

A person wearing a full-body yellow protective suit and a black cap is holding a large snake. The person's face is partially visible through the suit's visor. The snake is coiled around the person's arm. The background is dark and out of focus.

BLOOR

NO.1

2010

BLOOR IS ROOTED HERE and we are interested in art, neighborhoods, small business, people, festivals, local events, architecture, arguments, garbage, schools, youth, discussions, walking, bikes, luxury items from Value Village, make-up, fashion, politics, trees, gardens, music, land development, new business, ideas, the rail and TTC lands, food, dance, air quality, not hating your neighbours, empathy, forgiveness, moving forward, remembering the past, success and failure. We believe in living where we live. We are not interested in Utopia, gate-keeping or predicting the future.

By Bloor we mean Bloor Street and the surrounding neighbourhood within walking distance from that street. We also mean the Bloor Street that is a major artery for Toronto, linking to our sister street, The Danforth. Bloor Street is a microcosm of the world's nationalities, reflecting the cultures of all the diverse communities that chose it as home. Bloor Street is also representative of inner-city main streets everywhere with their interconnected global urban issues.

One of the innovations embedded in this publication is that we not only explored interesting content but we were also able to initiate projects and artworks. Robert Burley's photographic essay Faith On Bloor, John Abrams' paintings of local parks, and Doug Walkers' portraits of Jutta Mason to mention a few.

We appreciate and thank the many generous people who have contributed. The launch of Bloor was made possible by an anti-hate grant from the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, which recognized that building an engaged community identity is an anti-hate program. Thank you also to the Bloordale BIA, for encouraging this and many other neighbourhood ideas. Bloor intends to be a publication that celebrates the works of individuals, groups, businesses and organizations that make living here vibrate.

We hope you enjoy reading Bloor.


Dyan Marie

BLOOR

NO.1

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UNDERPASS PROJECT

Richard Mongiat

Below: Bloor Street Underpass, just West of Lansdowne.



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THE UNDERPASS PROJECT

began when Adam Giambrone visited a DIG IN meeting in the winter of 2007. I have lived in the West Junction Diamond since 2002, with the many rail lines that cut through and define our ward. Because these tracks cross many of the main thoroughfares,

the neighbourhood has an unusually large number of underpasses. Councilor Giambrone mentioned that funding through the City's Clean & Beautiful program was available for beautification projects. Thus the seed was planted.

This was the perfect vehicle for a visual artist to contribute to the neighbourhood. Initially I considered painting an underpass along Dupont Avenue until I was asked to consider the underpass on Bloor Street just west of Lansdowne Avenue. Dyan Marie, DIG IN's founder, had

initiated "Culture Works" as DIG IN's contribution to the first BIG Festival. My mural on the south face of that underpass and her "Banner Project" would be part of this.

I proceeded to paint the south face of the underpass in the spring of 2008. At first I was

wary of working so publicly. I would arrive each day around 9:30am and paint until 5pm. I started to recognize everyone going to and from the subway, on the way to work, school or shopping. And they certainly noticed me. I was overwhelmed by the many comments of support from

people of all ages, nationalities and walks of life. They were intrigued and asked questions: "Why was I doing this?" "Why was I choosing to work without colour?" "Why had I picked the imagery that I did?"

Not everyone liked what I was doing but most people



Above: Bloor Street Underpass, North side and South side.



understood that by allowing the surfaces of the existing wall to play against the graphic imagery, I was bringing out the real beauty of what was already present. The oranges and flesh tones caused by water staining, the honeycomb shaped salt deposits leeching through the concrete, the multiple textures of decay and the patches of various grey paints covering over old graffiti had created their own marvelous painting.

What was wonderful was that everyone who stopped to talk was genuinely interested. People were taking ownership of a place that previously they walked by and ignored. Complete strangers brought me coffee, sandwiches and

fruit. They became neighbours as I got to know many of them. I missed seeing them every day when I finished and went back to the solitude of my studio.

As a consequence of my experiences that spring, in 2009 I painted the north face of the underpass to coincide with the second BIG festival. I would like to thank DIG IN, Robert Mays and Elio Capizzano at Clean & Beautiful. Toronto Free Gallery and The Value Village for storing my paint cart and everyone who stopped, talked and bought me coffee!

“
I was bringing out the real beauty of what was already present.
”

BLOOR/ GLADSTONE TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY

Jennifer Schmitt

Though libraries may contain a finite number of books and other materials, confined within a limited number of square feet, the sense of possibility that lurks within them has always been boundless. Betterment, imagination, community, possibility; these are concepts at play in libraries the world over.

FOR

OR NEARLY A CENTURY, an impressive brick edifice near Dufferin and Bloor quietly made its presence known within the community, and allowed generations to experience those core concepts. This building, the Bloor/Gladstone Branch of the Toronto Public Library, underwent an extensive renovation and expansion, and proudly reopened its doors to the community in July, 2009. The renovation embodies not only the architectural juxtaposition of the old and the new, but also a philosophical melding of what libraries were, what they have become, and how they will continue to evolve.



Libraries have always been about borrowing, whether books or music or movies, but borrowing shares the limelight with many other features here at the Bloor/Gladstone Branch. Dozens of computers await the next résumé, screenplay, or Facebook update. Free wireless internet access further ups our computing prowess, as those laptop-toting denizens of our lounge areas will be only too happy to demonstrate. Our electronic databases offer an abundance of information, allowing you to access everything from world newspapers to a repair manual for a '97 Chevy Blazer.

Programming is another aspect of library service, and we have managed to mesh the traditional with the innovative here as well. You'll find things like storytimes and author visits, but so too may you find video gaming tournaments and live rock concerts. Newcomers to Canada will take comfort in knowing that our Library Settlement Workers are here to ease the transition to their new home, and that conversation circles that will build English skills happen frequently. Whether you view programs as an opportunity to learn, to interact, or to be entertained, you'll find something here, and for free!

And finally, libraries are about community. The Bloor/Gladstone Branch acts as a meeting place for all ages, all cultures, and all income brackets. With so many disparities in life, the library is one place that can serve to level the playing field. Becoming a member allows everyone the same access to that possibility.

This is your library, and we welcome you to it.



CITY COUNCIL is the main governing and legislative body of the City of Toronto. There is one Councilor for each of Toronto's 44 municipal wards. Councilors sit on committees and on community councils in the area where they have been elected, and make decisions on behalf of their

constituents. They address issues that are identified by members of the public, through research, following-up on existing programs, and assessing services or policies. City Councilors are part of the everyday activities of running a city, working to achieve the City Council's goals. The term

How to vote:
toronto.ca/elections

POLITICIANS HAVE A DIRECT EFFECT ON OUR LIVES: VOTE ON OCTOBER 26!

“Bloor neighbourhoods have a low voter turnout.”

of office is four years. ¹ Historically, innercity Bloor neighbourhoods have a low voter turnout on election days, with Ward 18 / Davenport one of the lowest. This is a quick primer to encourage everyone to vote and elect the officials that we want to represent us in the city, provincial and federal government. There is an upcoming opportunity to elect our neighbourhood councilor and Toronto's city mayor this fall. From fixing streets, providing water, garbage collection, caring for children and the elderly, running public transit, developing and maintaining parks and public space, supporting the arts, and protecting our city's residents, to the way we think of ourselves as a City and the atmosphere we want to achieve: these elections can have a major effect on our lives. Please vote on October 26.

In a democracy we elect people to represent our concerns in governments. We hire our politicians by voting for them and we pay for them with our tax dollars. They work for us. It is important to let our politicians know what our concerns are, what issues we think are important for them to address and for us to vote for the person we think will do the best job. We also need to elect people who have good ideas and have a willingness to learn, the energy and passion to act, the communication skills to bring people together and the vision and good-will to lead.

Everyone will have a chance to meet the candidates in person at locally organized debates or hear them express their ideas on the TV, radio or newspapers. They may also have offices to drop into. Politicians have websites that detail the geographic areas

they are responsible for, their achievements in the past and the activities they are busy with at present.

If you don't have a computer, visit the local library. They offer free public use of their computers. The search engine, Google, has a language converter so that you can get information in most languages [<http://www.translate.google.com>]. If you need help getting started, please ask the librarian for assistance.

Bloor invited all of our current elected officials to comment on the following pages.

¹ toronto.ca/elections



What was your first project or effort undertaken in the area?

My first projects in the area were my community involvement through high school and into university. I was active in a number of community groups.

List three of your most satisfying achievements?

The constant support I receive from my community, both through their words of encouragement and at the ballot box. Receiving the appreciation of my colleagues and peers is also extremely rewarding. For instance, being honoured by the Right Honourable Paul Martin, when he asked me to move the Speech from the Throne for the 38th Parliament's first session, or when I was bestowed with the title of Knight of the Order of the Legion of Honour by the President of the French Republic. I have helped thousands of my constituents, representing them to the

best of my ability. Through my work both at City Hall and in Parliament, Davenport is a better place to live and work.

What would you most wish to see enacted in the future?

Older people in this community and across Canada continue to face ever increasing challenges just to make ends meet. I would welcome the enactment of measures to further assist older Canadians. I believe we need to improve CPP and OAS as well as take measures necessary to ensure that older Canadians are able to remain in their homes and have reasonably comfortable lives.

What regrets or disappointments have you experienced?

The government of Paul Martin was about to complete the Kelowna Accord with Canada's

First Nations peoples, institute a true national child care program, work more effectively with municipalities and so forth. It was a time of great opportunity and I think so much good was lost when the government was defeated in 2006.

What is your vision for the economic revitalization of your area?

I see Davenport as a vibrant community with a lot to offer. It is a great place to live and work. The area around West Queen West is a perfect example of how many areas in Davenport and all across our city can be cleaned up. New developments are taking

place in the area, mainly spearheaded by the renovation of the Drake and Gladstone Hotels. Livable, dynamic neighbourhoods where we can live, work and play: that is my vision for the economic revitalization of Davenport.

Do you think trains should be made cleaner and greener?

I have been a long-term supporter of cleaner and greener trains. I have continuously urged the province to electrify the Georgetown corridor, especially as it moves forward with the Union-Pearson rail link. The good health of the communities along the corridor is at stake here. It is time we invest substantially in our public transit system to make it more accessible, efficient, and greener.

Will the Pan Am Games of 2015 have an impact on the area?

The Pan American Games of 2015 will have an enormous impact on the whole GTA and the Golden Horseshoe. There will be no new sporting infrastructures built in this particular area of the city; however, the economic impact of this event will be felt across our city and region. New jobs will be created. We also expect more investment in infrastructure and transportation.

What is your attitude to racial and religious intolerance?

I am strongly opposed to any form of intolerance based on race, religion, ethnic background, gender or sexual orientation. Unfortunately, our society is still plagued by many forms of intolerance.

What role do you believe art and architecture could play in this community?

Art and architecture play an extremely important role in every community. Art is the channel by which we express our dreams and aspirations. It is extremely important that we encourage high standards for architecture in this city. It is also essential that we respect our heritage and do everything to classify more heritage buildings and protect them for future generations.

MARIO SILVA



B

LOOR STREET IS CLOSE to my heart. I grew up in a house about half a block away and my parents still live there. I remember helping my mom do her shopping errands on a Saturday morning, visiting

ADAM GIAMBRONE

the hardware store with my dad, and the daily walks to and from Dufferin or Ossington stations to get to school or other parts of the city.

Although it is one of Toronto's great avenues, our section of Bloor has also seen its share of hard times. That's why I'm thrilled to see the positive changes that have taken place on Bloor since I became the local Councillor for the area six years ago. There are hardly any vacant storefronts now and the crime problems are greatly reduced. New businesses and residents are moving into the area. From art galleries

to dollar stores, from retirees to young families buying their first home—all are bringing a genuine community spirit. I've worked on many local projects with the Bloorcourt and Bloordale BIAs and several residents' groups. We've added new streetlights and benches, new planters, flowers and trees, painted vibrant murals and worked on remarkable events like the BIG-on-Bloor festival. These improvements have revitalized the streetscape and helped create more appealing public spaces. This was possible because of the dedication and energy of local people

“This was possible because of

the dedication and energy of local people.”



who saw something in their neighbourhood that needed improvement. Acting locally is exactly how to bring about positive change, strengthen a community and build a more livable city for everyone. What will the future bring for Bloor? Although it's clear that we need to protect our stable residential neighbourhoods, with a million new people coming to the GTA in the next decades, some intensification will also be needed along our major avenues. Bloor Street is a prime candidate since it is fortunate to have a subway line already built directly beneath it. New development understandably causes anxiety for people, who question whether it will be good development or bad. The answer, of course, is that it can be either, depending on the quality of the architecture and the design.

As a community, we should reject tall, imposing buildings on Bloor and insist on high quality mid-rise development. Architects and developers need to design their buildings with the human scale in mind,

create attractive streetscapes, and include public spaces with trees, gardens and sitting areas. All new buildings should be built to efficient LEED standards to help fight climate change, conserve our scarce resources, and save the residents money on their maintenance and utility bills. The ground floor of these buildings should have well designed commercial spaces for our local businesses that will thrive with the added foot traffic generated by the new local residents living above. All levels of government need to do their part to ensure that adequate infrastructure and amenities are in place, that we have top quality hospitals, schools, daycares, parks, libraries and community centers.

I'm excited about the opportunities the future will bring for Bloor Street and for Toronto as a whole. I know that together we can build a more prosperous and livable city that we can be proud to pass on to our children and grandchildren.

TONY RUPRECHT

“A community needs a vibrant and open place to meet, assemble, and do business.”

A

COMMUNITY IS NOT just an accidental conglomeration of houses and businesses. It is, above all, a coming-together of people, a living, changing, growing thing, and in Toronto people arrived from all corners of the world – we have the most diverse coming-together on the planet.

People have always sought a common space to enact this coming-together. A community needs a vibrant and open place to meet, assemble, and do business. Bloor Street is ours.

Of course, when you collect such a diverse group of people, there are bound to be challenges, but it is my conviction that Bloor Street's greatest strength is its potential, and that potential lies in the people that live and work and walk along its length. Indeed, the recent past has seen a great deal

of positive change in the area. I have done all I can to encourage this. What have we accomplished so far?

Citizens must feel secure in their homes and safe on their streets, and there has been much recent progress in making Bloor Street safer. My colleagues and I at Queen's Park ensured that 500 new police officers walk the beat in Toronto. I followed with a walkabout in the Bloor and Lansdowne neighbourhood with the Chief of Police and requested more foot patrols. I was also proactive in the passage of recent legislation which protects consumers from exploitative door-to-door electricity and gas salespersons. Although my attempts to relocate exotic dance and strip clubs to non-residential areas have yet to meet with success, I remain committed to increasing public safety.

