

The Great Kili

Climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa

_ BY MARC ROSE



Kilimanjaro. The name conjures up images of snow-capped peaks, rugged hills, and rainforests. Oh, and don't forget the wild animals that come to mind when one thinks of Africa. For six days and five nights, this was my playground.

In April 2005, my wife, Sharon, and I travelled to Tanzania for two weeks of "adventure travel". After spending time on Zanzibar Island and on safari in the Serengeti, Sharon (who is a doctor) left to spend a month in Kenya volunteering at a hospital. I continued my "vacation" by heading to the base of Mount Kilimanjaro to begin my trek to the top of Africa.

"Kili" is nearly 6,000 metres in elevation at its highest peak. Trekkers can choose from a number of routes – like most people, I chose the "Marangu": the oldest route on the mountain and the easiest to

climb. Reaching the top via Marangu involves hiking 34 kilometres and ascending 4,000 metres in as few as three days (by comparison, ascending to base camp on Mount Everest, which is the same altitude as the summit on Kili, takes 10 days or longer). Given that 10 people die every year on Kili from severe altitude sickness, I decided to spend an extra day acclimatizing before attempting to reach the summit.

At the start of the Marangu route, I was greeted by dense forest. The forest cover extends to about 3,000 metres, about an hour's walk beyond the first set of sleeping huts. The towering trees then give way to moorland, with its scrubby vegetation. By 4,000 metres, no vegetation can survive the altitude, or the cold. The alpine desert is otherworldly – vast expanses of greyish dirt, boulders the size of small cars, and cloud cover that you can walk through.

The climb to the summit starts from the last hut, which is located at 4,800 metres. From there, it's a 6 hour climb to Uhuru -the final destination- at 5,896 metres. To reach Uhuru by sunrise, you must leave the last hut at midnight. Those 6 hours are gruelling. The difficulty of the climb up the steep trail is surpassed only by the bone-chilling temperatures. Yet the view from the top is worth all the effort. Looking to the north gives you a commanding view of Kilimanjaro's crater, and beyond that, Kenya's southern border. To the south are a series of glaciers, which are slowly melting due to global warming. At sunrise, the temperature at the top is a balmy -15 Celcius. Despite my Canadian upbringing, I was more than happy to leave the top after taking the obligatory photographs.

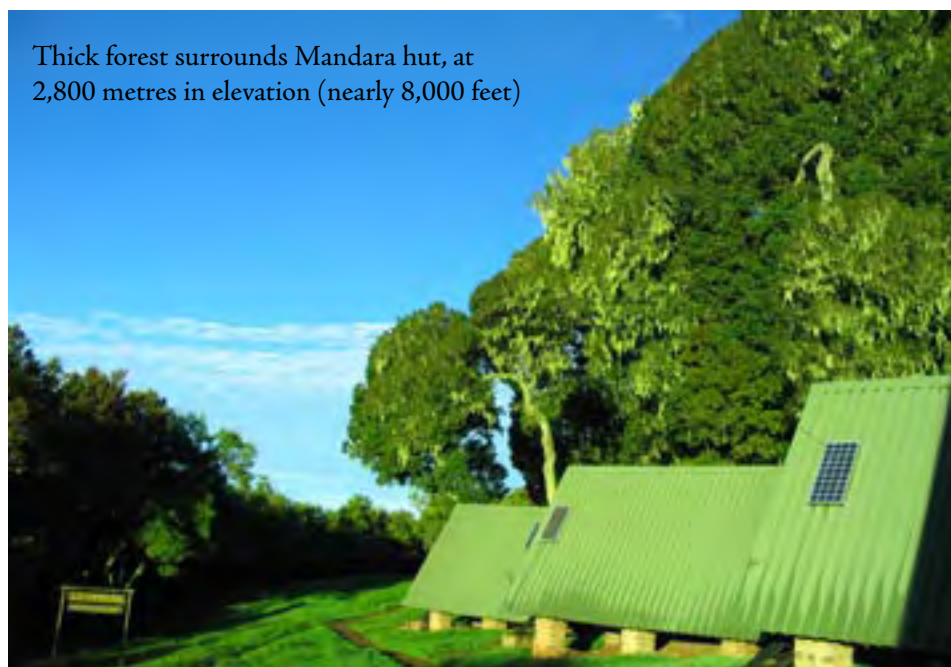
Kilimanjaro is truly a special place. Although it is one of many national



parks in Tanzania (nearly 40% of the country is set aside as protected areas), its topography makes it unique. For those who have been there, and have made it to the summit, it is an experience that will always be remembered.

Marc Rose is an environmental planner and is on the Board of Directors for NTGC. He designs this newsletter and is chair of the Outreach committee. This was his first trip to Africa and we are glad to share a "peak" into his journey up Kilimanjaro.

Thick forest surrounds Mandara hut, at 2,800 metres in elevation (nearly 8,000 feet)



New Zealand: The Gem of the Earth

_ BY QUEENLY LEE



Anyone who has experienced the vast beauty of New Zealand will agree that it has more value than a priceless gem.

I was lucky enough to be offered a position from Greenpeace New Zealand as a "front-liner". This job involved traveling around the country to educate people about the peaceful environmental campaigns of Greenpeace and ultimately offer memberships to the wonderful Kiwis who are keen to strengthen

Greenpeace's efforts towards a healthier planet.

Living in a big, fast paced city such as Toronto is convenient and entertaining. Living in a city for an extended period of time, however, can cause people to lose consciousness of our natural connection with mother earth.

I, like most Torontonians, have always been concerned about the fragile state of the environment. But growing up in cities (Hong Kong and Toronto) has taught me to do only

typical urban environmental tasks as recycling. I would barely call this level of concern "environmentalism"; to me it is a simple task of being a good citizen/participant in our complex society. After I arrived in New Zealand, one of the most geologically diverse countries in the world, my perspective of "environmentalism" deepened.

