

News & Views

A NEWSLETTER FOR BIA STAFF AND BOARDS | January 2011 | Vol. 2 No. 1

"HOWDY, NEIGHBOUR," PART TWO

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

At the Dec. TABIA Board meeting Executive Director John Kiru asked the Board how many of their BIAs were having difficulties of one kind or another with Toronto Hydro. Each of the 12 Directors, representing BIAs from all over the City, raised a hand. What seemed like just a fancy accounting manoeuvre of the City—selling street lamp poles to Toronto Hydro—has turned into a problem for BIAs. When the deal was made with Hydro, they were not aware of the relationship that the City of Toronto BIAs had fostered with the City for use of lighting Poles. This is an important item on TABIA's agenda.

Michael Comstock
TABIA President, Representing
St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood BIA

Will "My Neighbour Drives Me to Drink" be as wildly successful as "My Neighbour Jerks My Chicken?" Time will tell. According to John Kiru, Executive Director of TABIA, the intended outcome of the original "Get to Know Your Neighbour" campaign was to remind people within the GTA to shop locally. If the campaign goes as viral as it did in 2009, with people commenting on the posters in locations as varied as Denver or Germany and the campaign generating at least \$800,000 worth of free publicity, it's a bonus!

The second round of this "Think Big - Buy Local" campaign, created by The Backroom, TABIA's Agency of Record, began last year with ads that asked the public to send in their favourite phrase to describe a local business. The Backroom received more than 700 entries. Of that number 40 were shortlisted and then pared down to a dozen. These 12 were a selection of businesses from across the City. "The root cause for the number of submissions is that people are passionate about their neighbourhoods and stores," explains David West from the Backroom Agency.

Starting in the first quarter of 2011, 100 posters will start appearing in bus shelters and 200 in the subway system. Technically they will hang for a month, but last year many of the posters were displayed much longer or returned to various bus shelters depending upon the availability of space.

One grand prize winner gets the "Keys to the City" with a deluxe overnight stay at the Toronto Hilton and lots of prizes that were generously donated by BIAs such as Upper Village and the Kingsway. Stay tuned!



SURVEY UPDATE

Help us to help *you*... and maybe win a prize, too! New deadline: Feb. 2.

In the previous (the first and only!) issue of the December *TABIA News & Views*, we included a survey to find out your members' and your own information needs. Admittedly, it was a crazy/ busy time to send out a survey. So, we're back again so we can have a fair representative sample from our BIAs. If a BIA staffer or Board Chair hasn't filled in the form yet, please do so. There's a handy online link at:

<http://app.fluidsurveys.com/s/TABIASurvey/>

Reply by Feb. 2. One response will be picked at random to receive dinner for two at either the well-known and loved Rivoli or Queen Mother Restaurant, in the heart of the Queen Street West BIA. Many thanks to Laura Shaeffer and the restaurant owners for splitting the cost with TABIA.

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PROFILE: Kensington Market BIA



Whimsical bike racks now dot Queen West BIA

KUDOS!

This regular column will recognize some of the significant accomplishments of our BIAs. Let us know what you've done so we can spread the good news!

Queen St. West BIA engages art students to design bike stands

Fourteen clever new bike stands have sprouted on a stretch of Queen St. West between Simcoe and Bathurst Streets. Unveiled this past November, the stands represent the creative ways a BIA can work with an outside organization--in this case, OCAD University. Originally, OCADU students were challenged to design a bike stand that was both an urban sculpture and a usable design. When completed, they were to be placed at a redevelopment site within the Queen St. West BIA.

Marc Glassman, one of the jury members for the competition, also happened to be the Chair of the Queen St. West BIA. He said, "I was so impressed with the designs; I felt it was imperative we find a way to incorporate some of them into our streetscape."

The Queen St. West BIA chose two design concepts from the original contest – Speech Bubbles by Evi K. Hui and Olivier Mayrand and Halo by Michael Pham – for installation within the BIA. The BIA then embarked on a process with the City of Toronto to find a fabricator who would produce the racks exactly as they were imagined, and the City agreed to cost share in the \$24,000 tab.

Kensington Market is a place unlike any other. The market has been home to waves of immigrants –European Jews, Chinese, Portuguese and Jamaican – and still reflects their influence. An entire street showcases second-hand clothing that not only delights teens, it attracts the savviest of shoppers. What's worked so well in the past is a dedication to one-of-a-kind stores, deliberately excluding corporate interests and chains. There's been some accommodation over the years, but generally, the market has remained true to its intentions.

