

The Pocket

VOLUME 10

SEPTEMBER 2007

Pocket Convenience

By Jesse Frayne

The backbone of our Pocket neighbourhood is our trio of corner stores, where we have all dashed for some last-minute forgotten necessity, an impulsive ice cream dessert, or the save-your-life plumber's helper or pack of Dristan. We are lucky in our Pocket to have three such stores on Jones Avenue, open early and late, each filling a different niche.

At Baird: Jones Family Variety

Jerusalem ("Jerry") and Skinder, with their 5-year-old son Robel, have been the owners of the corner store at Baird and Jones since December 1997. The couple moved from Ethiopia 18 years ago and went shopping for a store that would be their home. Robel is now in junior kindergarten at Wilkinson School.

While Skinder drives a taxi many days, Jerry tends the lunch trade from Earl Grey School, across the street from their business. Her store smells like cookies, and when I arrive she is preparing the 50-odd hot dogs, burritos and Jamaican patties she will provide shortly to local kids. Her kitchen is immaculate and ready. She has tried to sell Ethiopian



Baird store, 1952 (City of Toronto Archives, Series 372, Sub Series 58, Item 2337A)



Jerry in front of the Baird store, today

bread (called injera), though this has not, so far, been picked up by the school kids. Jamie Oliver anyone?

At Shudell: Jones Variety

The store at the corner of Jones and Shudell was run with warmth and genius by Egbert and Moquoi Lee for nearly three decades while they raised their kids and grew their incredible garden. Upon their retirement and move to Markham, another Lee family ran the store briefly, but health difficulties forced the new owners to sell in 2004.

Current owners Helena and Fred came to Canada from China in 1999. Fred was an engineer in his homeland, but had difficulty getting his Canadian papers. After coming to Canada, Helena and Fred both worked factory jobs for two years to save enough for a down payment on a store. They looked for a good

neighbourhood for their daughter and their new life, and felt the Pocket was going to be it. They took a neglected store and transformed it into the bright and well-organized place it is now.

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Culinary Gems in the Pocket

By Lindsay Soomet, Dave Michaels and Jesse Frayne

When it comes to eating out, our neighbourhood holds up quite nicely. Our little stretch of the Danforth has food for every taste, from huevos rancheros to hearty hamburgers and fries. Here are some top picks from staff of *The Pocket*.

Best Burger

Square Boy, 875 Danforth Ave.

This spot has been around for longer than most of us have lived here, and it's still serving fast food in an old-school tradition that's fast disappearing elsewhere. You still get that drive-in feel when you stroll up and order a burger and fries or a Greek souvlaki treat.

Your kids will love it, and the prices are amazing. If you like food that hits the spot with greasy goodness, you'll make a place in your heart for Square Boy.

Best Fruity and Healthful Drink

Makkah Restaurant
1020 Danforth Ave.

A mango lassi is the perfect antidote to a warm summer day. It's like a mango milkshake but made with



yogurt, so it's better for you. At some South Asian restaurants these tangy, creamy concoctions go for \$4 or \$5, but at Makkah they are just \$2, a smoking deal. Pick one up with some samosas (60 cents for veggie, a little more for meat) and you've got a quick and cheap meal.

Best Bang-For-Your-Buck Breakfast

Motorama, 862 Danforth Ave.

If you're a greasy-spoon connoisseur, you've got to try Motorama. It's been entertaining our 'hood for 50 years, and in that time it has perfected the ultimate cheap morning feast of bacon, eggs, toast, homefries and a cup of joe, all for a whopping \$3.75! Make sure you get there before 11 a.m. or else you'll miss out on this early bird special.

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Editorial: Phin Park Rejuvenation, A Short History

By Kim Barnes and Marc van Beusekom

“People who complain about the park today should have seen it before—it was a mud hole, a swamp.”
—Marcia Lenglet, Ravina Crescent

Most of you have probably noticed or have even been involved in the recent exciting changes at Phin Park. Thanks to a group of local residents led by Jeff Otto, the park now has a proper sign, new trees and shrubs, more garbage and recycling containers, a gorgeous new pergola (wooden lattice structure to provide shade, located beside the wading pool) and colourful flowerbeds. This is just the first step in a larger plan to transform the park into a more beautiful and useable space for everyone. The long-range plan includes building a border surround for the playground, creating a message board, adding state-of-the-art LED lighting as well as creating a proper entrance – hopefully incorporating local art.



