

News & Views

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

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

POSTERING AND GRAFFITI

Mayor Ford's new agenda includes welcome news for BIAs – opposition to graffiti. Postering and graffiti are plainly and simply activities that deface the public realm. Postering has had a 20-year run of *rights* challenges as BIAs and enlightened cities have opposed it.

- The rights argument is supported by anarchists and commercial interests pasting up the street lamps any other available surfaces with advertising. Fortunately we have a court ruling stating that if the City allows postering in *some* locations, we can ban it everywhere else. John Kiru notes that when the City bans posters, the rights group will challenge the number and location of the allowed postering places. The City should implement a postering ban soon and commit to court appearances and testifying if we want to resolve this impasse.

- Graffiti also disfigures our public spaces. We must begin the same legal process used with postering for this problem. Four Lakeshore BIAs worked together for years with their MPP to propose provincial legislation to ban the sale of graffiti material to kids under 18. Why was that not adopted?

NEW AGREEMENT WITH TORONTO HYDRO

by John Kiru, Executive Director, TABIA

Let's face it: working out arrangements for the use of street poles has caused a few headaches. After TABIA and Toronto Hydro's latest discussions, we're hopeful headaches will be a thing of the past.

How the system will work *now*:

1. You apply for the use of the poles you want (for hanging baskets, banners or lighting) through Right of Way Management as you have done in the past, sending your application to Rita Hoy, E-mail: rhoy@toronto.ca
2. She will forward your application to Hydro (and TTC, if necessary) who will validate each pole and state whether it's usable or not. You might have to walk the street with their inspectors if there's doubt about certain poles.
3. You will not have to go through this process each year. Hydro will automatically review the poles to determine if there are changes such as new City signage.
4. This past year, Hydro asked for Engineer drawings for every pole. Now they will only need one drawing per type of pole (i.e. concrete or wooden).
5. The permit application will cost \$200 per year, regardless of how many poles are requested or types of usage such as hanging baskets and banners.
6. James Schofield is head of Hydro's Permit Applications. Get in touch with him at 416-542-3108, if you have questions.

The inability to define graffiti has helped to justify it. But a part of the arts community sees freedom of expression as a reason to tolerate and defend the childish practice. The only time it's OK is when a willing building owner allows or pays for a *piece* to be painted on his property. Some young bucks have their delivery trucks painted in this way. In any other situation, the offense is an attack on public or private property.

Let's stop listening to politicians that sit on the fence and will not decide if it's art or crime. We should handle graffiti in the same manner as postering. Some walls or objects are legal and registered as places where the activity is allowed and everywhere else it is a crime and should be enforced.

Michael Comstock

TABIA President, Representing St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood BIA



WHAT'S INSIDE

Kudos to the Entertainment District BIA! 2
 Profile: Mount Pleasant Village BIA 2
 News to Use for Business Owners and Managers 3

Gimme (A) Shelter 3
 Upcoming Events and Dates to Keep in Mind 4
 Assisting BIAs 4

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!

The Entertainment District BIA Engages the Public

When you think of extraordinary streets in Toronto, ones that might even be called "cultural corridors," John St. doesn't come to mind... yet. But possibly before the PanAm Games in 2015, we might be looking at John St in a whole new way, thanks to the competition just staged by the Entertainment District BIA.

For the past four months, this BIA engaged the public in an exercise to see what creative ideas would come forth to transform John St – the central north south "spine" of their BIA. The idea came about because the BIA's Master Plan Advisory Board was looking at the road ahead. They decided it made sense to engage the public in a fun exercise while they went out about their tedious tasks of environmental assessments and various studies. What's notable in all this is: this is uncharted territory. The BIA was concocting something that had not been tried before and had to devise legal requirements for a contest of this scope.

They received 28 submissions from a wide range of talent, then narrowed that down to a little more than a dozen. A jury of influential Torontonians eventually selected five which were open for a public vote and on Jan 17th the results were announced.



The Entertainment District's playful winning entry - The Urban Ballroom

PROFILE: Mount Pleasant Village BIA

It's easy to say Mount Pleasant Village BIA has it all –great restaurants, fresh baked goods, lots of independent specialty shops, impressive services and even two movie theatres, a library and a park. Established in 2008 with an inaugural AGM in March 2009, this BIA includes 200 businesses along a 10-block strip from Eglinton to Davisville. Says Board Chair, Neil Siomra, "It's positioned really well; it's central Toronto."

With Neil and his seven Board members giving direction and coordinator Harsha Mutucumarana executing the plans, the Mount Pleasant Village BIA has been busy. Even though it may appear that they already have it all, the BIA wants to do as much as possible to make the area better.