As one of Toronto's newest BIAs established in spring 2010, it's long been a tourist destination for visitors to Toronto, as well as city dwellers. It's the perfect place to stroll—to see, hear, taste, touch, smell (and buy!) especially on car-free days. It often makes the list of the 10 best places to visit in Toronto with tourists flowing through all year, particularly in the summer months. Many folks, local and otherwise, come by several times a week for groceries. And the locals, well, the locals are always there!

Now, as a BIA, the market is carefully balancing the needs of the businesses with the need to maintain its unique charm. As expressed by Board Chair, Mika Mareket, "Kensington Market is the epitome of unusual! We hope to keep it that way."

Pedestrians rule in Kensington

The streets are as narrow as alleys, so when it's time for Pedestrian Sundays, throngs of people take back the streets six times a year. Currently organized by Streets are for the People, this event may in time become part of the BIA's jurisdiction. The BIA holds a Festival of Lights during the winter holidays, filling the streets and Bellevue Square with lanterns and cheer. And even the undead get into the action at Kensington with the annual late-October Zombie Walk along Augusta Ave.

Plans for the coming year include basic cleaning, limiting the amount of garbage, discouraging graffiti, improving the lighting and getting more seating. The market is a tight-knit community so Board members are coaxed to join one-on-one. Most Board members are business owners. Board Chair, Mika, says she grew up in the area. "I feel very strongly that the Market needs to take charge of how it develops before others decide for us."

Kensington Market BIA runs north and south along Augusta Ave from College Street south almost to Dundas Street West. The east-west boundaries extend from Bathurst Street to the western boundaries of the Chinatown BIA with various streets like Leonard and parts of Bellevue included. The BIA also includes two lovely little parkettes.



Retro clothing and fresh food—two of Kensington Market BIA's draws

CONTACT INFORMATION

Mika Mareket, Chair
Telephone: 416-593-4663
Email: mika@goodegg.ca
www.kensington-market.ca

Four streetcar lines provide direct access to Kensington.

Taking a stand, in other BIAs

This isn't the first time a Toronto BIA has installed artistic bike stands along the street. Other BIAs include:

- **Yonge Lawrence Village** who worked with three public schools for their designs about four years ago.
- **Parkdale BIA** who installed 14 imaginative gargoyles, butterflies, trees and more thanks to assistance from Parkdale Liberty Economic Development Corporation and the City of Toronto.
- **Liberty Village** who have an artistic call out now to install a minimum of 20 stands in the spring: www.lvbvia.com
- Missed your BIA? Let us know what you've done!!

NEWS TO USE

FOR BUSINESS OWNERS AND MANAGERS

This column will bring you tips, suggestions, advice and the latest information or even legislation. In this issue: a timely tribute to snow.

Let it snow... somewhere else!

Each BIA has different budget priorities. Some BIAs keep a power washer handy to eliminate gum from sidewalks; some want to see their sidewalks at all times so they arrange for snow clearing. If your BIA is considering the latter, you might already have quotes from landscaping companies or private entrepreneurs with trucks and plows. The City of Toronto's website states that: Sidewalks will be cleared when the snow has stopped and the accumulation has reached eight centimetres (three inches) in November, December and March and five centimetres (two inches) in January and February. That still might leave a lot of time when snow covers your walk ways and

businesses demand you do something about it.

One BIA says that it pays \$275 a month to a private firm to clear a one-block, 65- metre long laneway, whether it snows or not. They pay an additional \$110 for each salting application, although be aware that there are complications regarding salting the public way. Those in the know say this removal and salting cost is reasonable and snow removal can be more expensive than just pushing the snow aside.

If you have any questions about the City of Toronto's role in snow clearing service, call 311.

