

# News & Views

A NEWSLETTER FOR BIA STAFF AND BOARDS | October 2011 | Vol. 2 No. 10



Scary times at Harbord Street BIA. Only at Halloween!

## PROFILE: Harbord Street BIA



**“The energy that comes from this street is quite amazing.”**

Describing his BIA as “a hamlet within a village within the City,” Board Chair Neil Wright is delighted with his historic neighbourhood, the residents and the businesses. He has been involved with the Harbord Street BIA for more than 30 years, back when Marshall McLuhan’s son, Michael, was the first Chair. Neil has never strayed too far from the BIA, alternating between being a Chair and a Director for the last 20 years.

This BIA which is only a few blocks long with approximately 60 businesses stretching from Spadina to Borden, (just east of Bathurst), has been a destination for a long time. The BIA is anchored by the University of Toronto on the east and by Central Tech H.S. on the west.

The BIA had its roots in 1983 when Neil met Alex Ling one of the founders of the Bloor West Village BIA – the world’s first BIA – in 1970. According to Neil, Alex was very articulate about the benefits of BIAs. Neil and his fellow merchants admired his vision and quickly adopted it. “We really ought to give Alex a lot of credit,” he says. “He’s a saint and governments should not tamper with this model because it works for everyone.”

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**Chair’s and President’s Reports return next month**

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# KUDOS!

This regular column recognizes significant accomplishments taking place in our BIAs. This month we highlight **Corso Italia BIA**. Let us know what you've done so we can spread the good news!

## AN INFORMAL AND UNOFFICIAL SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE TO SOME OF THE MORE POPULAR SERVICES:

- **TWITTER** is used to post short 140-character text messages that can be funny, whimsical, up-to-the minute and largely observational.
- **FACEBOOK** (the ever-popular social network service that's great for making fan pages or even having other groups all interested in the same thing, like your BIA!) is better for slightly longer messages but they still should be topical.
- **LINKEDIN** is used primarily for networking with other like-minded people or organizations and can be ideal when you want to find expertise or advertise your own.
- **FOURSQUARE** can be used to discover where your friends are or if "you" are a BIA, to encourage loyal customers and timely specials.
- **TUMBLR** is a sophisticated blog site where you can post anything but it's particularly well-suited for posting videos and large photos.

Facebook has gotten easier for some organizations. If you don't want to take responsibility for posting all the time or you're open to having the masses have their say, you can open up your page as a free-for-all. Warning: it might be taken over by special interest groups.

Best to let your own merchants know that they should only post once a week and suggest they not try a hard sell; instead, they should make their posts funny, entertaining and always interesting. People want to know about specials, so make the posting appeal in lots of ways. Also, make sure that an administrator can remove inappropriate posts as soon as they appear.

According to an Aug. 30 article in the *Wall Street Journal*, adult use of social media is soaring with two-thirds of all U.S. adults now using social media sites. People 18-29 are the biggest users, making up 83 per cent of the total. One third of all U.S. adults 65 and older now use social media.

## CORSO ITALIA- EMBRACING SOCIAL MEDIA

### With our own guide for the less-than-brave

It's possible there are lots of BIAs that are more social-media savvy than Corso Italia, but most remarkably, this BIA has been out there from the start. They had a website that attracted attention long before most BIAs even knew what a website was. When the BIAs got together to exchange information and learn from one another many years ago, this BIA was leading the pack in trying to convince others about the importance of an online presence.

Today, they mix it all up and use many of the popular formats. Brad Watkin, Corso Italia's coordinator, thrives on this activity. He says he uses Twitter every day, any time of the day or night. It may be in the office, but more often it's when he's walking the street, cell phone in hand. He says that his tweets are about anything and everything and they are usually fun and creative. Occasionally it's even about something that he likes in someone else's BIA since he doesn't feel that they are competing against one another.

Brad's background in social media is: learn as you go! He's completely self-taught. He encourages others to at least get a web presence. "It's not that expensive. It doesn't have to be super fancy with flash movies. It just has to be enticing." He also has these words of advice: "Don't just hype your specials. Add some personal interest and model yourself after someone or some organization that does it well." Brad's personal favourite is Bergdorf Goodman because the posts are interesting as well as entertaining.



Here are some typical posts from Brad:

- Sun is shining and three people just said "Buon Giorno" to me --> Wouldn't want to live/work anywhere else in the City... #CorsiItaliaTO
- Video: Meet the REAL singing Chef of Corso Italia! The multi-talented Carmine 'Big Ragu' Accogli... <http://tumblr.com/xtl4aeex6c>

"I like the idea of Twitter being more of a personal thing instead of hyping the area"



### SOME NOTABLES AROUND OUR TOWN:

- The Beach BIA has over 4,200 followers on Facebook.
- Many BIAs have embraced Twitter. For example, Junction T0 and Roncesvalles Village have posted more than 2,000 times.
- Other avid tweeters include Downtown Yonge, Queen West, West Queen West and Eglinton Way.
- Let us know about *your* successes and challenges, so we all can learn from them in a future column.

