

Spring 2008

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Harbord Village Residents' Association

Contents:

Message from the HVRA chair.....	1
When in doubt, draw a picture.....	2
Hallelujah potholes!	2
Fresh from the farm to HVRA.....	3
A second year of solar.....	4
Kick up your heels..	5
Monthly readings....	5
More and more tree projects.....	6
The Earth Hour party in Harbord Village	7
Get ready for the great pumpkin festival....	8
HVRA Board and Membership Stuff	8

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.

Message from the Chair of the HVRA Board

Dear wonderful HVRA members:

I am constantly amazed by the energy and smarts of you, our members, and your HVRA board. Not content to rest on the laurels of the success of past projects, we have set in motion brand new ones since the AGM last October. Here is just a sample:



- Michael Kerman, a member from Major Street, approached the board with a proposal for a community dance. He has been involved in the Contra Dance movement in various parts of the city. The dances are **not "partnered" so much as** line and square dances to live music. See the article by Michael Kerman elsewhere in this newsletter.
 - HVRA officially signed on for Earth Hour. Read inside to learn how we did.
 - Tim Grant, your southeast area rep, is introducing a post-Halloween Pumpkin Festival. See Tim's report for more information.
- The HVRA Heritage Conservation District #2 will be a reality by the AGM in the fall. Good work and cooperation from the residents of Robert Street!

Your chair guy

Rory 'Gus' Sinclair

Annual HVRA Spring Meeting

Tuesday, May 13, 2008, 6:30 for 7:00 p.m., Kensington Health Centre, 25 Brunswick Avenue
A Great Lineup! Put this date in your calendar – Three great and informative presentations!

- Locally grown produce is coming to Harbord Village!!!! Information, questions, answers on the HVRA Borden Street Weekly Farmers Market.
- Find out about the latest tree projects by our ever-active and groundbreaking HVRA Treeing Committee – find out about how you and your neighbour can get a half-price tree for your backyard and even get help digging the hole to plant it!
- Mapping HVRA – a demonstration of geography in action by a team of Ryerson students under the inspiration of Councillor Vaughan. See your community as you've never seen it before!

PLUS: Area caucuses and reports; committee reports, and more. Meeting to end at 9:00 sharp.



When in doubt, draw a picture

“A group of talented Ryerson students are coming to our spring meeting to show their first results”

What can be simpler than a map?

If developers want to come into a neighbourhood, wouldn't it help to have a map to channel their energies in a direction that is suitable to the community? Wouldn't it simplify things if developers knew what kind of neighbourhood they were planning to build in and what those neighbours valued in their community? Councillor Vaughan approached Ryerson University, and the course work that has emerged is now ready for prime time.

A group of talented Ryerson students are coming to our spring meeting to show their

first results. They've been mapping the lower parts of the ward, pointing out what exists, important buildings, heritage landmarks, where development is occurring, what developments are in play. This tool gives local residents, developers and officials at City Hall a composite and individual picture of developments at the local and ward level at the click of a mouse.

It's an important tool for developers because it captures the sense of each neighbourhood in single frame, so they can plan within a context, and **it's important because it puts** the virtual neighbourhood at the table at the beginning of the development process.

The students will also be generating a checklist of things each neighbourhood thinks are important: green space, trees, levels of intensification, areas that might be suitable for development, those where present levels of development are at a maximum. Each project will be scored on a report card to guide developers in how their plans might be adjusted to respond to neighbourhood wishes – and avoid lengthy and costly disputes at the Committee of Adjustment or the OMB.

It's quite a show!

Sue Dexter

Hallelujah potholes! In celebration of HVRA's holiest streets

April 2008 Pothole on Major Street

HVRA member Jonathan Center of 90 Major Street writes:

In the interest of continuing to "green" our community, may I recommend a new initiative:

to actively discourage the City from repairing any more of the potholes on our street. Aside from the fact that our street is noticeably quieter and calmer, as drivers now

around town from misguided communities seeking to eradicate theirs. It is a near certainty that should these potholes be repaired, we will once again see a huge increase in car traffic in our community. (I don't even want to think about the dreaded skate boarder thoroughfare that might be created, if the city actually plans on REPAVING our street. Gasp.)

Do you think that the HVRA would be interested in the "Harbord Village Loves Pot (Holes)" bumper stickers I'm thinking of producing?

fear our bombed out neighbourhood, they also provide ideal hiding places for our children, and additional parking spots for eco-friendly smart cars.

May I also suggest that we "adopt" any additional potholes from





Fresh from the farm to HVRA

In March I went to Scotland to attend my annual piping conference. I paid a visit to the small town of Fettercairn in south Aberdeenshire, the town I had discovered only a few months ago as the birthplace of my great-great grandfather – the immigrant to the New World.