Traveling from one breathlessly beautiful town to the next, I hiked through lush native rainforests in the north island -where the water of natural hot springs and rivers run like the veins of the forest to hydrate trees that live up to two thousand plus years old- across the south island I encountered remarkably tall and wide mountains rich in biodiversity that stretch across the landscape. I also walked across many magnificent golden and black volcanic-sand beaches that connect to the deep blue ocean as far as the eye can see.

Seeing and understanding the intricacy of New Zealand's

ecosystem was amazing. My favourite part of my journey through New Zealand was my visit to a large wind farm in Palmerston North. Watching the continuous moment of the propellers of each windmill (there were dozens!) was at first peaceful and calming. Then I became very excited and hopeful as I realized that this tribute to wind energy symbolizes that we are finally learning to live on our planet in a sustainable way, instead of depleting Mother Earth's buried natural resources until all on the planet is dead.

Working with Greenpeace while traveling New Zealand was one of the best experiences of my life. Witnessing the diverse beauty of our planet inspires me to continue protecting Mother Nature in every waking moment!

Queenly Lee traveled to New Zealand for six months between Nov. 2004 and April 2005. She works with Greenpeace Canada as part of their street Outreach team.

The Green Garden Visit _ BY ANITA ATKARI

How many times have you looked out into your garden and wished you could solve all your gardening woes with the wave of a wand? The Green Garden Visit is a program with some special gardening "elves" that could get you on the road to just that!

You can get your own "elf" (we call them GGV consultants) to come and visit with you. S/he will work with you -as a home gardener- giving you a personalized ecological gardening plan to help you grow your garden with environmental principles in mind.

NTGC has been running the GGV program since 2002. This year, we wanted to expand so we created a training program where gardeners and individuals with interest in gardening received 40 hours of training in ecological gardening practices, then gave back 40 hours participating in ecological garden consultations. This has enabled us to grow the program and expand education and awareness and by the end of the season we hope to reach out to at least 200 homeowners and residents.

Hogg's Hollow

Hogg's Hollow is a picturesque community with curvy streets and a beautiful overhanging tree canopy. The Don River runs right through

Hogg's Hollow. This adds to the quaintness of the community, but unfortunately in times of heavy rain the area experiences flooding.

NTGC has conducted community Green Garden Visits in Hogg's Hollow for the last few years. This year, working with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and the City of Toronto, we have embarked on a special project in the community with a focus on storm-water management and water quality to help reduce flooding. Storm-water (which can include pesticides from our lawns and gardens) is water that flows straight into our rivers, draining (un-treated) into Lake Ontario. It's one of the reasons why our beaches in Toronto are not swim-able.

Our Hogg's Hollow project is to work with 150 homeowners: assist them with their gardening challenges and help with the flood problems by showing them ways to reduce runoff from their gardens by planting more native species, reducing lawn space, disconnecting their downspout and installing rain-barrels, as well as having porous driveways.

The program runs through the fall. If you live in Hogg's Hollow, give us a call to find out how you can arrange a Green Garden Visit.

Pesticide Education

Toronto's Pesticide By-law came into effect on April 1, 2004 and it restricts the outdoor use of pesticides on public and private property. It applies to homeowners, renters, lawn care companies, golf courses and property managers. The by-law although already in effect has given people a chance to get educated and look for alternatives before handing out of fines starting September 2005. (http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/health/pesticides/bylaw_qa.htm).

Toronto Public Health has engaged some community groups to carry out pesticide education in their

communities. NTGC is one of those communities. Through the GGV, we are educating homeowners on the harmful effects of pesticides and alternatives they can use instead. For the health of your children, your pets and everyone in your household, we encourage you to seek alternatives to pesticides. If you have any questions, you can give us a call at 416-781-7663.

If you suspect that a pesticide has been used, you can contact Toronto Public Health at 416-338-7600. Public Health Inspectors will respond to all complaints. Your identity will not be disclosed by the City unless it is required to do so by law.



The GGV Consultants - An Amazing bunch of volunteers!

Our GGV volunteer consultants have gone well beyond the call of duty in conducting these visits in Hogg's Hollow. Read how some of our consultants feel about their experiences:

"First I want to commend North Toronto Green Community for expanding the program in this way, as I think it is the missing link in the many public education campaigns about implementing environmentally sound practices. The personal and customized home visit makes the information real and addresses some of the obstacles people have in implementing more ecologically sound practices. We are able to make homeowners aware of issues that are specific to their area, and opportunities they can take advantage of such as tree planting and downspout disconnection.

I also think that homeowners appreciate being recognized for the steps they have already taken. They are encouraged to implement a few more changes to

help the environment. We have visited properties that have stopped using chemicals on their lawn, and have progressed to replacing their grass lawn with an alternative groundcover. It is often in these non-chemical homes that water conservation is the next step.

I have really enjoyed being a GGV Consultant. I have wanted to do my bit for the environment beyond my own property lines and this opportunity was a great placement for me. The training expanded my knowledge base and the work provides a continuous learning opportunity. I really enjoy the challenge of assessing what will work best for the homeowner's lifestyle and personality. Everyone I have met is friendly and interesting and the GGV Consultants are such an enthusiastic group. I get to visit many different gardens, meet interesting people and make a difference. What more could I ask for?"