Early 80s, facing Eastern Commerce



Early 80s, facing south

What people may not realize is the amount of hard work, organization and co-ordination required to transform a park. The recent projects are actually the third wave of improvements championed by dedicated Pocket residents over the past 25 years. In each case, a few motivated neighbours got together and brought about – and continue to bring about – enormous change.

Phin Park was originally built on top of a landfill/garbage dump that filled in a ravine that used to wind along the back of Ravina Crescent. (See previous *Pocket* newsletter, Volume 4, at www.the-pocket.ca.)

The 70s and 80s

When Marcia and Brian Lenglet moved into the neighbourhood in the early 1970s, Phin Park had no playground, no path and few trees. Much of the area near the back of Queen Victoria was a swamp due to poor drainage. It did, however, have a sign that said, “No ball playing” and a sunken wading pool that could only be partly filled.

According to Marcia, Gord Gourlay of Ravina Crescent was the first “patron of Phin Park.” In the early 1980s he persuaded Parks and Recreation to plant the first wave of trees. At that time, there was a chain-link fence separating Phin Park from the Eastern Commerce schoolyard. The fence had a gate in the middle leading to the football field. This meant that residents had to cut across the often muddy field to get to and from the Danforth. Phin Park itself was also muddy but was still the preferred route to the subway and to Wilkinson School.

In 1982 the principal of Eastern Commerce, wanting to prevent residents from disturbing the physical education classes, locked the gate on the fence leading to the field and posted signs suggesting that pedestrians use the laneway behind Ravina. The laneway was also used as a two-way drag strip by some of the students, making this a dangerous route.

This action infuriated residents and prompted Marcia and others to agitate for access to Danforth Avenue. It also developed into a movement to renew the park itself. Three couples founded a group called EPIC (Eastern Playground Improvement Committee), which met with representatives of the school. The meetings were at first antagonistic but later became more collaborative with the participation of Toronto city council. The group’s efforts resulted in the removal of the fence, and the construction of the path we use today. In addition was



New sign and flowers

the installation of proper drainage, an improved wading pool, and the running track, as well as landscaping, berms (small hills) and lighting along the pathway (with an agreement to keep it on at night!). The agreement also put in place the basketball court, playground and a “no left turn” sign on the alleyway off Chatham Avenue. They did all this in six months!

The 90s and today

Around 1991 Suzanne David developed an interest in the park while taking her children there to play. The place was in decline: one tire swing was the extent of the playground, trees were only on the perimeter, there was a noticeable presence of drug dealers and lighting was poor. When a body (the unfortunate victim of a drug-related murder that did not involve anyone from the neighbourhood) was discovered in the alley behind

(continued on page 3)



PETER TABUNS, MPP

Toronto-Danforth

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Editorial: Phin Park Rejuvenation, A Short History

(continued from page 2)

Ravina, she felt compelled to act. In spite of being told it was the end of the budget cycle and no improvements could be made, Suzanne persisted by gathering 200 signatures on 10 petitions. The group she formed with other moms in the neighbourhood – the Phin Park Improvement Committee – made significant progress. The wattage of lights was increased, an extra light was installed on the path near the school, 20 trees were planted (about half survived), and a play structure was installed. A sandbox, built in her backyard on the sly with donated material from a lumberyard, was added to the playground. The group personally asked the drug dealers to leave, which they did. When Suzanne looks at Phin Park now, she sees “their” trees providing shade and an attractive space for a new crop of children.