In the centre of town is the market square, dating from around 1300, and at the centre of the square is the “**Merkat Cross,**” made of sandstone, well worn and also dating from 1300.

Market Square in Fettercairn is almost exactly the same size as the eastern third of the Green P Parking lot south of Bloor between Borden and Lippincott, home of our new farmers market. Could we be returning to a system of food distribution that our ancestors took for granted?

Following a phone call by our very active and smart board member, Sue Dexter, to **Farmers’ Markets Ontario, Sue** and I met with executive director Bob Chorney and set in motion this very VERY exciting initiative.

Together with the Annex **Residents’ Association and Huron Sussex Residents’** Organization, we are proud to bring you this wonderful weekly event. Here are the highlights:

- The market will be held every Wednesday from 3 to 7 p.m.
- The people from whom you buy your produce will have actually grown it, here in southern Ontario and mostly from the greenbelt area.

Nobody will be allowed at our market who has merely bought items at the Ontario Food Terminal and is flogging it from the back of a pickup truck. For example, there will be a bread maker at the market who not only grows the wheat but also mills it and bakes the loaves herself!!!!

- The market will have an official opening at the end of June, but the first day of operation will be Wednesday, June 4, featuring fresh asparagus and some root crops from last **fall’s harvest. As the growing season picks up, we’ll** showcase more and more goodies, including berries in June and corn in mid-July. The last day of the market will be Wednesday, October 29th.

If this initiative is as successful as I think it will, we can expect a number of benefits in addition to the fine **farmers’ fare: lots of** neighbourly interaction; musicians creating an even more festive atmosphere; increased contact with our local merchants on Bloor who will be encouraged to participate in the market with weekly

The Merkato Cross
in the market
square of Fetter-
cairn, Scotland

promotions; publicity for local **residents’ associations (there will a residents’ association** tent and table where the ARA, HVRA and HSRO can advise on our various initiatives as well as act as the contacts for the running of the market).

Ladies and gentlemen, we have done many things of which we can be proud, but **I’ve never felt so happy and** pleased about anything as I am about the farmers market.

Rory ‘Gus’ Sinclair

“Market Square in Fettercairn is almost exactly the same size as the eastern third of the Green P Parking lot south of Bloor between Borden and Lippincott, home of our new farmers market”





A second year of solar

“A prize will be offered to the first HVRA member who spots all of the solar energy systems installed in Harbord Village”

After a highly successful initial year, the HVRA-led Downtown West Solar Energy Project has extended its bulk purchase of solar electric and hot water systems for local residents for a second season. At a March 19 public meeting at the St. Vladimir Institute, approximately 100 people heard testimonials from local residents who installed solar energy systems last year. They raved so much about how happy they are with their systems that it began to sound like a solar energy revival meeting! Attendees also heard presentations from representatives of Solera Sustainable Energies and Goldwater Solar Services about how solar energy systems work.

The project was launched in September 2006 by David Booz and Tim Grant, both HVRA board members. The aim of this volunteer initiative continues to be to make it easy for residents to install solar water heating and solar electric systems on their rooftops. Residents who sign up are able to take advantage of the bulk prices

negotiated last year with the two solar companies. The project also encourages participants to increase the energy efficiency of their homes before investing in solar energy systems, because energy conservation is much more cost-effective. For example, many of those who



mental benefits have been much larger. It has been estimated that the solar hot water systems are now generating approximately 62,000 kW-hrs equivalent of energy and displacing 22 tonnes of carbon dioxide annually. The PV (i.e. solar electric) systems are generating approximately 30,000 kW-hrs of electricity and displacing 29 tonnes of carbon dioxide annually.



Photovoltaic (PV) installation on Willcox (top). Hot water (HW) installation on Robert (centre). PV+HW installation on Robert (bottom).

attended last year’s public meetings went on to purchase on-demand water heaters.

In total, downtown homeowners purchased 16 solar hot water systems and 12 photovoltaic systems last year, the majority of which have been installed. If you look up, you can see many of them sprouting from Harbord Village roofs. (A prize will be offered to the first HVRA member who spots all of the solar energy systems installed in Harbord Village, so please join HVRA and then get looking.) Besides helping to support the very small solar energy industry in Ontario with \$300,000 of business activity, the environ-

It’s not too late to get involved. Information on the project is posted on the HVRA website at www.harbordvillage.com and on the OurPower website at www.downtownwest.ourpower.ca. **If you’re interested in additional information,** contact David Booz at 416.806.2669 or Tim Grant at tim@greenteacher.com.