Back Issues

If you want to refer to back issues of *News & Views*, go to the TABIA website and click on the link on the lower right side of the page- <http://www.toronto-bia.com/>

ON THE MAP

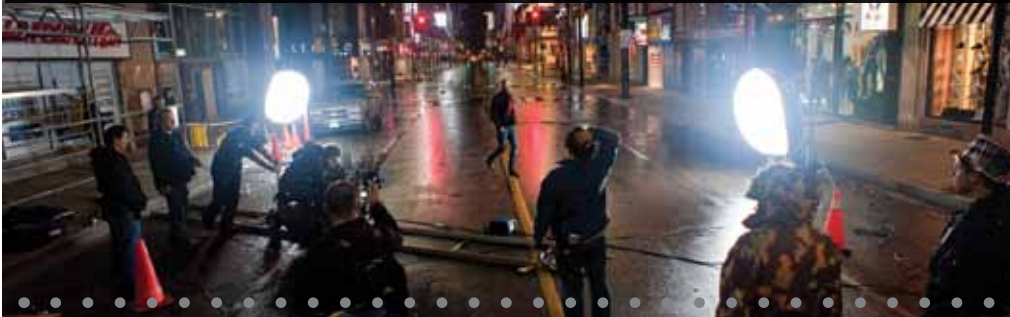
We're currently working on a BIA map to encourage visitors (both tourists and locals) to visit our neighbourhoods. Please make sure we have your BIA contact information, including logo, your office contact names, phone numbers, email, website, Facebook and other social media addresses by **Feb. 21**. Please include a two-line (25 words, maximum) description of your BIA.

QUESTIONS?

Call Faiza Ansari at 416-209-8881 or email at fansari@toronto-bia.com

WHEN FILM CREWS DESCEND

What to do when Hollywood, Hollywood North or Bollywood wants to film in your BIA



Yonge St in the Downtown Yonge BIA transforms into somewhere else in a film shoot

Inconvenience or opportunity

Filming can either be an enormous inconvenience or an opportunity— or even both.

It's an enormous inconvenience if it's going to disrupt traffic, decrease parking spots that regular shoppers would use or discourage people from visiting your BIA.

If you think there aren't too many disadvantages or inconveniences, it's best to acknowledge the message and accommodate the crew. However, you might have concerns due to some of the reasons noted above. If you think it will put a big dent in possible shopping and the timing is terrible, try contacting the location manager as soon as possible. Very often they give you very little notice so there might not be a lot of wiggle room. The City's Film Office may have already given out the permit; locations are decided long before you get to weigh in on whether it disrupts you or not.

The first clue that lights, camera and action are coming to your area is an email message. It will state that a film crew will be setting up numerous vehicles along streets within your area or along your main street.

It's possible that you will receive no notice at all because the film crew or the Toronto Film and Television Office didn't know whom to contact. Sometimes the film office lets you know; sometimes you'll get the message directly from the film's location manager.

Compensation

If it's barely acceptable or even intolerable, ask for compensation. It's what other BIAs do. They often ask for a donation to something like the graffiti removal fund or the community improvement fund. Whatever you think will benefit your BIA, give it a good name and ask the location manager to provide a little consolation prize to your BIA for removing a good chunk of business. It's not unreasonable to ask for \$500 or \$1000 if the trucks are there for more than a day and take up a lot of treasured parking space. If it's just for a couple of hours and doesn't really disrupt things, you probably won't get too far.

If it's for many days or weeks, you may want to develop a contract signed with agreements on both sides as well as a suitable compensation. Only you and the crew can decide!!

Extra mileage

Let your local or community newspaper know if you think that the presence of film trucks and or "stars" would be of local interest. This may even spur additional interest in your BIA and ultimately help you draw more business!!

THE BENEFIT OF BENEFITS

You've been postponing that visit to the eye doctor to get your eyes tested even though it's increasingly harder to read the fine print. You've also been ignoring that unpleasant feeling in the right back molar when you chomp down on popcorn. How long can you avoid the inevitable? If you had a benefits package, you'd be acting much faster on your health needs.

"Long overdue!" says Sandra Farina, Executive Director of the Emery Village BIA, when Apogee Financial Services started offering its services. Sandra has been pushing for a benefits package for years and now she and her staff finally have comprehensive packages.

To get you the benefits you deserve, TABIA has been working with John Colautti of Apogee Financial Services. In a July letter to all TABIA members and Board employees, John Kiru from TABIA stated that: "the provision of employee benefits is an important factor in recruiting and maintaining valuable staff for our BIAs."

50-50 Split Common

If your BIA decides to opt into this plan, it can fund the entire package as one generous benefit that's worth so much to any employee or it can pay any percentage of the cost with the employee paying the balance.

John Colautti of Apogee Financial Services will give our BIAs individual service and will customize employee benefits to our needs. Colautti comes to this position with genuine BIA experience, having worked as a coordinator in one of the BIAs. In addition to an insurance background, he has also worked in city councillors' offices.