-Leslie Atkinson

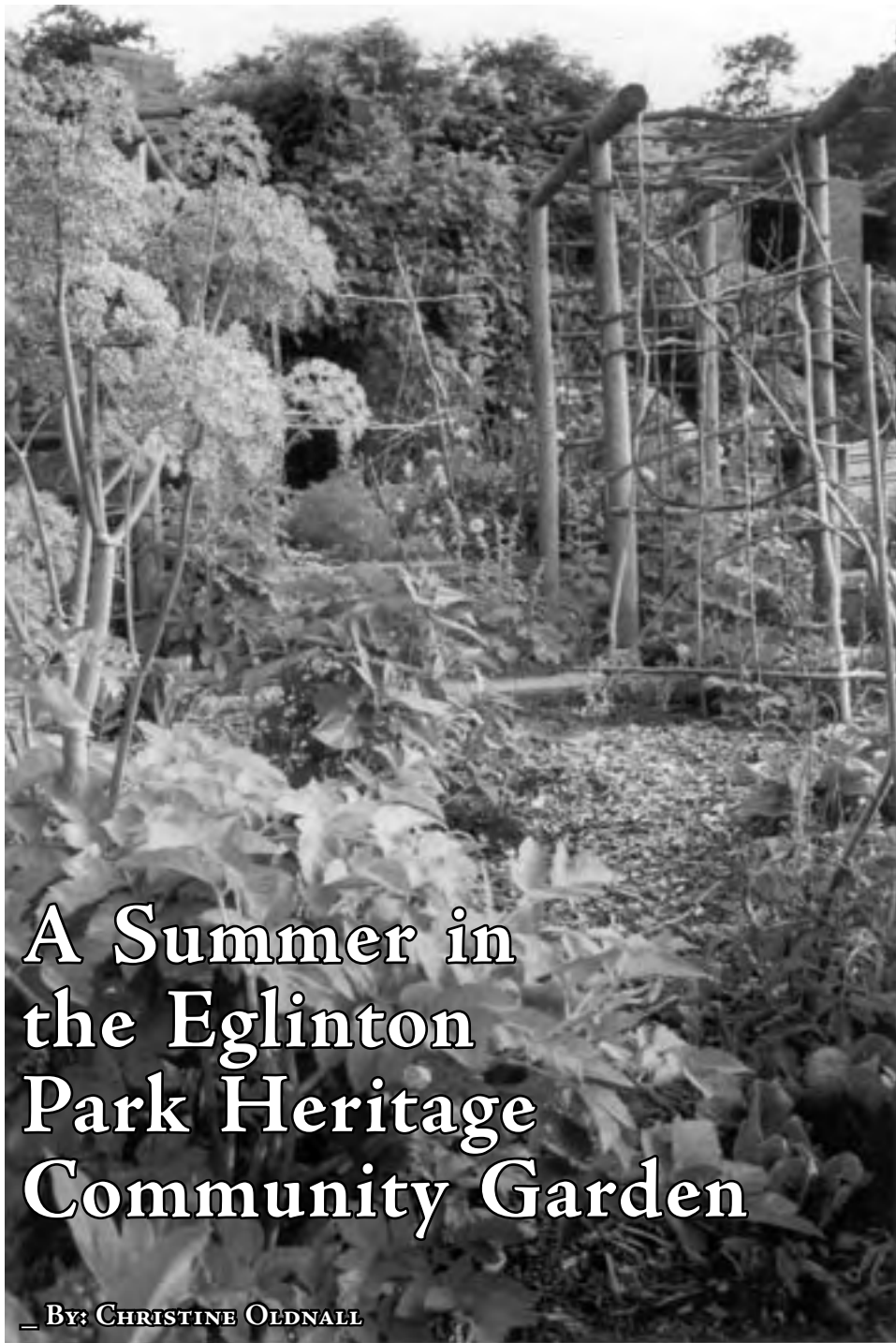
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A Summer in the Eglinton Park Heritage Community Garden

By: CHRISTINE OLDNALL

When I began my volunteer position with the NTGC I was excited and anxious to see what I would be helping out with. When I spoke to Minaz she suggested that I work as the Garden Coordinator at the Eglinton Park Heritage Community Garden. I had very little gardening experience at the time but have always been interested in gardening and really wanted to help out.

Working with members of the North Toronto Green Community has really given me the chance to enhance my gardening knowledge and has allowed me to get to know some really great people. Most people come from many different gardening backgrounds and it is interesting to hear them share their gardening knowledge with each other.

Volunteers learn about composting (turning scrap vegetables, fruits and other organic matter into soil), heritage plants (old varieties), organic gardening (not using chemicals and pesticides), container gardening (gardening in pots), mulching (using woodchips etc to prevent

growing of weeds and reduced watering), transplanting (moving plants from one place to another), and other gardening duties. Volunteers in the garden come for many different reasons: some have never gardened before and come to learn about gardening, some come for the social aspect, while others come because they just love spending their time outside in such a beautiful garden.

Every Tuesday night the North Toronto Green Community hosts Garden Work parties in the garden between 6-8 p.m. This weekly activity consists of people from NTGC and members of the community getting together in the garden and gardening. There is always plenty to do; watering and weeding, planting, transplanting, and harvesting. We always take some social time during the work parties for people to get to know each other a little better, have a little snack, keep the morale up, -and in the middle of the summer- take a break from the humidity.

Working in the garden has taught me so much about the importance of community

The Great Garden Adventure

By: CAITLIN MAHY

Every Tuesday and Thursday morning this summer, children have been exploring the fascinating world of gardening through the Great Garden Adventure program, a program developed in partnership with POINT (People and Organizations in North Toronto), the North Toronto Green Community and the Central Eglinton Children's Centre.

Youngsters from the Central Eglinton Children's Centre have either made the short trek to the Eglinton Park Heritage Community Garden or have had the program delivered to them by the garden coordinators from NTGC and POINT, Christine, Zarvan and myself. The two groups of children (aged 4-5 years and 6-7 years) had 8 weeks of environment and garden themed lessons.