May the sun continue to shine!

David Booz and Tim Grant





Kick up your heels!

HVRA Community Dance June 7 at Trinity St. Paul's

There was a time (and maybe it has come again!) when neighbours would regularly get together at community dances. This was a way for people to have fun and get to know each other. Usually attended by friends and neighbours and called "kitchen parties," "barn dances" or whatever, they usually featured live music, refreshments and people of all ages.

In the HVRA community we probably have friends we see regularly, neighbours we pass on the street, residents we see at the annual HVRA fall event ... or those we don't see at all.

On June 7, HVRA will be holding a community dance at **Trinity St. Paul's Church (Bloor between Robert and Major Streets)** from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. so more neighbours can come out and socialize with each other.

You don't have to know the first thing about dancing. (You don't even have to dance if you'd rather sit and just visit!) Caller Judy Greenhill will be giving out simple instructions for us to follow as we dance to an energetic blend of Scottish, Irish and Quebecois music played by Guelph's

Relative Harmony. Judy is an experienced dance caller and performing artist who has led community dances and many other dance events for many years. She will walk through and then lead the group in the dances.

Come with a partner or by yourself. You will dance with lots of folks, guaranteed. Bring your friends, bring your family, and bring your

neighbours for an enjoyable evening. If you have never danced before or dance all the time, this is an event made for you.

Admission will cost \$10, with any profits going to support the work of HVRA.

Michael Kerman, 'Dances on Major Street'



"You don't have to know the first thing about dancing"

Gus and Mary kicking up their heels (or whatever) at HVRA's 2006 Fall Fair

Monthly readings at Harbord House

Formerly Rower's Pub, the newly opened Harbord House at 150 Harbord Street has launched an impressive reading series on the first Wednesday of each month.

On May 7th, poets Stephen Cain and Olive Senior will read from their latest books of poetry, and Gale Zoë Garnett will read from her latest novel. On June 11th,

five writers will read from their latest works. There is no cover charge, but a hat will be passed. For more details, visit www.harbordhouse.ca or call 647.430.7365.

"... an impressive reading series on the first Wednesday of each month"



More and more tree projects

This winter, HVRA's Treeing the Village committee received a \$25,000 grant from the City of Toronto to provide subsidized backyard trees this spring and fall to area residents who want them. We've distributed fliers door to door and mailed letters to all of the absentee landlords to encourage them to purchase backyard trees for their properties.

Central Tech students will help us dig all the holes for the new trees on the first weekend in May, so that we can plant the first batch of trees on the following weekend. A second planting will occur in late September. For a list of available trees, visit www.harbordvillage.com or call me at 416.960.1244.

As this newsletter goes to print, we remain hopeful that **the federal government's stu-**

dent summer employment program will fund us to hire two U of T forestry students to complete the second half of the tree inventory launched last summer with the help of 40 volunteers. Once completed, the results will provide us with a good overview of the health of the urban forest in Harbord Village. And it will enable every resident who visits the HVRA website to readily learn what types of trees are in the neighbourhood and read about the condition of their own trees. (See the website for more details.)

This spring we'll also be launching our Adopt a Street Tree campaign. Volunteers will canvass local businesses to adopt a street tree outside their business and ensure it receives lots of water throughout the growing season. We hope to raise funds to photo-

graph each store employee who agrees to water a tree with a framed portrait of that person standing beside his or **her adopted tree.** If you're willing to canvass businesses along one block of Bloor, Harbord, Spadina or College, please contact Richard Longley at 416.961.2766 or email him at longley.fovea@sympatico.ca.

Finally, at our public meeting on March 27, there was great enthusiasm for two other **"arboreal" projects.** We now intend to hire a **"village arborist,"** who will be asked to prune the trees on the properties of participating households at a discount rate. This will save both money and time for homeowners and ensure their trees get the care they need. Secondly, we are planning one or more tree care workshops in late May and early June, where residents can learn to recognize problems and learn how to take care of their trees. For more information about these initiatives, visit the website or contact Sandy Smith at 416.324.8965 or by email at s.smith.a@utoronto.ca.

We welcome any assistance, big or small, that you can provide to help us with these projects. Please call me at your earliest convenience if **you'd like to help.** Our committee is excited about the **projects we've taken on** and are hopeful that – together – they'll help us create a leafier, healthier neighbourhood.

