

News & Views

A NEWSLETTER FOR BIA STAFF AND BOARDS | December 2012 | Vol. 3 No. 10



Awards night at the historic venue of the St. Lawrence Hall; Councillor Sarah Doucette joins John Kiru in presenting awards

ANNOUNCING THE WINNERS AND ENCOURAGING MORE WINNERS-TO-BE

By John Kiru, Executive Director, TABIA

SAFETY TIP HANDLING OF MONEY

With thanks to Canterbury, Australia

- The customer service area should be clearly visible from the street.
- Don't count cash in front of the public.
- Leave your cash register open and empty after closing.
- Change your cash handling procedures on a regular basis – such as days and times of banking.
- Don't carry cash in a marked bag.
- Clear excess cash frequently and randomly.

There really weren't any losers at the 2nd Annual Toronto BIA Recognition Awards event at the St. Lawrence Hall on Nov. 13. It's just that a few BIAs were singled out for their achievements. Not a juried event, this event recognized some of the efforts that have been going on in our BIAs. But it's important to realize that *all* of our BIAs have achieved a great deal. Pick any one of them and you're bound to see amazing changes along their "main streets" since that BIA was formed or even in the past couple of years. So congratulations to one and all. A list of the "chosen" with some photos, appears in this issue.

ONTARIO BIA AWARDS - A BIG DEAL

The *juried* award gala stomps into Toronto in April when the Ontario Association of BIAs hands out awards to various BIAs at the annual BIA conference. I encourage all of our BIAs to look into this and apply. At least, applying gives you an appreciation of what judges are looking for and an understanding that your initial goals are so important – and should be measurable.

When you apply, you'll be supplying answers that are related to four criteria: innovation replication, representation and outcome. And when you win, you will be showing your BIA and your community that you are recognized beyond your borders and by your peers for innovation and creativity. Now, that's not a bad thing!

The deadline to apply is **Mar. 1**; there's sure to be a category for something your BIA has done or achieved this past year.

Call for submissions

<http://www.obiaa.com/UploadedFiles/2013%20Call%20for%20Award%20Submissions.pdf>

WHAT'S INSIDE

Toronto BIA Recognition Awards Profile: Dundas West BIA On The Move

2
3
4

News to Use for Business Owners and Managers
Upcoming Events and Dates

4
4

2ND ANNUAL TORONTO BIA RECOGNITION AWARDS A FEWS OF THE WINNERS



PERSEVERANCE AWARD Queensway BIA

David Crate, Treasurer; **Kinga Surma**, Assistant to Councillor Peter Milczyn; **Michael Borromeo**, Chair; and **Franco Filice**, Board member.

Said Michael: "We are proudly new, after many decades and three tries at this, and we became a BIA in September." Michael found the recognition event "really class." "It's great to get out and network with other people who are doing the same thing as us," he said.



SMALL BUDGET, BIG IMPACT AWARD Bloor Annex BIA

Wade McCallum, Board Chair; **John Wakulat**, TABIA Chair; and **Mike Major**, Manager, BIA Office, City of Toronto.

Both Wade and BIA coordinator Janice McHugh thought it was a lovely surprise to receive the award which was for the colour-coordinated pole wraps and banners. The BIA added an irresistible holiday touch: "We now have 21 *Kissing Stations* with mistletoe hanging from the clamp-on lights. On the sidewalk we've indicated the best position to have a kiss, and it says: Approved by the Bloor Annex BIA".



ROUND OF APPLAUSE AWARD Bloor West Village BIA

Councillor **Sarah Doucette**, **Alex Ling**, Past Chair and **Paula McInerney**, Chair

"After amalgamation, the City wanted businesses to pay for their own garbage pickup. Originally, they wanted to charge \$5 for each bag with the Yellow Bag Program but with TABIA we renegotiated the price to \$3.10. When they changed the store where we could buy bags, they made it inconvenient for the businesses in my BIA, so I have been buying the bags for them with my own money and then the businesses can purchase them directly from me," said Alex.



COMMUNICATIONS AWARD Baby Point BIA

Sarah Doucette, City Councillor, **Darryl Kaplan**, Chair and **Dennis Maslo**, Vice Chair

"We were surprised to win and very pleased," said Darryl. "We don't have staff, so we volunteer Board members use social media whenever we can find a few minutes. We find it can make a huge impact -- and it's cheap and easy".



SPECIAL AWARD

Andrew Chomentowski, Roncesvalles BIA with the widow and sister of Michael Comstock

A special award was given out this year- the Inaugural Michael Comstock Community Builder Award. It was presented to Mr. Andrew Chomentowski, Roncesvalles BIA, for his 38 years of service to his community and for serving on the Board since the BIA's inception in 1986. Michael Comstock passed away on September 22, 2012 and had been, up to the time of his death, TABIA's volunteer president and a founding member and past chair of the St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood BIA. The award will be a lasting legacy to Michael and his commitment to the mom and pop businesses on the various Main Streets of Toronto.