The first week, the children were introduced to the foundations of gardening and safety know-how. Children planted vegetables and flowers in their very own section of the garden. The children created their own garden and were responsible for making sure it was watered (with the help of the staff). This introduction was followed by a new theme each week. The children learned about weeds, water, natural music, composting and animals. A number of exciting guests joined us this summer including a worm composting expert, a critter connoisseur, a puppet-master, and a multicultural music maker. These special guests made hour-long presentations for the children.

The children learned about the concept of a weed in one of many lessons. Weeds were described as "not a bad plant, but a plant at the wrong place at the wrong time". They were taught how weeds take

away nutrients, water and sunlight from other plants in a garden. Birdfeeders were constructed and mounted in the garden. We all enjoyed watching the seeds disappear as the birds enjoyed the seeds. Bricks were decorated and a special fence (made of recycled material) was built with the help Tali, NTGC's artist-in-residence. The bricks acted as a marker to keep people and dogs out of the vegetable garden the children had planted. Special seed shakers were created with recycled toilet paper rolls as part of the natural music lesson and we used them to make music with our guest.

Over the course of 8 weeks, children learned about gardening and many relevant environmental and natural themes. Many of the children in the program live in apartments and would otherwise not have a chance to experience gardening first hand. Children learned eagerly about gardening and always asked: "how the garden was growing" on our rainy days - which were spent indoors. Making the garden accessible to children through this program benefits the entire community. The children in the program learned so much and were very enthusiastic about their time in the garden. This is the second year of the Great Garden Adventure Program. It certainly instils a love of gardening and of our environment in the younger generation.

Many thanks to Diane at POINT for coming up with the idea of this program and for Zarvan for helping with the weekly acts and to the Central Eglinton Children's centre for having their kids participate in this great program.

Caitlin is a third year Psychology student at the University of Toronto and worked with NTGC as a gardening summer student.

gardens. Working together with members of your community while doing something that is both rewarding and positive really gives you a feel of self-fulfillment. I was even inspired and confident enough to start my own little garden at home using organic methods.

I recommend people of all ages and of all degrees of gardening experience to come out and

enjoy this wonderful garden. Call us at 416-781-7663 or email us at garden@ntgc.ca for information about next year's gardening season and how you can become involved.

Christine Oldnall is a third year University of Toronto Forestry student worked with us for the summer. She also helped with the Children's Great Garden Adventure program.

An Organizational Update

By MINAZ ASANI-KANJI

It has been an exciting year for NTGC! With our new office, a new board of directors -voted in at our AGM in April- and celebrating our 10th anniversary, there is always something going on at NTGC!

Space

Considering that we had never had our own office space before, the 450 square feet in our new digs seemed so spacious! It didn't take long for us to fill to our capacity. Since we are so well located at Yonge & Eglinton and we offer lots of volunteer opportunities, we have had volunteers contacting us in huge numbers. We have summer staff to work on our garden programs and outreach, and now with 6 - 10 staff and volunteers in the office at any given time, it's obvious we're making good use of every inch of our space! Our office is also currently home to the STEP2 youth sustainable transportation project and the Don Valley West One Tonne Challenge.

Meet the Board

Our Annual General Meeting in April ushered in our current Board of Directors, which includes Cheryl Shour (Chair), Harold Smith (Vice Chair), Yvan Champagne (Fundraising co-chair), Sarah Climenhaga, Dorothy Herberg, Mary MacNutt, Josh Matlow (Youth Action Committee chair), Michèle Martin, Camillo Ponziani (Programs committee chair), Elaine Ramsay, Jaye Robinson (Fundraising co-chair) and Marc Rose (Outreach chair). Sheila Harrison, who has given so much as a board member over the last year had to resign from the board for personal reasons. We thank her for all she did for NTGC.

Meet the Staff

We have been very fortunate to have wonderful staff who have taken their programs and projects and added to them wallops of initiative and creativity. We have been fortunate to have Zora Ignjatovic (GGV consultant), Anita Atkari (GGV manager), Mobin Choudary (gen. Admin.), Christine Oldnall and Caitlin Mahy (Garden and the Great Garden Adventure coordinators), Briana Illingworth (STEP2 coordinator), Becky Freedman (DVW OTC coordinator), Jovana Vukovic (summer outreach coordinator) and Christina Maximova and Andrea Beggs (assistant outreach coordinators (DVW OTC)). And of course there's Andrew Roy who not only works as a GGV consultant and trainer, but can always be called upon to carry out a garden workshop, lend a hand with

the computer or share his opinion on oh-so-many things.

Thank You Volunteers!

I wish I had the space here to thank all the volunteers who have worked with us this year. They come from so many places: high school students working towards their 40 hours of community service, new Canadians and others who learn about us through sites like Volunteer Toronto and want to gain some Canadian experience, people with some phenomenal environmental backgrounds from Goodworks, university and college students who give us significant amounts of time through their work study programs, people who hear about us from someone and want to make a difference in the community, and the Framework Foundation "Timeraiser", an art auction with a twist (bidding on art with volunteer hours instead of money) gave us access to young professional volunteers who will work with us over the course of the year. Volunteers for NTGC have always been worth their weight in gold for the organization. They bring tremendous quality and quantity to the organization and we could never do without them.

Earth Day with Timberland

In early April, we got a call from Timberland Canada to volunteer with us on Earth Day! They had 50 staff from their head office donate all of April 22nd -the 30th anniversary of Earth Day- to whatever we needed them to do. We planned a day that would bring meaning to the each volunteer and that would help NTGC kick-start our Spring season. The group was trisected to work in rotation on our naturalization site with our partner LEAF (Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests): weeding, planting 30 trees & shrubs, mulching, preparing the garden beds in the Eglinton Park Heritage community garden and creating art work for the garden with our artist-in-residence, Tali.