Tim Grant

Former HVRA board members Jane Auster and Sandra DeAthe (both of whom we much regret to say have left or are leaving our area) demonstrate the muscles they used to keep the new and older Sakuras alive on Bathurst Street during last summer's drought





The Earth Hour party in Harbord Village

Harbord Village registered as a participant in Earth Hour, March 29, to make a call for action on climate change by encouraging residents to switch off lights between 8 and 9 p.m. **Here's how Earth Hour looked in the Village.**

At 7.30 p.m., neighbours, their arms laden with food, hurrying to reach a local potluck supper in time for lights out, wished each other "Happy Earth Hour".

In a house on Robert St., cakes were being iced as an Earth Hour special dessert treat.

Harbord St. felt bustling and festive. **Like New Year's Eve.** The corner store on Harbord at Robert did a rush of last-minute flower house gifts.

Party-goers who walked down Brunswick from the north bore the first news: **Honest Ed's sign went out** before 8 p.m. Central Tech was dark.

At 8 p.m. people came out onto their porches to look south. The CN Tower had

switched off. At one Harbord St. restaurant, patrons applauded when the owners turned out the lights and began cooking by candlelight!

By 8.30, residents walking from Major and Ulster to Borden just south of Bloor estimated about 75% of the houses were completely dark.

Near College, one resident wrote: **"I found last night's event quite fun. A real sense**

flickering with candles inside. One home had a large dinner party, looked like a Barry Lyndon scene, with candelabras **on the table."**

Most of the businesses along College did not participate, but the Cloak and Dagger Pub was dark, with rows of candles in the window and back. Went to a birthday party afterwards, lights stayed off, **candles remained "on". Every-**

On the left, downtown Toronto on a normal March Saturday evening. On the right, downtown Toronto during Earth Hour on March 29. (Photo courtesy of WWF Canada.)



of bonding with neighbours and friends. I walked my dog for part of the hour; other neighbours were out walking as well. We spoke about the initiative and checked out the houses together. Lower Lippincott did well, I'd say about 50% were dark, many houses

one looked much younger.

At midnight, on Brunswick St., a group of friends who had spent the entire evening sitting by a fire, engrossed in quiet conversation, realized it was time to go home!

Folks started talking about **what's next. Here are a couple** of their ideas:

Celebrate Earth Hour and conserve power by going dark the full evening of the first Saturday of every month.

Next Earth Hour, encourage folks to get out of their cars!

Good job Toronto! Good job Harbord Village!

Sue Dexter

"At one Harbord St. restaurant, patrons applauded when the owners turned out the lights and began cooking by candlelight!"

Here are the numbers for the City of Toronto:

March 29	normal usage	3,000 kilowatt-hours
Earth Hour	target usage	2,745 kilowatt-hours
8 p.m. use		2,885 kilowatt-hours
8.36	TARGET MET	2,745 kilowatt-hours
8.54	TARGET EXCEEDED	2,738 kilowatt-hours

- Energy consumption dropped by 8.7%
- In all of Ontario, 900 MW of energy was saved, the equivalent of taking over 11,000 cars off the road for one hour.
- The energy saved in BC and Ontario alone was equivalent to turning off 20.5 million lights.



Get ready for the great pumpkin festival!

“HVRA's first pumpkin festival will take place on Harbord Street, 7-9 p.m. on Saturday, November 1, the day after Halloween.

JOIN HVRA:
SLEEP BETTER
AND LIVE
LONGER!

Mark your calendars and start thinking of a design you might carve on the front of a large pumpkin. HVRA's first pumpkin festival will take place on Harbord Street, 7-9 p.m. on Saturday, November 1st, the day after Halloween.

The idea began in Calgary and was imported by the MacDonnell-Roncesvalles Residents' Association in Toronto's west end. For the past four years, west end residents have brought their carved pumpkins to a park. Last November, a row of more than 1,000 lit pumpkins cast an eerie glow as it snaked through an otherwise dark park.

Since we don't have any large parks in Harbord Village, we

turned to the Harbord Street Business Improvement Association, which has enthusiastically embraced the idea. The restaurants along Harbord have agreed to set up outdoor tables for displaying pumpkins and add a pumpkin theme to their menus that night. The BIA intends to place large "celebrity" pumpkins at each corner, which will be carved by art students at Central Technical School, based on designs submitted by local celebrities.

Meanwhile, we've asked the city to turn off the low pedestrian lights that evening, and residents and businesses will be asked to turn off their exterior lights to focus attention on the lit pumpkins. Local

convenience stores will be encouraged to order many more pumpkins for Halloween next October. And we expect the city will agree to send a crew and truck at the end of the evening to remove all the pumpkins for recycling.

Tim Grant



Membership stuff

Membership soars past 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 2008?

Now's the time. Visit 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.

HVRA Board 2007-2008

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