

# TRIANGLE TOPICS

BTRA Winter Newsletter Articles 2016



CELEBRATING

30  
YEARS



## Presidents Report

*Hans Looije*

Seasons greetings. This year I am pleased that Centre 55 has recognized John Ellis as 2016 Beach Citizen of the Year. John has served on the Beach Triangle Residents Association in various capacities from president to his current capacity as editor of this newsletter.

The water line rehabilitation has moved to the area east of Woodbine and all of our sidewalks have been repaired. There are just now some home owners replacing the last of the lead pipe running into the home. Bell Telephone has been busy in the neighbourhood installing new underground fibre cable, The last of the disruptions should be sewer main replacement at Rainsford and Queen and the water main replacement along Kingston.

200 Woodbine construction has started which will cause some disruptions. The past summer has seen many home renovations in the Triangle and many construction bins. Some of the smaller houses have successfully applied for bylaw variances to add on additions and almost double the value of their homes. When completely updated, a Triangle home is a good value compared to the homes in Woodbine Park.

City council has approved bike lanes along Woodbine Ave. South bound bike lanes will end at Dixon to combine with the bike lanes along Dixon. North bound bike lanes will only start north of Kingston mainly because of the hazardous crossing of Kingston road experienced by cyclists as well as pedestrians.

## New By-law Approved at the AGM

*John Ellis*

At the BTRA Annual General Meeting held at Corpus Christi Church hall on June 03 the proposed amendments to the By-law were unanimously adopted, with one amendment. At the meeting, it was noted that Membership, Clause 1, apparently doesn't permit business owners in the Triangle to be members. An amendment was moved from the floor to add "or operating a business" to the clause, to read: "Membership in the BTRA is open to all adults (over 18 years of age) regularly resident *or operating a business* in the area bounded by the east side of Kingston Road, the west side of Woodbine Avenue, and the north side of Queen Street East."

This important amendment enabled the association to nominate its first director who is a non-resident business person, C. Lee Welbanks, who has a mortgage brokerage at 1831a Queen Street East. Lee then accepted appointment as Treasurer, taking over the role from Pat Blythe who served the BTRA well for several years.

*(See a list of the new Board of Directors elsewhere in this newsletter)*

## Beach Citizen of the Year – John Ellis

Pat Silver



Every year one Beacher is honoured for their outstanding extraordinary dedication to our community. Long-time Triangle resident John Ellis was honoured in September as the Beach Citizen of the Year, 2016 - and well-deserved. He's a helpful neighbour, warm-hearted friend, and yard gardener, but behind that winning smile is a passionate community activist.

From fighting for the rights of non-smokers, to chronicling our history, to working in the credit union field, John has always looked out for citizens, locally, provincially, and nationally. His passion for causes is contagious and inspiring. He has been our champion for decades and a leader of the Beach Triangle Residents Association since its inception in 1985. He rallied residents around Greenwood Racetrack issues of Sunday racing, parking challenges, and its overall negative affect on Triangle lifestyle and security. He has made significant contributions to the rejuvenation of The Beach and East Toronto Historical Society, Urban Design Guidelines for Queen Street East in the Beach, and to a proposed Heritage Conservation District. It's all in the family, with his daughter, Amber, as Executive Director of Earthroots, leading the charge to protect Canadian Wilderness.

As a C-Founder of the BTRA, I am an admirer of John and his work. John has given selflessly of his time and energy to protect and improve our health, safety, and lifestyle. We have all benefited from his initiatives. We are so fortunate to have John and his wife, Bev, as Triangle neighbours.



John shares the honour with past inductees: Paul Babich, Carole Stimmell, Suzanne Beard, Thomas Neal, Anne Butler, Pat Silver, Jean Cochrane, Joan Brent, Mary Christie, David Breech, Arie Nerman, Marie Perrotta, Ted Randall, Glenn Cochrane and Gene Domagala.