John Evans, General Manager of Timberland, said "Timberland's commitment to strong communities and volunteerism aligns with our corporate mission to equip people to make a difference in the world. It is our pleasure to partner with the North Toronto Green Community on Earth Day to help prepare this beautiful working garden to be enjoyed by thousands of residents and visitors in the community." Timberland donated two beautiful benches to the garden to commemorate the day.



NTGC Summer Staff, from left Jovana Vukovic, Christina Maximova, Andrea Beggs, Minaz Asani-Kanji, Becky Freedman, Christine Oldnall (not in photo: Anita Atkari, Briana Illingworth, Caitlin Mahy)



Councillor Cliff Jenkins along with current chair Cheryl Shour and past chair, Helen Mills celebrate 10 years of community action from the very visible wind turbine at Exhibition Place to teaching little children about gardening.



NTGC Board members at the Board Training Session

10th Anniversary Summer Garden Festival

Our 10th anniversary summer garden festival was held on Saturday June 18th. Friends old and new came out to help us celebrate at our Community Heritage Garden in Eglinton Park.

Speaker Series

Our Speaker Series (started in September 2002) has had some

famous speakers lecturing on interesting environmental topics. In January we had Martin Liefhebber of Breathe Architects deliver to a room of over 90 people a riveting presentation on the Healthy Home he helped build in Riverdale. This single-family home is not only

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Volunteering Is As Easy As Walking In and Saying "Hello"! _ BY ANDREA BEGGS

I was fresh out of high school – well, almost - when I wandered into the North Toronto Green Community. But I wasn't just popping by to steal a glance at what this little office held – I had an ulterior motivation. As I'm sure you are all well aware, students in the province of Ontario are required to complete 40 hours of community service in order to receive their high school diploma.

At the beginning of my high school career, serving the community with a little volunteering was the least of my worries – I was more concerned with the five compulsory Math and Science credits that I would inevitably have to endure. Community service was something that was much more compatible with my helpful and generous nature. So when it came to volunteering, I always thought that I had plenty of time: four years, so why rush?

But now there I was – 30 credits later, having successfully completed the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), ready to head off to McMaster University in the fall – but one thing was missing - my community service hours! Of course, being the procrastinator

that I am, I had left them entirely to the last minute – I had exactly two weeks to finish them, but miraculously enough they got done, thanks to NTGC.

Now my volunteer hours are finished, but here I am, still sitting here at good old NTGC. You're probably wondering what I'm still doing here, and no, I wasn't asked back to entertain the office with my grace, elegance and undeniable charm – I'm working here as a Summer Outreach Assistant with NTGC's partner, Don Valley West One Tonne Challenge (DVW OTC).

My experience at NTGC and DVW OTC will definitely better my life as a student, as it has allowed me to graduate high school and secure a job that will provide some support for the next four years at University, which we all know can be very financially draining.

So if you are a high school student seeking to complete your 40 hours of community service, contact NTGC; if you are open to learning I can assure you that NTGC will have an opportunity waiting for you.

Christina and Andrea were known around the NTGC office as "the girls". Their charm and positive attitudes enabled the completion of the successful "Doors Closed" campaign. They recently graduated from Northern Secondary School.

A Stroke of Luck _ BY CHRISTINA MAXIMOVA

My friend Andrea needed 40 hours of community service to receive her high school diploma and she had two weeks to do it, so we went out on a mission to knock on doors to find those community hours. We asked at the community center, at school and at the Northern District library. They all had positions, but also had lengthy wait periods that we couldn't afford! So, we continued on our quest up to the 2nd floor offices of the library. We found an open door, walked in and asked if they had any volunteer work for us! It was the North Toronto Green Community, and what-do-you-know, they did!

I didn't need the hours to graduate but I was game to volunteer to keep Andrea company. I had volunteered 150 hours in the last year in my placement with a dietician in the Neurology Department at Sick Kids Hospital. My placement was in the field I want to study: Nutrition at the University of Western Ontario, starting in September.

We learned so much in our time with NTGC. When we were done our volunteer hours, they called us back for real, paying jobs! We're

now working for Don Valley West One-Tonne Challenge (a partner organization of NTGC's) learning and educating about Climate Change. Who would have thought that a crazy search for last-minute volunteer work would land us both jobs! It wasn't just any old volunteer work either, it was truly meaningful. I guess it really pays to volunteer because employers get to know you and when something comes up, you're on their mind... not to mention all the experience you gain!

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built with every environmental consideration in mind, but is also terrifically economical: only \$300 in annual energy costs.

In March, Karen York, Author of *The Holistic Garden: Creating Spaces for Health and Healing* (2001) and current Managing Editor of *Gardening Life* presented a slide show, talked about gardens' healing powers, how gardens enhance our well-being, and the elements that contribute to a healing space.

In April, Professor Andy Kenney of the University of Toronto and Janet McKay, Executive Director of LEAF -the city's backyard tree expert- presented "Trees - Life of the City". Professor Kenney said that only 10-20% of the urban forest is owned by the City; the rest is in our backyards, and we therefore have a responsibility as individual homeowners to become the stewards of the urban forest. Trees and shrubs also play an incredibly important role in curbing Climate change. Each shrub over its lifetime removes 500 kg of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere while



trees remove an average of 1,500 kg each. This amount is increased in a forest, which sequesters large amounts of pollutants. Janet talked about how to care for our trees and she said the most important issues we need to address is protecting what we already have and preserving future possibilities for tree planting in the city.

In May, we had the Speaker Series on Climate Change with Dr. Danny Harvey of the University of Toronto. See page 11 for a youth perspective of this lecture.

Upcoming Speaker Series

On October 17, we will present our first annual "Youth and the Environment" Speaker Series with

Elise Houghton and Meghan O'Keefe (please note the change from the original September 26th date).

