

Spring 2006

Volume 4, Number 1

Harbord Village Residents' Association

Contents:

- Message from the HVRA chair 1
- The Graff report 2
- Robert Street rink: update 3
- Harbord Village Heritage Conservation District going great guns 4
- Heritage Conservation Districts rule! 4
- After the fire – It's a question of insurance 5
- College St. update . 6
- Six Sakura trees..... 6
- HVRA's neighbourhood awards..... 7
- Want to help make a difference? 7
- HVRA Board 8
- Membership information and renewal form 8

Message from the Chair of the HVRA Board

Dear members of our fabulous HVRA:

Here's another great newsletter from your very active HVRA board. Leaf through these pages to get the measure of how well your board is taking care of business -- from the success of the annual Fall Fair, through the follow-up on College Street for patios and street furniture, the anti-graffiti/pro-art mural on Croft Street, to our tree program, which will be under way again shortly.

All the activities we have been undertaking are on your behalf.

This is a terrifically strong neighbourhood in which to live -- and one of the things that leads to that strength is a sense of community. Your board is very conscious of the value of activities, such as the semi-annual cleanup and the Fall



Fair, not just for the events themselves but because through this getting together and cooperating -- the bonds of the neighbourhood are forged and made stronger.

When it comes to meetings, I want to encourage your active participation. This is always said in these matters, but the truth is that your board is only as good as your participation. We boardies may be smart and nice, but, without your input, **we're only guessing at what needs to be done.**

Our Annual Spring Meeting is May 16 at the Kensington Health Centre (25 Brunswick Avenue) just north of College:

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

7-8 p.m. local caucuses and reporting back to constituents

8-9 p.m. The Vision Thing -- **what's next for Harbord Village?** (see box below)

Until next time,

Rory 'Gus' Sinclair

ANNUAL SPRING MEETING

The Vision Thing: What's next for Harbord Village?

What will it be? Bloor Street revitalization? A refurbished Robert Street Rink? A cohesive development plan for the neighbourhood? The greenest 'hood in the city?

Bring your ideas -- join the discussion -- and let's all take it to the next level! Helping us will be:

Amanda McConnell was part of a team of Annex residents 12 years ago who conducted a tree inventory in that neighbourhood. What they found disturbed them. More trees were being cut down than planted and few residents understood the importance of planting native trees and shrubs. They organized a large community meeting, which led to a concerted tree planting effort. Ten years later, they re-evaluated their efforts and published a report, the first of its kind in Toronto. Amanda will discuss the lessons learned from their pioneering efforts and how we might apply them here.

...And that's just the start! More to follow as the date gets closer.

See you there (at 25 Brunswick, 6:30 p.m., May 16)



Mary and Gus, Christmas 2005



The Graffiti report

Graffiti continues to be a problem in Harbord Village.

What's wrong with graffiti? It can foster disrespect for property laws that might result in increasing crime, community degradation, and urban blight. The presence of graffiti breeds more graffiti, and other properties also become targets unless the graffiti is removed promptly and kept off. Graffiti can lower property values and reduce business opportunities.

The HVRA Graffiti Committee has been working to reduce graffiti in Harbord Village and contribute to the beautification of our neighbourhood.

We've met with officials from the City to coordinate our local efforts with their citywide initiatives.

We organized a very success-

ful graffiti eradication day last June, and with the assistance of PC Scott Mills of 14 Division and students from St.

Mary's School and St.

Stephen's Community House, cleaned up lower Croft Street. Michael Heydon organized the painting of a fantastic mural on Croft Street just north of **College (if you haven't seen it, take a look).**

On an individual property owner's level, it's your responsibility to keep your site free of graffiti. The City of Toronto has an anti-graffiti bylaw requiring property owners to remove graffiti within 72 hours or be subject to removal by the City with the cost added to your property tax bill.

So what can you do? The most effective cure for graffiti is for property owners to remove it promptly. Experience

has shown that while the offenders may return, after you remove graffiti three times, the vandals lose interest and tag elsewhere.

There are also graffiti removal services – check the yellow pages under Graffiti or Building Cleaning and Maintenance – Exterior.

To prevent graffiti, you can plant climbing vines or thorny plants along the wall or fence. Graffiti resistant coatings are available – to find them, you can search the web under 'Anti-graffiti coatings'.