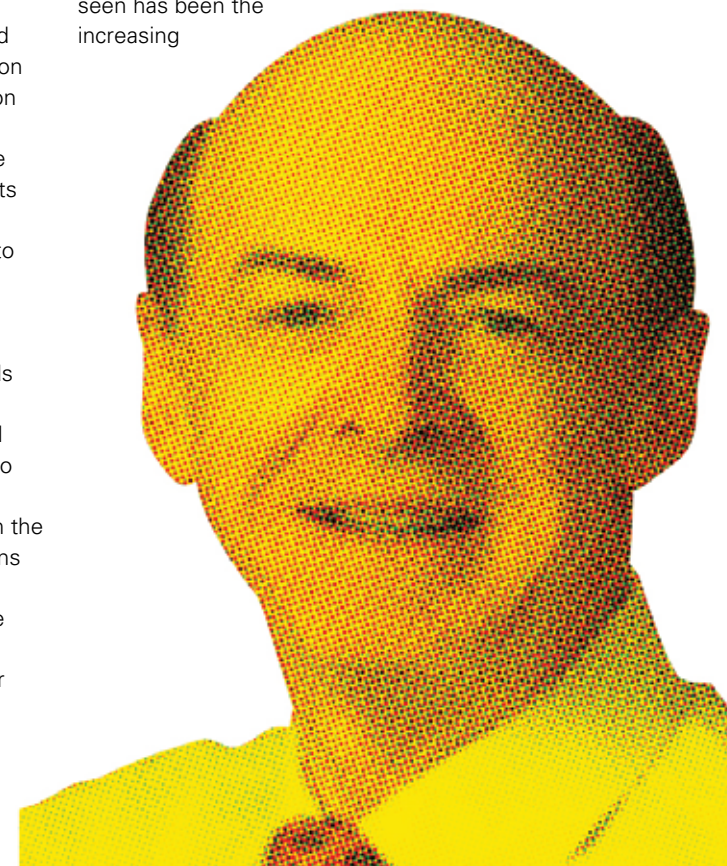
Greenspace is also vital to forging a pleasant, livable, breathable community. I have overseen the creation of such places, including the Davenport Nature Trail – converting grimy railway lands and underused industrial sites into clean, natural green space. Recently I authored two separate bills that encourage cities to build rooftop and community gardens, which will provide at least some access to sustainably produced, good, healthy food. I have worked closely with the Clean Train Coalition, sponsoring news conferences with them at Queen's Park, and I insisted that the present construction of the Pearson Airport-Union Station rail link include electrification infrastructure such as height requirements for bridges and grade separation. I will continue to advocate for electrification now.

A healthy community needs healthy citizens, and your health is important to me. I have written a brief guide to good health and held more than 20 public meetings on the effects of food and emotions on our bodies and minds, showing residents how the symptoms of old age can be delayed. I am an advisor

to the Anti-Aging Society (antiagingsociety.ca). Together we successfully encouraged the Premier to create the Ministry of Health Promotion. I take pride in the community's ethnic diversity and am the author of *Toronto's Many Faces*, which is constantly updated and distributed freely at each year's Big on Bloor Festival.

Things are changing on Bloor Street, but there is more that needs to be done. Fortunately, the most profound and encouraging change I have seen has been the increasing

engagement of citizens in building a better community. I encourage residents to continue to support local businesses; I encourage local artists to provide more public art; I support building intensification to attract more people and create more affordable living spaces. Above all, I exhort all in the community to continue to be engaged in the process of rejuvenation. By coming together we will ensure that Bloor Street realizes its great potential.



RON NASH DISCUSSES HOW BIAs WORK

RON NASH is with the Economic Development Division, BIA Office of the City of Toronto. His role is to advise and liaise with a number of BIAs including those in the Bloorcourt and Bloordale neighbourhoods.

Bloor: Could you please tell us what a BIA is and why they are important?

Ron Nash: A Business Improvement Area (BIA) is a geographic area consisting of commercial and industrial properties. BIAs are run by volunteer management boards selected from the commercial, industrial and property owners' general membership. These boards encourage local stakeholders to support their revitalization efforts, participate in their activities and become board members.

There are currently 70 BIAs across the city. They represent more than 27,000 small businesses. In 2009 the properties they included were valued at more than \$19 billion, generating annual tax revenue of approximately \$730 million to the City. That's quite a significant amount.

BIAs are key partners in marketing and promoting local business areas and undertake capital projects to enhance the business area. These projects include pedestrian scale lights, tree lights, banners, public art, holiday decorations, gateway entrances and customized street signs. This list can extend as far as the BIA's imagination.

BIAs are important to the City because they reflect the interests of the local commercial area. They provide advice and feedback about area improvements, information on how the area operates, and suggest local solutions to enhance the business climate.

What is your role with the BIA and the City of Toronto?

“

BIAs are important to the City because they reflect the interests of the local commercial area. They provide advice and feedback about area improvements...

”

What are some of the Bloordale and Bloorcourt BIA's important efforts?

Successes. One recent high profile success was participation as part of BIG on Bloor and providing financial support for this very successful festival.

Challenges. As the Bloorcourt and Bloordale Village BIAs have undertaken projects including lighting, planting, festivals and marketing, keeping up the level of engagement and expectation established by these activities may be their biggest challenge.

What else would you like our readers to know?

BIAs can play a key role in neighbourhood improvement. A BIA is only as strong as its membership and Board of Management. Tremendous momentum has been developed in the Bloorcourt and Bloordale communities over the past few years. Many people outside the community are not aware of the vast, positive changes that have taken place that have enriched the Bloorcourt-Bloordale corridor. Most business operators and area residents will confirm this. There is a new energy. Both BIAs have contributed to this.

membership and Board of Management.”

“A BIA is only as strong as its

“Our ongoing exhibitions are all free and open to the public.”

MERCER UNION

M

ERCER UNION is an artist-run centre founded in 1979. Our gallery is distinct from the commercial model in that artists lead the organization's governance and we are registered as a not for profit charitable organization. We aim to present the best in contemporary art practices and have in the past organized solo and group exhibitions by Canadian and International artists as well as innovative curatorial projects, events, lectures, performances and publications.

In fall of 2008, we relocated from our former home at 37 Lisgar Street in the heart of the Queen West area to our current address at 1286 Bloor Street West. The move represents a large growth opportunity for Mercer Union. We completed major interior renovations in order to transform the site into a venue appropriate to the presentation of art.

As many long-term residents of the neighbourhood will note, the building has housed many different businesses over time, serving as a banquet hall, a dance club and a dollar

store. However, a major point of interest is that the building's original purpose was as a cultural site—a neighbourhood cinema called “The Academy” that ran up until the mid-60s. By establishing our gallery at this site, we are thus restoring the cultural purpose of the building.

Our ongoing exhibitions are all free and open to the public – though donations are always welcome! As a charitable organization, there are various ways to support our activities: through volunteering, buying a membership, or making a tax-deductible donation to the gallery. Our past exhibitions included the group show “Days of the Eclipse” as well as a solo exhibition of the new 35mm film “50 Light Fixtures from Home Depot” by artists Christian Giroux and Daniel Young. We have also featured sculpture by Irish artist David Beattie, and a film installation by local artist Brenda Goldstein.

The gallery is open to the public Tuesday to Saturday 11AM to 6PM and all our current activities are listed on our website:

MERCERUNION.ORG



Above: Christian Giroux and Daniel Young, *50 Light Fixtures from Home Depot*, 2009.
35mm colour motion picture film loop, silent, 13:00 min. Courtesy of the artists.



IVEN THE OPPORTUNITY

to paint the parks in our neighborhood I've discovered, once again, the importance of these public spaces in the development and maintenance of a healthy urban community. Parks play an important role throughout all stages of life. For small children they provide places to play and dream. For adolescents parks are places to congregate and socialize. Adults stroll through with their new family, date or dog, while the elderly reminisce on the public lawn.

My park paintings fit in with my current practice of exploring archives as a source for material and as a creative principle for reinterpreting narrative and transition. I have been sourcing images in popular culture and experimenting with installation. Most recently I have been focusing on cinema as an

archive of signs that can be arranged into archive-like installations of paintings. This approach makes it possible to use the medium of painting to investigate ideas from other fields and frames of reference. Focusing on the archive as subject opens up a broad range of questions about the nature of discourse and power structures. By using a string of separate signs in the form of multiple paintings, an impression akin to Lacan's "I am the process of becoming" is allowed the 'potentiality' of representation in a visual context.

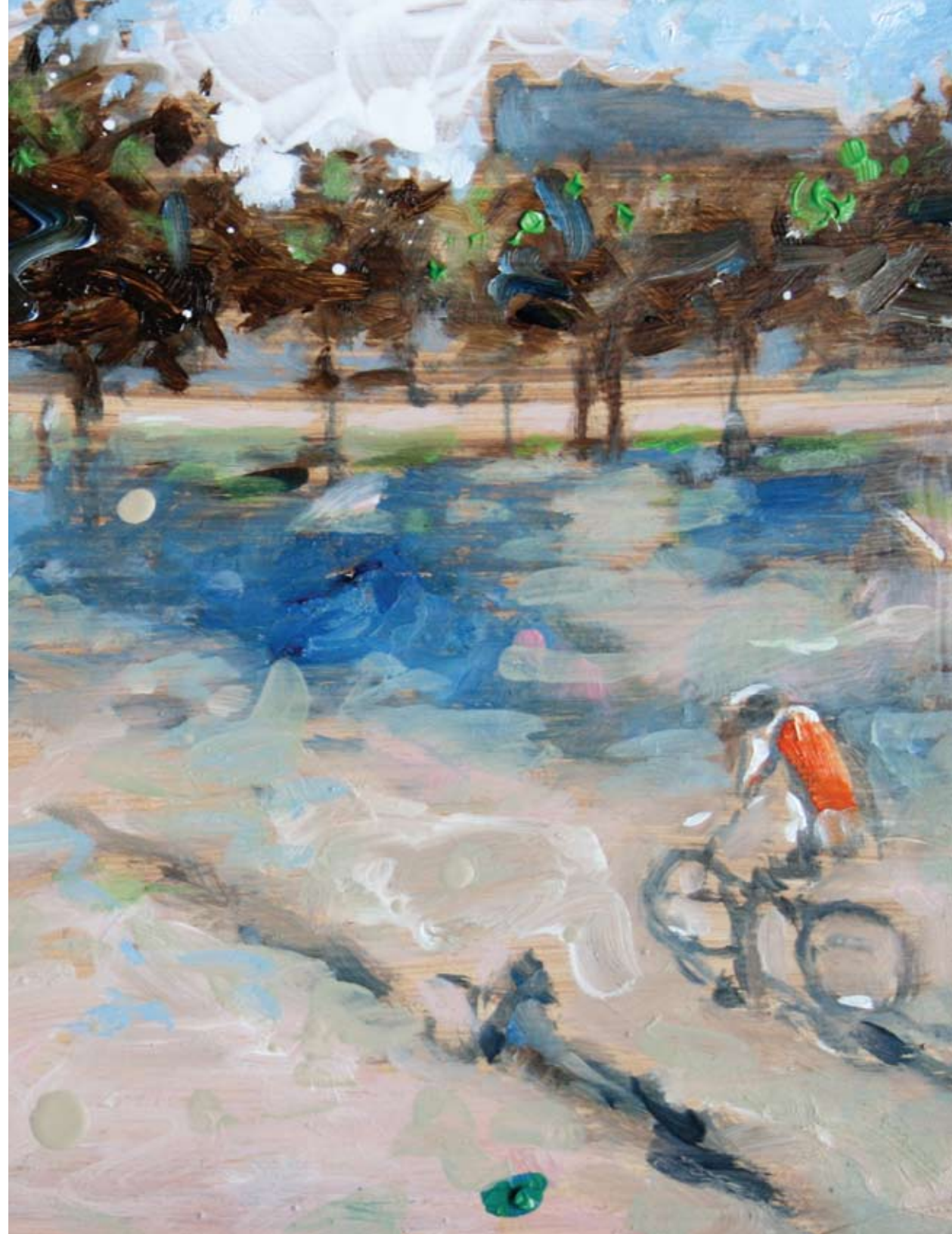
Using our city's parks as an archive category for paintings has offered me an opportunity to expand upon my notion of these urban environments as sustainable places to play out our lives and to make paintings about.

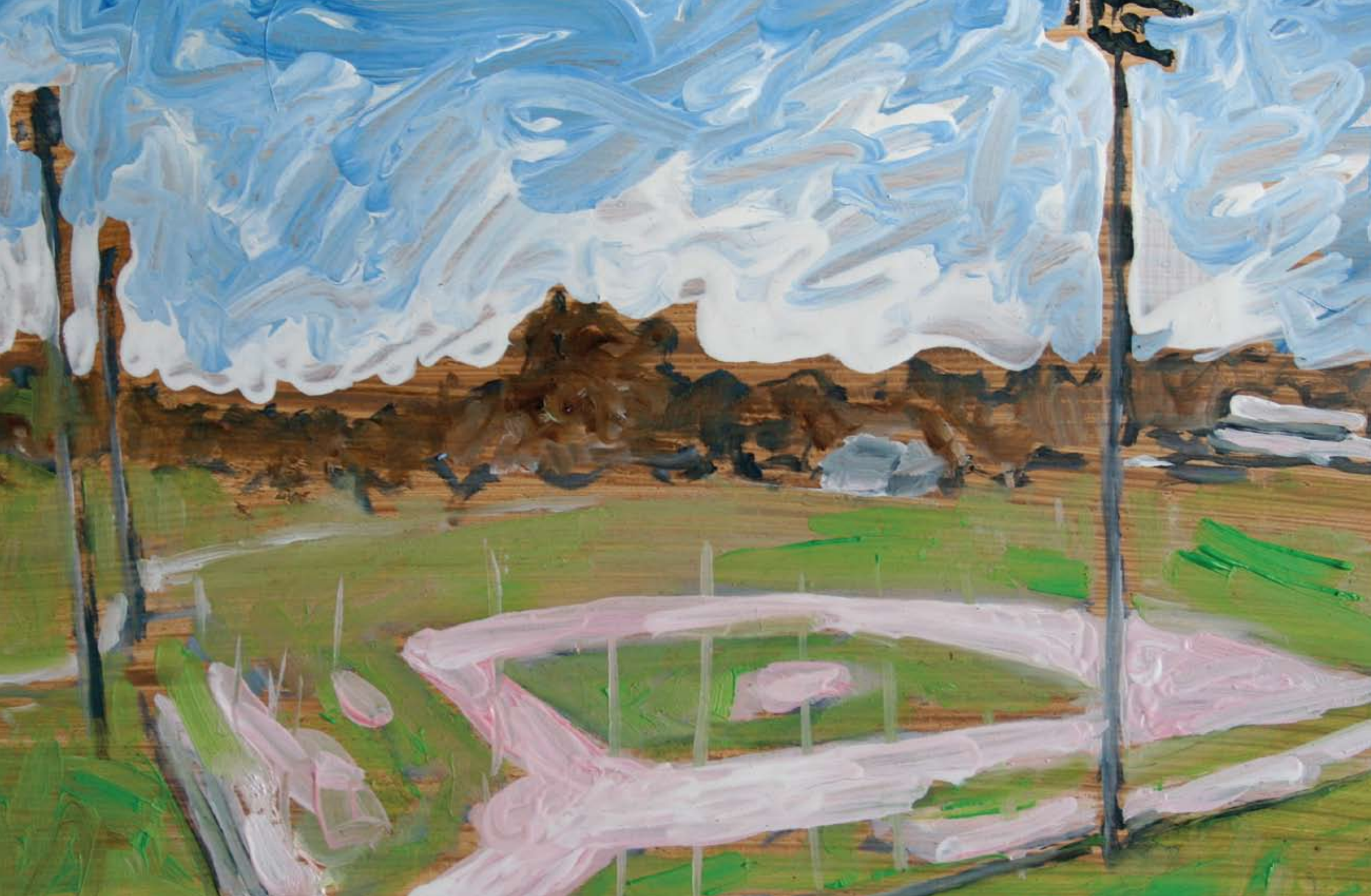
Opposite page:

Wallace Emerson Park.

