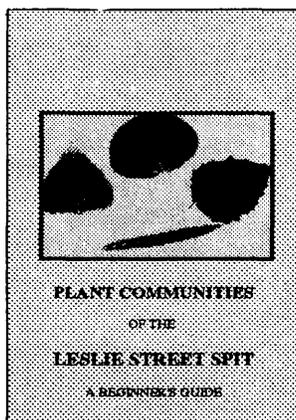


## Friends of the Spit

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

Inside:

- VICTORY!!!**
- City Council nixes golf driving range
- Environmental Award to Friends of the Spit



## WHAT IS THAT PLANT?

You will quickly become expert at identifying plants on the Spit with this handy guide. Written in clear language and illustrated with colour plates, it is suitable for all. Makes a nice present, too. To order, fill the form below and mail this slip to us with your cheque.

NOTE: We have some Bird Checklist left. To order, send your name, address and a small donation for postage and handling or a stamped self-addressed envelope.

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ plant book(s) at \$5.00 each plus \$1.00 per book for postage and handling.

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_ (in case of problem)

# NEWSLETTER

June, 1996

## AS AN EDITORIAL

*A very successful membership meeting, a prestigious environmental award, an all out effort to prevent yet another misguided scheme threatening the Spit and quality of life in the city...*

...made for a very busy spring. You will find a full report on the "golf driving range" issue. We think it is an instructional example of what can happen even when we are vigilant. As well, it raises a number of grave concerns about waterfront planning, the process of public participation and decision-making at City Hall.

It has also confirmed our belief that a very large number of people not affiliated with Friends of the Spit or other groups love and value that patch of wild land at the base of the Spit as much as we do and are prepared to take action to protect it.

**We salute them all.**

## GOLF ACADEMY AT BASE OF SPIT REJECTED BY CITY COUNCIL

*On May 21, 1996, Toronto City Council unanimously rejected an application for a golf driving range (officially called "Port Golf Academy") at the base of the Spit. In addition, Council set in motion a rezoning process so the baselands of the Spit, now designated industrial, would become parkland (i.e. receive a Gr designation, which is the same as the rest of the Spit).*

*The Golf Academy issue is a textbook case, worth reviewing chronologically. While the outcome was in favour of the citizens who enjoy and value the area, the process raises concerns regarding politicians and public consultation.*

*April 23 (Tuesday)... evening... all is well*

Friends of the Spit hold a membership meeting (see article). Upbeat mood and comments made that things are going well for the Spit.

*April 24 (Wednesday)... early afternoon... the s--- hits the fan*

We are called by the proponent wanting to discuss the Golf Academy project and to enlist our support. **This is the first we ever heard of this proposal!**

With horror, we discover that the project had been approved by the Executive Committee of Council the previous Friday (April 19) and is going to City Council on April 29, where it seems headed for rubber-stamping. Blanket support had been given by the Parks and Recreation Department. Executive Committee gave no consideration to the environmental significance of the area, to the fact it is ESA (Environmentally Significant Area), nor to zoning and mapping questions. Adding insult to injury, the proponent requested exemption from municipal taxes!

*April 25 and 26 (Thursday and Friday)... frantic calls*

Many calls made to the Planning Department (to try to get more details on the proposal), and to friends, allies and supporters, to get the word out that this project would have extremely detrimental effects on the use and enjoyment of the Spit as a Public Urban Wilderness. Over the weekend, notices start appearing on hotlines, on posts by the Spit and even on the Internet (many of these were spontaneous reactions by the public!). Our phone starts ringing. Members of the public call to offer their assistance. We hear later that the Mayor's office received more than 50 phone calls and 20 faxes during that weekend.

*April 29 (Monday)... the media starts to pay attention*

John Carley, Co-chair of Friends of the Spit, is interviewed on CBC Radio at 7:25 a.m. Councillors receive more calls from irate citizens. Our phone keeps ringing. More interviews follow Tuesday and Wednesday on CBC-TV and on CITY-TV

(continues over)

## The "Golf Academy" What was proposed

On 18 acres at the base of the Spit, starting close to Unwin Avenue and the extension of Leslie St. and going east-west, a company was going to put a two-tier golf driving range with double 70 foot high nets running the full length parallel to Unwin (great for migrating birds, eh!). In addition, there would have been a mini-putt, clubhouse, parking lot, and a licensed restaurant. The site was to be levelled and existing habitats removed.

