

The Pocket

FREE

VOLUME 6

NOVEMBER 2004

Community Communication For Safety's Sake

By Barbara Shaw

Walking through Phin Park in the day is pleasant. It is a time to watch people having fun and a nice place to catch up with a neighbour or to complain about the weather to a total stranger. Night is a different situation completely. Port-a-Pottys set ablaze, graffiti and now assault.

Those of us who walk through Phin Park at night, to and from the subway, have been aware of groups of men sitting around the west side of Eastern Commerce high school for some time now. This is a part of the path where the lighting is dim at best and there are picnic tables to accommodate those who wish to stare down residents as we walk by trying to look assertive.

Fear of the unknown became reality for a local youth in the wee hours of August 15th when he was assaulted and robbed in Phin Park as he tried to make his way home. It was late but not really late. He was male so he is *supposed* to be able to walk alone. This is his home; he should be safe. But he was not safe and after five males beat him, residents decided to take action.

Seymour resident Janet Roeder took the first step by emailing Susan McMurray (Pocket editor and summer party organizer) and myself to let us know what happened. As soon as the email came across my desk, it was forwarded to about 45 neighbours in The Pocket. Susan also made good use of her local email lists. Pocket residents got active and started passing on the word and the night after I had sent out the initial email I overheard three or four different porch conversations about the topic as I walked my dogs.

Councillor Paula Fletcher's office responded to the group email within an hour thanks to constituency assistant Pat Chastang. Pat offered support and assistance to help us deal with this issue either by calling a community meeting or by organizing a walk-around safety audit.

Condor resident David Langille contacted school Trustee Rick Telfer. Rick has committed himself to looking into fixing the lights along the path by Eastern Commerce. At press time, the TSDB has assured me that the lights will be on all night, every night. The School Board has also taken the step of removing the picnic tables along the path. This is

where groups of people would congregate in the evening.

At 55 Division, on their Tuesday safety meeting after the assault, the police decided to make Phin Park part of their Community Action Policing initiative.

This program ran through the summer but will be finished by September 5th. The program allowed police to decide on a weekly basis which areas of 55 Division needed special attention. After the assault, officers from this program patrolled Phin Park at random times from 10pm through to 3am Thursday through Saturday looking to get a better idea

of what really goes on there after dark. I was given a guarantee from Staff Sergeant Chris Fernandez that the officers would actually get out of their cars in order to get a good view of all parts of the park.

In the meantime, 55 Division runs a program called "Intelligence lead policing" and this means that when we call in complaints to 55 Division they get put into a computer and assigned as part of a regular shift to different staff officers. If the Phin Park problems persist, we can simply call Courtney Hudson at 416.808.5519 and ask her to pass along the message to have Phin Park watched through this program.

Over the next few weeks the situation will be re-evaluated by those of us who have become involved and inevitably, as the weather cools, Phin Park will not be as important a destination after hours. But we can start looking ahead to next summer

and continue emailing crime alerts to each other as well as thinking about community safety audits.

We are a step ahead of so many other neighbourhoods because we communicate with each other. You read this paper, you talk about it with the people on your street and this knowledge of our community, good and bad, will get us one step closer to a neighbourhood where we show respect for each other and are where we are free from all forms of violence. I can't think of a better place to live.

Barb Shaw is a Pocket Resident who spends too much time on her computer. Please email her at bjshaw@sympatico.ca if you would like to receive community updates.



Illustrated by Cecilia Booth

Editorial

By Nate Hendley, Pocket Publisher

What's so special about living in the Pocket?

Two recent events amply demonstrate the best qualities of this neighbourhood.

The first event came about as the result of an unfortunate incident. In the middle of August, a local youth was assaulted and robbed late at night in Phin Park. The alleged assailants were a group of five young men.

As Barb Shaw points out in her article, the community response to this violent crime was overwhelming.

Within days of the mugging, dozens of neighbours received emails describing the incident and warning people about potential dangers in our midst. Municipal officials offered to hold a community meeting or conduct a "safety audit" (a walkabout to determine unsafe spots in a given area).

Picnic benches (at which groups of young men tended to gather at night) were removed from Phin Park while lighting was dramatically improved. Police officers from 55 Division beefed up patrols of the area to prevent a repeat of the mugging.

We're not sure how successful these measures will be in warding off future incidents in Phin Park, but we do know that Pocket residents aren't covering in fear.

We know this, because a recent series of street parties in the Pocket were hugely successful.

The Pocket party on Condor Avenue street party, for example, was a smash hit with local residents.

Held on a beautiful, warm day in mid-September, the event featured face painting, kid's games, arts and crafts, a "high tea" and a massive potluck dinner. Dozens of people, young, old and middling wandered about, talking, eating, drinking, playing games and having a good time.