On November 28, 2005 we will host our highly anticipated Speaker Series on "Socially Responsible Investing". Michael Jantzi of Michael Jantzi Research Associates will talk about why socially responsible investing (SRI) is growing in Canada and abroad, the typical profile of a social investor, what a "good" company looks like, why SRI and competitive financial performance go hand-in-hand, and he will offer some practical advice about how to build an SRI portfolio.

We decided early in the year that one of our goals for our 10th Anniversary is to inform local residents about the North Toronto Green Community. To do this we have increased the distribution of our Spring 2005 newsletter from 4,000 copies to 43,000 copies and had it distributed to every home within the boundaries of Leslie, St. Clair, Bathurst, and the 401. The newsletter you are reading has been distributed in the same areas. This is a special youth edition and we

ask you to encourage any youth you know to read the inspiring articles we have gathered for this issue.

We will be celebrating our 10th anniversary year with a Gala event during the fall. More details to follow on our website at www.ntgc.ca.

Nothing you are reading would be possible without the tremendous support we get from every single volunteer, our funders, our members and donors (whose financial support is critical), the advertisers who help us get the newsletter printed and distributed, businesses, other community and environmental organizations, the staff, and finally the board, who keep us afloat.

Join Us

If this is the first time you are reading about the NTGC, we welcome you to join us and find out more about us as we step into the next decade of environmental community action."

Minaz Asani-Kanji is the Executive Director of the North Toronto Green Community. With her guidance NTGC staff and volunteers bring their projects from visions to realities.



— BY MICHELE MARTIN

Roots & Shoots is the Jane Goodall Institute's international environmental and humanitarian program for youth. Its mission is to foster respect and compassion for all living things, to promote understanding of all cultures and beliefs and to inspire each individual to take action to make the world a better place for the environment, animals and the human community.

Currently, more than 7500 groups have registered in over 90 countries around the world, with about 13 of these being based in schools and other community groups in the GTA. Each of these groups, whose members can range in age from preschoolers to post-secondary level, plans and implements their own community service projects to help the environment, animals, and people in their community.

So what does all this have to do with the NTGC? The NTGC is

committed to engaging youth in their programs and activities, and has partnered with the Roots & Shoots Ontario office (based in Guelph) to extend their reach into the Toronto Roots & Shoots network. In return, the Jane Goodall Institute is hoping that more schools and community groups in North Toronto will find out about our Roots & Shoots program through NTGC activities and join us. On the ground, our vision is that Roots & Shoots and NTGC members will work together on cleanups, gardening projects, tree planting, and other environmental campaigns in the city. Our joint gardening and cleanup project at Champlain Apartments in Downsview was a great example of this, engaging community members young and old in a hands-on project to help the environment right on their doorstep.

For more information about the Jane Goodall Institute and the Roots & Shoots program, please visit our website at www.janegoodall.ca.

Reaching Out to the Community! — BY JOVANA VUKOVIC

This summer, our outreach team consisted of a team of volunteers, staff and board members. We worked very hard initiating and completing various projects. First, we started by updating the database. We set up a "mini call-centre" in the office, from which we called all of our members in order to update their address information and to make sure that they had received our 10th Anniversary Spring newsletter. The response has been great and in a matter of eight weeks, we made over 1,600 calls and mailed over 100 newsletters! If this issue has been sent to you by mail, you have most likely spoken with one of our enthusiastic outreach team-members.

We have also worked on updating our media list, handing out flyers and posting posters in the community: all in order to promote our many events, such as the Green Garden Visits and weekly garden work parties and garden workshops.

From August 8th to 17th, our five teams of staff and volunteers went door-to-door to almost 1000 North Toronto and Don Valley West businesses for the Doors Closed campaign. This was a campaign

launched by the Conservation Council of Ontario to encourage businesses to keep their doors closed when their air conditioners are on in order to conserve energy. We thank all the businesses that were courteous to our staff and volunteers, those who already keep their doors closed, those who closed their doors because we asked them to, and those who put up our poster. Everyone has a part to play in energy conservation including businesses.

Our main goal this summer was to spread the word about the North Toronto Green Community and our 10th anniversary. We have reached out in many ways to get more members of the community involved in our projects.

All in all, it was a great summer to be doing outreach. I would like to sincerely thank everyone who has helped out.

Jovana Vukovic is a summer staff member with NTGC. She has worked wonders compiling disparate sources into cohesive databases. She enjoys listening to Hip Hop in the NTGC office after a day of outreach.

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"When Zora first approached me about training as an ecological consultant with the North Toronto Green Community, I was more interested in the free advice for my own eco-scaping business than anything else. I remember thinking 'maybe I will perform a few visits here and there, and not get too involved'. I was wrong. I realized moments after Helen began speaking at the first training session that the GGV is something very important. After attending several visits with Andrew and Zora, and workshops with Helen, Dagmar and Cheryl, the GGV's mission became clear to me: it is to inspire change.

So far my visits have been very positive. The homeowners are incredibly receptive. They seem to be most interested in getting the best out of their plants, as well as plant identification. The biggest challenges are convincing people to grow their own vegetables, and to compost their organic waste on site - instead of shipping it off in the city trucks to Michigan. For the most part I find the GGV gives homeowners the confidence to try organic gardening methods. It teaches techniques for reducing water and waste, but most of all it spreads the seed of hope, and brings us closer to our earth.

Although ecological practices are also new to me, I have always been aware of the paradox of the landscaping/gardening industry: polluting Nature while nurturing it. I believe that many others are aware of these negligent practices and are ready to start making some changes.

The Green Garden Visit hopes to inspire ecological restoration one yard at a time. It has to start somewhere."

—Lance Letourneau

"As a research and marketing eco-professional, I am impressed by the quality of the GGV initiative. The message is clear: savvy homeowners see the benefits of green garden alternatives for their families' health, their wallets, and

their storm-water challenged community. Together, we are making a difference."