Jeff Otto, a Ravina Avenue resident and the latest Phin Park champion, became interested in improving the park after spending many mornings walking his dogs there



(L to R) Sean Levine, Paul Woodman, and Jeff Otto work on the top of the pergola

and noticing the gradual deterioration. Through advocating for new trees in the Pocket he had already come to know many of his neighbours, and he developed a

contact list. The group he formed is now known as The Pocket Neighbourhood Association. TPNA holds regular meetings with representatives from Parks and Rec, Eastern Commerce, Toronto police and councillor Paula Fletcher’s office. Jeff has successfully canvassed local businesses for support, something the city now welcomes. Jeff and his team have put in many long hours on this project, and there is still a lot more to come.

He has been pleasantly surprised at how the doors have opened up for Phin Park when he has been approaching people for help: “It’s amazing – sometimes all you have to do is ask,” he says.

Thank you and congratulations to all of our Phin Park champions for their hard work to make an enjoyable park space for us all.

If you are interested in getting involved with efforts to further enhance the park through The Pocket Neighbourhood Association, please contact Jeff at jeffotto@sympatico.ca.



The completed pergola

A Greyhound’s View of Phin Park Cleanup Day

By Mike Farrell (uh, we mean, James Bond)

heLo thaiR evreebudee

mY naiM iS james

imE a greYhownd

I yooseD to rUn foR a living buT noW iME reeTiurD

i liV heer in the pOket wiTH my muM and dAd

yu maY no tHem



James checks out the displays

mY mum haS beyUtiful reD hare

anD my daD iYkes to wAre fuN shaydeS

aneewaY...

I jUSt wantED to reePOrt on URTH DAY iN the poKET

iT was reeLY fuN for mee and I think iT was aLso lotS of fuN for evreeBuddee elsE tOO

thE suN wAs briTE all daY

I tHInK thE sun wAs also happee thAT we wuR aLL taKing kAre of th Eurth

aS a doG in the pokET I tHInK I haV an inTurEstinG purSPectiv oN the urTH – iT smelz soh good wHEN its happEE and all the birDs and skwirLS and eeVeN the rakuNES (thAT I donT reALLY like at all) aLL liV beTTur and happeeUR wen ouR nayburHood is cleenUR and groWinG and the soyLE is weT and dark

iT waS verEE niSE to seE all the peepuL out and lurNing abowT the urTH and treez and pLants and hoW we caN be bettuR frendz wiTH it

i alSo had tons of fuN meeTing all the yungUR peepUL in the pOket

I lyke it a hoLe loT weN I get pET by them eSshuLLY

I hAD lotS of fuN and I hoap we do thiS evree yeeR

mayBee we caN thiNK aboWT the urth evree daY!

siNED

james BonD (the greYhoWnd)

Pocket Convenience

(continued from page 1)



Shudell store, 1952 (City of Toronto Archives, Series 372, Sub Series 58, Item 2342)



Fred in front of the Shudell store, today

The garden store has southern exposure and is a real gem on the corner. On a fresh May morning, Helena cheerfully waters her new potted deliveries while Fred chats with me indoors. They stock their store with unusual and premium dry goods, condiments, dairy, light hardware and first aid items, listening to requests from their clients and making the most of their brilliantly clean shelf space. There's practically everything in there and they have saved me from culinary disasters many times. Fred says he is happy to be of help in the Pocket neighbourhood.

At Boulton: Uncle Don's

Uncle Don's has been a feature at the south end of the

Pocket for over 25 years. A resident above his store, Don is committed to his neighbourhood and probably knows many Pocket residents from childhood. A modest man, he declined an interview. His employee, Kevin, who has worked there a few days a week since 1983 when he was about 15, now also works security at music concerts, and when we talk, he shows his respect and warmth for Don.

Uncle Don's store has suffered some water damage caused by a leak in the main piping overhead, and Don is uncertain about his prospects for renovation. The shelves are not vigorously stocked. But while I'm in the store, a few regular customers drop in to chat. This has clearly been a great community visiting place over the years. Don gets some of his business from the Blake Street School, particularly the E.A.S.T. (East Alternative School of Toronto) kids, and he has a reputation for kindness.