After dinner was consumed, a group of local musicians and singers held a boisterous jam session.

Like the response to the Phin Park mugging, the Condor Avenue street party exemplified the unique Pocket spirit: a willingness to get involved, a pride of place and a sense that being neighbourly makes a neighbourhood great.

Seymour Ave. Street Party

By Amanda Jasman-Smith

It was September 2002 when I first went to the Condor Avenue neighbourhood party. It was what drove me to buy a house in the Pocket. The party was so full of energy and neighbourliness that I was charmed.



Having moved onto Seymour Avenue, I am very happy to say that our smaller annual street party has an equal amount of heart.

Saturday September the 5th started with a big street yard sale. I made about \$15 profit, but hey...I got rid of almost all my junk. It was a really hot morning and the neighbours all milled about, checking out all of our stuff, trading books and other things with each other.

The afternoon celebrations consisted of a kids' BBQ, tattoos, face painting, costume making and hair spraying. Not having children, I was inside for much of the afternoon. However, I came out just in time for the 6th annual Seymour Street Parade, which brought many of our neighbours out front to wave and cheer.

The evening finished with a huge potluck dinner. The food was excellent and varied. Everyone brought out their lawn chairs and set up in the street. It was so nice to chat with neighbours and get to know people on more than a waving and saying hello basis. My husband and I headed in to bed fairly early, however, we heard that some made it to 2am, playing the guitar and singing their hearts out. I feel so lucky to live in The Pocket where everyone who wants to meet his or her neighbours has a chance.

If you're concerned about the future of the greenspace around the TTC's Greenwood subway yard (also known as the dog park, or Oakvale Green), please take the time to attend a community meeting to discuss the issue. The meeting is on Monday, November 29th at 7 pm at Eastern Commerce Collegiate (beside Phin Park). Our city councillor, Paula Fletcher, is organizing the event.



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Third Annual Car Free Day in the Pocket

By Susan McMurray

Once again, the neighbourhood party – held this year on Saturday, September 18th – was blessed by great weather and enthusiastic volunteers and participants. While other neighbourhoods in Toronto have not been as successful in continuing Car Free Day, we've been able to carry on our tradition of kids and adults playing games, sharing meals and talking with each other – safely – on our streets.



One special event was the afternoon's High Tea – providing quiet time and space for adults. The tea table was beautifully set with flowered tablecloths, and fine china and silver, and it was protected from the afternoon sun by a large green market umbrella. Serving a dozen adults at each sitting, Queen Victoria St. resident Kim Barnes and her daughter Nicole were kept busy for over an hour. Dressed



in an old-fashioned gown, Kim served two types of tea, scones with cream and jam, and cucumber sandwiches while local musician Ginny Barron serenaded on her viola.

Shudell Ave. resident Colleen Humer was agreeably surprised. "It looks so civilized," she said just before sitting down to enjoy the refreshments and conversation with her neighbours, "especially with someone playing the viola."

Meanwhile, Colleen's son Julian was helping to run a marathon session of street hockey. Julian decided to help out because one of the organizers invited him to think of an activity he wanted to see happen at the party. Julian, who is a keen street hockey player, brought his net and several sticks and played from 3:30 to well after dinner.

"These events work because everyone helps out doing what they can, when they can," said Julian's father Peter Laywine. "It's a lot of work and if you leave it to a few people, it'll stop after awhile. If people pitch in, it'll get bigger and better each year."

It was that type of day – there were lots of volunteers,

participants of all ages from around the neighbourhood, and a range of activities to suit most interests: face painting, a decorated bicycle parade, the world's coziest petting zoo, kids' games organized by local teens, foosball, storytelling, dog contests, the popular adult cafe – the list goes on and on. A fire truck paid a visit. Ward 30 city councillor Paula Fletcher and English public school trustee Rick

Telfer stopped by to say hello. (Our MPP Marilyn Churley and MP Jack Layton asked that their regrets be conveyed, and the bicycle police were also unable to attend this year.)

Along with the contributions made by so many volunteers, the event was also made possible with the help of Eastview Community Centre, which loans tables and chairs each year. This year the neighbourhood gave something back to Eastview

– residents contributed canned goods and toys. Councillor Paula Fletcher arranged for the barricades that were erected at each end of the block to keep the street party safe. The Sierra Club arranged for insurance. Local businesses provided prizes for games and contests.

90 people joined the potluck dinner. After photographs, eager dessert eaters finally got the chance to dig into the neighbourhood-sized circus cake prepared by Condor Ave. resident Tracey Linstead. Some great music, with singing and jamming by several local musicians, including mouth organist David Gauthier of Seymour Avenue, followed the potluck dinner.

The only caution for next year's organizers (note to self!) – make sure your watch is working so that you know when it's time to move the wonderful music indoors.



