

This Week in the Annex:

December 01, 2021

Finally a Fitting Tribute

In these pages [last February 24](#), we profiled the extraordinary contributions of Beverly Mascoll to the Black community in Canada, at the same time bemoaning the fact that a request to re-name Seaton Walk Parkette in her honour had been stymied a decade ago. What a delight it was, then, to serendipitously encounter a recently installed Heritage Toronto plaque extolling her life's work that has been mounted just outside the Bathurst subway station.

A little dabble in Google revealed that the plaque was formally unveiled by Heritage Toronto as long ago as August 1st of this year. The ceremony was held on the grounds of Central Tech – Beverly's alma mater – to mark the first official Emancipation Day in Canada.

You can watch [a video of the entire event](#) honouring several key members of Toronto's Black community. There are remarks from the Prime Minister and from other dignitaries – including our own Councillor Layton – but you might just want to tune in at the **51-minute mark** to catch Beverly's son, Eldon, speak to the assembled guests after being introduced by Heritage Toronto's new Chair, Liza Chalaidopoulos.



The full text of the plaque honouring Beverly Mascoll is available on the Heritage Toronto website. But that's just a superficial taste of her contributions. The [accompanying biography](#) offers a full and fascinating insight into a remarkably influential career that was cut far too short.

Christmas Trees That Give Back

You may well be aware of the Out of the Cold program that has provided food, shelter, and care to the most marginalized in this city. Thirty years ago, the [first interfaith branch](#) of the program opened its doors here in the Annex. In the years since, it has moved from its original location at 310 Bloor West, bouncing from locations on Bathurst to St. Clair, but it continues to be a vital resource serving members of our community.

Indoor programs were performed closed in March 2020. But the group pivoted to providing over 6,500 hot dinners and lunches, clothing, and PPE kits to mobile street outreach programs. The lunches were made in their own homes by a team of volunteers and then distributed through the [Common Table program](#) of the Church of the Redeemer at Avenue and Bloor. But, as with all such programs, monetary donations are vital.

That's where you come in. If you're looking for a Christmas tree this season, and you'd like your traditional holiday decoration to pack a positive social impact, consider buying a tree from the lot at Brunswick and Bloor. It's operated by the Flanagan/Johnstons family who each and every year donate the entire proceeds of their Christmas tree sales to the Out of the Cold program. Talk about a win/win tradition!



This year, the lot is located at the patio beside Futures Bistro, 483 Bloor St. It's open from 10:00am – 8:00 p.m. Volunteers are needed to help with greeting shoppers or loading trees onto customers' cars. So if you have an hour or so to contribute, please contact Sharna Cohen at sharna.cohen@rogers.com for more details.

Supporting "The Avenue"

Elliott Shulman at the Avenue Road Food Bank (aka "The Avenue") says it was a Mother Hubbard moment last week. The shelves had been completely depleted after a record surge of clients (food bank use has skyrocketed in the past month), and then the cavalry arrived in the form of students at Huron Street Junior Public School.

It was only six weeks ago that the students were cued in to the existence of the Avenue and the tremendous need faced by some residents right here in our community. The moment they became aware, the kids went into high gear and succeeded in collecting a record 1100 pounds of food.

It's gestures like this that lighten Elliott's heart. Indeed, he asked us to express his profound gratitude to all Annexionians for their continuing generosity to the cause. Without you, the Avenue would have had to close its doors long ago.

It's hard to exaggerate the need. Suffice it to say that Tuesday November 23 was the busiest day in the 3-year history of the Avenue. And there are no signs of food bank use abating. If you want to contribute, Amir Khosravi is still doing pickups from front porches on Tuesdays (you can text him at 416 997 6377). Elliott can always do with an extra pair of hands on distribution days (647 717 6969). And of course, [monetary donations](#) are always welcome.



Huron PS principal Peter Rewega (centre left) and parent Tina Louie (centre right) join with Elliott (far right) and Robert Mandel (far left) of the Avenue to honour the record-breaking donation.

Notes and Queries

Joy Abounds

There was absolutely no fanfare or ceremonial opening, but none was required for the local canine population to check out their swank facility newly opened at [Huron Street Playground](#). It may be small, but it features an impressive entrance system, paw friendly surfaces and abundant opportunities to sniff out new friends. Joy all round.



What Was He Thinking?

As we all know, the CP Rail bridges that mark the northern Annex boundary at intersections with Howland, Spadina, and Davenport are really quite low. But despite warning signs, zebra stripes, and flashing lights, truck drivers persist in great numbers to attempt their luck – with depressingly regular rates of failure. Last week’s stab by a Mississauga van driver at piercing the barrier at Howland proved inevitably futile. It even led to a [feature article in BlogTO](#).



We can perfectly understand why someone would want to come to the Annex. But honestly, there are better ways to get here!

Brain Fog

Our brain clearly wasn't out of first gear when we filed the report on [the Memorial Walk](#) that took place along Avenue Road on November 21st. For some reason James Graham from Chrystia Freeland's office was erroneously re-Christened in last week's newsletter. In keeping with *Toronto Star* policies, we won't risk compounding the error by repeating it here (even though we know how dearly you'd love to learn how bad the slip was 😊). Let this rest at sincere apologies to James. One more sign it's good we're taking a break.



Photo Courtesy: <https://jnyyz.wordpress.com/>

Signing Off 'til 2022

And with that, the cat's out of the bag. Yes, today's issue will be the last ARA newsletter of 2021. While it has been immensely rewarding to report week after week on the stories that engage and define this community, we need a break! So with grateful thanks to all our faithful ARA members – best wishes for the holidays no matter how you choose to celebrate them. We'll be back for sure on January 5th. In the meantime -- take care. Stay safe.



The Annex Residents' Association is a volunteer organization of residents committed to improving and preserving the distinctive character of our neighbourhood. Our strength depends on our base of support in a well-informed community.

This email was sent to gillianbartlettara@gmail.com. To stop receiving emails, [click here to unsubscribe](#).