Uncle Don's, today

Each of our corner stores is different, serving different needs in the Pocket. At Baird we have not only last-minute supplies, but also the lunch trade, which could expand deliciously in any direction. At Shudell is a broad variety of goods and fantastic flowers. And in the south, at Boulton, we have history and grace. Our corner stores are cornerstones in our lives. So thanks to all of the proprietors for giving us three more reasons to love our neighbourhood!

Culinary Gems in the Pocket

(continued from page 1)

Best Brunch For a Newcomer

The Only Café, 972 Danforth Ave.

It's been around for 22 years, and anyone can see why. The Only is a unique experience, which is perhaps where its name stems from. With a new back patio with 11 tables and an impressive mural on the front booth looking out to the street, the place is only getting better. On the menu are Belgian waffles, huevos rancheros and Cowboy, Queen and British breakfasts – perfect for a lazy Sunday morning. And it can be even lazier than you think; The Only serves brunch from 9 a.m. all the way till 3 in the afternoon. Prices are in tune with the casual vibe. More than 120 selections of beer, 16 on tap.

Best Fresh Just-Like-Mom's Pizza

Danforth Pizza House, 920 Danforth Ave.

Antonio has been making pizzas the same way for forty years, since he moved into the neighbourhood and set up shop. "I use all fresh ingredients," he says. Bite into one of his masterpieces and taste for yourself. Less salt, less sugar, but much more flavour than any other slice in town. Prices are reasonable, too, with a large 3-topping pie going for \$18 (dimensions are more than generous).

Best Cake

Chocolate Heaven Café,
974 Danforth Ave.

You'll find lots of treats at Chocolate Heaven, including some killer truffles, baked goods and robust Kicking Horse coffee. But if you have a hankering for moist, rich cakes, beat a path for this homey place. Among the specialties are made-from-scratch chocolate and carrot cakes, with buttery, homemade frostings. This friendly place is open late on weekends, and the service is excellent.



Best Zen-Filled Japanese Eatery East of the DVP

Sakawaya Bistro, 867 Danforth Ave.

As soon as you step into the shadowed Sakawaya Bistro, just east of Jones Avenue, you are in the presence of something spectacular. The sushi chef is serious about artistic expression, and it shows. Prices are reasonable and every savoury morsel will entertain your palate with flavours and textures that hold true to Japan. Pick-up or dine-in, if you like sushi you'll find nothing as authentic as this restaurant, which has been recommended four years in a row by *Toronto Life* magazine.

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES IN THE POCKET

By Susan McMurray

Sixth Annual Car-Free Day and Party in the Pocket

Saturday, September 15
2 to 10 p.m.

Condor Avenue between Shudell and Hunter

The tradition continues! On September 15, kids and adults will play games, share meals, and chat with each other in the middle of Condor Avenue, safely. The kids like having the freedom of the streets so much that it's hard to get them off at the end of the day. All of this is capped off with music and entertainment provided by neighbours.

Bring your bicycle at 2 p.m. for a "decorated bicycle parade." The potluck dinner begins at 6 p.m., so bring a potluck contribution too. Look for a more detailed schedule posted on neighbourhood lamp posts.

To volunteer, make a donation, or for more information, call or email Susan McMurray at 416-406-1684 or speaking@web.ca.

Pocket Pub Night

Sunday, November 25
7 to 9 p.m.

The Hargrave Pub and Restaurant
1106 Danforth Avenue (north side between Donlands and Greenwood)



Mark your calendars: Join friends and neighbours from the Pocket for an evening of socializing. It's casual and come-as-you-are – no RSVP required. The last Pub Night was extremely popular – don't miss this one! Organized by *The Pocket* newsletter.

Book Club



The Pocket Book Club was recently established in our neighbourhood. So far, we have met twice. Anybody interested in joining or finding out more about the club should contact Satu Repo at satu.repo@utoronto.ca or give her a call at 416-463-6978.

Be a part of *The Pocket!*

Attention scribes: itching to get something on paper? We invite article submissions of up to 500 words on topics of interest to Pocket residents. We also publish meeting and event listings, photos of neighbourhood scenes, drawings, jokes, and original recipes.