PARKS COMBINE

Paintings & text by John Abrams









Previous pages:

Christie Pits &
Dufferin Grove Park.

Clockwise from left:

Campbell Park,
Dufferin Grove Park,
Dovercourt Park,
Dufferin Grove Park.

“

And I remember going to the record studio and there was a park across the street and I'd see all the children playing and I would cry because it would make me sad that I would have to work instead. — MICHAEL JACKSON

”

JUTTA MASON

Interviewed by Ashley Johnson
Portraits of Jutta Mason by Doug Walker



OME PEOPLE POUR ENERGY

into their neighbourhoods and in the process have an enormous impact on them. Jutta Mason is one of these brave and selfless souls. She has taken Dufferin Grove Park under her wing and created CELOS, a centre for local research into public space aimed at encouraging improvements and communication with park authorities. I asked her some questions ...

Ashley: How did you first get involved with Dufferin Grove Park?

Jutta: I live up the street. We have an anomaly in our family. My kids are all university graduates now but they didn't go to school when they were younger and so that makes you look for other spaces.

So you did home schooling?

Yeah. Public spaces become important in a different way when you don't have institutional public spaces in school. And this park was funny...there was not so much happening...sort of an orphan. Which is probably one of the big reasons why the things that happen here were able to happen. If you can move into a vacuum it's always easier.

So it was like an informal school, where a different kind of education could take place?

Well, it was mostly just a way to find friends for the kids – and besides I have my own schtick. My family emigrated from Germany. I was born just after the war and something very bad happened

in Germany. People of my generation lived and breathed the horror of people standing by while their neighbours were burned up. So the question of public space where people in the neighbourhood can come to know each other and possibly build some loyalties has been a challenge. In Toronto we have this hilarious situation of people literally coming from all over the world and so by definition they are strangers to each other.

Yes. I think you have to get past a group to the individual.

What really goaded me into doing something was an ad campaign by the mall. All the bus shelters had these signs up that said: "Dufferin Mall, we are your community" and I was like: Oh yeah, really? No you're not. You're our shopping

mall. They had pissed people off a whole bunch in this area anyway because they were going to enlarge the mall and add condominium housing. They wanted to make a peace offering and to donate \$20,000 to the park. At that time the city had a policy that you couldn't accept a donation without a public meeting. So they called a public meeting and the public attendance was zero. That was mainly because the parks department was so badly connected into the community that they didn't even know how to make a community meeting. Because I had already been engaged in attempts to make a public space inside the Wallace Recreation Centre I got approached saying: Well, can you get a sense of what people might want to do with \$20,000?

What would be your philosophy on the role of parks?

I feel parks are so amazing because you don't have walls. I'm pro-park, anti-community centre, in a way.

Would you see yourself extending into other rinks?

Oh we have.

So you're actually starting a wave of change.

No, there's no wave. Too many people come here and I can sympathize why they come but Toronto is very well endowed with parks and rinks so: why are you coming here? Well we know why. Because there is a wood stove, there is the Zamboni Café, because there are real people here and

there is an encounter to be had. People like that and plus they can rent skates. One of our things was campfires and people came from all over the city to have campfires. We got a grant called "Taking the Show on the Road" from the Trillium Foundation and as soon as we let the city know we got the grant, there was a rule against all campfires.

They knew what was coming?

Of course! This afternoon I am going to put out a letter to the mayor and all the councilors as a response to a letter from the head of parks and recreation about how well their rinks are run and... I don't know. Tomorrow we're going to see the ombudsman. This has been a docket for a while but it's actually starting to happen and hopefully the ombudsman

“I feel parks are so amazing because you don't have walls.

I'm pro-park, anti-community center, in a way.”

will take the case of the mismanagement of all the city rinks. 'Rinks' means public space. It will be interesting to see what will happen but it's certainly not in the nature of a wave.

It would be interesting to create a set of thinking about public spaces like this. You do have a model.

People have had a number of ideas. A friend of Ivan Illich's once described himself as an itinerant storyteller and that's an interesting way of saying it, because you can put out booklets about rinks and they either make a hit or they don't. But carry stories from place to place like good gossip and then they have their life, they proliferate from there.

It seems to me the community is almost like an organism, spreading the influence and having a sense of goodness or sense of something happening.

But it's hard to know what the organism is. Certainly anybody coming from Germany is also cautious about that because that was a big thing about

the Nazis, "the organism of the German people," and yet clearly people perceive themselves differently according to their experience and a lot of people around here who never pulled one weed out of the garden in the park, still have a sense of being part of the community effort. That is interesting, it's along the lines of what you're talking about. Your perception must shift.

Yes, I get a sense of people wanting to actually do something...

Yeah, the people that work here became park staff because they wanted to be here and some of them wanted to have a job, but there is definitely a feeling of: there's something to be accomplished. What you are seeing are people who work here with a lot of moral support from people who live here.

So it's a huge commitment you've made to this. I see you as the main figure even if you aren't employed by the city... yet you are a driving force and a source of ideas.

Well sure, and they are a source of ideas for me.... You don't know how you're going to get pulled in your life, do you? I made no plan to do this.

You have a certain clientele using the rink but would it be valuable to include more local people or would that over run the facilities?

It has its own physics. When this place is too full people stop coming, but the park doesn't get too full. If you're wondering if I am interested in recruiting, no, but Michael will be putting up posters everywhere ...in strategic areas like today's schools because they let out tomorrow. He's putting up posters for the Wallace and Campbell rinks. I am pretty ambitious for people to have public spaces where friendships can form but that's a different thing from community recruitment.

Have you got ovens set up at the other rinks?

No we don't but fire is easier to set up than ovens so we have fires once a week by the side of the rink. People are starved for beauty and fire is

“...we have fires once a week by the side of the rink.”





beautiful. A campfire can also be messy, smoky and dirty but there are moments that are so beautiful and people are drawn to that.

It's surely a very primal thing and everybody must have been around a fire at some point.

When you stand by a fire quite a bit your clothes ...get stinky and I sometimes feel apologetic...but most people go: "oh no, its so resonant for me," ... if they had to stand there all day they probably wouldn't like it so much but I am sure you're right that it gets you on all these other registers, ...the same as bread...but you don't need to have a bake oven ...there are a few that have popped up into public space but the city has a policy against allowing any more ovens anyway (laughs ruefully).

So the city has got rid of the fire problem, have they?

In some things like the campfires we have battled and won, with the other thing ...it's a pretty short distance before an oven is a gimmick and it

doesn't run itself.

What are some of the other activities that take place in this particular park?

Well the big Spring Summer Fall thing is the adventure playground, which means that kids dig and play with water. The Toronto Eagles run their soccer practice out of here. And then we've got the campfires: there are 2 locations in the summer and two in the winter. There's David Anderson's Clay and Paper Theatre. They have been here forever and are now getting challenged. What are you doing? Why do you have a free space to work out of... in the field house? So I am going like: "Ok, it was a derelict building. Don't you start now with: " Oh yeah, we're going to charge you rent." Then sometimes we have music and then there's another festival going into its 7th year called the Cooking Fire Festival, with younger people and which is not connected to David. Then it's also a place where people can come and try things, like make a little concert or whatever.

And the organic market?

Right, I forgot that (laughs).

The produce I saw looked wonderful.

Oh I know, it's amazing hey, especially when I first saw it. So many of us are used to having wilted stuff...'sposed to be good for you but it's wilted – and here it's like holy doodle! That looks amazing.

So the people who sell their wares here are from this area?

No, they are farmers so they don't farm around here but are relatively near. The fish guy has to come two and a half hours from Georgian Bay but most are within an hour away.

I read that they were trying to set up community gardens or has that been a sticking point?

Yeah, that was when Foodshare was going to put in one more garden but you know we've got tons of gardens here.

“...people can come and try things...”

So the gardens are more aesthetic ...they're not for people growing food?

Oh no, they are not like Christie Pits, although I would like it to change a little bit to that. We do have areas where we grow food, right, but they're all by the ovens. We put in the first flowerbed in 1994. This place used to be a famous horticultural showpiece in the 30's but it was done by the city and then we gradually lost until only one little bed was left so we started expanding...at the peak I think there were about 14 garden areas in the park and now there's about 11.

So does the city take care of it?

No, people from around here. We had Ari, who is very elderly now. He took on a lot of things and kept on making new ones even without permission. He

was very good. They have tried to get more people involved in helping out with the gardens but it goes up and down. The native species don't need so much pruning, right, but the vegetable gardens are a lot of work so it's partly the staff working with people and partly the staff taking up the slack.

And the crime element, do you find vandalism diminished?

Well, we learned how to address vandalism a long time ago and it's diminished. There are rules, like whenever there is something new you have to watch out for 1 or 2 months because somebody might notice it. The oven roof shingles were partly ripped off when it was built in '95 but the second oven hardly got vandalized. The old rule is to paint over and repair fast, fast, fast. Vandalism is a constant and the subway ads

are correct; when something's not fixed then it's a magnet for more. Another thing that really drew me to this public space was a piece by Nils Christie, a criminologist in Norway, who wrote a paper in 1973 called *Conflicts As Property*. The gist is that conflict, including crime, is a most valuable resource for a community to come together if they deal with it directly and a terrible waste if it just goes off into the law courts. The crime thing is like theatre. You don't want only sugary sweet plots on stage. You're going to have everything. You don't have to try and pull all of the crooks over here ...they'll just come in good measure (laughs) and sometimes you'll be able to do something and most of the time, no – rinks are a very good magnet for bad behavior... stupid, angry, whatever.

Swearing and fighting?

Yeah. Intimidate people, throw your weight around, take your turf... that's why they call it turf ...push back but not push out ...and some people have to go and are now in penitentiary but a lot of them are not and I hope I am right that it will have bent a few people into a slightly different direction.

How difficult is it to keep these icerinks in good repair?

Well the city is supposed to be doing that.

And do they do it?

Well, they do it, but in such a strange way because it's all centralized ...so sometimes you get something done you don't even need, by people who have no idea where they are, they've just been sent ... and other times you fight and fight for something you really need ...and people go: Oh, no, there's no budget for that

and all of a sudden there's \$200 000 for something else. We have this Centre for Local Research into Public Space (CELOS), which came about because of people saying: No we don't have a budget for fixing park picnic tables. Well, what do you use the 300 million for every year, for your operating funds? Oh well, this and that ...all important things. Well, what are those things? Well, lets look at them.... so we have been traipsing around doing freedom of information requests forever. We now have a large fund of knowledge about how they do it and you just have to connect the fundamental issues with some possible results.

But you've found a working way of dealing with it or is it a problem that doesn't go away?

'Keeping things in good repair' never goes away by definition,

...but no, it's a wild ride. There's no system to it, even though people never stop talking about the system ...it certainly works in a sense but far too often on the squeaky wheel principle ...a stupid way to work, right.

Are there any regrets or disappointments?

No, I am not at that spot; you have to ask me on my deathbed.

What would you most wish to see enacted in the future?

I wish people would talk to each other more.

“We put in the first flowerbed in 1994. This place used

to be a famous horticultural showpiece in the 30's...”

IN A CROWDED CITY where diverse people share space, it's possible to brush up against someone who is different, feel slighted and then nurse those feelings into hate. There are many kinds of people who could be targets: boys, bureaucrats, childless people, city service staff, dog owners, drug addicts, gang members, gay people, girls, hipsters, homeless people, old people, people that drive cars, people that ride bikes, people with children, people with a different religion, people with mental health issues, politicians, poor people, prostitutes, rich people, visible minorities, white people, young people, yuppies...

It's hard to hate someone when you know something

about them, when you can imagine walking a block in their shoes. Having information about the other can help build empathy: the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. Information can change hate, fear, disgust, anger or simple misunderstanding into compassion. Understanding can change potential enemies into possible friends.

This year's high school graduates moved into an economy that was at a 26 yr. low in youth employment. It appeared from job related discussions that the better jobs were female-friendly and traditional male-oriented jobs were disappearing. Matthew Marie-Rhodes, a recent high-school graduate,

thought it was time we know more about boys and used the internet to research major journals for information that discusses boys at risk. He has contributed a number of statistical quotes and links that will put into question the idea of teenage boys as resistant, bad and privileged.

Heidi Overhill, Professor at Sheridan College, has built a rich information graphic that focuses on some of the realities of being homeless.

Andrew Prosser interviews Spencer J. Harrison, artist-in-residence at George Vanier High School, about the program he has developed to address homophobia, stereotypes and prejudices.

END OF HATE:

Who Do You Hate
And Why Not To



Photograph by Alaric Johnson

Stats by Matthew Marie-Rhodes

STATISTICS ABOUT YOUNG MALES

16%

of families are run by a single parent.

Of that 16%,
83%

are run by single mothers.

Boys are **2x** more likely than girls to be diagnosed with learning disorders.

The drop out rate among young men is

12.2%

The drop out rate among young women is

7.2%

Boys are **6x** more likely to be diagnosed with ADHD (Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder).