Pocket FoodShare Update

By Kirsten Nelson

Early this year in the Pocket newsletter, I asked for readers to contact me to gauge interest in starting a FoodShare drop-off for Good Food boxes of fresh fruits and vegetables. I've been running our drop-off point since April and I'm pleased to report it's a success!

FoodShare is a non-profit organization that works on food issues "from field to table" – meaning that they focus on the entire system that puts food on our tables. They aim to improve access to healthy, affordable food for everyone. Their website (www.foodshare.net) explains the program in greater detail.

Good Food boxes are delivered every other Thursday. Neighbours pick up their box at their convenience. Now that Ontario produce is at its height, we've been treated to "Sugar Baby" watermelon, baskets of tomatoes and peaches, and a few more exotic items such as papayas and avocados. Produce is local as much as possible.

Boxes range from \$12 to \$32, depending on whether

you choose organic or regular produce. You can sign up for a single delivery or get put on the regular list. We've even started a web page to trade recipes and ideas on how to use up that cabbage or cauliflower! We've had about 20 households in the Pocket try the boxes in total, and there is a core list of nine or ten that receive them regularly. I'm looking for more families to join, to make it worthwhile for Foodshare to deliver directly to the Pocket.

To find out more about the program or be added to the list, email kirsten@nelsonfamily.ca or stop by 83 Condor – the sign-up list is always out!



Waste Not

By Carol Ramm

I imagine every Pocket resident is as excited as I am by the launch of the green bin program this fall! Hmm. Maybe not. But if it's not exactly scintillating, the green bin program is important: it will save a lot of Toronto's garbage from taking the long, dull drive to Michigan landfills.

In case you're not already sick of reading about green bin details, here they are:

The program will be launched Oct. 19 and before that, we should have received a curbside green bin and a smaller indoor bin. Plastic bags can be used in the bins, but they don't need to be. All the goodies will be transformed into compost by a very long (and again, boring) process.

What goes in the Green Bin?

- food scraps of all sorts, including meat, pasta, bread, veggies, coffee grounds, even cake and cookies
- pet waste including kitty litter and pet bedding
- used paper towels & kleenex, fast food packaging, ice cream boxes
- used diapers and sanitary products
- paper cups (without lids) and paper plates
- household plants including soil
- pet food

What does NOT go in the Green Bin?

- plastic wrap, baggies and plastic milk bags
- styrofoam
- yogurt and margarine tubs
- foil and wax paper
- candles, cigarette butts and tobacco
- textiles and clothing
- cotton balls, makeup removal pads and baby wipes
- disposable mop sheets, dryer lint and dryer sheets
- hair, feathers, pet fur
- fireplace or BBQ ashes, wood products & wood chips

Scarborough and Etobicoke, where the program is already in operation, have a very high participation rate – over 90% of homeowners take part. Maybe the Pocket can do better!

A few final details – please remember that although the green bin will be picked up every week, the "regular" garbage will only be picked up every two weeks. If you haven't received your green bins by Oct. 15, you can call 416-338-2010. You can also check on-line for more info at www.city.toronto.on.ca/greenbin/card.htm.

Feel free to email the Pocket about your good and bad experiences with the green bin. I'm personally eager to see if the green bin is as heavily fortified (against our little friends the raccoons) as my regular garbage can has become!



POCKET RECIPE

CURRIED SINGAPORE NOODLES-A WARMING DISH FOR FALL AND WINTER

Submitted by Cecilia Booth

Ingredients:

8 oz. uncooked rice vermicelli
3 chicken quarters (breasts or legs) in thin strips
3 cups mung bean sprouts, ends removed
1 large onion thinly sliced
1 large carrot in fine matchsticks
1 green pepper in thin strips
3 cloves garlic finely chopped
1 tbsp. curry powder
2 tbsp. vegetable oil
1 tsp. granulated sugar
¼ cup soy sauce



Illustrated by Cecilia Booth

1. Break the vermicelli in half then place in a large bowl and cover with boiling water. Soak for 10 minutes or until tender. Drain and set aside.
2. Prepare the chicken and set aside.
3. Prepare the garlic and vegetables. Keep ingredients separate from each other. Place on a cookie sheet.
4. In a large wok or frying pan heat 1 tbsp. of the oil over medium heat. Swirl gently to coat the sides of the wok or pan. Cook garlic in the hot oil for 10 seconds. Add the chicken and stir-fry for 4 to 5 minutes until no longer pink inside. Remove the chicken and set aside.
5. Add the remaining oil and heat as before. Add the onion and curry powder and stir-fry 1 minute. Add carrot, green pepper and sugar, sprinkle with a little water (1-2 tbsp.) and stir-fry for 2 minutes.
6. Add the bean sprouts, chicken, vermicelli and soy sauce. Toss well to coat and continue to stir fry until heated through.
7. ENJOY!!!!!!



