.

Displaced from other natural wetlands, marshes, swamps and meadows (sometimes, indeed, by driving ranges) the migratory birds that still pass through

the Toronto area took to the new resting grounds with an eagerness born of desperation. And it looks like they'll be able to carry on. Hurray!

**Read the article
in the Newsletter!**

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