Young males are

2x

more likely to abuse drugs

64%

of the homeless youth in Toronto are male.

Boys are **10x** times more likely to be expelled from school than girls.

Male Tertiary Ed. numbers drop from

58% - 44%

1980 to 2010

400

young men commit suicide yearly - 150 women

Boys are **2x** more likely to be placed in special ed programs

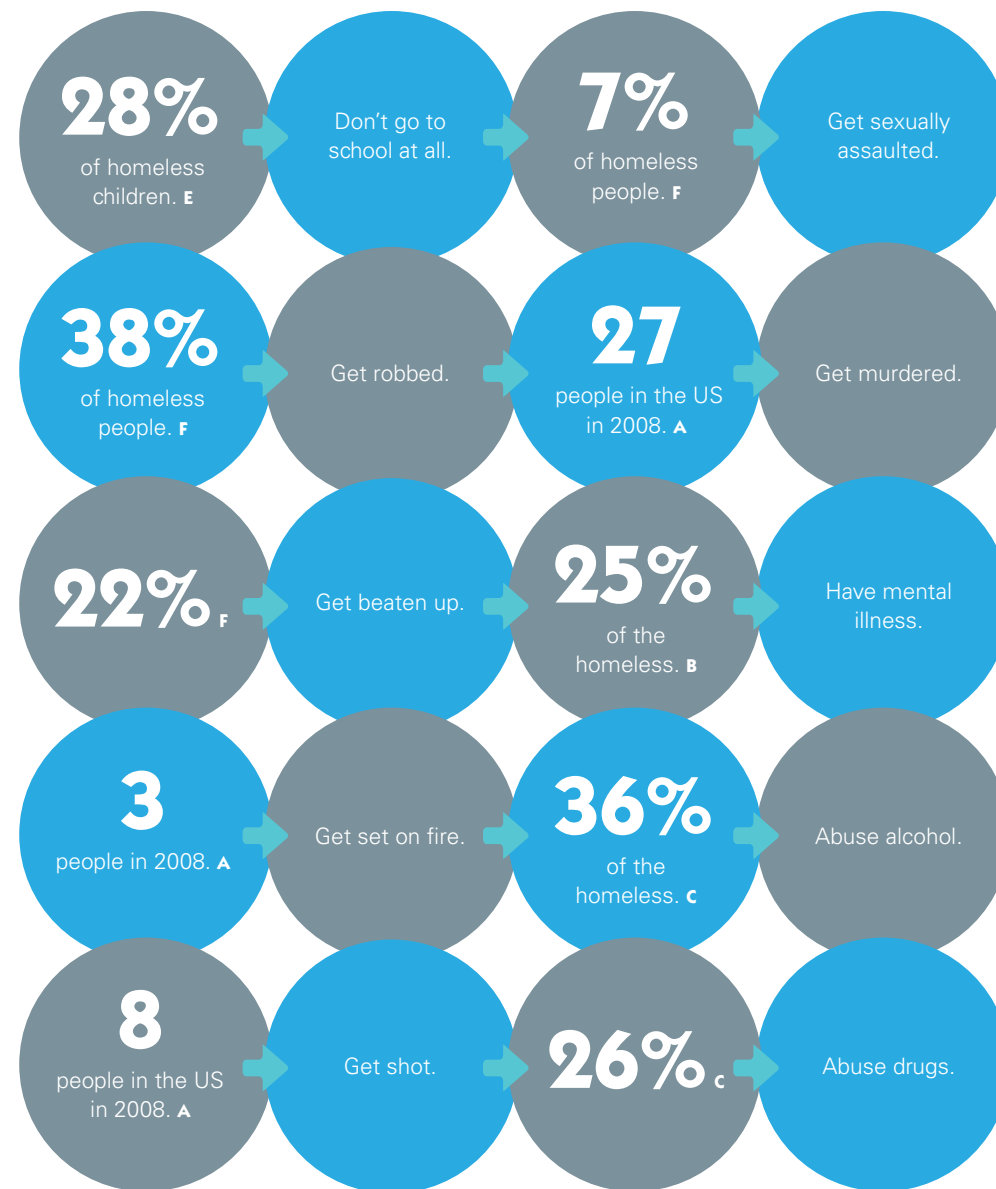
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STATISTICS ABOUT HOMELESSNESS

Stats by Heidi Overhill



SOURCES

- A** Hate Crimes and Homelessness. US National Coalition for the Homeless, Sept 2009.
- B** Mental Illness and Homelessness. National Coalition for the Homeless, July 2009.
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B Losing Ground: The Peristent Growth of Family Poverty in Canada's Largest City, 2007.
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F No Way Home, The Fifth Estate, CBC, broadcast March 10, 2004.



Above: *Home 1*,
 Andrée Gagné, archival
 silver print, 16" x 20".

A
NDRÉE GAGNÉ'S image conveys the perception that the resting, blanketed body is inside a protective shell. This is especially poignant in images of homeless people, where fabric has replaced house. These shrouded people seem to be in limbo; moribund yet also still living.

Her work was exhibited as part of *When the Dust Settles*, the inaugural exhibition at Angell Gallery and also in a solo exhibition April 29 to May 29.

HOME

W

HAT DO YOU GET when you take an openly gay artist and give him a studio in the middle of one of those renowned hotbeds for homophobia – a high school? Don't worry. If your first guess was "a freakshow," you're not necessarily wrong.

Spencer J. Harrison is the first artist-in-residence at George Vanier Secondary School (near Don Mills subway station). In fact, he's the first of his kind in Canada in that his role is entirely extra-curricular. Aside from speaking at anti-homophobia assemblies, his job is simply to be in the school three days a week. The doors of his studio (converted from an obsolete welding class shop) are always open and students are free to wander in, grab an apple, and take a look at what he's creating. Which is, quite literally, a freakshow: a 19-foot Big Top circus tent starring Spencer as the freak.



Above: Spencer J. Harrison in his studio.

HOMO-PHOBIA PROJECT

Andrew Prosser spent a morning with Spencer J. Harrison to find out more about his project and explore issues of homophobia in schools

“How does it feel

knowing that half the school hates you.”

Spencer: These are the walls of the tent. This is what I'm actually painting. On the exterior of the tent I'm projecting images and text that come directly from antique Barnum and Bailey style freakshows. They're being painted very flat, as they were painted then. On the exterior there will be two or three self-portraits of the most typical negative ways that people imagine me. So when I stand in front of a group and do anti-homophobia education, I'm always asked: "Do you wanna wear women's underwear?" And it's, "No, that's something else. You've got the wrong idea." So there's going to be an image of me in a dress. The exterior of the tent is about the misconceptions of who I am.

Andrew: So you're painting what you perceive as their hateful perceptions of you?

Negative, I'll call them negative; I won't call them hateful.

You don't like the term "hate"?

It's not that I have a problem with the word "hate" at all. Now I'm trying to talk to myself. I think queer people have internalized homophobia. I don't think they invented it. The story that's been told about us is really negative and full of hate. And even the history that's been written about us is written about the battles that we've fought to reach certain levels of acceptance. I think we need to start telling our stories to each other, and try to eliminate that lens of negativity altogether.

Why "Freakshow"?

I was a prankster in high school and that was my nickname. It was affectionate at first, but then my friends stopped using it, and it eventually changed to "fag." But by then I had started to think, "Well, what is a freakshow"? Historically, it was a place where anomalies lived miserable lives and were stared at.

The Elephant Man.

The Elephant Man. Tom Thumb. So that's partly how I came to think of myself. You know, I'm pretty comfortable with who I am. I'm very clearly 'out there'. So while the exterior of the tent is about misconceptions, the interior is about my perception of myself. I have free-written my history all over the walls and covered it with images from my childhood.

way to start telling my story. And I want viewers to think about how irritating it is that in some places I'm allowed to talk about my life, and in some places I'm not. I hope people walk inside this tent and it will be like going to the circus. They're overwhelmed by how much stuff's in there. And they'll look and they'll think; "Well that looks like my high school. Right, cuz – right, he's just a person."

they have a center for arts-informed research.

Arts-informed research?

Arts-informed research is where some sort of artful practice is used in the process of research. Our guiding principles are about understanding and improving the human condition. It's about getting your research out there rather than getting a PhD that goes on a shelf in a perfectly

me coming in the front door every day, to my studio, having lunch in the midst of the students and just being. After March break one of the kids came in and I asked him how it was. And the response was: "I came out to my parents." The studio has created a space for them to come and tell their story. It's the most commonly exchanged story between queer people – what our coming out was like. And I'm really clear with them: just

none of those kids are "out" in this school.

It's not like if you walk through that door, clearly you're gay?

At first I think people thought that. That's passed now. I'm the artist-in-residence, a title given me by the school board and the principal. Not only am I a working artist who's exhibited for over 25 years, I'm also a professor at OCAD,

homophobia presentations, it's confrontational. But they make space for a whole lot of conversations to take place afterwards. It's when five kids that normally sit together at lunch sit down together and one of them says, "So what'd you think about the fag at the – " and the other one says, "well, I don't think you should call him a fag." And they have a conversation where they peer teach each other.

“Aside from speaking at anti-homophobia assemblies,

his job is simply to be in the school three days a week.”

Free-written?

I don't plan it out. I wet the surface of the roll I am going to write on - I want the memories to be able to slide a bit. And then I just write. On top of that text I'm going to paint images of the neighbourhood I grew up in, my high school, church, the farm where I learnt a lot, the packs of kids that I hung out with, and three or four positive self-portraits. And so, when you walk in the tent you'll be irritated that you can't read that story. Well I wrote it for me. I didn't write it for all the viewers. I wrote it as a

But you do want this piece to be for heterosexuals, besides yourself and other queer people?

Yes. I want a straight audience to really engage with it. This is an auto-ethnographic work, which means: telling my story so others have a window into what it was like to grow up gay in rural Ontario. So that's the real term, auto-ethnography. But that's about my research and methodology. I'm a PhD student in Adult Education & Community Development. I'm at OISE (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education) because

bound book. It's about looking at the multiple layers of truth that can exist. If you're to hand in a PhD now, it's probably 350 pages, and it's a book. I'm handing in a circus tent, a methodological chapter that might be 20 pages long, and a process journal about being in this school, which will be 20-40 pages long.

That's all well and good, but why in the middle of a high school?

My real work isn't the tent. It's the conversations I have in this room and the hall. It's

because you've come out to me, you don't have to come out to anyone else. There are many different ways that I'm making it possible for these conversations to take place. I have a bowl of apples because some of the kids in this school need food. But it's also this really easy thing that I can do to create a common ground for people to come in. "Hey, do you wanna go to the studio and get an apple?" And so the queer kid can disappear in amongst his five friends, even though he's already been here. Sixteen queer kids have come in – and come out to me. And

a recruiter for universities, and a PhD student. I've probably talked to 150 kids who don't care about the work I'm doing – they just want to talk about applications and art portfolios.

Do you feel under any pressure here?

Yes. I walked through the cafeteria last week. And one student steps in front of me and says to me: "How does it feel knowing that half the school hates you?" And I said, "Well, pretty good, because I know half of them don't." I know that when I do anti-

So in addition to providing a space, you also operate as a catalyst.

Yup. And it creates a totally different environment in the school. And yes, it brings out some more hateful stuff right up front, but that gets quashed pretty quickly.

So you've been trying to end hate for –

Life. I confront it by doing the anti-homophobia presentations, by being a queer, 'out' person in the school that everyone can see

“
Homophobia’s
dead. I just
killed it.
”

Right: On the inside of one arm, Spencer has tattooed the word “Truth” and on the other, “Ro(man)ce”.

that they exist. The tent itself will do some as well. And then there’s my way of being in the world. It’s about wanting to have conversations with queer people about our lives, and moving through the world imagining that the hate is over. If we imagine that it’s over, and live like it’s over – and grow that. If, in all aspects of my life, I am just a gay man, not hidden in any way, and I clarify to the people around me when they’re doing something they shouldn’t. And if I celebrate with the people around me who I am and what I’ve achieved and how much I think life is amazing and beautiful – in the end, I think students will walk away and think about it years later when they see people saying something racist or sexist or homophobic or whatever. They’ll think about it in a really positive way and just say, “You know what? That’s wrong. And they’ll have learnt that from this connection.

Can you give us an anecdote about this type of connection?

Three guys come to my studio in the first or second week. They see the bowl of apples, one of them comes right in and says: “Can I have an apple, sir?” I hear in the hall, “I’m not going in there, he’s a

faggot.” So I go to the door and say, “You know if what you’re saying is that I’m gay, you’re right, I am. But that word is really inappropriate. You’re not going to get any of that in here. So you shouldn’t be nervous about coming in.” Months later, he comes in, grabs an apple and starts looking at some of the stuff. And he says, “Well, this one, this is pretty old, what’s this?” “That’s my grandfather with his horse team that they used to plough the fields with.” He comes back in the afternoon. He’s brought back a photograph of his grandfather to have a conversation with me. Four months ago he called me “faggot”, and now he’s having a conversation with me about his grandfather. Homophobia’s dead. I just killed it.

That’s overwhelming.

Award-winning director Fern Levitt, formerly of TVO, is filming a documentary on Harrison slated for next year. In the meantime, you can watch the preview by searching for Spencer J. Harrison on YouTube.



“Initiating in this kind of discussion can

IN CERTAIN SITUATIONS

students have been made to feel uncomfortable because of their nationality, religion, sexual orientation, culture, income, appearance – or they have participated in making other students feel uncomfortable. These situations may not be easy to solve (or even have any answers at all) but they may be better resolved by being acknowledged and explored.

Bloor discussed diversity with local students and teachers and listened to the comments of young people. We acted in the knowledge that initiating this kind of discussion can potentially make people more aware and empathic towards

each other but it can also nurse past wounds and make people more conscious of difference.

The project coincided with Black History month, a time to learn and celebrate Black History. It was also the moment when Bill 157¹ was adopted. This is a provincial bill that was passed in an on-going effort to make schools safer. These two events were very appropriate to a discussion about diversity. Even so, some students commented that nothing new could be said in a school and neighbourhood that were manifestly diverse but others still thought it was important to reinforce tolerance.

The responsibilities of everyone associated with the school environment came under scrutiny as efforts were being made to understand what the new rules of Bill 157 meant and how it could affect students and teachers. Would teachers now be obliged to report student indiscretions if they used a term or made a rude gesture that could be interpreted as hurtful to others? And, would that infraction become a permanent mark against the student's character since it would be placed in their file? How would the legislation affect the careers of teachers who did not comply or agree with the modus operandi? What effect

potentially make people more aware.”

would the legislation have upon the trust built between teacher and students? Should social issues that arose in the schoolyard be bureaucratized and potentially harm students' reputations in a future job market? Some important questions were raised.