Seymour Ave. Street Party



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THE POCKET SAYS GOODBYE TO AN ICON

By Glenna Kennedy

At first it was peculiar. No familiar daily sound of a clinking bundle buggy going by the houses in the neighbourhood. No sign of a tall, elderly gentleman who walked a big black and white Husky/Labrador cross through the streets – year after year, spring through winter.

Joseph Francis Leithwood passed away on July 5th of this year. He was 80 years old. If you live in The Pocket, then no doubt you remember Joe strolling around the neighbourhood with his bundle buggy collecting beer or pop bottles to take to local stores. That, or he would be walking his big beloved dog, “Buddy”.

“Joe” was a friendly man who loved to talk to people. Sometimes he would walk as far as Logan and Gerrard on his recycle quest, and sometimes as far as Cosburn Avenue. His wife Kathleen (Kay) says that occasionally he was out so long collecting bottles for recycle that she began to worry.

Joe and Kay (nee Morgan) were both born in Toronto, he in 1923 and she in 1925. (Kay’s father arrived here from England as a child exactly 100 years ago). Joe and Kay met at a corn roast in Rouge Hill and were married in 1949. They have had their home on Shudell Avenue since 1953 and produced a miraculous nine children.

Joe was a waiter by occupation and was Assistant Business Agent for Bartenders’ Union 280. He served in The Royal Canadian Engineers in WWII at the very dangerous job of detecting mines. When he retired at age 65, he took up golfing. A mishap at the golf course caused him a broken knee, but not to be daunted, he crawled to the clubhouse for assistance rather than call for help.

After the mishap, Joe began to collect discarded bottles around the golf course and then took his “new” profession to our neighbourhood. This he did for many years.

Buddy the dog is an incredible 16 years old now,



Illustrated by Anita Advani

and Joe’s son, Tom still takes him for daily walks.

Neighbourhood people who contributed their bottles (Joe once told me he cashed in the bottles to buy food for the dog, but I’m sure it was because he simply could not give up the gauntlet) always got a Christmas card from Buddy.

Even though he has left us, our memory of “Joe” does not fade. Some people talk of Joe as our neighbourhood recycle person. I don’t. I remember Joe as a daily fixture that has been removed from my life and I can’t help but to think that it’s still there.

As others do in the Pocket, I miss the everyday tinkling of the buggy.

MARILYN CHURLEY, MPP



Toronto-Danforth
*Please feel free to contact
my office with any
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Classified Ads

Web Assistance Required!

The Pocket Newsletter has secured the domain name, www.thepocket.ca. We're looking for help with building a small website that will complement the newsletter. If you have web site building experience and are willing to volunteer your time and energy, please contact: thepocket@sympatico.ca.

WANTED:DOMESTIC HELP

Reliable person needed for light house cleaning and meal preparation in my home for 1hour a day,2-3 days a week. \$15/hr.Please call Susan at (416) 462-3493.

WANTED:Reasonably priced, local space with good light and a sink, for kids Art School.Call Cecilia 416 406-1787 or Anita 416-461-6094

Pocket Jokes

What did the fish say when it ran into a wall?
-- Dam!

What happened to the survivors of a collision between a red ship and a blue ship?
--They were marooned.

Why did the tomato blush?
--Because it saw the salad dressing.

Neighbourhood party Pic's



The Pocket

Issue V

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Many thanks to all that have been involved and to all that read the newsletter. Drop boxes are located at 18 Boothroyd Ave, 34 Condor Ave. You can email us at thepocket@sympatico.ca

The Hargrave Pub + Restaurant



Purchase an entree and get one free entree of equal value up to december 15 with this ad. 1106 Danforth Ave,West of Greenwood. Phone: 416-465-4500



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Paula Fletcher
City Councillor, Ward 30

Community Meeting- TTC Yards

You're invited to a public meeting
to discuss the future of the green space behind the
Greenwood TTC yards.

Monday Nov. 29th
7:00- 9:00 pm
Eastern Commerce Collegiate
16 Phin Avenue

416-392-4060

Working for you!

A Neighbourhood Association for the Pocket

By David Langille

You probably like the Pocket if you chose to live here and remain here.

But there is a great deal that we could do to make this neighbourhood even better. Imagine better schools, better facilities for youth and seniors, a local day care and health centre, or simply more benches and garbage cans.

Things could also get worse – imagine more crime, more smog, unsafe water – whatever. How do we feel about creating one-way streets to facilitate driving on narrow streets like Boulton Avenue? Toronto's famous urban planner, Jane Jacobs, says that there is no evidence that one-way streets improve a community. What do you think?

We will discuss how to set up a neighbourhood association. We can invite our local school trustees, our city councillor, MPP and MP to future meetings.

David Langille 416-436-6650

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