

Spring 2007

Volume 5 Number 1

# Harbord Village Residents' Association

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*This newsletter is produced twice a year by the Harbord Village Residents' Association (HVRA) serving the part of Toronto bounded by Bathurst, Bloor, Spadina, and College. See Page 8 for more information about HVRA or visit [www.harbordvillage.com](http://www.harbordvillage.com).*

## Message from the Chair of the HVRA Board

Dear wonderful members of HVRA,

Sometimes I think it worthwhile to stop every once in a bit and think about how lucky we all are in this neighbourhood. In the first instance, we have geography working for



us. Simply put, we live in a stable built form which, while under some pressure for intensification, is not nearly so under pressure as our cousins in the southern part of the ward — Queen Street to the Lake and our immediate neighbours in The Annex.

That being said, it does not hurt that we also have a very active residents' association with a whippet smart board, which is always thinking hard about how to maintain our stability while at the same time introducing such new things as our Solar Project



(now spreading across the ward), the Tree Project (both of which you can read about elsewhere in this newsletter) and watching Committee of Adjustment and OMB cases very carefully.

It has been my very great honour and privilege to work with a succession of board members over the last seven years, probably about 35 or so in all.

There has been a healthy turnover in personnel — at least one or two new board members (referred to as 'boardies' by those in the know) join the board every year. This speaks first to stability and the carry-over of corporate memory, but more importantly it tells us we have an enormous depth of field inside our membership and a

healthy environment for them to wish to join and assist at the board level.

Let me tell you: the quality of your boardies has been unrelentingly outstanding. The way things work in volunteer organizations such as ours is that there are cycles where there are high points of activity, events and membership and then, sadly but just as inevitably, low points on these same fronts. In 2007, HVRA is in full flight and has been for a number of years, and it is the envy of all residents' associations in the city.

You may now applaud (stamp your feet, make a joyful noise, etc.)!

Your chair guy

Rory 'Gus' Sinclair

### SPRING MEETING: ALL ARE WELCOME

6:30 for 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday May 15, 2007

**Location: The Kensington Health Centre (25 Brunswick Avenue just north of College Street) in the main meeting room.**

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

7-8 p.m. -- Area caucuses and HVRA business (see Page 8)

8-9 p.m. -- HVRA website: Carbon footprint

*For more information about the meeting, please see Page 2.*



*"It has been the dream of your chair to have a new kind of HVRA site"*

*"A Carbon Footprint as Big as Sasquatch? Find Out How to Shrink it at Our Spring Meeting"*

Trees on Major  
(see Page 7)



## The Spring Meeting on Tuesday, May 15 Kensington Health Centre (25 Brunswick) 6:30 p.m. for 7 p.m.

You must come to the spring meeting to get a handle on two topics for the price of one!

The website

Upon the formation of the HVRA in 1999-2000, we had the good fortune to have the services of two fine boardies, Perry Goldberg and Bill Rogers, who took it upon themselves to put up a website in the name of HVRA. It served us well in its time, but the technology caught up to us and passed us a long time ago. **Now it's time to move on** to a better and more fully useful site.

It has been the dream of your chair to have a new kind of HVRA site that would be the repository of the membership list, the place from which emails could be broadcast to the whole membership with only a few strokes or sent to a narrow part of the membership, say an area or even a block; that would be interactive so an individual member could update his/her own data and in the bargain pay dues by, say, PayPal; that would host modules explaining **HVRA's various initiatives; that** would be a photo album, a local history lesson, a calendar of events, a home for the

constitution that would be 'live' in the sense that amendments would be added as they occur.

Well, dream no

more. These things and more are now a reality. After the AGM in October, the board sensed this was something the membership wanted. To get it up and running as soon as possible, three boardies were prepared to finance it personally pending a later approval of the membership at a general meeting.

May 15 is the official launch, and we will have present Jason Moore, the man who built it for you along with a very active subcommittee of the board, and he will guide us through its many wondrous and fine features.

Carbon Footprint

These days green is a hap-penin' thing.... **Not to be out-flanked by the politicos in Ottawa, HVRA is contemplating action on that wonderful and still relevant exhortation, "Think globally: Act locally!"** The notion of a local dimension to a "carbon footprint" was first brought forward to the HVRA board by our intrepid and global thinking Sue Dexter. We all decided this would be an excellent topic for discussion at the spring meeting.