Personal stories also came to light. A white student in a local school recalled playing basketball with a group of his black friends. They were fooling around calling each other racist names and calling him 'white boy'. He joined in. Suddenly a teacher appeared and reported him for racism. Another student complained, "If I do good work or if I work

hard, my Chinese friends or other friends say you are good because you are Asian. I don't think it makes much sense." Others told stories about homophobic, sexist and racial comments. There were also some comments about how successful multiculturalism was and still others just wanted to say, "People have to learn to get along with each other in this world. We all look different and come in different shapes and sizes but at the end of the day we are all humans".

Comments:
AboutBloor
Street.com

More about
Bill 157:
tdsb.on.ca

Below: Bloor
Collegiate Institute

DIVERSITY AND YOUTH IN SCHOOLS

¹ Bill 157* came into effect on
February 1, 2010

Revisions to the Policy and Program Memorandum (PPM 144 and 145) include incidents that may affect a school's climate and require reporting by all board employees and response and support by all board employees who work directly with students, (this list is not meant to be exhaustive, each school culture will differ and therefore so will the school climate): homophobia, gender-based violence, sexual harassment, inappropriate sexual behaviour, critical media literacy, safe Internet use, and others as determined by the school.



FAITH ON BLOOR

Photo essay by Robert Burley

R

ROBERT BURLEY is a well-respected Toronto photographer who has specialized in photographing architecture for over 20 years. In 2003 he explored 6 Downtown Toronto synagogues in the series *Instruments of Faith*. Burley says:

"These buildings are distinctly urban in character; their exteriors, which share limited space with the

adjacent businesses and residences, embrace the street. Like the buildings themselves, the sanctuaries are confined by the limited footprint of the structure, which accentuates height over elbowroom, encouraging the congregations to crowd together for services. These intimate one-room designs are steeped in the history

of the communities which created them. Memories of founders and congregants are incorporated into furniture, light fixtures, wall tablets and built-ins. The resulting spaces, created as 'instruments of faith' to encourage spiritual life and community bonds, have a uniquely timeless quality."



Previous page:

Bloor and Lansdowne
Christian Fellowship,
1311 Bloor Street West.

This page: The Buddhist
Association Of Canada,
1330 Bloor Street West.



加拿大佛教會弘法精舍

THE BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION OF CANADA



NA MO AMITABHA
南無阿彌陀佛

加拿大佛教會 1330 弘法精舍

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THESE
INTIMATE
ONE-ROOM
DESIGNS
ARE
STEEPED
IN THE
HISTORY
OF THE
COMMUNITIES

Dovercourt Baptist Church

Sunday Services 10:30am And 6:30pm

THE BEST ANTIDOTE
FOR DESPAIR IS
TO DO SOMETHING
FOR SOMEONE

BAPTIST CHURCH

Previous page:
Belarusian Autocephalous
Orthodox Church,
One block north of Bloor at
524 St Clarens Avenue.

This page:
Dovercourt Baptist Church,
1140 Bloor Street West.

In Faith on Bloor he has created a beautiful photographic portfolio of places for spiritual learning or worship located on Bloor Street or nearby.

Some faiths symbolize their belief in splendid architectural extravagance or rituals of arcane significance. Still others remove indulgence and regard the inner

body as the true temple. Here on Bloor many different faiths coexist as a sign of the great diversity in the area. They are a testament to humankind's enduring need for spiritual nurture.

Burley has had many exhibitions and his work has been the subject of numerous books.

His photographs are collected internationally and can be found in the collections of the National Gallery of Canada, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal. The Canadian Centre for Architecture, and the Musée d'lysee in Switzerland. Burley was a featured artist in Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal (2009) and his work has been exhibited

in Canada, the U.S. and abroad. Burley teaches at The School of Image Arts, Ryerson University and is currently serving as the Program Director of the Photography Studies Program. He is represented by the Stephen Bulger Gallery in Toronto:

BULGERGALLERY.COM



This page:

Islamic Information and
Da'wah Centre International,
1168 Bloor Street West.

SOMETHING IN THE AIR

Dougal Bichan



YOU WALK THROUGH the door and something hits you immediately – the air fairly crackles with electricity. There is music everywhere, with people trying out guitars, keyboards and even turntables. All kinds of instruments are here, from classical and jazz

play the clarinet! This is Long & McQuade, 925 Bloor Street West: a store dedicated to music in all its forms.

When you meet Jack Long, the founder, it all makes sense. You see: Jack is a musician, having played the trumpet from the

“Our customers are all musicians, whether they are classical,

to hip-hop or computers. But there is another music too; the harmonics you hear when people enjoy their work. The customers feel the ambience too. You can hear it in the talk at the counter and see it in the movements as they dance across the sales floor. A friend calls it the “musical candy store.” I almost bought a clarinet there once, a clear plastic clarinet. It was so intriguing, and I don’t even

age of 9, and as a professional since he was 15, so he likes to hang out with other musicians. That’s fun for him, so that is what he does. The staff are all musicians and the customers are musicians: some famous, most not.

The store moved to the Bloor/Ossington area in 1988, from 459 Bloor St., between Spadina and Bathurst. They were looking for a spacious

building on a main street with a parking lot. Much of the business is equipment rental and requires customers to park close to the doors for loading. They found it at 923 Bloor St. West, the former site of the Concord Tavern, where Jack had often played during the

floorboards. They had even tried to take a large fridge down the stairs from the second floor. The weight broke the stairs and the fridge was left hanging there.

At the time, Jack wondered if they were moving too far west

jazz, or hip-hop or anything else.”

50’s. At that time the tavern had a policy of hiring groups to back up the floor shows. These shows could be anything – singers, dancers, jugglers, ventriloquists or magicians.

The building was a mess, needing extensive renovations. It had been standing derelict for over a year and someone had been systematically stripping it of anything valuable, including the

and if their customers would follow them. They needn’t have worried. Since then, the store has spread westward along Bloor St., adding different departments for guitars, keyboards, even computers. As Jack says, “Our customers are all musicians, whether they are classical, jazz, or hip-hop or anything else.” Founded in 1956, L&M now has 42 stores across Canada.

Jack has seen the area change since then. It was pretty rough when they first moved in and they used to find used needles in the parking lot. He notes that the residents have changed and shops have improved, citing the Guardian Drugstore across the road, which he has patronized for years. They got involved in the area and sat on the Bloorcourt BIA board. Originally, Jack also sat on this board. Now well past the usual retirement age, he doesn’t get to the store as often as before, spending most of his time at the head office in Pickering. If you do drop in to the store, you may be lucky enough to find him there, still hanging out with musicians. It is what he enjoys.



AFRICAN VILLAGE FESTIVAL



Ashley Johnson: Can you tell me about African Fest?

Mesfun Haile: The original idea to get a taste of Africa came from the restaurants in the area, spearheaded by Pero Restaurant. They wanted to showcase the unusual fact that there are over 20 African restaurants between Ossington Avenue and Crawford Street. So we created a 2-day festival, with the support of public representatives like deputy mayor Joe Pantalone and others. This is our 4th annual festival now, showcasing the culinary traditions and variety of foods coming out of Africa.

“Community instead of borders and boundaries.”

What are some of the nationalities and cultures represented?

The two main cultures in that neighbourhood are Eritrean and Ethiopian but we wanted to showcase the whole African diaspora, including other African restaurants and vendors. And so every year we set up the marquee tents and showcase a different culture. We have also added a soundstage and presented Afrocentric performances from both local and international artists.

Who are some of the artists who have performed in the past?

We have had quite a few, like Whalid and Kush. We've had artists from Gabon, Ghana, Nigeria and Somalia. We've also had a showcase of African fashion. Right now we are sourcing some international acts and stepping it up. The festival will be happening on the 3rd weekend of August.

The focus of the event is really the restaurants and food vendors. The whole idea is to make people, both within the community and without, aware of the restaurants so they continue to patronize and enjoy the ambience and hospitality of these restaurants after the festival.

Will people get specials?

Yes, each restaurant will have their own program of live entertainment, tasting, movies or buffets created specifically for the festival.

Will you have other Afrocentric stalls?

Yes, we have arts and crafts. Last year we showcased an organic farm with indigenous fruits and vegetables found in Africa. There is also a games area with Michèzo and Iyo. This exposes kids to some of the games and it's interesting to see that some familiar ones originated in Africa.

We have tried to make it a community-based event and limit commercialization, although the sponsorship of big companies like Rogers is still necessary. A non-profit event means a lot of volunteer work and a lot of sweat equity. Hopefully with the support of the city we can continue to produce a great event.

Will you have African dancers?

Yes, we have dancers. A lot of the performances combine music and dancing. We had a captivating show last year from a Southern Sudan artist. It wasn't just his voice, music or the way he danced, it was also the storytelling. There is a lot of storytelling in Africa.

So the festival has an educational side with griots and praise singers?

One of our mandates is to make it apolitical. We're looking at community instead of borders and boundaries. So we are rising above the conflicts and showcasing all cultures. The festival is situated within the Ethiopian and Eritrean communities despite the conflicts that exist between them. This is an open-ended showcase of culture.

It's like bridge building?

Yes, it's an inclusive thing where you see all the different flags and cultures being showcased. Every year we try to rotate it and look at cultures from the North, East, West, South and Central regions.

It sounds like a wonderful festival. What about African art and photography? Is there any way of showcasing some of that?

Last year we launched a space on Bloor where we were able to showcase arts and artists. Drums and artifacts from Africa were brought in and it went very well. This year we'd like to dedicate a certain space, somewhat like a gallery, where statuettes and large-scale arts can be displayed.

This is to get a feel for the culture through the artifact, votary or figurine?

Yes, large-scale figurines give you a sense of what's out there. It's a great event that's had a major impact and people look forward to it.

What date is it taking place on?

This year it will take place on August 21 and 22.

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

The website is www.afrivillagefest.com and we're busy updating it. We're looking for volunteers, artists, Afrocentric wares and other things. We're looking forward to everyone getting a taste of Africa and a true sense of what Africa is all about, beyond the stereotypes. One of the greatest compliments we received was that the festival feels like one big family event and that's quite an achievement when you think of people from different backgrounds, cultures, conflicts and religions coming together with friends from Canada to enjoy the taste of Africa.

That's great.

Thank you so much.

Vid Ingelevics

HALLAM STREET: ECONOMIES OF SCALE

I am a Toronto artist currently working on a project concerned with the history of retail on Hallam Street; which stretches from Dufferin to Shaw and is just north of Bloor.

A

S ANYONE WHO HAS WALKED, DRIVEN OR CYCLED on that street can observe, there were once a lot of stores. Like other areas in the Bloor street neighbourhood, the empty stores provide evidence of evolving social and economic changes. Many of the stores have since been converted into residences. Dovercourt Village spread east and west on Hallam from Dovercourt Street. Hallam Street was named after John Hallam who was born in England in 1833 and became a Toronto alderman. His advocacy led to the creation of the Toronto Public Library in the late 19th century.

So far I have compiled a 100-year name changing history of the stores that are still visible on Hallam. I can tell you the name of every store on Hallam Street at any time in the 20th century. One of the earliest stores on Hallam Street at 996 Dovercourt, was a grocery store owned by a Mr. James Brackley. In terms of longevity,

“Hallam Street was named after John Hallam.”

Sone's Pharmacy has been in existence since at least 1950 and was, in fact, already functioning as a drug store by 1915. William F. Cantelon originally owned this store.

However, what I can't seem to find are photographs of the street as it once looked. I have only located three photos at the City of Toronto Archives that show historical views of Hallam Street. One of the photos shows the TTC making repairs to the streetcar tracks on Hallam at the corner of Hallam and Ossington in 1930. Those tracks were ripped out in 1965, coinciding with the construction of the Bloor subway line. This and nearby

shopping malls opening, probably contributed to the closing of many retail stores on Hallam Street and caused major retail upheaval on Bloor Street.

them. Potentially I would like to include copies of them in this project, with full credit to you.

Do you have any photographs in your family album or stored in a filing cabinet that show historical views of any part of Hallam Street, particularly including the stores? I would be very interested in viewing

Contact me:
vid@web.net
416 706-4020

Right: Hallam Street and Ossington looking East - July 1830.



Photograph courtesy of the City of Toronto Archives

HAVE TO CONFESS, I do live in the best neighbourhood in Toronto. It is not the most trendy or upscale neighbourhood. It is interesting. Interesting people live here and interesting events happen here. People say the neighbourhood needs a lot of work. Depending on who you talk to, there are a variety of problems here. I won't list them all. As you can imagine, there are as many problems and solutions as there are people proposing them. About three years ago, I was part of a group that came together to try to do something about improving the area. It was an extremely diverse group including

local business groups, six politicians from three levels of government in two different ridings, several residents associations and social services agencies — 24 stakeholders in all.

Many ideas were proposed. One of them was to produce a big community street arts festival, with the intention of getting local people to work together to improve the public image and, maybe more importantly, the self-image of the neighbourhood. It was appropriately named the BIG on Bloor festival, after the group that developed the idea, the Bloor Improvement Group (BIG). The festival was mainly

supported by the two BIAs in the area — Bloordale and Bloorcourt.

It was an ambitious project, to close a 2 ½ km. long section of Bloor Street, from Christie to Lansdowne and fill it with events. Many well-meaning people suggested that we should scale it back and grow gradually. The group went ahead with the original idea anyway. We produced the first event, June 21, 2008. Somehow we managed to pull it off. We attracted 300 vendors and about 100,000 people to that section of Bloor Street for the day.

So last year, we decided to do it again, only bigger and better. The community came out to support it big-time! We attracted more than 400 vendors at 500 tables this

dancers, to the all-girl punk band, Fidget. In between, there was folk, jazz, fado, blues, rock, reggae, hip-hop, salsa, swing, hillbilly, Portuguese folkloric, the Fort York Fifes and Drums, and Mr. Something Something with their bicycle-powered rock show.

What a day it was! In spite of rain, on and off during the early part of the afternoon, people came out, some with umbrellas, some wore green garbage bags. I was amazed and gratified by all the support. That's me checking to make sure the garbage is being taken care of. Somebody has to do it.

“
We attracted more than 400 vendors at 500 tables, (in 2009), everything from knitting to donuts.
”

year, everything from knitting to donuts. We had three stages programmed with eight hours of entertainment each. There was a great variety of entertainment, from Ote'a Tane, all-male Polynesian

Dougal Bichan

NOTES FROM THE BIG FESTIVAL

Opposite page: Colour in the letters on a T-shirt that states “Get Off On Bloordale, Lansdowne and Dufferin Subway Stations” and keep the T-shirt. Nick Bakoias, Bloordale BIA Festival table.



