

It's for the birds

Collisions between birds and aircraft at airports can be expensive and disastrous.

Scaring birds, such as gulls, with noise soon becomes ineffective. Falcons, however, could provide the solution, say a team of fish and wildlife technicians from Toronto. Falcons are effective on birds, such as gulls, who socialize, said Doug Wilson, one of the falconers. "After gulls have been taken by a falcon, the rest of the flock soon learns the appearance of the falcon means danger."

Artificial falcons do not work because when they do not take a gull, the rest of the flock realizes there is no danger. However, local birds of prey will not continue to pursue gulls, rather, they will seek out easier birds, such as pigeons and blackbirds. Falcons, on the other hand, can be trained to take herring gull.

"Falconry is expensive, but so are repairs to aircraft after a birdstrike. From what we've seen, the falcons are effective, said Transport Canada's manager of airfield operations, John FitzGibbon. There's been a 70 percent reduction in birdstrikes in some areas we've studied."

(Courtesy of Compressed Air dated June 1979.)

First solar apartment building

Canada's first apartment building heated entirely by solar heat was officially opened recently by the Ontario government.

The two-storey senior citizens' home, located in the southern Ontario town of Aylmer, has 29 one-bedroom units.

One of the main problems in using solar energy in Ontario is that less sunshine is available in the winter when it is needed most.

But this building solves the problem by using an annual heat-storage system, which features a huge, underground insulated-concrete tank holding about 2,000 gallons of water.

Water from the tank is circulated through solar-collector panels on the south-facing roof, where it absorbs heat before returning to the tank. The water in the tank becomes quite hot by the end of the summer and gradually cools towards the end of winter as the building uses the stored heat.

Ontario's mammoth play park

Visitors to Niagara Falls, who go to witness a natural wonder, will soon be able to explore another wonder — this one man-made.

For, well on the way is a "theme" park, described by the Ontario Ministry of Industry and Tourism as the largest on the North American continent, a giant \$75-million, 1,000-acre animal domain three times the size of Disneyland in California and much bigger than Tampa's Busch Gardens in Florida.

The new park, on which most of the preliminary work is completed, will include a four-mile canal system and a man-made lake that will carry a fleet of 50 passenger boats; a 150-foot pool for marine acts performed by porpoises, sea lions and killer whales which spectators can watch from a 15,000-seat stadium, and miles of mono-rail and steam train track over which passengers glide through plains and forests in open coaches pulled by steam locomotives.

To top it all, a fairy castle will be constructed, complete with spires and battlements, and perched on a lofty "mountain" built from slag dredged for the canal system. Curling around the castle's base will be a European-style village, a novelty never before seen, say the planners, in any North American theme park.

Visitors will see a large assortment of animals, including elk and buffalo, roaming in herds and packs.

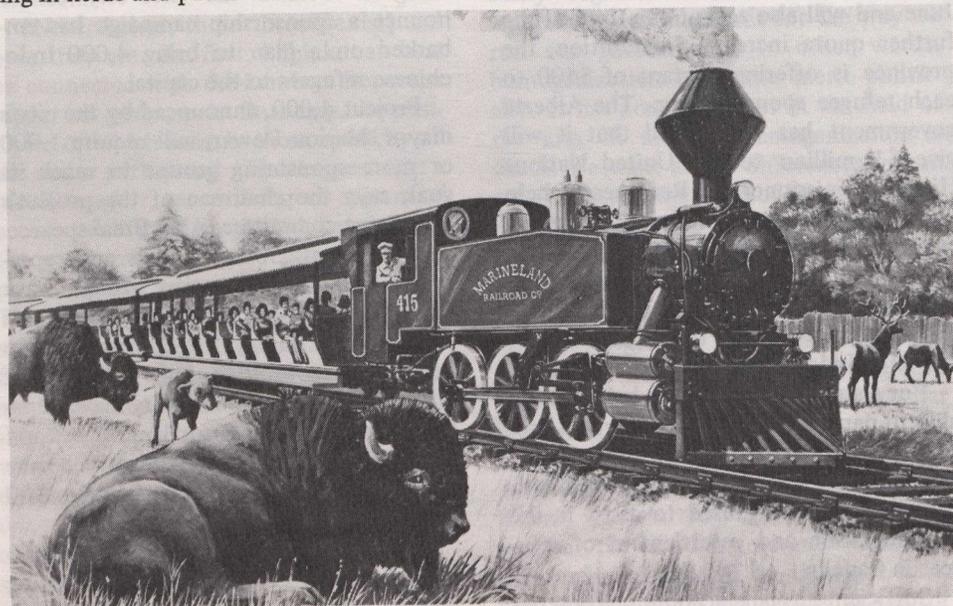


Artist's conception of the fairy castle, centerpiece of Niagara's new giant park, which planners say will rival Disneyland, California. Circling the base of the castle will be a European-style village.

Next summer there will be a deer park with rolling, tree-covered hills and winding walkways to encourage human contact with friendly fauna.

The next phase, in 1981, will include canal cruises, the monorail and steam railroad, monster roller coaster, and other rides.

Finally, the castle, centerpiece of the entire project, stadium and mammoth whale and porpoise pool will complete the new park.



A train ride through the Old West, depicted above, is one of the attractions that will be available for visitors to Niagara's "theme" park.