JUDGING TABIA AWARDS

TABIA's executive team judged the awards. In this second year of competition, BIAs were also able to nominate themselves as well as suggest other BIAs that were deserving of an award.

A list of all the award winners is posted on the TABIA website at: http://www.toronto-bia.com/images/stories/and_the_winners_are.pdf

Generous sponsors for the evening included: City of Toronto - Economic Development & Culture, Tourism Toronto and Toronto Community News (TCN).



Attractive murals adorn many walls



A rep from Toronto Community Housing acknowledges the important collaboration with the BIA



Bold graphics define the fence at the parkette

PROFILE: DUNDAS WEST BIA

DUFFERIN AND DUNDAS - A QUIRKIER VERSION OF YONGE AND BLOOR

If you were transported to the centre of the Dundas St. West BIA in the daytime, you'd think you were in a quietly unpretentious neighbourhood. It hardly seems unique, but on closer inspection, it certainly is. For starters, the "main street" is angled on a SE to NW grid due to the CNR tracks that snake through the BIA. It has no fancy hotels or flashy facades and only one big Superstore. But that doesn't tell the whole story of the area the *Globe and Mail* called "cooler than New York" and why there's such a low vacancy rate.

The BIA extends for approximately 10 blocks (from the east corner of Rusholme to the west side of Lansdowne) and includes almost 200 businesses. Mom and Pop stores that have been around for 30-40 years are juxtaposed next to some of the newest, freshest, most interesting restaurants and shops around. Some might assume that chefs and business owners have chosen this area because rents are still reasonable but it's also due to the easy, natural vibe. The area has many fine businesses including art galleries, vintage and hip clothing stores, many beauty salons and even the Lula Lounge, known on this strip, long before any of the newer arrivals. "You could say we have a little bit of everything for everyone," said Helder Ramos, the BIA's coordinator.

DIFFERENT VIBE A FEW YEARS AGO

But it wasn't always so. The BIA began its operation in 2006, and at that time the area was a bit run down and beset with petty crime and

vandalism. "It was *not* Queen St. West or College Street; all it had was a real inner city vibe," said Helder.

At that time, the City was intent on turning Dundas West into a thoroughfare where cars would just whiz on by, and so they removed all the parking meters. But the BIA fought hard and succeeded in having the meters replaced so that cars could stop and linger and businesses could flourish. "There's lots of pride about that, even to this day," said Helder.

PLANS FOR THE STREET

In addition to the traffic calming, the BIA formulated a plan to beautify the area, make it safer and of course, encourage people to linger. A recent article in the *Bloor West Villager* and online version of *Inside Toronto* quoted Councillor Ana Bailão who said that restoring Dundas West BIA's retail parking spots and ensuring an efficient end to the Dundas Street West road re-construction were two early accomplishments. "The fact that the BIA was just awarded 'best streetscape' by the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas last month was simply icing on the cake," she said.

New parkettes are part of the "lingering strategy" and as people stop and talk, they may also gravitate to the shops. As part of true community spirit, the BIA collaborated with Toronto Community Housing to help plant flowerbeds in front of their site.

Murals are also part of the mix with a new one added each year. The earliest murals were all painted by the same artist, with similar colours and equally attractive themes. Now, the BIA has artists paint murals that are attached to walls, rather than painted *on* them. The seven murals are kept graffiti-free.

One way to engage the people in the community is to get them involved so for one of the newer murals, the BIA held a workshop for children and youth who live in the neighbouring Toronto Community Housing. They asked them to draw the things they liked most in their neighbourhood and then the mural artist distilled their images to create an attractive mural. The new murals are more stylized than the earlier ones but they all seem to be part of a larger family.

FESTIVELY SPEAKING

In collaboration with the Little Portugal BIA, the Dundas West BIA is working to stage its first street fest with a street closure next June. Up to now, sidewalk sales in September, Art Crawls in October and guided tours for events like Jane's Walk (and hopefully, one day, Doors Open) were the main festivities. The "Shop DuWest" marketing campaign continues.

THE BIA'S BOARD

Board members are typically property owners who run their own businesses and either live upstairs or close by. They have not been recruited but come to the BIA on their own and "they care about more than just their bottom line," said Helder. They see importance in developing a greater social media presence and they agree that it's important to build upon what they've done, both with streetscaping and with ties to the surrounding community.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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NEWS TO USE

FOR BUSINESS OWNERS AND MANAGERS

ON THE MOVE

greenTbiz LAUNCHES SERVICE PROVIDER PROGRAM

greenTbiz is pleased to announce the launch of its Service Provider Partnership Program which will connect BIAs and BIA members to providers of sustainable goods and service solutions that will improve business bottom lines and reduce environmental impacts. For more information, please visit our website at <http://greentbiz.org/directories/services/>

ARCHIVAL PHOTOS

Occasionally you might want or need historical photos of your area. First stop should be your local library. If they have a limited stock or cannot loan anything out, have a look at this website which connects you to the City's archives and other great resources. And best of all, you can order prints.

http://www.blogto.com/city/2011/11/where_to_buy_vintage_photographs_of_toronto/

TWITTER LIST

The Liberty Village Business Improvement Area (LVBIA) has created a Twitter List of the various business improvement organizations that are currently using Twitter. The LVBIA has found that social media, especially Twitter, is an excellent marketing tool. The list's live feed can be found here: <https://twitter.com/i/#!/GiveMeLibertyTO/bias> Please feel free to subscribe to this list and share it with others.