Community is a very powerful thing. People are still talking about the sense of community that the shared activity of this festival built. Any kind of honestly shared activity will do that.

We are now starting to plan for the 2010 festival. For a variety of reasons, it will not be the same. It can never be the same. Nothing ever is, but it will be every bit as ambitious, as much fun, and as rewarding for all the people who come out to be involved in it.

Bloordale's **NEW** Bloor Festival

Saturday July 24, 2010,
1 pm to 9 pm

Lansdowne to Dufferin
on Bloor Street!

Participate, volunteer,
perform, host a table at
the **NEW** Bloor Festival!
Find out more at:

newbloorfestival.com



Ghazaleh Etezal, Festival design and website



Sid Bruyn - Festival co-ordinator



Dougal Bichan - Festival co-ordinator

“

FOR MORE
INFORMATION
ON BIG OR TO
CHECK OUT
THE ASSET MAP
ONLINE VISIT
BIGONBLOOR.
COM

”

Bloor Improvement Group

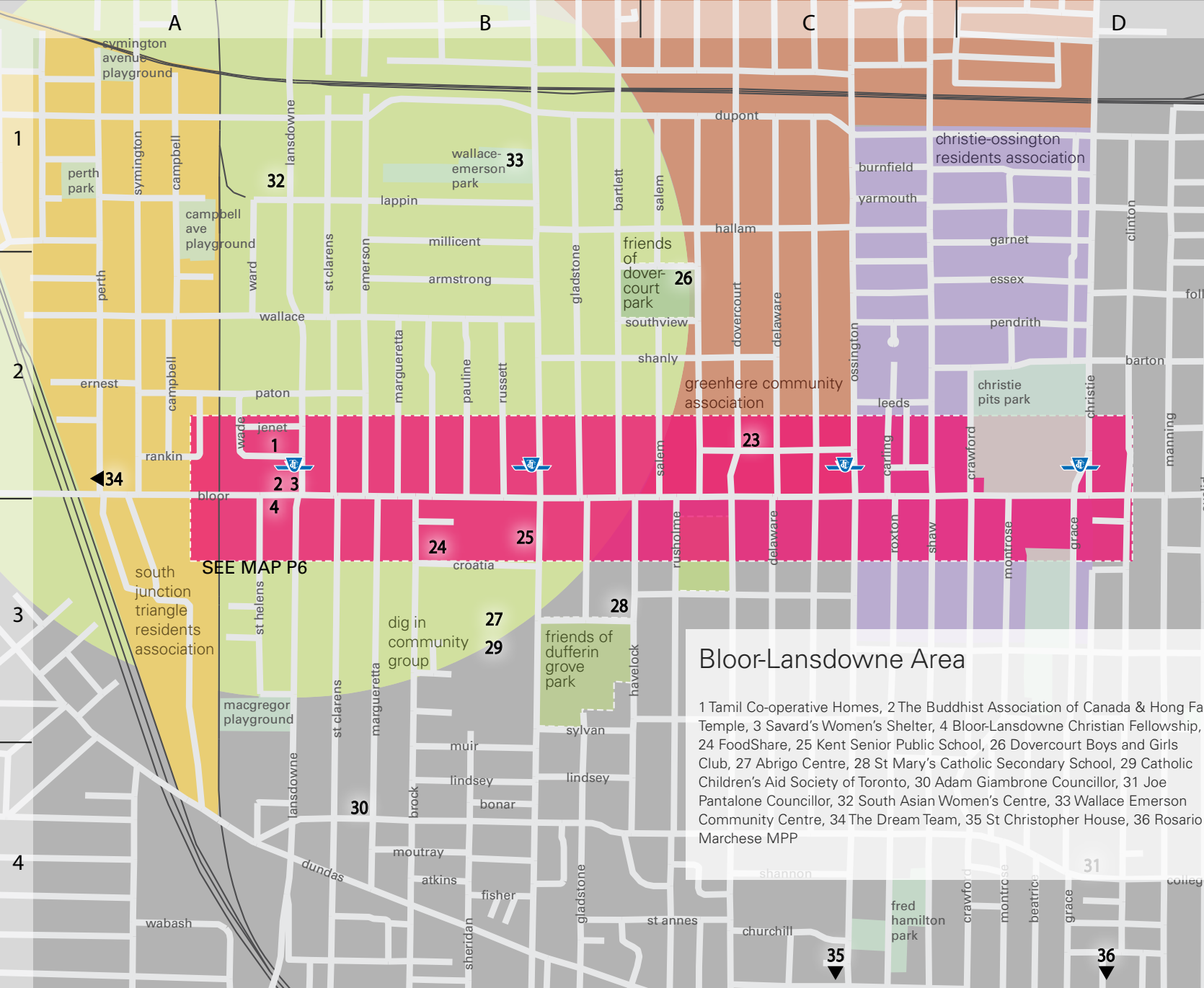
Welcome to the BLOOR Neighbourhood Asset Map!

The neighbourhood around Bloor Street, from Lansdowne to Christie, is rife with dozens of amazing economic and social assets. From residents associations, to parks, to Business Improvement Areas, to art organizations, to community and social services—this wide range of resources helps make this neighbourhood the diverse and vibrant place it is today.

This map is a celebration of these resources. The database of community assets was produced in consultation with a wide range of local stakeholders, representing business, social and community services, residents, and other community organizations. It's part of a project to bring members of this community in better contact with their neighbourhood. To break down silos between organizations, to facilitate interaction amongst diverse individuals, to help residents get to know the neighbourhood's many amazing resources, to build a stronger community.

The pages that follow contain a detailed neighbourhood asset directory. Every asset on the map is listed, with its contact information and a description of its mission. Listings are organized by category: art, business, community centres, ethnocultural organizations, education, parks and green space, politicians, religion, social and community services, and miscellaneous. Use this map to locate a service, to join an organization, or simply to explore the streets of this community.

The neighbourhood asset map was prepared with funds from the City of Toronto as part of the Bloor Improvement Group's Community Safety Investment project. For more information on BIG or to check out the asset map online visit bigonbloor.com.



Neighbourhood Asset Map

"Bloorcourt Village, which became a BIA in 1979, is well known for its great variety of shops and services catering to all tastes and ages."

Art

Clay & Paper Theatre

> www.clayandpapertheatre.org
Clay & Paper Theatres creates, develops and performs multi-disciplinary, community-driven theatrical works using narrative theatre and large-scale puppetry in public spaces for diverse audiences.
David Anderson, Founder and Artistic Director
<claypaper@sympatico.ca>

Toronto Free Gallery (Page S6, #6)

> www.torontofreegallery.org
1277 Bloor St. West M6H 1N7
Toronto Free Gallery is a not-for-profit art space; its vision is to provide a forum for social, cultural, urban and environmental issues expressed through all media.
Heather Haynes, Executive Director
<heather@torontofreegallery.org>
(416) 913-0461

Business

Bloorcourt Village BIA

> www.bloorcourt.com
Bloor St. West, Montrose Ave. to Dufferin St.
Bloorcourt Village is well known for its great variety of shops and

services catering to all tastes and ages. The ethnic mix includes Portuguese, Greek, Japanese, Korean, Ukrainian, Ethiopian, Eritrean and Caribbean, to name a few.
Lance Lehman, Chair
<lance.lehman@mpllaw.ca>
(416) 534-3555 X206

Bloordale Village BIA

> www.bloordale-bia.com
Bloor St. West, Dufferin St. to Lansdowne Ave.
An infectious spirit of goodwill is evident along Bloor Street West between Dufferin and Lansdowne these days, as community leaders, merchants and residents join together in an ambitious program to create a vibrant and stable neighbourhood to work, shop and visit.
Nick Bakoias, Secretary
<nick@thehouseoflancastr.com>
(416) 688-7329

Community Centres

Toronto Public Library – Bloor/

Gladstone Branch (Page S6, #14)
> www.torontopubliclibrary.ca
1101 Bloor St. West, M6H 1M7
Toronto Public Library preserves

Community Assets

"An infectious spirit of goodwill is evident along Bloor Street West between Dufferin and Lansdowne these days." - Bloordale Village BIA

and promotes universal access to a broad range of human knowledge, experience, information and ideas in a welcoming and supportive environment.

Wallace Emerson Community Centre

(Page S2, B1, #33)
> www.wallaceemerson.ca
1260 Dufferin St. M6H 4C3
The Wallace Emerson Community Centre is located next to Wallace Emerson Park. The Centre features an indoor swimming pool, a rink, a workout gym, a gymnasium, a BMX park, and programming for adults and children.

Tino DeCastro, Supervisor
<mail@wallaceemerson.ca>
(416) 392-0041

Education

Bloor Collegiate Institute

(Page S6, #11)
1141 Bloor St. West, M6H 1M9
Established in 1925, Bloor Collegiate Institute has had a long tradition of excellence, scholarship and post-secondary success for its graduates.
Katherine Evans, Principal
<katherine.evans@tdsb.on.ca>
(416) 393-1420

Kent Senior Public School

(Page S6, #25)
> www.schools.tdsb.on.ca/kent
980 Dufferin St. M6H 4B4
As part of its rich history, Kent Senior Public School continues to offer a quality program. An experienced and energetic staff provides a wide variety of academic and extra-curricular activities to serve the diverse educational needs of students.
David Smith, Principal
(416) 393-0400

St. Mary's Catholic Secondary School

(Page S6, #28)
> www.tcdsb.org/stmaryss
66 Dufferin Park Ave. M6H 1J6
The St. Mary's community is built on Catholic Gospel values, which are the foundation of the school's philosophy.

Robert Merolle, Principal
<robert.merolle@tcdsb.org>
(416) 393-5528

Toronto District School Board Ward 10 Parent Council

> www.myward10.ca
The Ward 10 Council is about the children, for the parents, with the support of the staff.
Chris Bolton

“
THE
AFRIVILLAGE
STREET
FESTIVAL IS
A TWO-DAY
MULTICULTURAL
CELEBRATION.
”

<chris@chrisbolton.ca>
(416) 588-4386

Ethnocultural Organizations

AfriVillage Fest

(Page S6, #37)
> www.afrivillagefest.com
Bloor St. West, Crawford St. to Ossington Ave.
The AfriVillage Street Festival is a two-day multicultural celebration that presents a festive Africa Village setting complete with a cultural walk, live performances, and street vendors showcasing the tastes of Africa.

Mesfun Y Haile, Founder
<mesfun@xclusv.com>
(416) 985-5185

Eritrean-Canadian Association of Ontario

(Page S6, #19)
> www.ecao.ca
920B Bloor St. West, M6H 2P6
The Eritrean-Canadian Association of Ontario was founded in an effort to address the pressing cultural, social, economic, health and educational needs of the Eritrean-Canadian community.
Negussie Asgedom, President
<negussie.asgedom@cibc.com>



Bloor-Gladstone Public Library

Ethiopian Association

(Page S6, #7)
> www.ethiocommun.org
1227 Bloor St. West, M6H 1N6
The Ethiopian Association in the Greater Toronto Area and surrounding regions has been providing community and social service programs to people of Ethiopian origin and others since 1980.
<office@ethiocommun.org>

Portuguese-Canadian National Congress

(Page S6 #16)
> www.congresso.ca
1081 Bloor St. West, Ste 300, M6H 1M5
The Portuguese-Canadian National Congress is a national organization that represents the nearly 400,000 Canadians of Portuguese heritage.
(416) 532-3233
<pcnc_info@bellnet.ca>

Tamil Co-operative Homes

(Page S6, #1)
20 Wade Ave. M6H 4H3
A housing co-op managing 129 housing units in downtown Toronto, Tamil Co-operative Homes is a home for many nationalities and a centre for multicultural activities.
Palitha Pathberiya
(416) 538-6016
<tamilcoop@yahoo.ca>



Ethiopian Association

Parks and Green Space

Friends of Dovercourt Park

> <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/dovercourtpark>
Dovercourt Park neighbourhood Friends of Dovercourt Park are interested in community issues such as urban greening, development, traffic and policing.

Friends of Dufferin Grove Park

> www.dufferinpark.ca
875 Dufferin St.
The friends of Dufferin Grove Park are not an organization. The friends are all those people who are friendly to that 14.2-acre city-owned common space bordered by the Dufferin Mall, St. Mary's Catholic High School, and the mix of affluent and subsidized housing to the east and south.

Jutta Mason
<jutta.mason@sympatico.ca>
(416) 533-0153

GreenHere

> www.greenhere.ca
Bloor St. West to St. Clair Ave. West, Christie St. to CPR/CNR rail tracks

GreenHere is a not-for-profit community group dedicated to increasing green space in Toronto's Davenport neighbourhood.

