

October 2005

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Harbord Village Residents' Association

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CROFT bringing back the street and the man

Croft Street used to be a place to dump trash, do drugs and mark territory—**someone else's**. Graffiti and garbage were everywhere. It was like a street that had given up on itself. This summer, things changed. Now, **it's the proud host to people** strolling up from College, taking in the John Croft mural and enjoying the unique, urban back-street ambience.

The HVRA's inaugural Graffiti Removal Event was a small neighbourhood victory. The two-day paint-a-thon cleaned up Croft Street from College to Vankoughnet. PC Scott Mills, 14 Division's School Watch Officer/Graffiti Co-ordinator, put

students performing community service together with companies donating materials and we.....well, we just looked good.

Students from St. Mary's School and St. Stephen's Community House pitched in with the HVRA Graffiti Committee on July 22nd and 23rd to paint 25 garages. The paint and supplies were sourced and collected by PC Mills and PC Margaret Duarte. They canvassed Para Paints, three Canadian Tire stores, Home Depot and Paint Colours Unlimited. The pizza & pop were also provided "at special police prices." The water fights

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our AGM is on October 18, 2005, at the Kensington Health Centre, 25 Brunswick Avenue, in the main meeting room:

6:30 -7:00 p.m.—registration and schmoozing

7:00-8:00 p.m.—HVRA caucuses and business—Election of new officers

8:00-9:00 p.m. – Special presentation, *Protecting Yourself from Fire*, on fire and preparedness for fire, featuring reps of the Toronto Fire Department and the Insurance Industry.

See the HVRA chair's welcome letter on Page 3

Part of the striking mural that graces the south end of Croft Street
(more on Pages 3, 4, and 7)



Photo: Harbourfront Community Centre



CROFT bringing back the street and the man

(Continued from Page 1)

“The HVRA’s inaugural Graffiti Removal Event was a small neighbourhood victory. The two-day paint-a-thon cleaned up Croft Street from College to Vankoughnet”

“Take a look up Croft Street from College Street and you’ll see people going for walks past John Croft’s mural, taking in the story of what he did to help rebuild devastated Toronto streets a century ago.

Many hands make for light work as the Graffiti Removal Gang gets to work painting over tags and beautifying Croft Street

Photos: David Booz and Michael Heydon

were...priceless and considering the heat, necessary.

With a little persuasion from officers of Scott Sullivan’s Clean and Beautiful City department, the effort was a complete success. By the end of the day, we had 100% compliance from garage-owners. Croft Street’s never looked so good. Special thanks go to three neighbours: Steve Lastiwka (36 Borden St.), who supplied water for the powerwash for the entire lane on September 11 for the final removal; Paul Macarico and his son Andrew (38 Borden St.), who painted on Saturday, July 23rd; and Bill Sharp (14 Croft St.) who helped prep and paint on Saturday July 23rd. Great neighbours made all the difference!

At the same time as the graffiti removal, a mural project was underway on Croft and College. In Monty Python-esque graphic collage, it tells the story of the

street’s namesake, John Croft, sole victim of the Great Toronto Fire of 1904. John Croft was a part-time dynamiter (yes, it’s true!) helping to clear the ruins of the worst fire in Toronto’s history. He set three charges in a wall left standing from the Gage Building on Wellington Street. When only two sticks exploded, Croft was urged by others who wanted to get back to work to disable the dud. While he attempted to remove the fuse, the stick detonated. And, lest we forget...a street is named.

The HVRA applied for and won a \$5,000 grant from the City’s Department of Economic Development Banner and Mural Program. Donations from local residents completed the balance of the budget. The mural was designed and painted by the Harbourfront Community Centre’s Mural Design Project whose director is Michael Brown. His team is mostly made up of students working for the summer.

The final touch was a new road surface design. Helen Kennedy from Olivia Chow’s office brought Croft Street residents and Brown and Storey Architects together with City planners to achieve a unique streetscape. They came up with a custom innovation-concrete banding impressed with a faux-brick stamp, designed especially for Croft Street, a prototype treatment bringing a bit of European flavour to Harbord Village.

These days, take a look up Croft Street from College Street and you’ll see people going for walks past John Croft’s mural, taking in the story of what he did to help rebuild devastated Toronto streets a century ago...as Croft’s likeness looks out over the street he helped transform today.

- Michael Heydon, Graffiti Transformation Committee





Welcome!

By Rory 'Gus' Sinclair
Chair, HVRA

Dear members of our fabulous HVRA:

We have had quite a half year since our last newsletter--The biggest news of course is the Robert Street Fire. A dozen houses were affected, and some in the centre of the conflagration will not survive the **wrecker's ball. This is so sad** on any number of levels that one could care to think about, but here are a couple:

1: These are the homes of our neighbours; these homes contained the artifacts of the lives of our neighbours; these homes contained the energy and activities of the families of our **neighbours....The fabric of our community** has been rent asunder by this awful event. There is much loss and pain for our

neighbours, and their pain is our pain.