—Sonja Persram

Our GGV consultants come from all sorts of different gardening backgrounds from avid gardeners to gardening scholars. They all have a passion for the environment but what they all wanted was more organic and ecological knowledge and an arena to practise their newly acquired skills. The Green Garden visits have helped them learn and teach. We are so very proud of all our consultants for the marvellous job they are doing and for doing their bit for the environment.

Our other wonderful GGV consultants this year include: Suli Asani, Gary Carmichael, Paula Coutinho, Elyssa Elton, Sonja P. Emerson, Monika Mai Kastelic, Gerry McGowan, Sarita Moodie, Katie Wolk, Tanja Siegert, Hiromi Sonoda and Elizabeth Webster. Our GGV Training Consultants are Zora Ignjatovic and Andrew Roy.

The Green Garden Visit helps homeowners better understand the connections between their personal spaces and their local environment. Individuals learn how their personal actions affect their environment that surrounds them. Through actions in their yards and gardens, individuals are cultivating a more meaningful and tangible relationship with the environment. Green gardening enables us to become stewards of our local environments- all in our own backyards!

The fee is \$75.00 and includes a membership to the organization. To learn more about the Green Garden Visit program, or to book your own Green Garden Visit, contact our GGV Program Manager, Anita Atkari at (416) 781-7663, or e-mail at ggv@ntgc.ca.

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Dear Eloise:

I'm concerned about our environment, but don't necessarily want to engage myself in the "alternative" lifestyle that the media portrays. Is there any way to maintain my current style while making green changes?

-Josie.

.....

Dear Josie:

You raise an important question. It is true that the media portray alternative lifestyles in a biased manner. The stereotype of a contemporary environmentalist often looks and sounds a lot like a 1960's Hippie: a hemp-wearing, granola-crunching, deodorant-free specimen who refers to everyone as "man". "Save the Dolphins man", "Don't trust the Man, man".

But this is a stereotype. It aligns and confines the expansive social views and values of this distinct and powerful group (environmentalists) to a historic period; it presents as its spokesperson a defunct cartoonish figure -the granola cruncher- in order to demoralize and deter plain-old-ordinary people like us from associating with it.

This stereotype is so pervasive within our society that often only the most bold and outgoing individuals choose to take part in environmental consciousness. Problems arise however, when the ordinary folks like us rely too much on the boldness of these individuals. Take Bob Hunter, one of the founders of Greenpeace, as an example: his courage and defiance shaped international values of respect for our environments. If this world had ten Bob Hunters it would be a different place. More importantly, imagine what it might become without him.

Should we expect another prophet to rise up and take his place? Should a single person have to encapsulate the necessary vigour that environmentalism demands? No. There has already been enough foisting of responsibility by us ordinary people. It is time for us to recognize our responsibility towards our planet, continent, country, province, city, and community. If you have already recognized it, then it is time for you to act on it.

Now don't be scared off by the words "act on it". I'm not asking you to go out and protest in Queen's Park. That is way down at #237 on my Green Consciousness List. Let's put it this way: if you had bad breath, and you knew it was caused by eating copious amounts of ice cream, it is logical and reasonable that you should probably cut down. I'm not saying give it up entirely - you might live next door to a great ice cream place - but it does make sense. Taking the initiative to participate in Green Consciousness, engaging yourself with the planet, makes the same kind of sense.

Since there are a zillion things that you can do to make an accumulative difference, I'll only focus on things

that you can pay for: goods and services. After all, your dollar is your vote in our economic democracy; where and what you spend it on dictates future production and consumption patterns, which in turn dictates the fate of our planet.

Let's consider how you carry the things you buy: going to the grocery store three times a week, purchasing five bags of groceries per trip adds up to an immense 780 bags per year! Not to mention all the clear bags used for vegetables, fruit and bulk foods, as well as all the non-food items that you purchase in a year! Two or three cloth bags tucked in the trunk of your car, or at the bottom of your backpack (which is also a wonderful grocery receptacle) can save you all of this plastic mess.

Also think of your morning coffee or tea (for me: my morning, afternoon and evening coffees): one coffee purchased in a paper or foam cup per weekday adds up to 260 per year! For a cost of between \$10 and \$20 you can buy a reusable travel mug from any coffee shop in the city, which will also (in most stores) fetch you a 10-cent discount per purchase.

What about your hygienic and cosmetic products? Do you slather your face, hair and body in chemicals and animal extracts each morning and night? What about internally-how do you fix your too-much-ice-cream bad breath? There is a range of cosmetic products (even toothpaste) available in natural stores throughout the city -such as The Big Carrot on Danforth- that are non-chemical, contain no animal extracts, are cruelty-free, and biodegradable. Also consider cleaning your home and dishes with chemical free products. I certainly don't like the idea of eating off a plate that was drenched in an industrial chlorine sanitizer, and

cuddly babies -though they can't say it- probably don't like crawling over shiny-clean carcinogenic floors.

For entertainment, consider the small, independent businesses all around Toronto. There are many vegetarian restaurants that offer exciting, experimental cuisine while respecting animals and our environments. Look across the street at Yonge and Eglinton from the monolith bookstore chain to BMV (Books Music and Videos) used books. Not only do they have all the books you could ever want, when you're done reading they'll even buy it back from you!

Imagine how amazing it will be to find a "Vote for Pedro" shirt 20 years from now in a vintage clothing store. The concept of purchasing a reused item for its retained intrinsic value is one of the foundations of Green Consciousness. CD's, televisions, microwaves, furniture; almost everything that you can buy in our city is also available in a recycled version.

