

## SNAP SNEAKS A PEEK TOMMY THOMPSON PARK

by: Jillinda Greene

"PLEASE WALK ON THE GRASS", a request attributed to the first Commissioner of Parks, Tommy Thompson. Little did he know that through his desire, and efforts spanning his twenty-six year career from 1955-1981, a park would be named in his honour.

In 1963 Tommy Thompson had a vision to make the Toronto Islands into green spaces, parks and entertainment areas and that vision became a reality upon completion in 1968. To this day Torontonians and Tourists alike love the trip by ferry across the harbor to Toronto Islands with all they have to offer.

During the same time period that Tommy Thompson was the Commissioner of Parks, The Toronto Harbour Commission began construction of an area of land at the base of Leslie Street. Locally known as the Leslie Street Spit, the park that came to be known as Tommy Thompson Park is located at the northern half of the spit - which extends 5km into Lake Ontario and spans 250 Hectares. It is a completely man made park - with trucks carrying fill in the form of concrete and earth from the quickly developing City of Toronto over the years, as well as dredged sand - these have made the area what it is today - a haven for wildlife and an urban wilderness five minutes from the Beach, Leslieville and Riverside. The park has contributed to the ever-increasing colonization of hundreds of plant varieties, nurtured by the meadows, wetlands and poplar forests that have emerged.

In 2003 The Toronto Region Conservation established a Bird Research Station at the park. Monitoring migratory birds, breeding birds as well as providing ornithology research programs. Families can observe Banding demonstrations and learn exactly how the station monitors migration.

How about a Birdathon at the park? You might want to mark a day next May on your calendar and enjoy a birdathon - see how many birds you can identify in a twenty-four hour period. If you are a new birder or would just like to glimpse and experience this aspect of the park, the station conducts hikes helping you to seek out and identify the many, many species: Green Heron, Whimbrel, Common Night Hawks and Warblers to name but a very, very few.

Friends of the Spit, a group founded in 1977, have worked to ensure that everyone can come and appreciate this area with it's naturalized state created by man's hand yet endorsed in plenty by nature. "Please walk on the Grass" - Tommy Thompson would like that.

Hours of Operation:

9am - 6pm on Weekends and Stat Holidays in Summer  
9am - 4pm on Weekends and Stat Holidays in Winter

Email [jillinda@jillindagreene.com](mailto:jillinda@jillindagreene.com) or contact her at 416-230-3849 to give her your ideas about unique landmarks in our communities and to see your Sneak Peeks in the pages of SNAP in upcoming issues.

## ART IN THE PARK



Gloria checks out her new accessories at the festival



Thumbs up to this year's festival

Harrison Estate Park erupted with artistry and creative expression, as local artists and the community gathered for Art in the Park on July 16. Presented by the Scarborough Arts, Art in the Park is an annual one-day juried outdoor art show and sale. The community event provides local artists with a valuable opportunity to showcase their innovative designs, as well as converse with patrons regarding their art and art practices. This year's festival featured artists working in a wide range of media, including: original handcrafted jewelry, oil, watercolour and acrylic paintings, mosaic, sculpture, stained glass, photography, fibre arts and more. You can see for yourself the results! Scarborough Arts is located at 1859 Kingston Rd. For more information contact them at 416-698-7322.



Artist, Laura Dee (right) along with her friend, enjoy the shade on a sunny afternoon

Event by Lee Waddington  
Event code: peavcx



A violinist entertains patrons as they comb through art in the park



Artwork sprawled out across the park at Harrison Estate Park

## SANDCASTLE SHOWDOWN AT ASHBRIDGE'S BAY

Sculptors scattered across Ashbridge's Bay with their shovels and buckets at this year's 5th annual Sandcastle Building competition on June 26. Hosted by the Beaches Lodge #473, builders arrived on the sandy scene by sunrise, going over blueprints with teammates in hopes of being crowned Grand Champion and People's Choice victors. At no cost, anyone with a shovel and bucket could compete, and compete they did, as dozens of builders created innovative castles for spectators on site to check out.



Teammates work together as they form the walls on their castle

Event by Lee Waddington  
Event code: pe9yvf



Scott works on the prize winning dragon



Morgan works on her sandcastle at the 5th annual competition



Hudson paves the way for his teammates inside the castle



Participants dig around the edges of their fortress

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