Still in the initial phase, it's Colautti's hope that the service will be rolled out to BIA members so that they too can have the advantages of a benefits package. Sandra from Emery Village is disappointed that more BIAs haven't responded yet. When they do, there will be strength in numbers in getting ever-better packages for all.

Contact info:

John Colautti, Insurance Broker | Apogee Financial Services
3 Macdonell Ave, Ste 301, Toronto, ON M6R 2A3 | www.apogeefinancialservices.com
Email: John@ApogeeFS.com | Mobile: 416-894-5246, Office: 416-845-6542

UPCOMING EVENTS AND DATES TO KEEP IN MIND

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

TABIA inter-departmental meetings – Held the last Tuesday of each month at City Hall, from 2-4 p.m. Room TBA each month. These are great sources of information on the latest news coming from City Hall or issues affecting BIAs. Notices are always sent out preceding the meetings but if you have a question, contact Mirella Martino at 416-392-1291 or mmartin7@toronto.ca

Orientation Day

The City of Toronto BIA Office would like to congratulate all BIA members recently nominated to their Boards of Management.

The vitality of our Business Improvement Areas is an important part of making Toronto a more prosperous, livable and safe city. Accordingly, your involvement in BIAs is a valuable contribution to city-building.

In support of your efforts, the City BIA Office will host an orientation day for all newly appointed and re-appointed Board members.

The orientation day will take place in March at City Hall Council Chambers. Within the next few weeks, we will provide you with more details including date, time and program agenda.

We wish you continued success with your work on behalf of the BIA. Should you have any questions or comments please contact Mike Major, BIA Manager, or your BIA Advisor.

Depending upon City Council budget approval:

Facade Grant – Watch for an online link March 1 followed by a mailing to eligible property owners. Contact: George Wheeler at 416-392-1820 or http://www.toronto.ca/bia/financial_incentive_programs.htm

Mural Program - Application forms usually appear online starting in January, with the final application accepted the last Thursday in March. Contact: Michael Saunders- mrsaunders@toronto.ca at 416-392-1005 or http://www.toronto.ca/bia/financial_incentive_programs.htm

Enterprise Toronto – programs and seminars for business people

Check the Enterprise Toronto website each month for the latest offerings to help business people at <http://www.enterprisetoronto.com> or contact them at North York C.C. - 416-395-7434, Scarborough C.C. - 416-396-7169 or Toronto City Hall - 416-392-6646. Or, you may send an e-mail to enterprisetoronto@toronto.ca

Spring EXTRA-Specials from Enterprise Toronto!

- Dragon's Den – Enterprise Toronto will once again work with CBC's hit show on a spring event. Former Dragon's Den successful pitchers will be on hand to share their experiences and business tips.
- Small Business Arts Forum – This event is geared to the Arts Industry to educate participants on business tips they can incorporate into their businesses. End of March.
- Lessons from the Trenches – Successful Toronto Entrepreneurs share their experiences and tips to succeed. Late spring/early summer.

At the BIAs

Monday, Feb. 21 from 11a.m.- 4 p.m. at Kew Gardens on Queen St. East (and nearby locations) - **4th ANNUAL BEACH BIA FAMILY DAY FESTIVAL** - Presented by BMO, Bank of Montreal – www.BeachBIA.com

SEND US YOUR UPCOMING EVENTS.

To make it easier, just send details to Patricia at TABIA who will publicize it on the TABIA website and share info with News & Views. info@toronto-bia.com

John Colautti has the expertise to bring benefits to your BIA



TABIA Staff

Executive Director: John Kiru | Office Manager: Patricia McCartie
Membership Outreach and Development Consultant: Faiza Ansari
Communications Advisor and Newsletter Editor: Deborah Etsten



Contact TABIA at info@toronto-bia.com or 416-263-3295.
Website: <http://www.toronto-bia.com>

TABIA Board Executive

President: Michael Comstock, *St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood BIA*
Past 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*; Kevin Currie, *The Waterfront BIA*; Harbhajan Dhillon, *Emery Village BIA*; Beverly Don, *Yonge Lawrence Village BIA*; Jacques Jones, *Bloorcourt Village BIA*; Don Panos, *St. Clair Gardens BIA*; Carl Porritt, *Long Branch BIA*; John Scheffer, *Lakeshore Village BIA*

Board Directors (BIA staff):

Lynn Clay, *Liberty Village BIA*; Grace Russo, *Little Italy BIA*; Laura Schaefer, *Queen St. West BIA*