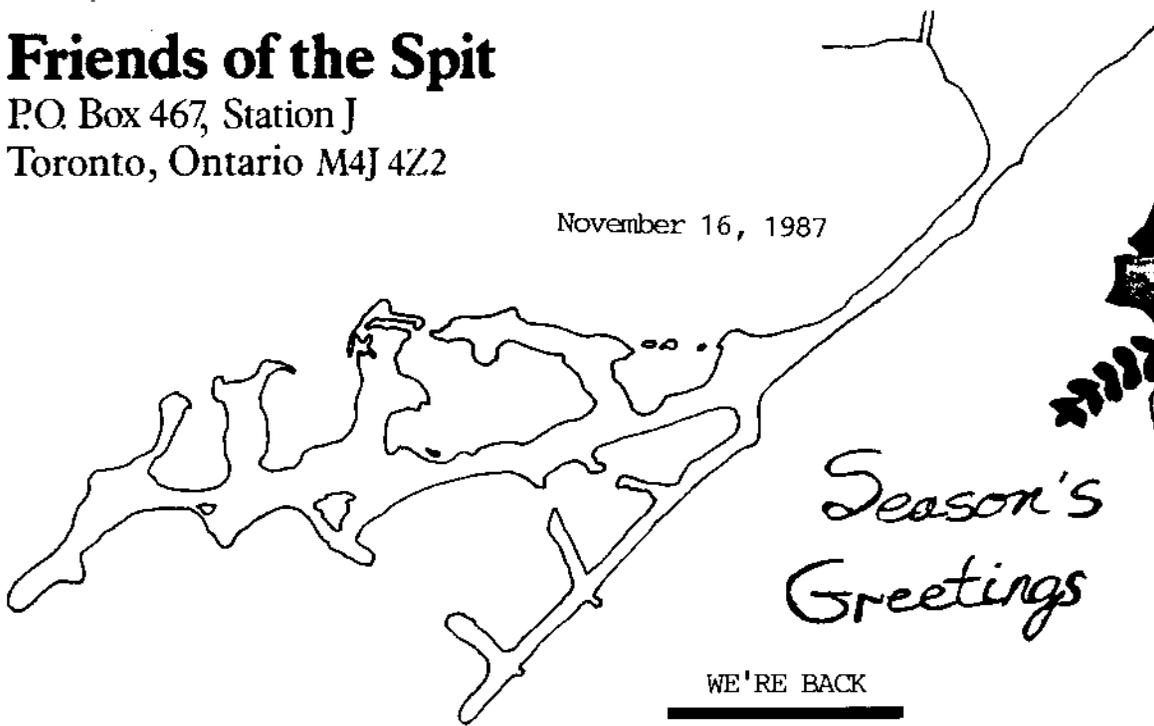


Friends of the Spit

P.O. Box 467, Station J
Toronto, Ontario M4J 4Z2

November 16, 1987



Season's
Greetings



WE'RE BACK

After a long summer break, we're back at the typewriter. Your editor apologizes for this unusual delay between newsletters, which is partly due to the absence of hard news about the Spit and partly to the need to recuperate after a very busy winter and spring.

Not that we were idle. Throughout the summer, we continued lobbying politicians and meeting with government officials. And we were actively involved in a number of community events, including Environment Week, at the North York City Hall, where we had a display. In September, with a number of environmental groups, we co-sponsored "Clean Water Ontario" a debate at Harbourfront between Jim Bradley, Minister of the Environment, and Ruth Greer and Jim Gillies, environment critics respectively for the NDP and PC.

We spoke to school groups and helped several college students with projects about the Spit. Toronto Field Naturalists displayed our brochure at their log cabin, in Sunnybrook Park (thanks TFN). Our brochure is also now available at Ecology House, thanks to Pollution Probe.

Display Available to Members

We have prepared a portable, easy to set up display about the Spit. It consists of a dozen beautiful photographs taken through the seasons, four information panels and a map. The display can be mounted on any surface in a minimum of time.

We will be pleased to loan you this display for meetings, talks to community or school groups, etc. It is important we keep reaching more people, and your help in recruiting new members is needed. For more information, please call 699-6442.

Phone listing

A phone number for Friends of the Spit is now listed by Bell Canada. It will appear in the 1988 edition of the phone book (white pages). The number is 699-6442.

IMPORTANT PUBLIC MEETING IN JANUARY

On January 13 (date to be confirmed), the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (MTRCA) will hold a public meeting on its detailed Master Plan for the Spit. This meeting will be the last chance before the environmental assessment to comment on the MTRCA's "development" plans for the Spit. Subject to confirmation, the meeting will be held in the Medical Science Building Auditorium of the University of Toronto, at 7:30 p.m.