During our email discussions, we tried to come up with a catchy title. Try these possibilities:

**"Be a Pal to the Planet,"  
"Befriend Your Local Planet,"  
"Kick the Carbon Habit,"  
"Here's to a Healthy Planet,"  
"The Fifth Annual Harbord Village Carbon Reduction Cap-er? Prizes and Laffs Galore,"  
"HVRA's Great Carbon Conservation Contest,"  
"Low Carbon Living in Harbord Village,"  
"Less Carbon in the Atmosphere, More Cash in Your Pocket." And the biggest**

laugh goes to Jane Auster for "A Carbon Footprint as Big as Sasquatch? Find Out How to Shrink it at Our Spring Meeting."

**Here's what you need to know: the phrase "carbon footprint" stems from the idea** that we need to get a handle on climate change. Almost everything we touch involves burning carbon. The carbon we burn creates the greenhouse gases that are changing our climate and putting the health of the planet at risk. **It's a planetary problem, but it has to be solved locally. And that's begun to happen.**

**It's a worldwide movement. And it's being led by little people** in everyday life. Leaf Rapids municipality in northern Manitoba has banned plastic bags. Britain is beginning to label all its produce and manufactured goods for carbon content so consumers can make wise choices.

In Australia, in late March, two million people—more than half the residents of Sydney—dropped their energy use by 10.2%, the equivalent of taking 48,613 cars off the road for an hour, saving 24.86 tonnes of carbon from fouling the atmosphere *by simply turning off the lights for an hour.*

This is a time for pulling together. **It's a time for innovative ideas, and far-out solutions.** No point letting carbon weigh on your conscience. Begin to lighten our load on the planet by sharing solutions.

Come out on May 15 and help us figure out what HVRA can do.



## The graff report

An odd couple, passionate anti-graffitist Jane Auster and graffiti-sympathiser Richard Longley, attended, on behalf of HVRA, the session "Graffiti - New Initiatives" of the nationwide Business Improvement Association conference at the Toronto Marriott on April 3rd. We both learned a great deal: that genuine outdoor art is emerging from the swamp of tagging and graffiti vandalism that blight so many of our buildings, that graffiti and mural art that is executed with obvious talent is rarely tagged and that, in our part of Toronto, less than 5% of graffiti and tagging is gang-related (according to PC Scott Mills, the Toronto Crime Stoppers School Officer and Legal Graffiti Art Coordinator).

We heard from representatives of a number of youth-groups. We also learned that graffiti artists are obstinate, hard to find, not easily punished and rarely discouraged when their work is obliterated. But handling graffiti can be 'managed.'

The most eloquent voice in favour of management came from Michael Young of Ottawa where the campaign 'Legal Graffiti' has installed 'legal walls' in parks and open spaces for graffiti artists to work on — knowing the walls will be painted over to make way for the efforts of others, two or three times a summer. Legal Graffiti also encourages graffiti in places where young people love to gather — at skate parks, outdoor rinks and beneath underpasses where kids stage music, break dance and hold graffiti 'events'. In Gatineau, graffiti artists have been invited to paint the blades of snow ploughs, thus realizing the

graffitist's dream: to see his or her art travel that it might be seen far and wide.

But this is all scheduled to come to an end in January 2008, when Ottawa's eradication-only anti-graffiti bylaw comes into effect.

Meanwhile, in Toronto, where we already have an anti-graffiti bylaw similar to Ottawa's, the seeds of compromise are beginning to flower.

One result of this compromise is the 'Queen West Alley' immediately south of Queen between Portland and Spadina, a wild fauvist canyon which has been described as "a place where you used to find people doing crack, where you now find tourists taking photos."

Another product of this compromise is the jewel in the crown of HVRA's outdoor art scene: Croft Street. Where walls and garage doors were once smothered with crazy quilts of obscenity-laden tags, pedestrians are now treated to an ambitious mural of the 1904 Toronto fire and the death of its only victim, explosives expert John Croft (after whom the street is named), who blew himself up while clearing debris left by the blaze, which destroyed 120 buildings in Toronto's business district. The massive painting, created by The Harbourfront

Community Centre's outdoor art program, led by director Michael Brown, took him and his team of students six weeks to create.

Those who attended the graffiti session at the BIA conference were fortunate in that Michael Brown and Viviana Astudillo were present throughout, spray-painting a portrait of a friend. The portrait was auctioned to the highest bidder, Neil Wright, chair of the Harbord Street Business Improvement Association. Neil Wright and the Harbord BIA will be collaborating this summer with the HVRA graffiti committee on a campaign that promises to 'transform Harbord Street.'

HVRA property owners keen to have graffiti removed from their fences or buildings and those who are interested in having them painted with murals should contact Michael Heydon, michaelh@citytv.com. Those who do, especially those who opt for murals, are in for an adventure!