2: HVRA has embarked on an ambitious campaign to preserve neighbourhood architecture, and Robert Street was our next **destination...this is a heavy blow** to this enterprise, and we are temporarily on hold.

This issue affects us all and it behoves you to attend and know where you stand in your fire preparedness.

On a happier note: the 12th annual Fall Fair will take place in Margaret Fairley Park (Brunswick and Ulster) on Sunday, September 18- noon to 7 p.m.

Come out and enjoy non-stop but not too loud live music; burgers and fabulous veggie



wraps (for the first time); kids games and activities; beer and wine (legally, honest!) and have a chat with your neighbours that does not involve getting mad as hell at someone--just have a great time on a beautiful Sunday afternoon.

And don't forget our Annual General Meeting on October 18 (see Page 1).

Until next time/à bientôt

Rory 'Gus' Sinclair, Chair

"...don't forget our Annual General Meeting on October 18"



Another shot of the Croft Street mural

Photo: Harbourfront Community Centre



“The first phase of the HCD—Lower Brunswick and Willcocks—has been completed.”

More of the Croft Street mural



Photo: Harbourfront Community Centre

Harbord Village Heritage Conservation District Going Great Guns

The first phase of the HCD—Lower Brunswick and Willcocks—has been completed. All property owners in these areas have received copies of the District Plan, which outlines the heritage character of the HCD and guidelines for protecting the facades of designated properties.

The HVRA has appointed a three-person advisory committee—Sue Dexter, Steve Forchon, and Julian Kitchen (chair)—to support heritage preservation in the district.

Richard Longley is in the last stages of developing an HVHCD Restorers’ Manual, which will

prove to be a valuable resource for homeowners seeking to improve their properties in a manner consistent with heritage principles. It should be ready in time for the Fall Fair.

Some residents of Robert Street and Russell Street have expressed an interest in exploring heritage designation for their homes. A meeting will be called in the near future to explore this possibility.

If you have any questions about the HCD, please contact jkitchen@sympatico.ca.

- Julian Kitchen, Chair, Heritage Conservation District Advisory Committee



Harbord Village HCD directory now available

During the week before the HVRA Fall Fair, a Directory for Conservers and Restorers of Heritage Properties was to be distributed to the more than 100 property owners of Harbord Village Heritage Conservation District. The Directory was then to be sold to all comers at the Fall Fair (as it was, one week earlier, at the Cabagetown Festival).

The purpose of the directory is to provide property owners with a guide to the ideals of conservation and restoration as they apply to the street-visible façades and sides of our homes--such 'elements' as brick, masonry and roofing, porches, doors and windows. We hope the directory will help property owners better understand the aims of our Heritage Guidelines as they strive to make them a reality. The directory goes beyond those guidelines by venturing into such areas as exterior paint colours and landscaping and by stressing restoration as well as the HCD's prime aim: conservation.

The directory is the first step of a 'work in progress' that might take years to complete. There is an astonishing amount we do not know about the appearance of our

houses when they were originally built--and late Victorian Toronto houses in general. In time, we look forward to much of that information's being discovered as property owners research the histories of their homes and embark on the adventure of conserving and restoring--rather than merely 'renovating' them.

To assist that process, the directory lists sources of information as well as the names of experts: heritage consultants, restoration contractors and craftspeople who are able to provide us with the skills and the reproduced elements that we so sorely need--such things as doors, windows, porch pillars and balustrades and advice on paint colours.

A number of those craftspeople agreed to be on hand at the Fall Fair to display their skills and examples of their work. In time we hope to hold seminars on all aspects of conservation and restoration--everything from slate roofing to late 19th century Toronto gardens to help us discover Harbord Village as it was during the time of its first owners.

- Richard Longley, Heritage Conservation District Advisory Committee



Major fire threatens Robert Street heritage houses A major fire on July 10th destroyed six Victorian homes on Robert Street at Russell and damaged several nearby houses

Our community rallied quickly. Councillor Olivia Chow's staff called 300 local residents to an emergency meeting the next night.

Eighty people attended to show support for those displaced by the fire and ask questions of a fire department official who fought the 14-hour blaze. During the meeting, Neil Wright of the Harbord Business Improvement Association (HBIA) offered \$1,000 in support.

Over the course of the following week, neighbours made available accommodations and other assistance to those displaced, and heritage architect Cathy Nasmith, along with Guy Zimmerman from City Heritage Preservation Services, stepped forward to stop the insurance

companies from demolishing the façades of the houses.