We will issue a special newsletter with more details at the end of December. But we suggest you pencil in the date on your calendar now. Friends of the Spit and sympathizers should attend in large numbers -- start thinking about bringing as many friends and family members as you can muster.

The MTRCA will send a notice of the meeting and an information package to each individual on its mailing list. If you are not on the MTRCA list, we strongly recommend that you phone them to add your name. Call the MTRCA at 661-6600 and ask for Larry Field.

A VERY SUCCESSFUL ANNUAL MEETING

Attendance at our annual meeting, in June, was very impressive. We were very pleased to meet with so many of you and felt particularly encouraged to see a good number of new members. The CBC carried a report on our meeting during the local news program.

Membership Dues Increase

On a motion from the floor, members present at the annual meeting voted unanimously to increase membership dues. (At \$3.00, individual dues did not even cover the production and mailing of the newsletter). Starting in January 1988, individual membership will rise from \$3.00 to \$5.00, and family membership from \$5.00 to \$8.00.

CONGRATULATIONS, SAVE THE ROUGE

Our most heartfelt congratulations to Save the Rouge Valley (SRV). This citizen group gathered widespread support, including 45 of the 48 Scarborough ratepayers associations, to persuade City Council to reject plans to sell off the valley for development.

SRV's campaign is a textbook example of the emerging force of one-issue organizations. In The Toronto Star of November 15, David Israelson wrote: "A new wave of activists is surging in the struggle to save the environment -- just plain folks... People are telling officials they're not going to take it anymore... fighting perceived abuse of the environment with an intensity that has not been seen in years, if ever..." Glen De Baermaeker, of SRV, quoted by Israelson, said: "People are realizing now that they do have power. They have figured out the system. They were fooled before."

You did a superb job SRV, and we hope your victory will pave the way to many more in the struggle to preserve natural parkland.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Recently, we have enrolled many new members, from all parts of the Toronto area. We are very pleased to have you with us and look forward to your help.

The Spit is now open year-round every weekend, from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (weather permitting). The Spit in late fall and winter is a beautiful experience, but please dress warmly -- it can be blustery. Note there is no van service from November to April.

FOS Brochure

The Friends of the Spit brochure contains a summary of the issue, information on our organization and a membership form. As we are gearing up for the final stages of the struggle to save the Spit, we need as many members as possible behind us. Can you canvass your friends and co-workers? We will be pleased to send you a supply of brochures. Call us at 699-6442 or drop us a note.

NATURAL AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE

In January, the MTRCA board approved the development of Concept "D" and the establishment of a committee to advise the MTRCA on the development, use and management of the "Natural Area" of Tommy Thompson Park. This committee has representatives from Friends of the Spit, Federation of Ontario Naturalists, U. of T. Botany Conservation Group, Toronto Ornithological Club, Field Botanists of Ontario, Canadian Wildlife Service, Metro Parks, Ministry of Natural Resources and Aquatic Park Sailing Club (!).

Stunningly, at the first meeting, in April, the first item on the MTRCA's agenda was how big to make the Interpretive Centre. After lengthy discussions at several meetings, the Committee seemed to reach a consensus that the "policy" for the Natural Area should be Natural Succession with Minimum Management. (As a condition of our participation, we stated that in no way did we agree with the MTRCA's Concept D. This was also the position of many other organizations.)

The Committee broke for the summer after a tour of the Spit. Surprise! During the summer, the MTRCA had engaged E.D.A. Collaborative, the firm that prepared Concept D, to draft a plan for the Natural Area. When E.D.A.'s plan was presented, members of the Committee wondered why the MTRCA had created this committee, since that firm's vision differed greatly.

The final plan is not yet available, but E.D.A. and the MTRCA seem intent to present a scheme involving extensive management and the creation of organized paths and of 11 ecological zones. Low key it is not. This plan will be presented at the MTRCA public meeting tentatively scheduled for January 13 (see article on first page).

T-SHIRTS MAKE A NICE CHRISTMAS GIFT

We still have Friends of the Spit T-shirts available. Imprinted with the design of the Spit (one of our members used it to show first-time visitors to the Spit where they were) on light blue cotton-polyester, they come in sizes S (will fit children), M and XL (sorry, we're out of size L). The cost is \$10.00 each, or two for \$19.00, including postage and handling. Order now to receive them in time for Christmas by sending your cheque or money order made to Friends of the Spit to our P.O. Box address.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Thank you to the large number of members who have renewed for 1987, including many who have included an additional contribution.

However, we are still waiting to hear from a few who have not yet sent in their dues. If you are among them, you will find a renewal slip with this newsletter. We thank you in advance for your continued support. (Although we try to maintain accurate records, mistakes do occur. If you have renewed for 1987 but receive a slip, please call us or send us a note.)