Not a writer, but still have a great story idea? No problem! Send it to us, and we can assign someone to cover it. And we always need volunteers on our newsletter committee to help with things like editing, production, ad sales, and delivery. You can reach us at 416-778-4564 or pocketnewsletter@sympatico.ca.

Wedding in the Pocket

By Kim Barnes and Julia Morgan

On August 18, Sax Francisco of 80 Condor married Luis Nicolas Fuentis Aceves from Mexico. You may have noticed the wedding, since Sax and her new husband celebrated their nuptials right in our midst, under a canopy in front of their house.



Sax has lived on Condor Ave. for eight years. She met Luis at a centre for Aztec dancing, and he proposed to her in Phin Park on 7/7/7 (his birthday) during a drumming/dancing ceremony. In the future, they hope to split their time between Mexico and the Pocket. In Mexico, weddings are often in the garden and that is where Sax wanted hers. ("My garden is me," she says.) Since her garden was too small for guests, Sax got a permit to close part of Condor. She says the city workers were "very sweet" and even helped clean up the street for the occasion.

Paula Fletcher

City Councillor
Ward 30, Toronto-Danforth



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The Ravina Project: An Experiment in Renewable Energy

By Nate Hendley

Gordon Fraser, a semi-retired IT consultant, looks mildly perturbed as he checks numbers on an assortment of electronic equipment in his basement. The basement lacks both a furnace and an electric hot-water heater. It does boast, however, a boiler powered by natural gas, two picnic cooler-sized plastic bins containing batteries, a laptop computer, power cables and several other complicated gadgets. The computer is broadcasting an image from a camera positioned on the roof of the house. The camera is focused on a 1500-watt array of solar panels that sits on top of the otherwise unassuming 80-year-old structure.

“We only generated 3.8 kilowatt hours today,” says Fraser. “Our average for May was 4.8. On a really sunny day, we can get 8.”

Fraser and his partner Susan Laffier, a semi-retired social worker, want their house at 75 Ravina Cres. to become one of the first – if not the first – private residences in Toronto to generate its own electrical power using clean energy.

Fraser and Laffier call their initiative “The Ravina Project,” and over the next 60 months or so, they want to collect as much data as possible to make it easier for other homeowners to “go green.” The data is being published at www.theravinaproject.org.

A few Torontonians have already had a glimpse of their project in action. Their house was on the itinerary in this spring’s Doors Open Toronto festival (an annual event where buildings of architectural and social significance open their doors to the public). 75 Ravina Crescent was one of roughly two dozen “green buildings” at Doors Open.

“We thought we’d get 20 people over the weekend. We had 20 people in our first hour,” recalls Laffier, with a smile. Over 300 people visited the house during the two-day Doors Open event.

Fraser and Laffier have spent about \$50,000 on The Ravina Project to date. Some of this went towards fixing the house up to make it more efficient – upgrading the wiring, adding insulation and putting in double-pane windows.

They decided to “go solar” last summer, inspired in part by the notorious East Coast blackout of 2003, which saw Toronto and other major cities plunged into darkness. Fraser and Laffier liked the idea of being self-sufficient and not tied to a massive external power grid.

In late 2006, a 12 square metre array of solar panels

was affixed to the roof of 75 Ravina.

The house wiring was once again modified to accommodate this fixture. A system of batteries was installed in the basement to store energy gathered by the panels. Meanwhile, an on-demand, natural gas-fired boiler was installed to take care of hot-water needs for the house.

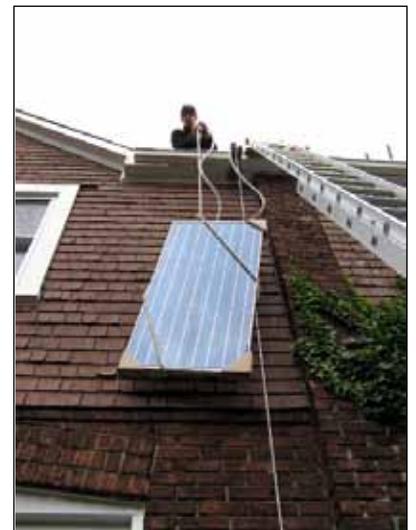
On February 23 this year, Fraser and Laffier put The Ravina Project to the test and severed their connection to the external power grid for 24 hours. The test went off without a glitch.