- Richard Longley for the graffiti committee

*"... genuine outdoor art is emerging from the swamp of tagging and graffiti vandalism that blight so many of our buildings ..."*

*"... less than 5% of graffiti and tagging is gang-related ..."*

PC Scott Mills, artists Viviana Astudillo-Clavijo and Michael Brown, and Harbord BIA chair and painting auction winner Neil Wright





## Downtown West Solar Energy Project

Air pollution, climate change and renewable energy are major issues. Almost every day, politicians at all levels are talking about these important subjects.

Tired of all this talking? Ready to do something about it?

The Downtown West Solar Energy Project is a group of people working to bring solar energy to Harbord Village and the Trinity-Spadina area. This project, led by HVRA board members Tim Grant and David Booz, is organizing a bulk purchase of solar electric and solar water heating systems for individual homes and finding ways to mount solar energy systems on multi-unit residential buildings. The electricity would be sold to the province under the new Standard Offer Contract program for \$ 0.42 per kW-h. The domestic hot water would be used in each household. We also have a second committee working on solar energy opportunities for condominiums

*“Solar energy is exciting and has the potential to be a major energy source, especially in the urban environment”*

Tim Grant, David Booz,  
and solar panels



and co-ops, including developing a demonstration project that will show what kind of solar projects make sense, and looking for creative ways to finance a large project for this type of building.

### Solar Energy Systems

Since our first public meetings in late September, a group of interested people has been investigating all aspects of rooftop solar systems. Most recently, a Request for Information and then a Request for Proposal were sent to solar vendors.

By the time you read this, **we'll have selected vendors** for the solar electric and solar hot water heating systems and organized a series of public meetings tentatively scheduled in May where we'll present the vendors, answer questions and indicate the deadline for signing up. After the deadline has passed, the solar vendor(s) will arrange a free site visit to confirm that your rooftop is suitable and discuss any variations that may be necessary. Once questions are answered, individual homeowners will purchase their systems directly from the selected vendors. The vendors will be responsible for the supply, installation and warranty of the complete solar system, including all required solar panels, peripheral equipment, installation, connection, testing, commissioning and warranty support.

### Costs

The costs for each system will depend on the number of participants and the details of the contract. Solar electricity-

generating systems can cost \$12,000 for a basic 1-kilowatt system and \$18,000 for a 2-kilowatt system, with an expected payback of 15-20 years. By contrast, solar water heating systems cost \$4,000 to \$7,000 and can have a payback of five to seven years, depending on the amount of hot water used in the household. We intend to announce a couple of financing options to minimize the upfront cost of these systems.

Solar energy is exciting and has the potential to be a major energy source, especially in the urban environment.

**If you're interested in being a solar energy pioneer**, please attend one of the following public meetings:

Thurs. May 10, 7:30 p.m.:  
Walmer Road Baptist Church,  
188 Lowther Avenue at Walmer.

Sun. May 13, 1:30 p.m.:  
Alban's Boys and Girls Club,  
843 Palmerston Avenue, south  
of Dupont.

Thurs. May 17, 7:00 p.m.:  
Christopher's House, 248  
Ossington Avenue at Dundas

Wed. May 23, 7:30 p.m.:  
**St. Stephen's in the Fields**  
Church, 103 Bellevue Avenue  
at College.

(Meeting schedule subject to change – please check the website for updates).

For more information, to confirm meeting dates, or to get involved with our group, please visit [www.OurPower.ca](http://www.OurPower.ca) and [www.harbordvillage.com](http://www.harbordvillage.com). Or contact David Booz at 416.806.2669, [dbooz@boozengineering.com](mailto:dbooz@boozengineering.com), or Tim Grant at 416.960.1244, [tim@greenteacher.com](mailto:tim@greenteacher.com).



## Neighbourhood for sale?

Maybe.....not?

**The University of Toronto's** recently announced business plan contemplated the sale of the Huron-Sussex neighbourhood, 108 Victorian houses tucked in between Robarts Library and Spadina Avenue, north of Harbord Street.

A month later, the University of Toronto area liaison committee members, concerned that there be public participation in any moves affecting many long-term and lower income residents, pressed the university for detail and were informed that the sale might not be happening after all.

...Which we take as a maybe.

But more students there will certainly be. The University plans to increase its enrolment of graduate students, a move which, in their view, necessitates an increase in campus floor space, to the tune of four Robarts libraries.

The expansion will take place at all campuses, including St. George. The University has initiated a process to revise the Part II area plan, zoning rules which have defined where the university can build on the St. George campus, to what height and how massively. Harbord Village Residents' Association has actively pressed for an open, city-run process, with full neighbourhood consultation and participation.

