

"Bashful Bobby" star of show

# Hike to study buffalo

**By Roy Downs**  
Over 30 braved a fine but steady drizzle of rain on Sunday (Grey Cup Day, at that) to go hiking at Rattlesnake Point Park and learn more about buffalo. Halton Region Conservation Authority's biologist Gary Hutton conducted the Buffalo Hike, part of HRCA's winter program called "The Great Escarpment Escape."

The "GEE" program started two weeks earlier with a "beaver romp" at Hilton Falls Conservation Area. Sunday's program moved to the buffalo compound at Rattlesnake where nine buffalo are penned in a 70-acre enclosure. Biologist Hutton explained the program is designed to introduce people to some of the Authority's various parks and projects. Programs will be held on two Sundays in January and February. Sunday's stalwarts trudged half a mile from the parking area at the northern point of Walker's Line, to view the buffalo close-up. And close-up

they were, visitors could have reached through the fence and patted the big beasts, except the buffalo were too busy eating fresh hay to take time out for human affection. **Whole story**  
Hutton, a storehouse of information on the buffalo, chatted all along the hike route about the animals' history, feeding, survival tactics, breeding and seasonal habits. He told how HRCA had imported a few buffalo from

western Canada in 1967 and set them up in the compound west of the escarpment bluffs at Rattlesnake Park. The herd grew to 24 last year before it was thinned out—some were sold to universities for research, some sent to zoos and other parks, and some died natural deaths. The herd now numbers 12, nine of them at Rattlesnake and three more at Mountsberg Game Farm, another HRCA holding.

Buffalo were recorded as being much larger during the ice age. Today the full-grown male weighs up to 2,200 pounds, a female up to 1,500 pounds, he said. Bashful Bobby, one of the original herd still on display at Rattlesnake, is about nine years old and would tip the scales about 1,900 pounds, he said. **Not really**  
Bobby was nicknamed "Bashful" because he didn't start producing offspring in his first two years at Rattlesnake. Since then he has made up for it, however and many of the buffalo in HRCA compounds are his offspring. There were once 60 million buffalo in North America, Hutton said. The Indians used every part of the animal for something. Then the white man tried to eliminate the Indian by eliminating the buffalo and in the 1800s the buffalo were slaughtered en masse. They became nearly extinct but have since made a comeback and they are once again plentiful. Hutton explained the "pecking order" of the herd, which fascinated the visitors. Usually the largest and oldest buffalo is No. 1 and he eats, drinks and mates first. The second largest ranks as No. 2 and he always comes second, and so on down the line, Hutton pointed out. As proof he tossed handful of fresh hay into the compound and all the others hung back until Bashful Bobby, king of his own herd, came forth to eat. The order of rank was illustrated as one by one, as if by roll call, the animals from the largest to the smallest ventured forward to nibble and chomp at the fresh meal.



A GOOD CLOSE-UP VIEW of HRCA's herd of nine buffalo was enjoyed by over 30 people Sunday when biologist Gary Hutton conducted a buffalo hike at Rattlesnake Point Park. The buffalo munched on hay just a few feet inside the fence while the group listened to a lecture on the animals' way of life.



A BUFFALO HIKE was held at Rattlesnake Point Park's buffalo compound Sunday with over 30 people out wandering in the rain to learn more about the spectacular animals. Kelly Jarvis, 9, of Oakville was one of the hikers and she was greatly interested in this buffalo skull, one of the exhibits arranged by Halton Region Conservation Authority. Sunday's walk was part of the HRCA's "Great Escarpment Escape" program.

## Pays \$1,000 for top pig

At the all-breed swine "Sale of Stars" at the Royal Winter Fair last week, Allan Cook of Milton paid \$1,000 for the Landrace bred gilt which won a first prize, grand champion and supreme championship in the 10-12 months competition. It was consigned by Marie A. Turnbull of Brussels, Ont.

All first and second prize boars and gilts in this year's Royal were sold at the sale. The 50 lots averaged \$359 and the sale total was \$71,975. The highest selling animal, the grand champion boar went for \$1,100.

At this time of the year the buffalo are docile but in the rutting season (summer and early fall) they are mating and can be dangerous. Hutton explained their speeds as a walk, trot, bound and gallop, and said animals have been clocked at 40 miles per hour. Buffalo have been known to run steadily for two days during a stampede, he said. HRCA also had some elk in the buffalo compound but they have been moved to Mountsberg.

Despite the downpour or drizzle and the cool November breeze, the hikers were all keenly interested in the subject of buffalo and praised Hutton at the end of the short hike for his informative and interesting tour.

## Storm sewer needed to alleviate floods

Council's Community Service Committee will recommend proceeding with storm sewers, a catch basin and some road work on Pine St. The work is estimated to cost \$42,000 and according to works superintendent Bruce McKerr, the matter is becoming urgent.

Deputy Clerk Campbell Thompson said the construction of the library had aggravated the storm situation. He explained water was pumped from the library to the road

and in some cases flooded properties across the road. McKerr agreed the library aggravated an already bad problem. He noted the storm sewers in that area were about 100 years old.

The committee agreed work should be done to rectify that problem as soon as possible but voted to leave the major road work that will be required until its scheduled time, which is three or four years away.

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INTERESTED HIKERS took a walk Sunday to view the buffalo at Rattlesnake Point Park and were rewarded with a real close view of the animals. Halton Region Conservation Authority biologist Gary Hutton (left, above) conducted the hike and explained the lifestyle, feeding and mating habits of the bison that have been on display in Halton for seven years. Above, he discusses a buffalo skull with part of the group.

## M.S. patients host dinner

Volunteers who work for Halton Multiple Sclerosis Society will get a pat on the back from M.S. patients and the society at a pot luck Christmas dinner in Halton Centennial Manor December 11.

The Society and patients want to show they really appreciate the 50 volunteers who work for them all year round, so plan to treat them for a change.

Any M.S. patient and their family or friends is welcome to the dinner, where transportation will be provided. The Society van, with a hydraulic lift, will be made available to any wheelchair patient.

Spokesman Sandy Symmes said she hoped M.S. patients not known to the Society would come and make themselves known to the group.

A total of 51,991 cases of bronchitis and emphysema were treated in Canadian hospitals in 1971. These lung cripples, including tuberculosis are the targets of your Halton TB and Respiratory Disease Association. Support the Christmas Seal campaign.

The U.S. purchased Alaska from Russia in 1867 but it was not until 1903 that a boundary dispute was settled by negotiation.

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