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## Home History: Adventures in renovation

Hans Looije

My wife and I bought 30 Rainsford on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1980, over 35 years ago. I have been repairing and renovating the house ever since. In that time I have found out many interesting things about our homes. Many were built before indoor plumbing was available. My home was among a few in the Triangle to have the basement walls made from collected field stone (most Triangle homes have basements built with concrete or bricks). The stone didn't come from the digging of the basement because all the holes I have dug over the years have only met with sand, clay and roots.

Maybe because the sand drained so well, the builder never put weeping tile around the house, but many homes with unfinished basements still have little rivers running through the basement during storms. So why was my basement so dry while the other half of the semi was so damp? I found out this year that I *did* have weeping tile that was put in later around the inside wall of the basement (something to keep in mind if I ever decide to lower the basement).

One thing I have learned is to never assume anything. If you have any insulation, you probably DO have asbestos in the walls; the walls are seldom straight; and the floors are seldom level (and never were). When I was doing renovations at the same time as my neighbour in the other half of the semi, I assumed everything would be mirror image. Well, I discovered my ceilings were two inches higher than his. And his floors were two inches thicker than mine, which explained why my floors had sagged over the past 100 years and his hadn't.

All old homes in the Triangle have been renovated. Wood kitchen stoves and coal burning furnaces were replaced. Slate shingles were replaced, and indoor plumbing installed. I found the remains of gas lighting in my house along with the knob-and-tube wiring and lead drain piping. One thing that was never addressed in the past was insulation.

When I pulled off the flat roof at the rear I made sure I put insulation in. What I did not expect to see: the supports under the flat roof deck were 16 foot two by four's. The joists are now 2"x10" with plywood over top, but for 20 years the deck that I had on the roof had actually been stronger than the roof! The insulation in the roof may not be perfect because there are areas where the snow melts faster, but at least there *is* insulation. A new deck may go up in the future now that I know there is a solid roof under it but I need one that will not rot after 20 years.

There is now only one wall in one room that has the original lath and plaster and is uninsulated. Work on it also involves doing something with the old coal-burning fireplace that results in a big loss of heat in the winter. After 37 years, I think I will leave this last bit for my son.

### **Footnote (Hans Looije, John Ellis):**

Survey: October 1912 for F.E. Price, Esq., 183 Lee Ave., Toronto, by Speight & Van Nostrand; 30/32 Rainsford is 'Parts of Lots 42 and 43, Reg. Plan 427 E', 'Unfinished Brick Dwellings'.

City of Toronto Directory (1913 for 1912): Nos. 8-20, 38 and 40 are finished and occupied; 22-24 and 32-34 are "Unfinished".

City of Toronto Directory (1914 for 1913): The entire block is built. Charles Parton lives at 30, and Herbert Loates lives at 32.

Recent: Hans and Carol Looije bought the house in 1980 from Wilhelm and Louise Terhaag, who had purchased it from Florence Butler on Aug. 27, 1957.



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## Weed 'em and reap

*Skye Vandenberg*

*What is a weed? A plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered.* – Ralph Waldo Emerson

A noxious weed is a plant that is considered harmful to animals or the environment. It can include harmful plants such as poison ivy and invasive species such as dog-strangling vine. The difference between an unwanted garden weed and a noxious weed is their potential for taking over habitat and eliminating habitat for native species. Some weeds that are unwanted in your garden, in contrast to noxious weeds, are not harmful to the environment overall and can actually be put to good use (e.g., Purslane, a succulent plant with a lemony flavor, that can be eaten fresh in salads).

Dealing with any noxious weeds requires some knowledge of how they spread. Some spread most quickly through producing many seeds (think of a dandelion's flyaway seeds), others through underground runners (think of crabgrass).