If you're adventurous, we can hook you up with one of a number of mural artists, many of whom are willing to create an original work of art on your property for little more than the cost of the paint. Most

(Continued on page 3)

“The presence of graffiti breeds more graffiti, and other properties also become targets unless the graffiti is removed promptly and kept off. Graffiti can lower property values and reduce business opportunities.”

“Experience has shown that ... after you remove graffiti three times, the vandals lose interest and tag elsewhere.”

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





Robert Street rink: Update

Many of you have wondered about the Robert Street rink and the status of its resurrection.

First the history. In a land swap in the 1950s between the City and the University of Toronto, the Aura Lee playground (which used to be in the park area just north of Avenue and Davenport) was exchanged for the Robert Street playing field. At that time, the University of Toronto Schools was a part of the University of Toronto Faculty of Education (the relationship became more separate in time), and the use of the field was to be shared among the Faculty of Physical Education, UTS, and the community.

The rink was installed in the 1970s, and there was an agreement that the city would maintain the rink while the university would share its use with the community. The cooling system was based on

brine with its old-style cooling plant. It was patched up and made to work about 10 years past its expected lifespan. All City rinks moved to glycol in the 1980s and beyond.

Why not simply replace the rink with a new glycol system and be done with it? There are too many interests involved in the Robert Street rink (and the playing field itself) to get them all on the same page: the University of Toronto, the U. of T. Faculty of Physical Education, University of Toronto Schools, the City of Toronto in the form of Parks and Recreation, and Council itself, The Harbord Village Residents' Association, and The Huron Sussex Residents' Association.

Some Section 37 monies were donated by David Green to HVRA (at our suggestion, owing to the fact his new building on Spadina will be in Harbord Village) to help rebuild the rink. HVRA now has

\$100,000 sitting in an escrow account, which will be freed up to make this dream come true. The estimated cost is **\$800,000, so there's a way to go.**

At the spring meeting, there will be a motion proposed to impertune all the players to get moving on this forthwith. Torches and pitchforks will be provided for the parade to City Hall, Simcoe Hall, and UTS!

Rory 'Gus' Sinclair
The Chair Guy

"At the spring meeting, there will be a motion proposed to impertune all the players to get moving on this forthwith. Torches and pitchforks will be provided for the parade to City Hall, Simcoe Hall and UTS!"

The Graffiti report

(Continued from page 2)

'graffiti artists' are reluctant to tag murals, preferring blank canvases for their work.

Come out and help clean up Croft Street

On Saturday May 13 at 9:00 am, HVRA will be supporting **14 Division's PC Scott Mills** and Central Technical School's **VP Karin Fuessel** to organize a graffiti removal blitz on the remaining portion of Croft Street from Van-Koughnet to Harbord Street. PC Mills has some paint, rollers and brushes, but not

enough, so if any Harbord Village residents can donate paint or supplies it would be appreciated. The Annex Residents Association has donated a power washer and we are hoping the Toronto District School Board will send their clean-up team with their sand blaster. We definitely need your help!

HVRA, along with Central Technical School, is also planning another graffiti eradication day this fall, focusing on Harbord Street. Stay tuned!

David Booz for the HVRA Graffiti Committee

More Graffiti work





Harbord Village Heritage Conservation District going great guns

Residents of Phase 1 are reminded to check with the Heritage Conservation Committee before making changes to the façades of their houses (including windows, doors, porches).

Recently, the owners of 82 Willcocks consulted with us regarding changes to the side of their laneway property (visible from the street). We responded very quickly to their request and wrote letters to the Committee of Adjustment and Preservation Services supporting their appli-

cation to build a third-floor extension.

For more information:

Julian Kitchen, Convener
72 Willcocks Street
jdkitchen@sympatico.ca

Steve Forchon
48 Brunswick St.
forchon@responseinnovations.com

Sue Dexter
97 Willcocks St.
susan.dexter@rogers.com



“... hundreds of copies have been sold to architects, craftspeople and owners of heritage properties in various parts of Toronto and Ontario (one copy even went to Australia).”

Heritage Conservation Districts rule!

Our *Harbord Village Heritage Conservation District Directory for Conservers and Restorers of Heritage Properties* was distributed to all Harbord Village HCD property owners when it was released last spring. Since then, hundreds of copies have been sold to architects, craftspeople, and owners of heritage properties in various parts of Toronto and Ontario (one copy even went to Australia).

In many of these places, the directory has inspired heritage conservation campaigns that might never have been started.