Two weeks later, two benefit concerts at the Free Times Cafe raised almost \$1,800. (The Café had suffered its own devastating fire 16 years ago and recalled how difficult it was to rebuild. Our thanks go to Judy Perly and Ryan Azakawa for their wonderful efforts.) Part of the monies raised that weekend were used to pay the first month's rent of the one Robert Street tenant displaced by the fire.

The remaining monies, along with the HBIA donation, will be used this winter to fund an HVRA neighbourhood fire prevention education program. It has been suggested that we hire one or two university students to go door-to-door and

hand out literature prepared by HVRA and/or the fire department and insurance companies. The students might also ask questions, such as "how many smoke detectors do you have?", "is your attic open to your neighbours?" or "would your current insurance provide full replacement value if your home were destroyed by fire?". If funds allow it, we might install smoke detectors in the homes of those unable to do so themselves.

Look for details of HVRA's fire prevention education initiative in the coming months – and do attend our Annual General Meeting in October to hear speakers address the theme "Protecting Yourself from Fire."

- Tim Grant and Susan Dexter

"Eighty people attended to show support for those displaced by the fire and ask questions of a fire department official who fought the 14-hour blaze"



Devastation on Robert Street

Photo: Richard Gilbert



“Brenlee Robinson, this year’s tree advocate, visited over 200 households, delivering flyers, discussing the benefits of trees and patiently answering the many questions posed to her”

Gina and Ajay were among those in Harbord Village who responded to this summer’s drought by regularly watering their front yard tree



Photo: Tim Grant

Lots of New Trees Coming to our 'hood

Two recent initiatives have encouraged the City of Toronto to commit itself to plant lots of new trees in our neighbourhood in the coming months. For the second year in a row, HVRA hired a graduate from the UofT’s Forestry Department to go door to door this past spring and summer, asking area residents to fill out a City application for a free front yard tree. **Brenlee Robinson, this year’s tree advocate, visited over 200 households, delivering flyers, discussing the benefits of trees and patiently answering the many questions posed to her.**

Her efforts paid off. She managed to sign up 20 households for a free City front yard tree, **almost double last year’s total.** As was the case last year, it was estimated that probably as many residents mailed their completed applications directly to the City forestry department, rather than handing them to her.

While she faced the usual resistance on many doorsteps to-

wards trees—and also found it difficult to find people at home in spite of repeated attempts, she was better equipped than **last year’s advocate.** She brought to each doorstep a set of small colour photos depicting each important native tree species. In addition, she carried multiple copies of a brand new City pamphlet explaining that planting trees will not cause problems **with anyone’s foundation or water pipes—unless**

either were already damaged.

In a related development, after **a year’s worth of lobbying, the City has agreed to plant 12 medium-sized new trees in a total of eight public areas in our neighbourhood next spring.** Last summer, our first employee identified 10 public spaces in need of more trees and submitted **a report to the City’s Urban Forestry Department, complete with digital photos.** This past August, the City finally reviewed the report, inspected the sites and approved all but two for planting next spring!

I would like to thank the many generous people who donated funds to allow us to continue our front yard tree solicitations for a second year. Particularly generous was Samiha Abdul Sayed, wife of the late Jorg Bentz, a long-time tree advocate. Inspired by the many years that Jorg spent advocating for trees in our neighbourhood’s public spaces, we can do no less than to keep trying next year.

- Tim Grant, Chair, Environment Committee

HVRA protects trees

You will notice hoarding around **the trees in Philosopher’s Walk,** thanks to the vigilance of the University of Toronto, City Forestry and HVRA. Construction damage had occurred on both the Royal Ontario Museum and Royal Conservatory sites.

Hopefully, the wooden barricades and drip watering and removal of construction rubble will permit existing trees at the north end of the walk to survive.

The University of Toronto, in keeping with the development of a new master plan for **Philosopher’s Walk, will erect wrought-iron pineapple gates** it has salvaged for the south end of the walk.

Photo: Gord Brown



HVRA boardie Richard Gilbert competes in his first triathlon

ROMantics

The Royal Ontario Museum has run short of cash for the last phase of its redevelopment. To raise funds, it has cast its eyes on the planetarium site, south **of the old building on Queen’s Park.** In a joint venture with a private developer, it has in mind constructing a 45-storey, 210-metre (for reference, the TD Tower is 213 metres), high-priced condominium, which will tower over the entire east side of the campus. For approval, it has to go to public review and a rezoning application for both height and the change of land use from institutional to residential.

Please join in the process this fall. It is a significant departure from present zoning as it could set a precedent of high rise residential on the entire St. George campus of the university.

- Susan Dexter, Institutional Liaison



Want to help make a difference?

HVRA relies on the board and member volunteers to get things done -- including the many things you're reading about here. Priorities for the year are set based on member and Area Rep input at the Annual General Meeting -- but the actual work is done by our hard-working committees.