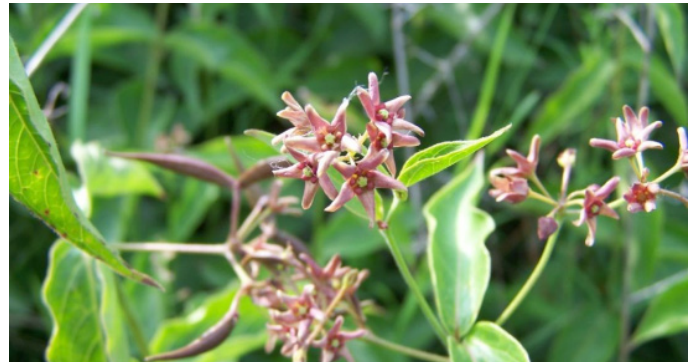
Some weeds reproduce quickly through seeds that are designed to travel distances and colonize disturbed soil. Queen Anne's lace and its cousin wild parsnip are examples of noxious weeds that spread rapidly through seeds. The flowers and young seed pods can be pinched off or clipped with garden shears if you have a serious outbreak. Remove the weeds before their seeds mature or the weed will quickly spread through your garden and your neighbor's (however, bees and butterflies would appreciate you leaving them in the ground until they are finished flowering). Be cautious when removing the roots of large clumps of noxious weeds. If one thing is true about weeds it is that they are capable invaders taking quick advantage of newly exposed soil. Quickly cover soil that is exposed during weed removal with mulch or replant the space to help prevent their return.

To eliminate noxious weeds that spread rapidly through their perennial roots you must dig up their entire root system. After digging up roots, you can control the plant by cutting down re-growth until the energy stored in the roots is eventually exhausted. This would be the treatment for Tree of Heaven, a rapidly-growing plant with particularly smelly leaves.



**Tree of Heaven, showing leaf pattern and flowers**

A species that has most recently invaded the Beach is dog strangling vine (DSV). DSV is harmful to monarch butterfly larvae. When the butterflies lay their eggs on this plant the toxic sap kills the larvae when they feed on the plant.



**Dog Strangling Vine showing seed pods and flowers**

DSV and Japanese Knotweed (which resembles bamboo and is present in large swaths along the lower Don bicycle path) are particularly noxious and difficult to eradicate even through constant effort in removing new growth.



**Japanese Knotweed**

Another pervasive weed that produces an attractive showing of white flowers but climbs over trees, shrubs and fences, creating dense shadow is Invasive Honeysuckle.



### Invasive Honeysuckle

In any case, noxious weeds are best removed in cooperation with an entire community. Ask a neighbour whose garden you admire to help you identify and remove noxious weeds from your property.

Visit the Ontario’s Invading Species Awareness Program website <http://www.invadingspecies.com/> and look at their list of terrestrial invasive plants for more information on identifying invasive weeds.

### Tree for Me

Do your part to help support the growth of Toronto’s urban forest! [Toronto Parks and Trees Foundation](#) has launched a new program – [Tree for Me](#) – aimed at increasing tree plantings on private property. Tree for Me offers residents anywhere in Toronto a free native tree that is grown from local seed stock to plant on their property.

You can sign up for your tree on the website. And with help from TreeMobile, a free delivery and planting service is available to anyone with limited mobility.

Participants can also join a Tree for Me event nearest them where they are invited to join a tree planting and care workshop, and pick up their free tree.

## OMB Reform - Finally?

*John Ellis*

The BTRA has for decades supported City Council in pressing for reform of the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB). The Beach has paid a high price through the OMB permitting development that wasn’t sensitive to heritage and historic properties and streetscapes, and often legalistically negating strong positions taken by communities. A member of the Ontario legislature supported Council by submitting a bill to eliminate the OMB altogether.