Unfortunately, our earth has bad breath, and our consumerist, disposable lifestyles are the ice cream that's causing it. Bob Hunter has moved on to a place without climate change; David Suzuki might even retire one day (though I doubt it), and then what will we do? How long should we let the granola-cruncher stereotype hold power over us, prevent us from collectively accomplishing significant change and attaining sustainability? Not one day longer. Go out and buy a used book. Wash your hair with chemicals one last time. Eat a loaf of organic bread. The planet will thank you, and so will I.

-Eloise.

Local Business Supports NTGC

Halsall Associates, a consulting engineering firm headquartered at Yonge and Eglinton, Toronto held a fundraiser for the North Toronto Green Community. During the smog alert in early August, the firm reduced their energy use by keeping lights off and setting air conditioning at a higher temperature. Volunteers helped Halsall's over 100 employees "beat the heat" by pushing a makeshift ice cream cart around the office and serving cones at a dollar a scoop. The money was donated to NTGC, as a token of appreciation for creating the nearby community garden that many of Halsall's employees enjoy on lunch breaks.

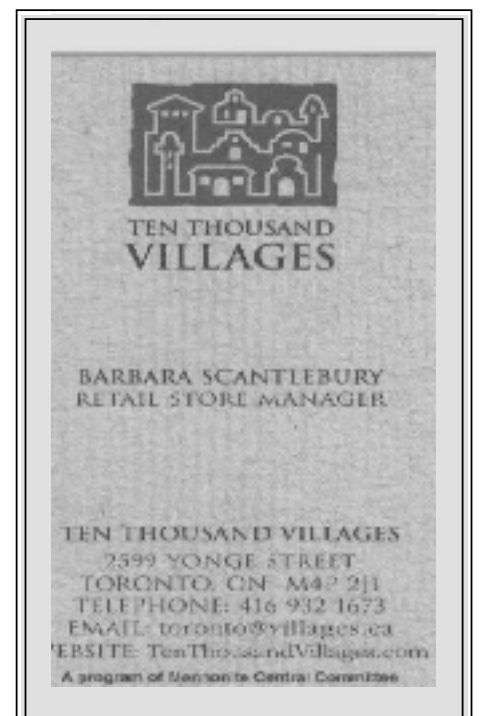
Continued from page 8

beside hers, and two grandchildren who -for the most part- lived in their grandmother's house. These homes were not large, but each family had a separate kitchen, and would usually congregate in the evenings on the front porch or in the sitting room to chat. I would observe these interactions many places: as I walked down the streets, there were often entire families sitting out together, just watching the world go by. The people I met were un-endingly generous. One girl (around my age) whom I became friends with would invite me over to her house, where her whole family would insist on giving me the most comfortable hammock to lie

in, and eat the largest amount of food.

The trip was an enlightening one for me. Meeting people who have (economically) less than we do in Canada have a much stronger sense of community and family. We have much to learn about priorities from them.

Rachel first volunteered, and then worked with NTGC on several projects in 2004, including the coordination of a Community pesticide awareness project and our annual Eco Gift wrapping project. She took the spring off to travel and we thank her for sharing her experience.





NTGC'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY GALA EVENT - CELEBRATE GOOD TIMES: COME ON!

Date to be determined. Please visit www.ntgc.ca for updates or phone us at 416-781-7663.

FALL 2005 LOST RIVERS WALKS

Find out more details on the walks on the Lost Rivers website at www.lostrivers.ca

Sunday, September 25, 2005, 1:30 p.m. The Third Tenth Anniversary Mud Creek Walk (refer to the poster to the right for details)

Sunday, October 16, 2005, 2 p.m. What happened to Castle Frank Brook?

Sunday, November 20, 2005, 2 p.m., Mimico Creek.

Sunday, December 18, 2 p.m. 2005, Market Streams.

Continued from page 8

and tourist complex with a strong artist community. We ate at an organic vegetarian restaurant, and after exploring the town, we rode to the Baños del San Juan, natural pools and waterfalls in the middle of the forest. From Las Terrazas, we rode back to

Havana in a single day. After riding on quiet roads for so long, we had to adjust to the traffic going into Havana. After arriving, we celebrated a successful tour with a beer in a nearby plaza, packed our bikes up after dinner to return home the next morning.

Briana Illingworth is Project Coordinator for the Green

Communities Canada's Sustainable Transportation project in schools called STEP2. She is also member and coordinator of the NTGC Youth Action committee. Briana is an avid traveler who loves to explore places in a different way. For more information about the STEP2 program, e mail Briana at info@ntgc.ca

JOIN US IN CELEBRATING
TEN YEARS OF
LOST RIVER WALKS

The North Toronto Green Community celebrates 10 years of sponsoring walks along the paths of streams that used to flow across Toronto. Today most of these streams are buried in landfill or diverted into storm sewers.

To mark 10 years of discovering and walking along these mostly forgotten watercourses, and to celebrate International Rivers Awareness Day, three walks are planned over two days along Mud Creek, where we held our first walk a decade ago.

September 18, 2005 10 am ⇒ The Headwaters
START: Downsview Subway Station
Lunch at Earl Bales Park – bring your own
END: Wilson Subway Station

September 25, 2005 10 am ⇒ The Middle Section
START: Bathurst Street at Prince Charles Drive
END: Eglinton Park for lunch – bring your own.
A lunchtime celebration will be held at the garden behind the community centre. Salads will be provided to participants compliments of Marcy's Salad Dressings and Croutons

September 25, 2005 1:30 pm ⇒ The Lower Section
For hardy souls or newcomers
START: Eglinton Park
END: Don Valley Brick Works Park

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I would like to volunteer with NTGC. I am interested in (please check all that apply):

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening | <input type="checkbox"/> Clean Ups |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lost Rivers | <input type="checkbox"/> Speaker Series |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Office |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Committee/Board | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |

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