Politicians

Adam Giambrone, Councillor (Ward 18 – Davenport)

(Page S6, #30)
> www.adamgiambrone.ca
1232 College St. M6H 1C2
Marjolein Winterink, Community Assistant
<mwinter@toronto.ca>
Chris Gallop, Special Assistant: Works, Development and Constituency Matters
<cgallop@toronto.ca>

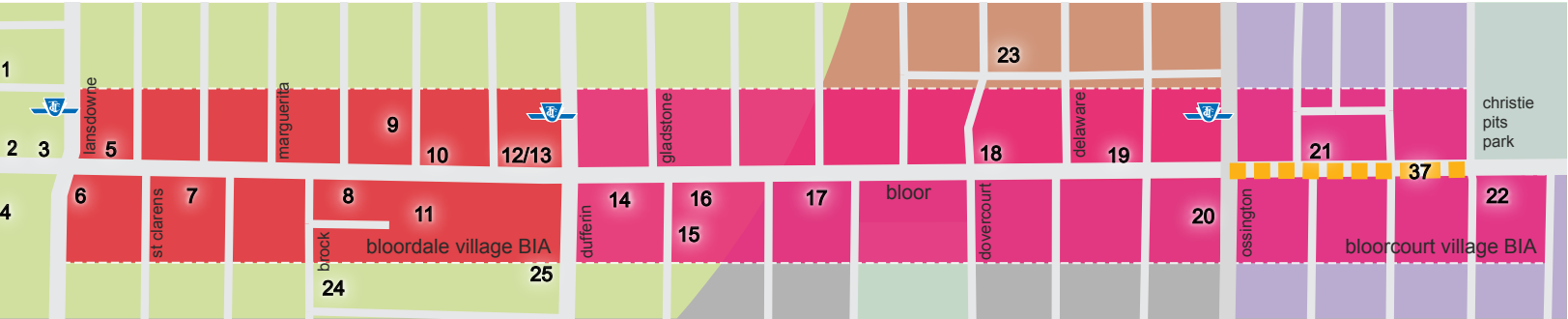
Joe Pantalone, Councillor (Ward 19 – Trinity-Spadina)

(Page S2, D4, #31)
> www.joepantalone.org
622 College St., 1f. M6G 1B6
Sonia D'Agostino, Executive Assistant
<sdagost@toronto.ca>
(416) 397-4110

Rosario Marchese, MPP (Trinity-Spadina)

(Page S2, D4, #36)
> www.rosariomarchese.ca
854 Dundas St. West M6J 1V5

Bloor Street BIAs



Juan Huang, Chinese language constituency
Helder Ramos, Portuguese language constituency
Andrew Schwab
<rmarchese-co@ndp.on.ca>
(416) 603-9664

Tony Ruprecht, MPP (Davenport)
> www.tonyruprecht.ca
1359 Davenport Rd. M6H 2H5
<truprecht.mpp@liberal.ola.org>
(416) 325-7777

Olivia Chow, MP (Trinity-Spadina)
> www.oliviachow.ca
144 Augusta Ave. M5T 2L5
<chow@parl.gc.ca>
(416) 533-2710

Mario Silva, MP (Davenport)
> www.mariosilva.ca
1674 St. Clair Ave. West M6N 1H8
Andre Ferreira, Outreach and Community Liaison
<andre@mariosilva.ca>
416 654-2428

Religion

Bloor Lansdowne Christian Fellowship (Page S6, #4)
> www.bloorlansdownechristianfellowship.com

[fellowship.com](http://www.fellowship.com)
1307 Bloor St. West M6H 1P1
Bloor Lansdowne Christian Fellowship is an evangelical church of Christ committed to intentional discipleship, inspiring worship, intensive outreach and inclusive fellowship.
Reverend Joe Elkerton
<rev.joe@bloorlansdownechristianfellowship.com>
(416) 910-1861

The Buddhist Association of Canada & Hong Fa Temple (Page S6, #2)
1330 Bloor St. West M6H 1P2
Founded in 1968, the Hong Fa Temple is open to all, offering Dharma talks, two meditation halls, chanting services and a library.
Reverend Sing Hung and Reverend Shing Cheung
<hongfatemple@netzero.net>
(416) 537-1342

Dovercourt Baptist Church (Page S6, #13)
> www.dovercourtbaptist.org
1140 Bloor St. West M6H 4E6
Dovercourt is a multicultural church, diverse in ethnicity, ages and social backgrounds, but united together by a love for Jesus Christ and a

commitment to the Bible as the Word of God.
Pastor Arc Da Silva
<pastor@dovercourtbaptist.org>
(416) 536-4000

Islamic Information & Da'wah Centre International (Page S6, #10)
> www.islaminfo.com
1168 Bloor St. West, M6H 1N1
The Islamic Information & Da'wah Centre International is a multicultural mosque offering all prayer services, as well as Arabic classes, Quran classes and interfaith dialogue.
Imam Shabir Ally
<comments@islaminfo.com>
(416) 536-8433

Ossington Avenue Baptist Church (Page S6, #20)
720 Ossington Ave. M6G 3T7
Reverend Olga Brown
<ossingtonbc@on.aibn.com>
(416) 533-5091 X24

St. Anthony's Church (Page S6, #17)
1041 Bloor St. West M6H 1M4
St. Anthony's is a multicultural parish offering masses to six parish groups.
Reverend Vilmar Orsolin
<st.anthonychurch@sympatico.ca>

(416) 536-3333
St. Sebastian's Church (Page S6, #9)
20 Pauline Ave. M6H 3M8
(416) 536-2302

Residents

Christie Ossington Residents' Association
> <http://groups.google.com/group/cora-toronto>
Christie St. to Ossington Ave., Dupont St. to Harbord St.
The Christie Ossington Residents' Association is a local neighbourhood association representing residents in the Christie Ossington region of Toronto.
Angela Burns
<wlmburns@rogers.com>
(416) 539-9373

DIG IN
> www.digin.ca
Bloordale neighbourhood
DIG IN is a local community group committed to the cultural, social, environmental and economic vitalization of the Bloor Street West neighbourhood surrounding Bloordale.
Ann Homan

1 Tamil Co-operative Homes, 2 The Buddhist Association of Canada & Hong Fa Temple, 3 Savard's Women's Shelter, 4 Bloor-Lansdowne Christian Fellowship, 5 Bike Pirates, 6 Toronto Free Gallery, 7 Ethiopian Association, 8 Safehaven, 9 St Sebastian's Church, 10 Islamic Information & Da'wah Centre International, 11 Bloor Collegiate Institute, 12 New Horizons Tower, 13 Dovercourt Baptist Church, 14 Toronto Public Library Gladstone Branch, 15 Working Women Community Centre, 16 Portuguese-Canadian National Congress, 17 St Anthony's Church, 18 Sistering, 19 Eritrean-Canadian Association of Toronto, 20 Ossington Avenue Baptist Church, 21 Christie-Ossington Neighbourhood Centre, 22 Houselink, 23 The Salvation Army Bloor Central Corps, 24 FoodShare, 25 Kent Senior Public School, 26 Dovercourt Boys and Girls Club, 27 Abrigo Centre, 28 St Mary's Catholic Secondary School, 29 Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto, 30 Adam Giambrone Councillor, 37 AfriVillage Fest

<ahoman@saai.ca>
South Junction Triangle Residents Association
> www.southjunctiontriangle.ca
Bloor St. to Dupont St., Lansdowne Ave. to Dundas St. West
The South Junction Triangle website started in February 2008, shortly after the South Junction Triangle Residents Association was formed at the end of 2007. Although the residents association was short-lived, the website continues to grow with content, contributions, and discussions.
Vic Gedris
<vic@gedris.org>

Social and Community Services

Abrigo Centre (Page S6, #27)
> www.abrigo.ca
Dufferin Mall, 900 Dufferin St., Ste 104, M6H 4A9
The Abrigo Centre is a multi-service, charitable organization that focuses on building community capacity in west Toronto by helping individuals and families achieve their full potential.
Cristina Santos, Executive Director

<csantos@abrigo.ca>
(416) 534-3434

Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto (Page S6 #29)
> www.ccas.toronto.on.ca
Dufferin Mall, 900 Dufferin St., Ste 219, M6H 4B1
The Catholic Children's Aid Society is one part of a province-wide network of agencies in Ontario working to protect children from neglect and physical, sexual and emotional abuse.
<pr@ccas.toronto.on.ca>

Christie-Ossington Neighbourhood Centre (Page S6, #21)
> www.conccommunity.org
854 Bloor St. West, M6G 1M2
The Christie-Ossington Neighbourhood Centre is dedicated to building upon the strengths and vision of community members to improve the quality of life in the Christie-Ossington community.
Lynn Daly, Executive Director
<lynn@concc.ca>
(416) 516-8642 X32

Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood Centre
> www.dpnc.ca
1900 Davenport Rd. M6N 1B7

Community Assets

“Homes First Society develops and provides affordable, stable housing and support services.”
- Savard’s Women’s Shelter

Working in partnership with other community and citywide organizations, Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood Centre provides a wide range of flexible, responsive and barrier-free services.
Marcelo Castro, Community Devt. & Health Promotion Coord.
<mcastro@dpnc.ca>
(416) 656-8025 X367

Dovercourt Boys and Girls Club
(Page S6, #26)
> www.dovercourtkids.com
180 Westmoreland Ave. M6H 3A2
The mission of the Boys and Girls Club is to maintain an agency that can identify and respond to the changing needs of children, adolescents and families of a multi-cultural, urban community.
Sandra Morris, Regional Director
<smorris@bgccan.com>
(416) 289-9955 X4

The Dream Team (Page S2, A2, #34)
> www.thedreamteam.ca
c/o Houselink Community Homes 1678 Bloor St. West, 2nd floor M6P 1A9
The Dream Team advocates for more safe, secure and affordable supportive housing for people living with mental health and addiction

issues.
Pedro Cabezas, Interim Coordinator
<coordinator@thedreamteam.ca>
(416) 516-1422 X263
FoodShare (Page S6, #24)
> www.foodshare.net
90 Croatia St. M6H 1K9
FoodShare takes a multifaceted, innovative, and long-term approach to hunger and food issues.
Ian Alley, Community Food Facilitator
<ian@foodshare.net>
(416) 363-6441 X241

Houselink (Page S6, #22)
> www.houselink.on.ca
805 Bloor St. West, M6G 1L8
Houselink is a non-profit, charitable agency that provides supportive housing to people living with mental illness.
Naomi Berlyne, Community Development Coordinator
<naomibe@houelink.on.ca>
(416) 539-0690 X258

New Horizons Tower (Page S6, #12)
> www.newhorizontower.com
1140 Bloor St. West, M6H 4E6
New Horizons Tower exists to provide seniors with compassionate support and quality service,

while promoting independence in a secure, affordable environment.
Ian Logan, Administrator
<ianl@newhorizontower.com>
(416) 536-6111

Safehaven (Page S6, #8)
> www.safehaven.to
1173 Bloor St. West, M6H 1M9
Safehaven provides residential and respite care programs that enable children and youth with multiple disabilities and complex medical needs to live comfortably in their own communities, near family and friends, with the support of 24-hour care.
Colleen Ashmore, Director of Operations
<cashmore@safehaven.to>
(416) 535-8525

The Salvation Army – Bloor Central Corps (Page S6, #23)
> www.bloorcentral.com
789 Dovercourt Rd. M6H 1A1
The Salvation Army is an international Christian organization that began its work in Canada in 1882 and has grown to become the largest non-governmental direct provider of social services in the country.
Greg Peterson, Volunteer Coord.
<volunteering@bloorcentral.com>

“
BIKE PIRATES
IS A DO-IT-
YOURSELF
BICYCLE
COLLECTIVE
THAT AIMS
TO EMPOWER
CYCLISTS.
”



Dovercourt Boys and Girls Club

(416) 531-8031 X103
Savard’s Women’s Shelter (Homes First Society) (Page S6, #3)
> www.homesfirst.on.ca
1322 Bloor St. West, M6H 1P2
Homes First Society develops and provides affordable, stable housing and support services to break the cycle of homelessness for people with the fewest housing options.
Deena Nelson, Shelters Manager
<deena.nelson@homesfirst.on.ca>
(416) 395-0902

Sistering (Page S6, #18)
> www.sistering.org
962 Bloor St. West, M6H 1L6
Sistering has been supporting homeless, underhoused and low-income women in the Toronto community since 1981.
Jane Kali, Director of Programs and Advocacy
<jkali@sistering.org>
(416) 926-9762 X234

South Asian Women’s Centre
(Page S2, A1, #32)
> www.sawc.org
800 Lansdowne Ave. M6H 4K3
The South Asian Women’s Centre is a voluntary non-profit women’s organization run by and for South

Asian women.
Kripa Sekhar, Executive Director
<ksekhar@sawc.org>
(416) 537-2276 X222
St. Christopher House
(Page S2, C4, #35)
> www.stchrishouse.org
248 Ossington Ave. M6J 3A2
St. Christopher House has been a neighbourhood centre in the downtown west end of Toronto since 1912.
Maureen Fair, Executive Director
<maureenfa@stchrishouse.org>
(416) 504-3535 X233

Working Women Community Centre (Page S6, #15)
> www.workingwomencc.org
533A Gladstone Ave. M6H 3J1
The mission of Working Women Community Centre is to provide immigrant and refugee women and their families with opportunities to improve the quality of their lives through self-development and community action.
Diana Karolina Grimaldos, Community Devt. Coord.
<dkgrimaldos@workingwomencc.org>
(416) 532-2924 X32



Friends of Dufferin Grove Park

Miscellaneous

Bike Pirates (Page S6, #5)
> www.bikepirates.com
1292 Bloor St. West, M6H 1N9
Bike Pirates is a do-it-yourself bicycle collective that aims to empower cyclists and make bicycles more accessible.
<info@bikepirates.com>

Friends of the Paradise
> www.friendsoftheparadise.com
The Friends of the Paradise was established as a community organization with the mission of re-opening the Paradise Cinema as a dynamic and sustainable multi-use arts centre offering entertainment opportunities to everyone in the community and beyond.
Joe Jacobs
<joe.jacobs@gmail.com>

THE FACE OF BLOOR: PORTRAITS OF BLOORDALE SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS



THE STORIES OF BLOORDALE

storeowners would be more at place in a novel than in the brief statement here. They come from countries around the world. Many made dramatic decisions to change their lives under pressing political or personal circumstances. We are honoured that they chose Bloordale to set up shop.

It is brave to start anything new, and very brave to start a new business. The effort to navigate the costs of setting up shop, then put in the long hours keeping the doors

The following 21 images introduce some of the 130 Bloordale storeowners

open, shelves stocked and the books in order, is a balancing act. Success depends on providing goods or services in an atmosphere that attracts customers. Luck and good timing help, along with the support of family, friends and community.

Some shop owners opened their stores the first year

they landed in Canada and learned to speak English on the job. Others spent years imagining the freedom and independence of owning their own small business. They saved funds, attended small business seminars, read, and met with accountants and lawyers before going forward.

GEORGINA HAMILTON was born in Jamaica and came to Canada in 1978. She opened **Caribbean Queen of Patties** in 2002, which specializes in jerk chicken, patties and traditional Jamaican sweets. It is located at 1279 Bloor Street West.





ANTHONY NGUYEN was born in Vietnam and came to Canada in 1993. He opened a shop selling second-hand items in September 2008. It is called **A and T**, located at 1197 Bloor Street West.

COLIN MOYNIHAN was born in Wallaceburg, Ontario. He opened a store selling used furniture in 2009. It's called **Ping Pong** and located at 1199 Bloor Street West.



EDDY RAISI was born in Mumbai, India. He came to Canada on May 19, 1989. His store does vacuums sales, service and repairs. The name is **AZZ Vacuums**, located at 1189 Bloor Street West.



DAVID NGO was born in Vietnam. He opened a cell phone store called **International Cellular**, in 2000 at 1296 Bloor Street West.

KUMAR NATHAN was born in Sri Lanka and came to Canada in 1983. He opened a grocery store in 1985 but changed to a furniture store in 1997. It's called **Great Furniture**, located at 1300 Bloor Street West.