While some BIAs pride themselves on different niches, this BIA could say it has a host of unusual shops such as ones offering lamp shades, doll houses, wild birds, spa services, chocolate or pet grooming. Neil raves about the quality a shopper can find, stating, "You can't find shops like these in a shopping mall!"

Creating greater awareness

In an effort to create greater shopping awareness, the BIA held a fall fair this year. Miraculously, the festival was pulled together in under three months. There's already interest in adding festivals in other seasons. The BIA joined the social network with a Facebook page and very active Twitter page that allows each merchant to post his or her own specials, events or monthly promotions. They've also done some advertising and branding and published a directory.

Streetscaping is high on the list with street sign replacement in the works and next spring beautiful banners and hanging flower baskets. Like many other BIAs, this BIA has noticed limitations to using existing street poles and is determined to buy their own poles. They've begun the mapping process with various City officials to find out where poles can be *officially* placed. New benches are also on the to-do list, literally down the road.

"Starting this BIA has given me the most satisfaction," says Neil. "I toyed with stepping down but the job's not done yet."



Mt. Pleasant BIA offers everything on its bright, wide street

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Neil Siomra, Chair – 416-484-9828
and owner of Pallucci Restaurant and Event Space

Grand Prize Winner: Urban Ballroom - Coryn Kempster

"An exciting and playful multi-functional outdoor room" was how the winning entry described their submission. It's a gathering spot, an event space, a place to have lunch, even a playground.

The voting public also scooped prizes. Congrats to the Entertainment District BIA for such a fun and engaging project as they move ahead on the actual street transformation which may or may not borrow ideas from any or all submissions.

To see and read more about the winning submission and the four finalists, go to www.torontoed.com/johnst

Free shelter advertising is appreciated by many BIAs including Yonge Lawrence Village BIA



GIMME (A) SHELTER

They are yours, free for the asking. In fact, only 23 of the 71 BIAs have bothered to ask for a shelter from Astral Media who generously donated a free shelter to each BIA, for their advertising and promotion needs.

The conditions for using them are pretty simple:

- They must be located in or quite near your BIA
- They are presently not being used for advertising.
- The BIA is responsible for having the creative work done. In other words: get a worthy idea and a way to express it and then find a great graphic designer to bring it all together. It must be a strong, powerful, but simple idea and able to be read from a distance and that means LIMIT THE WORDS!

Those who use them love them

They are a great way to get your message out, whether it's shop local, shop this season or come to our festival. Make sure you change your design as frequently as possible. The recommended amount is two to four times a year. After all, this is advertising and when it's up too long, the public just doesn't see it anymore.

The how-to's

- Get in touch with Tracey Gardner, Management Administrator at Astral Media at 416-924-2494, ext. 7268 or tgardner@astral.com
- Either have your poster printed at Astral's facilities or have it done by your own printer. If you choose your own printer, make sure you have the paper, size and distribution information in advance.
- They charge \$125 to print one poster but two is recommended since one might get damaged or destroyed, and they'll keep the spare for you.
- Hanging charges are \$25 per installation
- Not every BIA has available shelters. Tracey will explain.
- Want to expand your campaign beyond one shelter? That's possible too. Ask Tracey for more info.

NEWS TO USE

FOR BUSINESS OWNERS AND MANAGERS

BizPal

As a business owner or manager, BizPal could be your new best pal. It's a new, one-stop web-based service to help users find all the permits and licences they need from all levels of governments.

<http://app.toronto.ca/BizPal/Bzlnit.do?lang=en>

Going greener

greenTbiz is TABIA's energy and environmental conservation program. greenTbiz develops and delivers energy and environmental conservation programs which benefit the environment, while improving the bottom line of the businesses and properties within the BIAs. greenTbiz is *your* program for assistance in all matters relating to energy and environmental conservation for your business and property.

greenTbiz has partnered with the City of Toronto's ChemTrac Program to assist your business to reduce or replace the use of potentially harmful chemicals during your business operations. Their focus is to provide knowledge and awareness of alternative products and processes which may be suitable in addition to providing access to support resources to help identify opportunities.

In addition, information regarding new by-law regulations governing chemical use reporting will be reviewed including which businesses are eligible and a step-by-step reporting process. Best practices and case studies will be presented to illustrate the potential that exists to improve operations, reduce costs and improve human and environmental health.

To host an educational seminar, please contact Chantal Brundage, greenTbiz Program Manager, at 416-697-9000 or chantal@greenTbiz.org
Visit at www.greenTbiz.org

Keeping data safe

Data protection and security is becoming increasingly important in today's electronic world. Your BIA should have a disaster recovery and/or backup strategy in place so that your data is protected. In TABIA's continuing efforts to bring the highest level of service at the best possible price we have engaged in discussions with KnoxVault to share their expertise in this area.

