

HELP! HELP!

SAVE OUR GOLDFISH!

At this time of year there are numerous pleasures in the Park -- the Jones' star magnolia, the Stockwoods' tulips, Elaine and Michael's drifts of daffodils, the ubiquitous forsythia and carpets of scilla, but in our opinion the most beautiful attraction of all, and not just in springtime, is the "golden horde" in the pond, sunning themselves as if in suspended animation. Alas, our thing of beauty is not to be a joy forever. The powers that be have decreed that this will be the last spring that we are to be enchanted by that gorgeous sight. And why? Because some outside "experts" have accused the goldfish of stirring up silt and thus depleting the oxygen supply in the pond. So what? Especially since the pond will contain much less silt after being dredged?

Not only are they beautiful, but the goldfish in our Heritage Conservation District are a significant aspect of our heritage. From the Toronto Telegram, February 15, 1922: "GOLDEN HORDE, MEMORIAL OF BOY WHO WENT TO WAR. Defying Winter Frosts, Goldfish in Wychwood Park Pond Have Multiplied and Grown Big. Lad Who Laid Down His Life in France Put in the First Glittering Inhabitants -- Artist's Colony Made the Pond a Refuge For Homeless Goldfish -- Now They're There. . . 'It wasn't until June of 1918 that I saw the goldfish in the pond,' said Mrs. Goodman when asked about them. 'By that time they had grown larger and Harold was overseas. I kept watching for them and writing him about them. He was killed in August of that year, and now they seem more than ever his. By 1919 there were a great many goldfish in the pond and last year more than ever. Usually they keep pretty well down, but sultry weather brings them near the top, where they seem to sleep in the sun. That first hot day last May under the willows and wild apple tree the water was a quivering, shimmering sheet of gold with them.'"

The Matthews family, who founded the Park and gave it its name, had six children; only two were married, and only one of those couples had only one child, Harold Goodman. After Harold was killed, almost at the end of the War, his father Ambrose died at age 56 in the following year. It was said that he died of a broken heart. If you visit the interior of the Church of St. Alban the Martyr at 112 Howland Avenue, you will see a memorial plaque to father and son mounted in a prominent position on the north side aisle. Our local memorial is much more visible. Last Remembrance Day the Park Archivist attached poppies and red roses and two signs to the fence by the pond which read, "In Memory of Lieut. Ambrose Harold Goodman (4 Wychwood Park), 116th Batt. C.E.F., born October 6, 1896, died August 15, 1918. The goldfish, first placed here in 1916, are a lasting memorial of a boy who went to war."

The consultants' proposal is to stun the goldfish and koi with electrical charges and remove them when they float to the surface. After the dredging is completed, they would be replaced by "native species". But the Taddle continues to flow, and the last time that the pond was dredged, in the late fall of 1961, the goldfish survived in the small pool which remained during the work. Why not let this happen again?

Albert & Emily
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