The directory has also put craftspeople in touch with homeowners who desperately need their services so that no one can complain that the resources needed to conserve and restore heritage properties are not available any more – they are. They are not always easy to find, but they do exist, some in abundance, and many **are listed in HVRA’s directory.**

The second edition of our directory (to be released on May 16, **at HVRA’s spring meeting**) has been considerably expanded, with the inclusion of more names of craftspeople and suppliers in most sections. **There’s a new section on the preservation of decayed wood with resins** (based on information provided by Maria Perin) and a greatly expanded section on gardens.

The directory’s garden section was compiled with the help of landscape historian Pleasance Crawford and Toronto Museums horticulturalist Wendy Woodworth (who gardens at Spadina House, Colbourne Lodge, and Mackenzie House).

Otherwise, we look forward to the replanting of the parkette by the City and Kensington

Gardens at the foot of Brunswick Avenue and its naming (**possibly in honour of Doctors’ Hospital**, which once featured so prominently in our neighbourhood). Meanwhile, a campaign has been launched to create a parkette at the foot of Major Street, which might be named in honour of actor Walter Huston, father of actor-director John Huston, grandfather of actress Anjelica Huston. Walter Huston was born at 11 Major Street on April 6, 1884; his birth must have been one of the first in our neighbourhood.

Putting a Face on Harbord Village: Ongoing Appeal for Stories and Photographs

Historic research at the City Archives tells us the names of the previous owners of our houses, their jobs and the taxes they paid, otherwise very little. We continue to appeal for photographs and stories of the people who lived before us in Harbord Village. If anyone has a photograph to lend or a story to tell, contact

Richard Longley, Heritage Conservation District Committee

416.961.2766 or
longley_fovea@sympatico.ca.

“... the directory has inspired heritage conservation campaigns that might never have been started.”





After the fire – It's a question of insurance

After the devastating fire on Robert Street last summer, residents were left with a lot of questions about insurance coverage. The HVRA Board invited Don Stewart and John Woodburn from the Insurance Bureau of Canada to address the AGM in the fall. Here are a few of the key points they made about house insurance and making a claim:

Coverage

Comprehensive coverage is becoming the most popular, as it does exactly that: covers all risks to your house and contents.

There can be exclusions to your coverage, for example, most damage caused by mould (unless part of a covered water damage claim) or vermin.

Tenants in your house must have their own insurance for their contents.

The biggest issue victims face is inadequate insurance coverage – make sure you have *replace-*

ment coverage in your insurance policy.

Replacement coverage is standard on buildings, but not necessarily on contents. *Replacement* coverage replaces old items that were destroyed with new items.

Adjusters

Adjusters work for the insurance company and will pay **what you're entitled to under your policy** and no more.

Adjusters have their own perspectives about your claim – **you're entitled to speak to a senior manager of the insurance company if you're not happy with the decisions of the adjuster.**

Public adjusters are independent adjusters you hire and pay for – this can cause an adversarial situation with your insurance company, so proceed with caution!

Repairs and Living Expenses

You have the right to use the

contractor of your choice, but insurance companies will pay only up to the amount, less deductible, of their own **contractor's estimates.**

Insurance companies will back the work of their preferred contractors and ensure the repair is done right.

Your *increased* costs owing to having to live off the premises while repairs are done are covered. These could include the cost of hotel rooms and increased for transportation to and from work or appointments. The main thing to remember is that the increased costs must be reasonable and in accordance with your normal lifestyle.

The Insurance Bureau of Canada has a wide selection of very good consumer brochures (clear language!) on insurance coverage on their website at www.ibc.ca. Click on Publications and follow the link.

- Sandra DeAthe

“Public adjusters are independent adjusters you hire and pay for – this can cause an adversarial situation with your insurance company, so proceed with caution!”



Rebuilding the Robert Street houses begins

Photo: Richard Gilbert



“This concept (already seen in Quebec, Halifax, and throughout Europe and the US) has the potential to create additional patio space on our wonderful wide sidewalks, while keeping the Pedestrian Clearway clear and improving storefront access for all businesses.”

College Street update

The focus continues to be creation of a “Pedestrian Clearway”. The Clearway provides clear, unobstructed walking space from the building face to edge of the tree pits, with all ‘street furnishings’ located between the trees. The concept is catching on! It improves access and mobility for all, supports **Toronto’s Clean and Beautiful City Initiative**, and encourages more ‘feet on the street’.

- *The Eucans are coming!* Agreement has been reached and locations marked for installation of ‘old style’ stainless steel EUCAN bins. Megabins are NOT on the list. Thanks to all those who have

patiently carried their litter elsewhere while we worked on a good solution.