These days, Fraser and Laffier still rely on the grid to supplement electricity generated by the solar panels. Some days, however, the panels generate more power than they need. When this happens, excess power is channelled back for the common good.

The couple hope to go completely “grid-free” over the next five years. Solar alone won’t be sufficient to meet this goal, so Fraser wants to install a 25-metre wind tower on his property to gather energy from stray breezes. Municipal bylaws might stand in the way of erecting such a structure, except that Fraser happens to be a ham radio operator, so he’s allowed to put a radio tower on his land. He envisions a customized tower with a radio antenna and a turbine to generate electricity.

Fortunately, 75 Ravina is situated on a double lot, which means Fraser and Laffier have plenty of room to set up a tower. Unfortunately, they’ve just about tapped out their cash reserves, and aren’t able to proceed with the roughly \$15,000 to \$18,000 it would cost. The couple are hoping to attract a sponsor to help pay for a tower.

Fraser and Laffier see The Ravina Project as more than just an experiment in generating kilowatt-hours. They also take a philosophical view. “Back thousands of years ago, people had to know when to plant and when to harvest,” says Fraser. “Talk about irony – we get all this incredible technology in our house and it makes us as sensitive to the sun ... as people who were living in prehistoric and pre-technical times.”



Solar panel installation at 75 Ravina

The Pocket

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What's Been Happening in the Pocket

Remembering Charlie Anderson

By Kevin Koufis

On May 4, 2007, at the age of 83, a great member of our community passed away. Charles Donald Anderson, or Charlie, as many often called him, was one of the nicest people I've ever met. Whether you personally knew Charlie or not, you probably felt his good nature when you noticed your recycling bins and garbage cans were back from the curb on pick-up day.

Charlie had been part of the Pocket community for more than 60 years. He was born on October 24, 1924, in Winnipeg, Manitoba. He moved to 24 Ravina Avenue at the age of 20 and had been here ever since.

Over the years Charlie became known as someone who loved to talk. Whenever you stopped to talk with him on the street, 20 minutes would pass before you knew it. Often you would unfortunately be forced to interrupt one of his stories and say goodbye because you were late for something. He had many stories to tell people. When I spoke with him he would often tell me about our street, back when Ravina actually had a ravine behind it. Or we would talk about his cottage on the Gull River up north, which is near my own family's cottage.

On behalf of the community I want to say that all of us will miss Charlie and everything about him. He truly was a great man and made our little Pocket a nicer place to live.

Remembering Edith Gayle Colley (1941–2007)

By Mike Warren-Darling



After my move to Condor Avenue seven years ago, Gayle Colley became my friend and confidante. With her sense of humour and explosive laughter, Gayle could lighten anyone's day. It was "Nan"'s nature to mother and feed stray cats, dogs, birds and people that gravitated to her home. She was the lady out sweeping the veranda who would wave and say hello to strangers, and they would wave back, even though neither knew the other's name.

Gayle, a long-time Condor Avenue resident, was a mother of three, with several grandchildren, and she was also "Mom" and "Nana" to many others. Gayle is sadly missed by her family, friends and our neighbourhood.

Tree Tour

By Susan McMurray



On April 21, our community clean-up day, 20 Pocket residents spent a couple of hours learning about the neighbourhood's trees. (Thanks to Jeff Otto for arranging for the tour.) Tree tour guide Todd Irvine, an arbourist with LEAF Toronto, began the tour in Phin Park. The tour wound its way through nearby streets as participants learned about how trees stay healthy or get sick, as well as local stories about interesting neighbourhood trees.