One major site to watch is the Planetarium and the Historic Flavelle house to its south, which is flanked by the law and music faculties. A second, sensitive site right next to the neighbourhood is Spadina circle, which was an approved building site under the exist-

ing Part II plan. HVRA has been arguing for the preservation of the marvellous Victorian roofscape, which we see coming south along Spadina Avenue from Bloor Street. The University said it would have to move its trash facilities elsewhere.

Other planning developments in the neighbourhood:

- HVRA has concluded its inventory of neighbourhood houses, which captures a physical description of front and back streetscapes and which provides statistical background for the completion of a specific zoning for our neighbourhood, called a Part II plan.
- College Street has been through a public process of planning, called a visioning

study. This defines allowable heights and streetscape improvements.

- A second visioning study is underway for Bloor Street from Avenue Road to Bathurst, Phase II to be Bathurst to Christie.
- Councillor Adam Vaughan met with representatives of all **residents' associations in Ward 20** and has begun a ward-level planning study. He is committed to bringing in Part II plans from Dupont Street to the Lake and University Avenue to Bathurst St. so that neighbourhoods will not be fractured and destroyed by spot developments.

- Sue Dexter

*"The University plans to increase its enrolment of graduate students, a move which, in their view, necessitates an increase in campus floor space, to the tune of four Robarts libraries."*

Huron-Sussex



Photo by Christina Hartling



## Community-Police Liaison Committee: priorities and update

*“Crimes committed within this broad area appear to be either on the decrease as compared to last year or constant”*

One of the committees that link the HVRA to our neighbouring associations and other community organizations is the 14 Division Community-Police Liaison Committee (CPLC).

This committee meets the final Tuesday of each month with the objective being to encourage a meaningful community-police partnership for

greater safety and security in our communities. In addition to the substantive issues, the committee serves to introduce the various 14 Division Community Response and Crime Prevention officers who work in our area.

The meetings are chaired by Superintendent Ruth White. Issues vary month by month, but an ongoing monitoring of crime and disorder within the boundary served by 14 Police Division remains a constant of our meetings.

Crimes committed within this broad area appear to be either on the decrease as compared to last year or constant — with some minor month by month variations.

One recent issue for discussion has been the piloting, following community consultations, of what is called the CCTV project — cameras in designated high crime/incident areas. Toronto Police received \$2 million to run these pilots.

A pilot ran on Yonge Street during the December/January holiday season, and 31 and 42 Divisions have

applied to be the next pilot projects.

Within 14 Division, a request has been made — apparently with community approval — to have a camera project in the Bloor/Lansdowne area. The pilots are to run for six months to see whether there is an actual impact on crime. While the CPLC expressed strong support for these pilots, some concern was raised as to whether the crime rates in our specific areas warranted that degree of camera monitoring

At the meeting held on February 27, a representative from **St. Stephen’s Community House** came to the CPLC to describe their *Conflict Resolution Service*.

This free service works to mediate community disagreements pertaining to complaints such as noise, parking, fences, landlord/ tenant issues and small claims issues. For more information, you can call 416.925.2103 ext. 229.

If you have policing concerns pertaining to our neighbourhood that you would like to have raised at a CPLC meeting, please contact :

- Margaret E. Beare (HVRA board member for the north-east) at 416.926.8984 or [mbeare@osgoode.yorku.ca](mailto:mbeare@osgoode.yorku.ca).



How Police Division 14 defines its neighbourhoods



## Needing volunteers and donations for treeing Harbord Village

Later this spring, HVRA will embark on what is perhaps the most ambitious community tree initiative in any single Toronto neighbourhood in recent memory. Inspired by the success of a tree inventory conducted 12 years ago on two city blocks within the NW part of the Annex, HVRA's Treeing the Village committee is planning to conduct an inventory throughout Harbord Village in June and July.

The inventory is but the first step in engaging local residents to help overcome worrying city-wide trends towards reduced tree canopy, less diversity of tree species and fewer overall trees.

To do this, the committee first needs to recruit 40 additional volunteers and raise \$6,850 in charitable donations to pay for the project.

Why should you volunteer? During a day-long "Neighbour-Woods" training session in late May you will be among 70 other local volunteers who will learn how to identify common tree species, assess their size and health and record these details on special data sheets. During June and July, you will work under supervision with another volunteer to do an inventory of all the trees found on two blocks within the Harbord Village.

**You'll work at a leisurely pace,** and by the end, you will have so much knowledge of local trees that you will be the envy of your neighbours and invited to all the dinner parties on your street!