- *New Trees for Spring.* Peter Simon of Urban Forestry is on the case, and failed trees will be replaced with healthy new specimens.
- *Patio Pilot?* Councillor Martin Silva is a big fan of the Curbside Patio concept and will be working with businesses to gain their support for a pilot. This concept (already seen in Quebec, Halifax and throughout Europe and the US) has the potential to create additional patio space on our wonderful wide sidewalks, while keeping the Pedestrian Clearway clear and improving storefront access for all businesses. Take a look at the Florida example on the left for a bit of inspiration.

Pedestrian Clearway goes city-wide? City staff like the Pedestrian Clearway concept and have indicated they will be using it as the basis for the new Integrated Street Furnishings initiative. And College had it first!

Here’s to the start of a great summer on our section of College, between Spadina and Bathurst. Check it out, and let us know what you think.

- Gord Brown for the College St. Committee

Six Sakura trees

Japan is donating 400 Sakura (Cherry Blossom) trees to Toronto. HVRA requested some and we are to receive six of these beautiful trees. They are to be planted on the east side of Bathurst, just south of Lennox along a particularly barren stretch of the road.

They will bring much joy, especially during spring blossom season, to local residents and the tens of thousands of transit users and car drivers passing by each day.

We expect delivery of the six Sakura trees on May 11. Central Tech teacher Paul Gorcey has already recruited students **from the school’s Environment Club** to plant the trees.

Please join us in extending a big thank you to the Japanese Consulate for this generous gift, the **city’s Clean and Beautiful office** for its coordination, and Paul Gorcey and his students for their enthusiasm. May this now grim intersection be forever enriched by their contributions.

- Tim Grant, Chair, Environment Committee



College Street, and a Florida example of a curbside patio.



Bathurst St. where the trees will be planted. (See next page for Sakura trees in full bloom.)

Photos: Gord Brown



HVRA's Neighbourhood Awards

To recognize those among us who've improved our community, the Association is once again inviting nominations before the September 15th deadline for the following four special awards:

- * **Best Front Yard Garden**
- * **Best Heritage Restoration of a Home**
- * **Best Heritage Restoration of a Commercial Building**
- * **Neighbourhood Builder Award.**

This award will recognize residents who have made a substantial contribution to the betterment of our community.

To nominate someone for any one of these awards, here is what you need to do:

Using no more than one page, explain why someone or some

property owner is particularly deserving of one of the awards. Include their address, the name of the award, your name, mailing address, phone number, and email address.

2) Submit a maximum of three photos illustrating the front yard garden or the front of the restored home or commercial building that you are nominating. If nominating a Neighbourhood Builder, try to include a head and shoulders picture of that person.

3) Submit the above items no later than the deadline of September 15th, either by email to rory.sinclair@rogers.com or as a hard copy to Gus Sinclair, 133 Major Street, (416) 543-2785.

Neither the front yard garden

projects nor the heritage restoration projects need be nominated in the year in which they are completed.

In addition, we are now seeking three volunteers to judge the nominations for each award. Please contact Gus Sinclair if you are willing to serve as one **of this year's judges. And don't** hesitate to send us your suggestions for additional awards that HVRA should consider offering in the coming years.

Don't be shy: submit your award nominations this week! Then mark October 17th on your calendar. **That's the night of HVRA's annual general meeting, at which this year's awards will be presented.**

- Tim Grant

"Don't be shy: submit your award nominations this week! Then mark October 17th on your calendar. That's the night of HVRA's annual general meeting, at which this year's awards will be presented."

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:** Maria Perin, 416.922.6652.

● **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.

Sakura trees at Hamilton's Royal Botanical Gardens





Membership stuff

HVRA Board 2005-2006

Chair	Gus Sinclair	966-1523	rory.sinclair@rogers.com
Treas.	Gordon Brown	924-6445	brownge@sympatico.ca
Sec.	Sandra DeAthe	929-3621	sdeathe@interlog.com

Area Reps

NW	Jane Auster	534-9888	jauster@rogers.com
NW	David Booz	538-8109	dbooz@golden.net
NE	Stuart Schoenfeld		schoenfe@yorku.ca
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 2006? 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 Maria Perin at 416.922.6652.

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 2006. Not a member yet? Know someone who should be a member? Please join -- to help us continue building a great neighbourhood!

2006 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.....