## PROFILE: Harbord Street BIA (continued)

### So many attractions

Neil proudly states that the Boulevard Cafe was the *first* restaurant in Toronto to have an outdoor patio more than 25 years ago. The restaurant is still thriving as are many with acclaimed chefs and cuisine. According to Neil, a certain well-known restaurant critic says that Harbord Street's restaurants compete with the best of New York City.

Speaking of attractions or draws, the Harbord Bakery has been an iconic fixture for 60 years when the Jewish community still had a nearby presence at Kensington Market. The community has largely moved on but they are still faithful and visit often. In this age of faltering book stores, three well-known independent book stores are thriving.

It's easy to brag about this street, but Neil insists it's not about bragging rights. "It's all about the neighbourhood." He adds, "While a 'who's who' of people come here regularly for quality and excellent service, they also come because they won't be bothered."

### Relationships matter

Neil is grateful for the close relationship he shares with the neighbourhood but it's one that they both cultivate. He meets regularly with the local residents' associations and they've even set up a conflict advocacy program which has greatly helped over the years.

Events are pretty low key in this BIA, but when they do something, it's different. They are known across the City for the Great Harbord Pumpkin Festival which occurs *after* Halloween on Nov. 1. The BIA collects pumpkins from the neighbours and displays them lit up at night on tables along the length of their BIA. It has turned into a lively event with residents' groups planning auctions in local eateries on the same night. The pumpkin concept

has taken on some diversions with celebrities submitting drawings of pumpkins and the local high school art students volunteering to carve the pumpkins. They also have pumpkin auctions and direct the proceeds to Sick Kids Hospital.

In addition to its neighbouring BIAs, the Harbord Street BIA has a strong relationship with the University of Toronto which flanks the BIA on its eastern end. For example, the BIA is one of the sponsors of the U of T Astronomy Club. Neil also knows that many of the superb athletes on campus have to maintain high academic standards, so the BIA embraces and encourages them and gives them a card that provides them with discounts at many of their stores.

In the coming years a high priority is to retain the integrity of the street, making sure that the area is clean and respectful. The BIA also keeps up its involvement with crime prevention and social justice for youth. Neil is mindful of the upcoming Pan Am games in 2015 which will have a decided impact on the BIA. With the world's press in their back yard, they will see how to capitalize!

This ambitious and hard-working BIA functions without a staff person. Neil and his seven-member Board are happy to share the work. As Neil explains: Having a strong volunteer board is essential to the success of any BIA, large or small; you don't need a large budget to make things happen.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Neil Wright, Chair | 416-961-1698, ext. 35 | [nwright@trebnet.com](mailto:nwright@trebnet.com)



# NEWS TO USE FOR BUSINESS OWNERS AND MANAGERS

**911 FOR BIAS** Calling Faiza Ansari is like calling 911—assistance when you need it! And it's part of the services that TABIA membership provides to BIAs. As Special Projects Consultant, Faiza's range of expertise is vast, with more than 10 years of direct BIA experience and a superlative events background. She will consult with BIAs about operations, events and marketing. Faiza, as well as John Kiru and Michael Comstock, can be booked to attend your AGM. You can contact Faiza at [fansari@toronto-bia.com](mailto:fansari@toronto-bia.com)

**HISTORY IN YOUR MIDST?** You should have received a message from the TABIA office about funding opportunities connected to the commemoration of the Bicentennial of the War of 1812. If you think your BIA can tie in, in some way, through a project related to the war, get in touch with a program officer to discuss your idea at [info@1812.gc.ca](mailto:info@1812.gc.ca) or 819-997-0055.

**AGM PROXIES** Chapter 19 has resulted in changes to BIAs, as you know. This is to remind you that proxies are allowed for members attending AGMs but forms have to be filled out five days prior to your AGM and sent to the downtown BIA office. The proxy has to be either an employee of the business or someone outside the BIA.

**INFO TO GO** These info kiosks should be arriving at all BIAs within weeks. Kyp and his staff at Street Furniture should be contacting your BIA, but if you haven't heard, you can contact Carly Hinks at [chinks@toronto.ca](mailto:chinks@toronto.ca)

**INSURING YOUR BIA** It's possible and even smart to get an insurance policy to protect your BIA's assets like murals or poles. One BIA has a policy that's only \$2,000 year. What will vary is the amount that's deductible before the insurance company pays your BIA any money. Worth a bit of research...

**VIDEO VIGNETTES** The company that TABIA hired to produce video vignettes of every BIA is working its way down the list, with many already completed. These short (and free to you) videos will be downloadable to your website, facebook page or anywhere that you can use it.

**PUTTING UP LIGHTS** If you are adding seasonal lighting to any trees in your BIA, let Forestry know, in case they are about to prune the trees. You don't want to lose any lights to an over-zealous pruner.

# 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. Room TBA. 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.