For those of you who attended the TABIA Annual General Meeting, we talked about and provided literature from KnoxVault Data Security, a local Toronto company. Further to our discussions, KnoxVault and TABIA developed a program that will enable you and your members to use the latest technology in data protection and security. KnoxVault is offering this service to TABIA members at an incredible savings.

Via the KnoxVault TABIA program, you can ask KnoxVault to attend a BIA Board meeting, to provide a presentation and discussion about your data protection, security and anti-virus technology needs.

In addition, the KnoxVault TABIA program brings leading edge online backup for your BIA office so that your data is protected against any disasters such as fire or flood. Your BIA will receive a 20 per cent discount on all KnoxVault products and services. This special discount is also available to your BIA members.

Since TABIA would like BIA offices to be on top of these issues, KnoxVault will be contacting some of you to discuss setting up a meeting and/or attending a board meeting where they can provide your board with more information. To get in touch on your own, phone: 1-888-657-5547 or by email: info@knoxvault.com

UPCOMING EVENTS AND DATES TO KEEP IN MIND

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

Third Tues. of each month- TABIA inter-departmental meetings –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 Patricia at TABIA at 416-263-3229.

Wed., March 23- Boards of Management Orientation, (for Board members, BIA staff and City Councillors). From 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Learn what it takes to have a successful BIA

Enterprise Toronto – programs and seminars for business people

Check the Enterprise Toronto website each month for the latest offerings to help business people at 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

Tuesday March 8: 6 pm to 9 pm-**Dragon's Den - Learn How to Pitch**, Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St., West, Rotunda

Tuesday March 29: 9 am to 5 pm- **Small Business Arts Forum**, North York Civic Centre, 5100 Yonge St., Council Chambers



April 10- 12 - 2011 BIA National Conference, held at the London Convention Centre in London, Ontario. Themed "The triple return on investment of your BIA: Measuring the investment, innovation and impact of your Business Improvement Area," the conference will offer many useful sessions. Here are a few examples: media crisis management, retail revitalization, nightlife, getting the most out of your Blackberry, blogging, marketing your parking and grant writing.

The conference committee has been hard at work for many months to make this happen. Special thanks to Rob Hunter from OBIAA and his committee that includes our own hard-working co-chair, John Kiru. For more info, visit the BIA 2011 National Conference website: www.bia2011.com, email at info@obiaa.com or call toll free at 1-866-807-2227.

AT THE BIAS

Feb. 21 - Family Day on Toronto's Waterfront, presented by the Waterfront BIA, with free Family Day fun for kids of all ages all day long. Enjoy ice skating, live music, dog sports demos, arts and crafts and even special appearances by RBC Canadian Olympians! Visit www.waterfrontbia.com or call Harbourfront Centre at 416-973-4000 for more information.

Feb. 21 - Family Day at the Beach, 4th Annual Family Day Festival, Presented by: The Beach BIA and BMO Bank of Montreal. 11 a.m. - 4 p.m., check the website for more information at www.beachbia.com

Feb. 26-27- 6th Annual IceFest 2011,

presented by the Bloor Yorkville BIA in the Village of Yorkville Park to celebrate winter in all of its icy glory! Enjoy the circus theme, complete with clowns, mimes, ringleaders, princesses and circus-inspired food! Not to be missed: the IceFest and Ice Carving Competition on Feb. 26. More info at www.bloor-yorkville.com/icefest/icefest.html



SEND US INFO ABOUT 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

ASSISTING BIAS

Survey results

At press time, we were still receiving surveys from you. Since we'd like to tabulate as many responses as possible, we'll be giving you the analysis in the March issue. Thanks to all who took the time to answer the questions.

Consultant on board

TABIA has hired the services of a consultant to help bring the important issues of small

business to the attention of all three parties of the provincial and federal government. The consultant will also work with us to secure grants, capital and programming funding and will be in close touch with key media outlets to give greater recognition to TABIA as the de facto voice for small business.

BIA neighbourhood map

This spring, hotel concierges will have an important new tool for their guests – a map of Toronto's neighbourhoods with imaginative

icons denoting attractions within our BIAs. TABIA has been working on the design of this map for nearly a year and if we don't have your logo and website info, your BIA will not appear on the map. Additionally, the maps will be distributed in banks and other community venues and within the taxis of our project partner, Beck Taxi. They can also be customized by individual BIAs and distributed as you wish within your BIA. Get in touch with Patricia as soon as possible to give her your BIA information.

TABIA Staff

Executive Director: John Kiru Office Manager: Patricia McCarrie
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*