**R.I.P.**

# MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR 1996

Memberships for 1996 are now due and still remain at :

**\$5.00 — Individual**

**\$8.00 — Household/group**

Donations  
are welcome

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**

**IMPORTANT NOTE: Friends of the Spit  
does not sell or trade its mailing lists**

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print)



"Golf Academy..." continued from the front

*...the same day, early evening*

City Council votes 15 to 2 to return the proposal to Executive Committee for deputations. However, many people who saw the meeting on cable are distressed by the aggressiveness of the support for the proposal by some Councillors and by their dismissiveness of citizens' calls against it (said one that shall remain nameless but be ashamed: "Sure, I've received calls. We all receive calls. But they don't mean much. There seems to be some network out there"). In the minority were those, such as Councillor Tabuns, who said the proposal was inappropriate for the area, or acknowledged the magnitude of the public uproar, such as Councillor Rae. "I have never received so many calls. And they are not from friends of something in Scarborough but from residents in my own ward," he said.

*May 4 (Saturday)...sunshine!*

Friends of the Spit receive the 1996 Ontario Association of Landscape Architects Award for Service to the Environment (see article).

*May 7 (Tuesday)...meeting at the Waterfront Regeneration Trust*

The meeting at the Trust (spawned by the Crombie Commission) includes the City planner, the proponent, the MTRCA, Friends of the Spit and other groups. Ultimately, the Trust took position against the proposal — a position consistent with that of Watershed, the final report of the Crombie Commission

*May 8 to 13 (Wednesday to Monday)...the pressure keeps on*

Calls and letters to Councillors continue. Newsletter outlining issue sent May 8.

*May 13 (Monday)...11:00 a.m. Executive Committee meeting*

The Committee includes Councillors Ellis (chair), Rae, Tabuns, Gardner, Jakobek, Korwin-Kuczynski and the Mayor (who was absent). More than 15 individuals, who had taken time from work, spoke eloquently and forcefully against the proposal. They spoke about the importance of the land for bio-diversity, of zoning, of the significance of the area for ecological education. Many simply told about the beauty of the land and how important it is for the City.

A spirited discussion followed among the Councillors. Councillor Hutcheon supported the deputants, and stated that what started as a tax problem was now a land use issue. Councillor Ellis called the scheme that was sprung upon area Councillors at the last minute "repugnant". He was upset that no notice had been given to citizens and shocked that the issue had come back to Executive so quickly. "Why give a tax gift to desecrate our environment?", he said.

Councillor Tabuns tabled the critical motions: • Reject the tax exemption • Request TEDCO to reject the proposal • Direct the Commissioner of Planning to re-zone the area to Gr, and • Request the MTRCA to identify all ESA sites in the City. The motions won 5 to 1 (Councillor Korwin-Kuczynski being the sole dissenter).

*May 21 (Tuesday)...victory at Council!!!*

Executive Committee recommendations are adopted unanimously by Council.

*Thanks to all of you who called, wrote, spoke.*

**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. Please inform us when you change your address.

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

## ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD TO FRIENDS OF THE SPIT

*In a ceremony at Ottawa, on Saturday, May 4, 1996, we received the*

*1996 Ontario Association of  
Landscape Architects Award for  
Service to the Environment*

James Floyd, President of the OALA, read the citation:

"Friends of the Spit is being recognized by this organization for its exemplary work in protecting Tommy Thompson Park as a significant urban wilderness and in championing the process of community involvement in improving and protecting the environment.

"We congratulate Friends of the Spit for its fine work over many years in service to the environment and our natural heritage. We believe this choice sets an excellent standard for our OALA award in the future. OALA members join me in expressing thanks to Friends of the Spit for its vision and commitment."

*Congratulations to our members on a well-deserved honour for two decades of dedication!*



## A GREAT MEETING!

*Friends of the Spit Membership meeting, on April 23, was a resounding success.*

After a lively discussion about the Spit and our future action, the audience enjoyed the "entertainment" part : *Urban Wilderness*, a fascinating look at the Spit guided by Scott Jarvie of the MTRCA. This video is part of the Profiles of Nature series.

Thanks to all who attended and made it a very pleasant evening.

(A man's beige raincoat was found in the room after the meeting. Call us at 699-3143 to claim it.)