**Enterprise Toronto – programs and seminars for business people**  
Check the Enterprise Toronto website each month for the latest offerings at [www.enterprisetoronto.com](http://www.enterprisetoronto.com) or contact them at [enterprisetoronto@toronto.ca](mailto:enterprisetoronto@toronto.ca)

**Oct. 16 - Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon**- a TABIA supported event. Support your local Neighbourhood Cheering Section. [www.torontowaterfrontmarathon.com/en/nc.htm](http://www.torontowaterfrontmarathon.com/en/nc.htm)

**Oct. 18 - Small Business Forum 2011**, Learn. Connect. Grow. - Metro Toronto Convention Centre

**Oct. 26 - TABIA Awards Night** – 6 p.m. at St. Lawrence Hall, 157 King St. E. Recognizing the special accomplishments in our BIAs. Watch your email for more info.

**Nov. 15 - Deadline for the Celebrate Ontario Grant**. To apply for this grant go to: [www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/awards\\_funding/celebrate\\_ontario.shtml](http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/awards_funding/celebrate_ontario.shtml)

## AT THE BIAS

**Oct 14-Nov. 3 – Yonge Lawrence Village BIA 7th Annual Artwalk** – celebrating the works of local artists displayed in merchants' windows. [www.yongelawrencevillage-bia.com](http://www.yongelawrencevillage-bia.com)

**Oct. 15- Mount Pleasant Fall Fair** from 10-6, from Davisville to Eglinton Ave. E. Contests, giveaways, tastings, sidewalk sales and more. 416-262-9692 or [www.mtpleasantvillage.ca](http://www.mtpleasantvillage.ca)

**Oct. 22-Take a Walk on the Riverside, all day**. Walking tours, pub crawl. [www.riversidedistrictbia.com](http://www.riversidedistrictbia.com)

**Oct. 23 – Celebrate Diwali** (Festival of Lights) from 2-8 p.m. [www.albionislingtonsquare.com](http://www.albionislingtonsquare.com)

**October 24-31 – Halloweek, Church Wellesley Village** - A week of wickedly weird with the annual Jack-O-Lantern Competition and more on October 31. 416-393-6363 [www.churchwellesleyvillage.ca](http://www.churchwellesleyvillage.ca)

**Oct. 27- Nov. 6 - Bloor-Yorkville BIA's 3rd Annual Beautylicious** – Over 50 Bloor-Yorkville beauty and wellness specialists with “pre fixe” packages. [www.bloor-yorkville.com](http://www.bloor-yorkville.com)

**Oct. 29 - Bloor West Village Halloween Festival**, with treats, treasures and pumpkin carvings. [www.bloorwestvillagebia.com](http://www.bloorwestvillagebia.com)

**Oct. 29 - 9th Annual Pumpkin Festival in The Kingsway**, on Jackson Avenue. From a farm-themed street to street entertainers, catch the activities from 11-3. [www.kingswaybia.ca/events](http://www.kingswaybia.ca/events)

**Nov. 1 - Great Harbord Pumpkin Day Festival** – Hundreds of pumpkins lit up at night, displayed along the sidewalks. <http://harbordstreet.ca>

## 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](mailto:info@toronto-bia.com)



## PLAQUE UNVEILING

Bloor West Village BIA *invented* the BIA concept back in 1970. Now there are 72 BIAs in Toronto and hundreds throughout Canada and the world. On August 31, a group of VIPs helped Paula McInerney, Chair of the Bloor West Village BIA, unveil a commemorative plaque recognizing the beginnings of the BIA movement at the Neil McLellan Parkette across from the Runnymede Subway Station. Also attending: William Whiteacre, Robert Bundy, Gary Ward and Alex Ling – founding Board members of Bloor West Village BIA, representatives of all three levels of government, as well as representatives of TABIA, several BIAs and the City of Toronto BIA Office. (Bottom photo: Alex Ling and Robert Bundy | photos -Rosemarie Ling)

## EX-CELLENT AUGUST 30TH DAY!

At TABIA's 3rd annual “Day at the EX,” many fair-attendees had an opportunity to learn about important contributions BIAs make in their community and receive the new City of Neighbourhoods Map. Patricia, TABIA's office manager, and her assistants gave away over 600 Bloor West Village bags and over 200 City of Neighbourhood Maps. Children stopped by to colour T-shirts for “Alex the Beaver” and get their photos taken with him. TABIA would like to thank Exhibition Place for this opportunity and special thanks go out to Nadine Alton and Rosa Urbina who volunteered their time.

### TABIA Staff

Executive Director: John Kiru  
Office Manager: Patricia McCartie  
Special Projects Consultant: Faiza Ansari  
Communications Advisor and Newsletter Editor: Deborah Etsten



Contact TABIA at [info@toronto-bia.com](mailto: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*; Jeff Gillan, *Corso Italia BIA*; Jacques Jones, *Bloorcourt Village BIA*; Dan Glazier, *Crossroads of the Danforth 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*

### Board Directors (BIA staff):

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

This newsletter is also produced electronically and can be found at [www.toronto-bia.com](http://www.toronto-bia.com)