Why are donations needed? Most of the \$6,850 is needed

to pay for the Neighbour-woods training sessions and the salary of a graduate forestry student to coordinate the project and write a final report in August.

We know that \$6,850 is a large amount of money, so we are very thankful that Evergreen, a Toronto tree advocacy organization, has agreed to provide charitable receipts to all that donate a minimum of \$30 towards this project.

Rather than collecting donations, **we've decided to collect pledges of donations, until we're certain that we have the promise of enough funding to launch this project.**

What happens after the tree inventory? A public meeting will be held in the fall to release the results of the Harbord Village Tree Inventory. **There, we'll seek community**

input about what needs to be done to improve the urban forest in our downtown community.

Our committee is interested in organizing bulk purchases of native trees and shrubs.

We also want to recruit volunteers to actually plant some of those trees and shrubs for those who cannot do it themselves.

Hopefully, by this time next year, our neighbourhood will begin to look a lot greener, the air will be a little cleaner, and we can all enjoy cooler summer temperatures that come with having more shade trees.

If you would like to volunteer, please contact Tim Grant, 416.960.1244 or [tim@greenteacher.com](mailto:tim@greenteacher.com).

If you are willing to make a financial pledge to this project, please contact me. Please be assured that you will only be asked to write a cheque once we have collected enough pledges to proceed.

- Tim Grant, chair, Treeing the Village committee

*"... by this time next year, our neighbourhood will begin to look a lot greener, the air will be a little cleaner, and we can all enjoy cooler summer temperatures that come with having more shade trees"*

Trees in a Major St. yard





# HVRA's organization

JOIN HVRA  
AND LIVE  
LONGER!

HVRA  
NEEDS  
YOU

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, Clean-ups, Trees:*  
Tim Grant, 960.1244.
- *Graffiti Removal/ Transformation:*  
Jane Auster, 534.9888;  
Michael Heydon, 963.9600.
- *Traffic (Streetscape, Speed bumps, Pinch-points):*  
Rory Sinclair, 966.1523.
- *Committee of Adjustment/Bylaw Compliance:*  
Rory Sinclair, 966.1523.
- *Communications, Newsletter:*  
Jane Auster, 534.9888;  
Richard Gilbert, 923.8839.
- *Membership:*  
Katrina McHugh, 833.5900
- *Fall Fair:*  
Rory Sinclair, 966.1523.
- *Awards, Community Recognition:*  
Rory Sinclair, 966.1523.
- *Heritage Conservation:*  
Richard Longley, 961.2766;  
Sue Dexter, 964.9527;  
Julian Kitchen, 935.0757.
- *Liaison with BIAs/Conflict Resolution:*  
Rory Sinclair, 966-1523.
- *College Street Revitalization (winding down):*  
Richard Gilbert, 923.8839;  
Michael Heydon, 963.9600.

## HVRA Board 2006-2007

Chair	Gus Sinclair	966-1523	rory.sinclair@rogers.com
Treas.	John Pham	920-9788	phaminhong@hotmail.com
Sec.	Sandra DeAthe	929-3621	sdeathe@interlog.com
Memb.	Katrina McHugh	833-5900	kmchugh@trebnet.com
Area Representatives:			
NW	Jane Auster	534-9888	jauster@rogers.com
NW	David Booz	806-2669	dbooz@boozengineering.com
NE	Stuart Schoenfeld	964-3223	schoenfe@yorku.ca
NE	Margaret Beare	926-8984	mbeare@osgoode.yorku.ca
SW	Michael Heydon	963-9600	michael@citytv.com
SW	Jane Perdue	923-7065	jperdue@sympatico.ca
SC	Richard Gilbert	923-8839	mail@richardgilbert.ca
SC	Richard Longley	961-2766	longley_fovea@sympatico.ca
SE	Tim Grant	960-1244	tim@greenteacher.com
SE	Leslie Thompson	964-6393	lthompson@lesrisk.com
UoT	Sue Dexter	964-9527	susan.dexter@rogers.com

## Membership stuff

### Membership soars to over 400!

Wow! From 30 stalwart souls at the HVRA launch just four years ago to over 400 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 2007?** Now's the time. Visit [www.harbordvillage.com](http://www.harbordvillage.com) OR fill out the renewal slip with this issue of the Newsletter and mail 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 membership secretary Katrina McHugh at [kmchugh@trebnet.com](mailto:kmchugh@trebnet.com).

HVRA's mailing address is:  
PO Box 68522, 360A Bloor Street West, Toronto M5S 1X1

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