How about investing a few hours in making our neighbourhood a better place?

Please give the committee contact a call, and let's have some fun building a better 'hood.

- **Environment Day, Cleanups, Trees:**
Tim Grant, 416.960.1244
- **Graffiti Removal/Transformation:**
Jane Auster, 416.534.9888;
David Booz, 416.806.2669;
Michael Heydon, 416.963.9600.
- **Neighbourhood Planning:**
Susan Pfeiffer, 416.964.8822.
- **Traffic (Streetscape, Speed bumps, Pinchpoints):**
Rory Sinclair, 416.966.1523.
- **Committee of Adjustment/Bylaw Compliance:**
Maria Perin, 416.922.6652
- **Communications, Newsletter:** Jane Auster, 416.534.9888;
Richard Gilbert, 416.923.8839.
- **Membership:**
Margaret Beare, 416.926.8984.
- **Fall Fair:**
Rory Sinclair, 416.966.1523.
- **Awards, Community Recognition:**
Rory Sinclair, 416.966.1523.
- **Heritage Conservation:**
Richard Longley, 416.961.2766; Sue Dexter, 416.964.9527; Julian Kitchen 416.935.0757.

- **Liaison with BIAs/Conflict Resolution:**
Rory Sinclair, 416.966.1523.
- **College Street Revitalization (winding down):**
Gord Brown, 416.924.6445;
Richard Gilbert, 416.923.8839;
Robert Stambula, 416.922.4453;
Michael Heydon, 416.963.9600.

"How about investing a few hours in making our neighbourhood a better place?"



Photo: Wayne Neon. HVRA Fall Fair, September 2004.



Photo: Richard Gilbert. Yet another view of the wonderful Croft Street mural.



Membership stuff

HVRA Board 2004-5

| | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|----------|----------------------------|
| Chair | Gus Sinclair | 966-1523 | rory.sinclair@rogers.com |
| Treas. | Gordon Brown | 924-6445 | brownge@sympatico.ca |
| Sec. | Bob Stambula | 922-4453 | stambula@yahoo.ca |
| Area Reps | | | |
| NW | Jane Auster | 534-9888 | jauster@rogers.com |
| NW | David Booz | 538-8109 | dbooz@golden.net |
| NE | Sandra deAthe | | sdeathe@interlog.com |
| NE | Margaret Beare | 926-8984 | mbeare@osgoode.yorku.ca |
| SW | Michael Heydon | 963-9600 | michael@citytv.com |
| SW | Susan Pfeiffer | 964-8822 | susan.pfeiffer@utoronto.ca |
| SC | Richard Gilbert | 923-8839 | richardgilbert1@csi.com |
| SC | Richard Longley | 961-2766 | longley_fovea@sympatico.ca |
| SE | Tim Grant | 960-1244 | tim@greenteacher.com |
| SE | Maria Perin | 922-6652 | m.perin@sympatico.ca |
| UofT | Sue Dexter | 964-9527 | susan.dexter@rogers.com |

Membership soars to over 350!

Wow! From 30 stalwart souls at the HVRA launch just four years ago to over 350 names on our roster today. This is truly a neighbourhood that cares -- and is willing to roll up its sleeves to make things better! Please take a bow.

Already a Member? Thanks. In particular, sincere thanks to all of you who have honoured us with your Supporting and Fanatic memberships, which have supported many of the new initiatives we've undertaken.

Haven't had a chance to renew for 2005? Now's the time. Simply fill out the renewal slip on our back page and post it with your cheque. To make it simple, how about a two-year membership?

Not yet a member? Now's the time! Meet your neighbours, have some fun and perhaps devote a few hours to something you want to improve. No time to spare? We understand. But by simply joining, you'll add your name to the ever-growing roster and help make HVRA's voice even better heard at City Hall.

Ideas for how to grow our membership, and strengthen connections? Please contact Margaret Beare, 416.926.8984.

This issue of the HVRA Newsletter has been edited by Jane Auster. Layout: Richard Gilbert

HVRA Membership & Renewal Form

Thanks to everyone who has renewed for 2004. Not a member yet? Know someone who should be a member? Please join -- to help us continue building a great neighbourhood!

2004 HVRA Membership

Please mail to:

Harbord Village Residents' Association

P.O. Box 68522
360A Bloor Street West
Toronto, M5S 1X1

Please check one:

| | | |
|---|-------------|---------------------|
| Voting Member (individual or family): | \$5 | 2 years \$10 |
| Supporting Member (to support HVRA activities): | \$20 | 2 years \$40 |
| Fanatical Member (to <u>really</u> support HVRA activities!): | \$50 | 2 years \$100 |

Please make your cheque payable to the Harbord Village Residents' Association and include:

Name.....

Address.....

Telephone Email.....

Areas of interest or concern.....