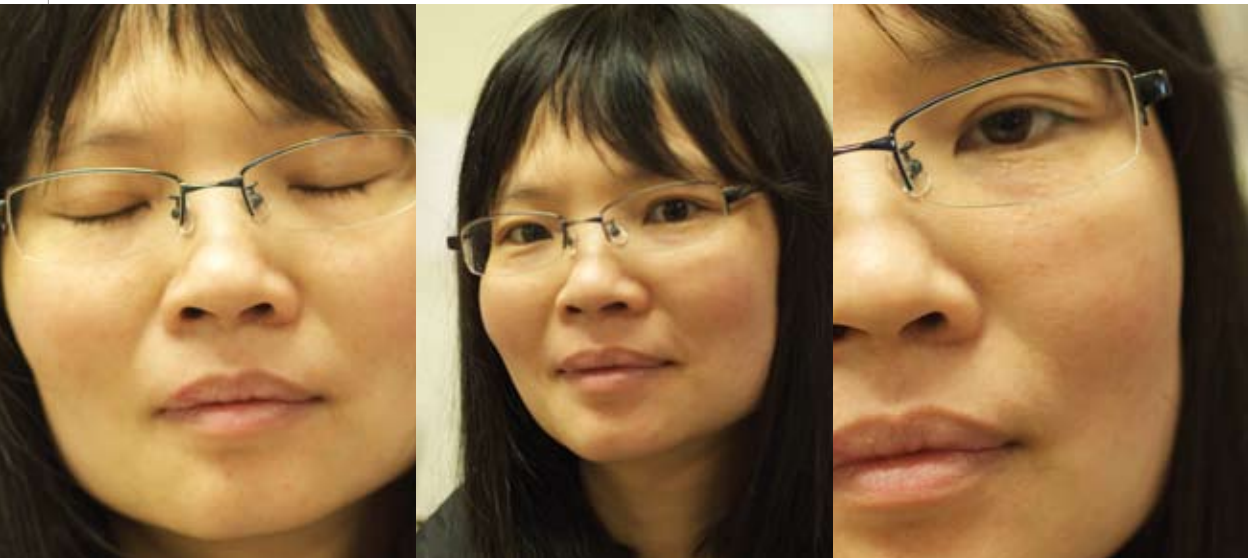
DIANE GONCALVES & CRISTIANO SILVA were both born in Portugal. They are wait staff for the owner of the store, **Rui Rocha**. Diane's father opened the store, which serves Portuguese cuisine, 25 years ago. Rui Rocha purchased it 3 years ago. It's called **Bloor Village Grill** and is located at 1184 Bloor Street West.



JARED DAVIS was born in Bracebridge, Ontario. This is Muskoka cottage country. He opened a vegetarian restaurant called **Galilo Café and Caterer** on June 20, 2009. It's located at 1226 Bloor Street West.

GEORGINA DOREGO was born in Portugal and came to Canada in 1979. She began work at her husband's family grocery store called **DoRego Supermarket** in 1986. Her husband John DoRego has worked in the store, helping to stock shelves since he was four years. The store has been open since 1979 and is located at 1162 Bloor Street West.





JUDY YE was born in China. She came to Canada in 2008 and opened a store that same year. It's called **Family Fruit and Vegetable**, located at 1182 Bloor Street West.

MARILYN HARTLEY was born in Parkville, B.C. She moved her shop, selling vintage clothing, textiles and related objects in December 2009 to Bloor Street. It's called **Rozane H** and she is also a member of the **69 Vintage Collective**, which is at the same address. This collective represents a number of stores in the same building on all three floors. Rozane H is located at 1207 Bloor Street West, 2nd Floor, through the kitchen.



MASHUD SIDDIQUE was born in Bangladesh. At first he moved to England and then in 1974 to Canada. His eatery is called **Best Roti in Town** and has been open for 14 years. It's located at 1263 Bloor Street West.



NAOMI LOGAN & LOGAN VAJHILINGAM were born in India. Logan came to Canada in 1983 and Naomi followed him in 1988. They opened a restaurant called **South Indian Dosa Mahal** in 1989. This is the fourth and largest restaurant they have opened in the area. They are located at 1262 Bloor Street West.

WILLIAM ASHMAN was born in Canada. He started a clothing store in February 2010 with partners **Rachel Beaupartant** and **Maurizio Plammini**. It is called **Haus** and is located at 1265 Bloor Street West.



PETE LILLY is from Edmonton, Alberta. He opened a bicycle and bike related sales service and repairs shop in January 10, 1997. It's called **Sweet Pete's Bicycle Shop**, located at 1204 Bloor Street West



PINTO ARLINDO DE JESUS was born in Portugal. He came to Canada in 1972. He first worked for **Economy Fruit**, a store selling fruits and vegetables and later became the owner. The store was first opened sometime in the 1940's. It's located at 1170 Bloor Street West.

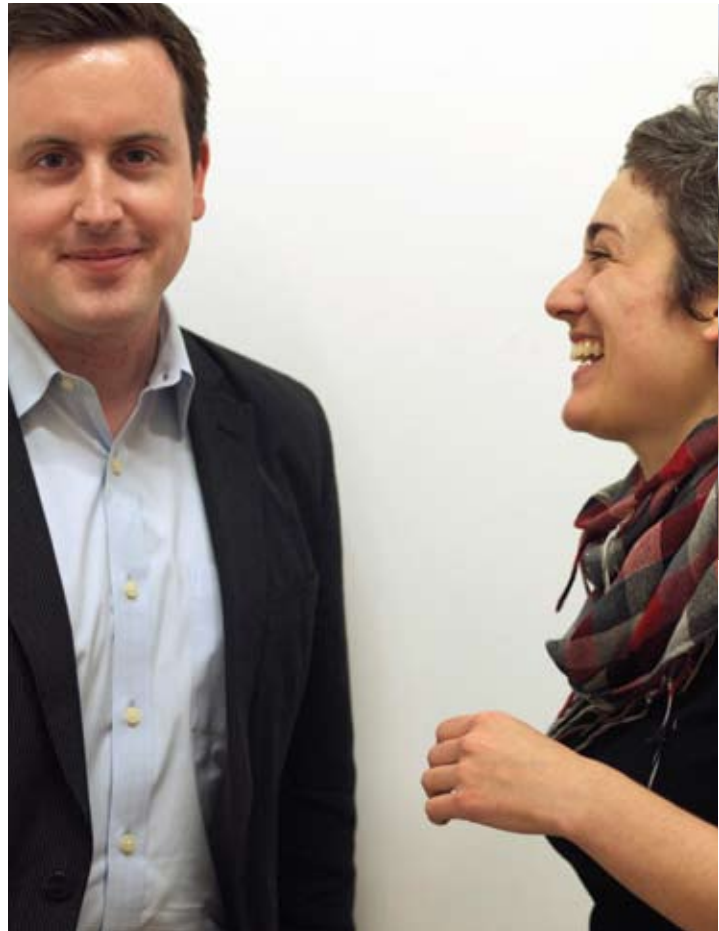
KE YING LIAO (KAY) came from South China to Canada in 1998. She opened a spa shop in 2003 called **TCM@Bloor**. It's located at 1218 Bloor Street West





ZAKIN PELA ATOUTSEI was born in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He came to Canada in 1991 and opened **Barbershop, Jeco Services**, in 2007. It's located at 1281 Bloor Street West.

YORK LETHBRIDGE & SARAH ROBAYO SHERIDAN are directors of **Mercer Union**, an artist-run art centre that was formed in 1979 at Mercer Street. It relocated in 2009 to 1286 Bloor Street West.



TEEKAM RAMOUTAR was born in Trinidad and came to Canada in 1988. He is a cook, past partner and friend of the current owner, **Luiz Medeiros**. His daughter's name is beautifully tattooed on his neck. The eatery offers Caribbean cuisine and it opened on October 21, 2010. The store is called **Teekam's Taste** and it's located at 1160 Bloor Street West.



SARBJIT SINGH was originally from India and came to Canada in 2007. He opened an Asian/ Indian grocery store called **India Sweets and Spices** on December 1, 2010. It is located at 1196 Bloor Street West.

POLICE AWARD

Below (left to right):

Richard Mongiat, artist, resident and longtime member of DIGIN; Superintendent Ruth White; Bloordale BIA chairperson Spiro Koumoudouros; Inspector Paul Vorvis; and local business person, Katie Grahm of Fly Spins Fitness studio.

B

LOORDALE BIA and community members have presented Superintendent Ruth White, the officers and staff of 14th division Toronto Police with an award of appreciation for their work improving the safety of the neighbourhood.



In her acceptance speech for the award, Ruth White returned the compliment and said she regularly mentioned the Bloordale and Bloorcourt area as a model when advising other communities. She emphasized the exceptional number of people and organizations that had come to the table to discuss problems and solutions, including residence groups, Business Improvement Associations, businesses, service providers, community groups DIG IN and BIG. In particular she praised Donna Cowan of DIG IN for

her on-going efforts. Ruth White said anecdotal evidence would suggest that there has been a 25% drop in crime over the past few years. Under her leadership the 14th Division's laudable efforts to develop a culture of strong community and police relations were seen as an important factor in improving the area.

Police records and press stories from the recent past make the change in atmosphere in this area of Bloor all the more remarkable. The 2005 City of Toronto Police

statistical report stated that 14 Division, along with 41 and 42 divisions, had the "largest proportion of dispatched calls, which together constituted 26.1% of all calls received by all divisions." The report further described 14 Division, along with 52 and 51 divisions, as continuing to have the highest rates of crime in 2005 (i.e. number of crimes per 1,000 population). This has become a pattern over the past ten years.

'Project Sting' was an anti-drug pilot that took place in the neighborhood from 5

September to 4 October 2006. 94 people were arrested and a total of 241 charges were laid. Those charged had a combined total of 1467 prior convictions. It was also found that most of the dealers did not live in the area – the neighborhood was used as a "GO TO" site to pick up crack.

In 2008 a large drug sweep in the city's west end resulted in 96 arrests and 238 drug related charges. \$30,000 worth of crack, cocaine, ecstasy, LSD and marijuana and \$10,000 in cash were seized. 26 Officers

from the 14th division took part in the operation. They worked closely with residents in the neighbourhoods to identify problem areas.

Under Superintendent Ruth White's leadership, the 14th Division has developed a strong relationship between community and police, which has been significant in improving the area. She paid tribute to her staff and Inspector Paul Vorvis, whom she credited with playing an important role, encouraging and fostering an atmosphere

of cooperation and partnership between the police officers in her department and the community. Paul Vorvis is currently representing the Toronto Police Service in Kabul, Afghanistan, where he has been deployed to assist with training their police force. He is one of 11 Toronto officers that have volunteered to be deployed along with other police officers from various Services throughout Canada.



Photograph from: icmp-grc.gc.ca

“Anecdotal evidence would suggest that there

has been a 25% drop in recent years.”

“Things change and it’s been years

since the last game of ball hockey.”

MOVED JUST NORTH of Bloor Street and Lansdowne Avenue 21 years ago. At that time our neighbourhood was alive with children. Neighbours walked to work at local factories while ball hockey and soccer games were played daily on the road in front of our house. In the evening teenagers would congregate and talk into the early morning. Small trucks stopped and idled while waiting to pick up friends for jobs in the roofing and construction trades. The ice cream truck visited every summer day to serve line-ups of children.

Things change and it’s been years since the last game

of street hockey. The ice cream man says it’s not worth his while to do the street as the children have grown up and smaller families have replaced them. Houses that once had a different family in the basement, first floor and second floor are returning to the one-family households that characterized the street when it was an industrial hub. American Standard, the TTC Barns, General Electric, Glidden Paint and many others are gone. Bloor’s once thriving street with its waves of immigrants continues to change but the Croatians are displaced – Mary, one of the last remaining, closed The Cosulich Travel Agency at 1240 Bloor this year. Only the Croatia Street signs act as a reminder. The owners of AMKAY, at 1181 Bloor Street, recall 36 years ago when they had three stores side-by-side and Saturday line-ups of people buying their beautiful sari material. They now have one quiet store and loyal customers that order by mail or drive in from the suburbs. The

A few storeowners still lament the opening of the Dufferin Mall that, combined with the disappearance of industrial jobs, contributed to failing stores and flagging street life. But nothing stays the same and we have begun to see a recent revival of the street with new stores opening. While many still struggle, others thrive. It was rewarding to see that the restaurant South Indian Dosa Mahal moved a block east to a larger space and then gave their old restaurant to a friend, keeping the doors open. New art galleries, shops, clothing stores and restaurants have moved in and are transforming Bloor and Lansdowne. The

galleries are free to visit and welcome people dropping in to see the exhibitions.

The intense drug trade that once frightened pedestrians away and intimidated storeowners has largely disappeared over the past few years. Savard’s Women’s Shelter and The Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre’s award winning shelter with transitional housing for men continues to offer shelter for some that need it. Find out about other services and organizations in the BIG directory on page 71. It remains a tragedy that more affordable housing is not available, that people

with mental health issues are abandoned to the streets and that the revolving door of prison sentencing remains the standard for drug-related offences instead of treatment.

This is all to say that Bloor Street is a live organism and that we are a part of it. The street is always changing and is always an interesting destination for a walk, where distinct communities change every few blocks. Many stores are family owned, each offering an indigenous culture that supports local families and that offers a lively alternative to the standardized sameness of globalized corporate retail.

Dyan Marie

SHAPE-SHIFTING ON BLOOR

Photograph by: Richard Rhodes



Left: Neighbourhood friends, summer 1989. Young boys playing on the steps a few blocks north of Bloor Street on St Clarens Avenue.

ECONOMY FRUIT STORE

Andrew Prosser



Left: Economy Fruit:
open since the 1940's.



LUCKED AWAY AT 1170 Bloor St., Economy Fruit, with its handwritten prices and haphazard crates, might strike you as cheap. Well, it is – but not in the stingy sense.

“I lose money, anytime I’m serving. With him?” The worldly, straight-talking proprietor jabs his thumb at an employee. “With him, no, I don’t lose money, because he charge the right price. But with me, I lose.”

Even after he took ownership of the store in 1994, he still works 6 days a week. He doesn’t do it for the money, he says. He does it because he

likes it – and you can tell. “All kinds, Mexicans, Eskimos from Alaska, Indians, Asians, Russians, you name it, they’re all here... I got one lady come here on Fridays. She comes here every week for 58 years. She come to Canada, a little girl. Italian lady. She’s old now.”

His more famous patrons include George Chuvalo, the Toronto boxer whom Muhammad Ali claimed was the toughest guy he ever fought. “When he was in trouble, he come here. We used to help him out. Now he’s on his feet again and helping other people, giving talks at schools.”

Economy Fruit are hauling in new produce every day – often directly from local farmers – so you never know what you might find. And if you don’t know how to cook it, you can probably get recipes from three different sides of the globe just by wondering out loud.

