



Features

[2005 Features](#)
[2004 Features](#)
[2003 Features](#)
[News Releases](#)


Hurricane or Typhoon - Looking Back

There are events in the life of a city that are long remembered by its denizens- these include the unlikely companions of centennials, elections, wars, annual summer fireworks, etc. - but little can compare with the remembrance offered by Mother Nature. We hear our elders speak of winters when Lost Lagoon and Beaver Lake were frozen for weeks on end making possible the prospect of outdoor skating, even under the stars. Or what of the snow storms or floods that are etched indelibly upon generations of children who are the few among us who can see the silver lining in natural disasters as long as school is called off.

When I first arrived at the Park Board as a young twenty-something in the early 1970s, the older generation of staff above me were still speaking about the "storm of the century" that hit an unprepared city on October 12, 1962. In the States it is referred to as the Columbus Day Storm and it's surprise arrival in the Pacific Northwest is still recounted by those who experienced it with awe and wonder.

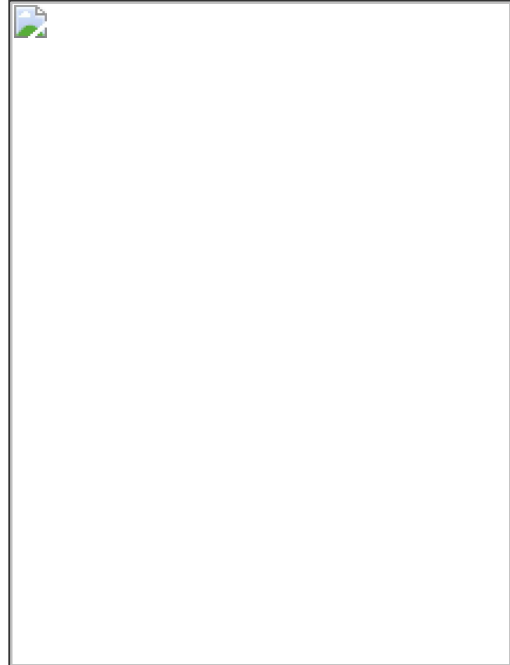
You'll hear some folks refer to Frieda as a typhoon and others as a hurricane and both terms are a little right and a little wrong. As storm aficionados are aware, the term "hurricane" refers to severe Atlantic weather systems and those in the eastern Pacific. The term "typhoon" is the designation for Pacific storms west of the International Date Line. Frieda had the distinction of starting as a typhoon and then moving east (instead of west which is the usual pattern for typhoons) and becoming a hurricane while merging with another tropical storm. Weather professionals like to call her, an extropical storm and she proved her strength when she slammed into the coastal cities of Portland, Seattle and Vancouver.

How all this naming effected Vancouver is moot when considering the devastation left in Frieda's wake.

The Park Board's head of horticulture at the time, William Livingstone, recalled that Stanley Park was devastated by the storm which packed winds up to 129 miles per hour. In all, over 3000 trees, many mature specimens, were lost in the park along with hundreds more on Vancouver's tree-lined streets. Park trails once used as early skid roads when the area was logged in the mid to late 1880s, were once again employed to remove the downed woody sentinels. Leaving the logs fallen in the park was not an option as their mere mass and number would have prevented access to many areas while causing a potential fire hazard.

It took the better part of a year to remove the trees which, because of their good condition, were sold to lumber companies. Not all was lost as clever Park Commissioners and staff were presented with newly cleared areas in their sacred Stanley Park, sites which could now be used for recreational activities.

The year following the storm, the new Stanley Park Miniature Railway, whose engine was a replica of CPR's #374 that pulled Canada's first continental passenger train into



Click on image to see a large version.

Vancouver, was officially opened proving that even Hurricane Frieda's horror had a silver lining, especially for the city's children.

Terri Clark, Park Board Communication Coordinator