For more information about tree tours, visit www.treetours.to. If you participated in the Pocket tree tour and want to submit photos or a description of the tour to be put up on the website, please contact todd@leaf.toronto.org.



A Mysterious Light

By J.B. Longton

My neighbour, returning home from work, was suddenly startled by a light in the basement, as her family was not using this part of the house.

Having been robbed once, she waited for her son who would be coming home soon. Together they entered the house after quietly planning what to do. They decided to investigate together – she with a rolling pin, her son with a bat. They descended the stairs.

They located the light in the basement back room, where the door was closed. They acted on their plan and she opened the door quickly, while her son made the plunge, only to find the room empty.

Not satisfied, they started checking all spaces. But she suddenly remembered having given her key to her neighbour so the furnace man could inspect (he had come and gone). Relieved, they sat on the stairs laughing.

The proper procedure would have been to call 911, but she was happy she didn't, since she saved herself a foolish moment.

(What's Been Happening is continued on page 8)

The Pocket by the Numbers

3	Issues of <i>The Pocket</i> each year
16	Number of volunteers who worked on this issue
4	Length of time, in months, to put out this issue
150	Estimated number of total volunteer hours given this issue
\$400 to \$600	Total cost of printing each issue
1000	Number of households who receive <i>The Pocket</i>
2500	Estimated readership per issue

If you enjoy *The Pocket*, please consider making a financial contribution – any amount most welcome! – to keep it going. Or why not take out an ad to promote your local business? Ads cost \$50 for a business card-sized space; larger dimensions are also available. In addition to reaching our loyal readers, you'll also be helping to build our community. You can reach us at (416) 406-1684 or pocketnewsletter@sympatico.ca.

Special thanks to several very special donors who helped to make this issue possible: PW, CM, JBL, SP, PF and anonymous.

What's Been Happening in the Pocket

(continued from page 7)

The East Toronto Climate Action Group

By Carol Ramm

Can't sleep because you're worrying about climate change? Well, relief is at hand...

The East Toronto Climate Action Group (ETCAG) is a small, energetic group of Toronto residents (mostly east-enders) who work on issues such as climate change, air quality, renewable energy, conservation and other hot environmental issues. We organize occasional tree plantings, film screenings or panel discussions about solar electricity options and peak oil, and do environmental education at public events such as the Green Toronto Festival. ETCAG has also helped several east-end schools create and erect large anti-idling banners. Members have met and lobbied politicians at all levels to press for more action. In 2007 ETCAG received an Environmental Award of Excellence from the city.

Interested in finding out more? You can check our website (lots of good tips about reducing your eco-footprint) at www.etcag.org, email etcag@sympatico.ca, or email me (a proud Pocket resident and ETCAG member!) at carol.ramm@yahoo.ca.

The Pocket Has a Website!

By Julia Morgan

That's right, the neighbourhood we all love to live in has a recently launched website: www.the-pocket.ca. Organized by The Pocket Neighbourhood Association, one highlight on the website is that back issues of *The Pocket* newsletter are all available in PDF format for your enjoyment. If you missed any of our nine previous issues, you'll want to visit the site to catch up on this archival treasure trove of neighbourhood stories. The website is a work in progress; if you would like to volunteer to help out in any way, contact David Langille at 416-406-1684.

Chatham West Residents' Association

By Trish O'Reilly

The westernmost block of Chatham Avenue harbours a particularly dynamic group of residents (plus a few who join in from the next block over). The formation of the Chatham West Residents' Association was prompted initially by concerns about the lane behind our houses – lying as it does between Coffee Time and 7-Eleven, it sometimes gets misused and was not the most attractive part of our neighbourhood.

The group began in early 2005 by doing a safety walkabout with Community Safety Officer Rob McDonald from 55 Division. We made a list of the things that Officer McDonald recommended and set to work implementing them. The most important thing he told us was that community safety was easiest to maintain when neighbours know each other. Accordingly, we always have a couple of community pot-luck lunches a year, where we get together and do what we do best – that is, talk and eat! We have also gotten to know each other better while working on various community issues.