While the Province has stopped short of eliminating the OMB, there are a number of very positive reforms proposed in the [consultation document](#) that would significantly improve the planning process for Toronto, including:

- Only allowing the OMB to hear appeals on the “validity of the decision” by Council, limiting the OMB’s ability to hear appeals and completely overturn decisions.
- Preventing appeals of secondary plans (including Yonge and Eglinton, which is now under review) for two years.
- Requiring the OMB to send “significant new information” arising from a hearing back to councils for re-evaluation before rendering a decision.
- More actively promoting mediation to settle disputes, preventing adversarial hearings.
- Better training of OMB members, who are appointed by the Province.

**BULLETIN:** What do you think? The BTRA wants to communicate with you. Please supply us with your e-mail address and ‘Friend’ us on Facebook: ‘Beach Triangle Residents Association’

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## Betting Hall to become Music Hall?

John Ellis

Councillor McMahon was happy to support the re-zoning of a former off-track betting facility at 1661 Queen Street East, to an event space for live performance. This application was made by Live Nation, a well-known and well-respected international entertainment company. Their proposal for a 2700 seat venue was approved at the Committee of Adjustment in July of this year. As is typical with any development and rezoning, the applicant is currently going through the city planning process.

On April 1, 2017, City Council unanimously approved the Toronto Music Advisory Council's Music Strategy, which aims to grow the music sector and make it easier for artists, venues and promoters to navigate bureaucracy around concerts. This new Live Nation venue is a way for our ward to contribute to the successful implementation of the Music Strategy, and Councillor McMahon looks forward to drawing people from across the city to Queen Street East.

Pat Silver, long-time Triangle resident, former BTRA President, singer, composer and impresario, says that Toronto definitely needs another mid-sized concert hall. There are so many events that cannot take place in the larger venues because of cost, and the small venues don't have enough capacity to generate enough revenue to support the fees of well-known artists. The only present east-end venue is Danforth Music Hall but, at about 1000 seats and a high rental price, it is not practical for many events.

The new hall could create opportunities for local artists and even school presentations, and that should be part of the requirement of the license to build and operate the hall. This hall would also relieve promoters of the financial burden placed on arts events in the parks where a percentage of food and beverage revenue goes back to Foulidis, who holds the contract for this. There could be some strain on neighbourhood parking, but there is a large lot behind the complex. "A music hall would be a huge improvement over the off-track betting facility", Pat says.

Patricia Blythe, an independent telecommunications and contact centre consultant, design specialist, and also a Triangle resident, says "I do like the idea of a mid-size concert venue in the area. As long as it is managed well, both inside and outside (since it is very close to a residential area) it should prove to be very beneficial, particularly to the few decent restaurants in the area". She continues with the observation that there is lots of TTC service to the location, and a goodly amount of parking if people insist on driving. The proposed hall could be split up for two smaller events or one large one with a total capacity of 2,700. A year-round location can also be used for community functions and it will handle events in the winter when we "lose" the use of our parks. Pat says "I think there could be many creative uses for a space such as this as long as the cost is reasonable, particularly to the community. It will become a *destination*, encouraging people from all over the city to 'take a trip east' and enjoy all the amenities we have to offer. One article called us 'sleepy'...this could definitely change that perception."



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## Police update

Hans Looije

Our police Division 55 will be merging with Division 54 (which handles calls north of Danforth Ave. to Eglinton). There will be no change in the services provided, but the police force is looking to save money by not repairing the two old stations and instead building a new one close to Danforth Ave. This means the building at Dundas and Coxwell will become surplus. Are there any suggestions for a new use for the property (besides another condo)?

Division 55 is continuing to implore residents to use lockable mail boxes. Thieves steal mail from unlocked boxes and use the info collected for identity theft. It doesn't take long for an imposter to clean out your bank account.

Besides the use of body cameras, police are now retrofitting the shotguns carried in cruisers to fire bean bags as a non-lethal alternative in confrontations. They will be easy to spot as they will have bright orange barrels. To counter the firepower carried by some criminals, Toronto police are rolling out new C8 semi-automatic rifles. There are currently nine Division 55 officers trained in its use.




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