The LVBIA has been able to compile 72 Twitter users for this list - Business Improvement Areas/Associations/Zones/Districts/etc. from near and far, from the local (Toronto) to the international. The list members can be viewed here: <https://twitter.com/i/#!/GiveMeLibertyTO/bias/members> If any BIAs were missed, please contact christine@lvbia.com to be added and provide your Twitter name, or contact the LVBIA through Twitter directly - @GiveMeLibertyTO

NEW STAFF

Gail Kendall is the new coordinator of the **Beach BIA** and has worked in various Beach businesses.

PROPOSED BIAS

Leslieville BIA received positive polling results and will be official after being approved by Council at the February meeting.

The proposed **Wilson Heights BIA's** polling period ends Dec. 20.

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Lakeshore Village BIA welcomes two new Board Members: **Cyrus Chan** and **Carol Ledden-Cusson**

Let us know the changes within your BIA at detsten@toronto-bia.com

UPCOMING EVENTS AND DATES TO KEEP IN MIND

HERE'S THE INFO YOU NEED NOW, FOR YOU, YOUR BOARD AND YOUR MEMBERS

Third Tues. of each month-TABIA inter-departmental meetings

City Hall, from 2-4 p.m. (**NO meeting in Dec!**) These are great sources of information on the latest news coming from City Hall or issues affecting BIAs. Questions? Contact Patricia at TABIA at 416-263-3229 or pmccartie@toronto-bia.com.

Enterprise Toronto – free programs and seminars for business people. Various Dates and Toronto locations www.enterprisetoronto.com/index.cfm?linkid=99&linktype=mainlink&fromurl=boxes&content_id=2580

Mar. 5 – Deadline for submission for 2013 OBIAA Awards

April 14-17, 2013 – TABIA OBIAA Conference at the Marriott Eaton Centre

LET US KNOW ABOUT YOUR UPCOMING EVENTS.

Send details to Patricia at TABIA who will publicize it on the TABIA website and share the info with *News & Views*. info@toronto-bia.com

AT THE BIAs

Nov. 24-Dec. 16 – Winterfest at Waterfront BIA. Check out Santa's Workshop for free arts & crafts, the Santa Cruise, pet's photo taken with Santa, free skating, big bands and DJ Night. www.waterfrontbia.com

Dec. 7-22 – St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood BIA -Victorian carolers performing Fri. eve, and Sat. afternoons. oldtowntoronto.ca

Dec. 13– Village of Islington, Toronto's Village of Murals, Music Studio and Creative Village, Free concert at Second Cup, Dundas and Islington

To Dec. 19 – Mt. Pleasant Village BIA's Winter Wonderland, a neighbourhood window decorating contest. mountpleasantvillage.ca

To Sat. Dec. 22 – Yonge Lawrence Village BIA Winter Retail Promo with Santa and Carolers. www.yongelawrencevillagebia.com

To Dec. 23 – Downtown Yonge BIA's Winter Magic Buskertainment – Sat. and Sun in various locations. www.wintermagic.ca/buskertainment

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Website: <http://www.toronto-bia.com>

TABIA Board Executive

President: John Wakulat, *Roncesvalles Village BIA*

Past-President: Alex Ling, *Bloor West Village BIA*

Secretary: Paul Dineen, *Cabbagetown BIA*

Treasurer: Henny Varga, *The Kingsway BIA*

Vice-Presidents: Amy Chow, *The Danforth BIA*
and Lionel Miskin, *Kennedy Road BIA*

Board Directors (BIA Board Chairs or Members)

Christena Chruszez, *Bloor-Yorkville BIA*; Harbhajan Dhillon, *Emery Village BIA*; Beverly Don, *Yonge Lawrence Village BIA*; Jeff Gillan, *Corso Italia BIA*; Jacques Jones, *Bloorcourt Village BIA*; Darryl Kaplan, *Babypoint Gates BIA*; Tonny Louie, *Chinatown BIA*; Don Panos, *St. Clair Gardens BIA*; Carl Porritt, *Long Branch BIA*; John Scheffer, *Lakeshore Village BIA*; Spencer Sutherland, *Queen St. West BIA*

Board Directors (BIA staff):

Lynn Clay, *Liberty Village BIA*; Keith Denning, *Roncesvalles BIA*; Grace Russo, *Little Italy BIA*; Robert Sysak, *West Queen West BIA*

This newsletter is also produced electronically and can be found at www.toronto-bia.com