Our work in the lane includes

- an annual clean-up, when we pick up garbage and trim vegetation
- encouraging residents to post house numbers at the back
- a graffiti elimination program
- wildflower plantings
- and, recently, a request to the city to give the lane a name. (We hope they will accept our suggestion of Ben Kerr Lane, after the late musician and political candidate who was famous as one of Toronto's most

well-loved buskers, and also lived on Jones Avenue.)

We have also had the streetlights on our block upgraded and worked with Coffee Time to discourage undesirable activity

there. At the moment we are working to get a number of residents to request front lawn trees from the city's urban forestry program. (I don't know if we can rival Ravina's record of 11 new trees requested. But we will see how many we can get.)

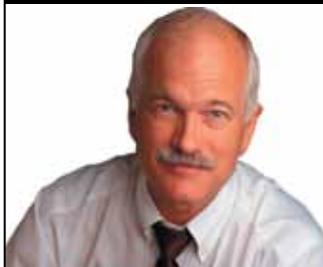
Over the past two and a half years, it has been fun to see our various neighbourhood improvement projects make progress. But most of all, it has been great to get a chance to get to know more of the wonderful and diverse people who live – well, just next door!



Graffiti eradication on laneway behind Chatham Avenue

Jack Layton, MP

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Pocket Resident Wins “Caring Canadian” Award

By Julia Morgan



Koyes Ahmed
(photo courtesy of *East York-Riverdale Mirror*)

Who knew Queen Victoria Street has a hero living on the block? Resident Koyes Ahmed, who has lived in the Pocket since 2004, was recently presented with the Governor-General’s Caring Canadian Award, as reported recently in the *East-York Riverdale Mirror*. Ahmed, a social worker by training, immigrated to Canada from

Bangladesh in 1992. He is executive director of the Network for International Care and Services, a non-profit agency that supports disaster relief and development programs by organizations such as Doctors Without Borders and the Red Cross.

Ahmed has also worked actively building bridges between cultural communities in Toronto and improving the lives of his neighbours. He and his family lived for a time in Regent Park, where he helped to organize a community garden, a residents’ association, a revitalization workshop, and a family support program, and worked with local politicians and police officers to address crime in the neighbourhood. Now in the Pocket, Ahmed is still carrying on his good works, which apparently includes helping elderly neighbours with their gardening. Congratulations Ahmed!



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In the Kitchen with Cecilia

By Cecilia Booth

Zucchini Pancakes

Serves 3 to 4. These make an excellent meal served with rice and salad. Tomato salad is especially good with them (see following recipe).

Ingredients:

4 eggs, separated (separate yolks and whites into two large bowls; easy to do with hands)
 4 packed cups grated zucchini (about four medium sized)
 1 cup feta cheese, crumbled
 1/3 cup flour
 1/2 cup finely chopped green onions
 Oil for frying
 Salt and pepper to taste

1. Whip the egg whites until stiff, set aside.
2. Add all the other ingredients to the egg yolks, mix thoroughly.
3. Gently (but not too thoroughly) fold/mix the egg whites into the mixture to form a nice thick batter.
4. Heat some oil in a heavy skillet or non-stick pan. When it is very hot, add spoonfuls of batter. Fry on both sides until golden brown and crispy.
5. Serve topped with sour cream or yogurt. Also good dipped in soy sauce.



Easy and Delicious Tomato Salad

Ingredients:

(Quantities are approximate.)

3–4 large, tasty tomatoes (don't keep in fridge or they will go mealy)
 1 small or medium red onion, thinly sliced
 Lots of salt
 1/4 to 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
 3–8 leaves fresh basil, roughly chopped
 Optional: 1 roughly sliced hot pepper (hotter with seeds in), Italian bread for soaking up the juices

1. Chop tomatoes into thick chunks or slices.
2. Add the onions, pepper and salt; combine.
3. Pour olive oil over and sprinkle on the basil.

Special thanks to my brother-in-law Gennaro Cuccurullo for this one. His homegrown tomatoes are the best in the world.

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