

D O N M I L L S R E S I D E N T S I N C .

DMRI newsletter

VOLUME 25, ISSUE 1

MARCH 2011

Power to the People

AS MARCH ARRIVES WITH ITS PROMISE OF SPRING, we look back on a cold winter and forward to warm summer days. Although the last of the snow may not be over yet, we know that if it does come it will soon be gone again for at least nine months. Although we have many things to be grateful for we can thank lady luck for the fact that most of the big snowstorms that raced across the continent kindly passed Toronto. Even our biggest one fizzled out, which is just as well, as most of our Army have a much more difficult task on hand.

The New Year has seen the new Council at City Hall get started on a new and perhaps very different agenda from what we have seen over the last seven years. The initial start with cuts to bus services was not a good omen for the future and the financial picture, along with the objectives being laid out by the new Mayor, could lead to interesting and perhaps challenging times in the months ahead. The withdrawal of the late evening and weekend bus service that links Don Mills and the communities directly west of us to the Lawrence Avenue subway system is a big loss and we hope that we can still make a case for perhaps a less frequent service to continue. One of the biggest and more immediate issues for Don Mills is the relocation of the Don Mills Civitan Arena. Unfortunately, the Parks and Recreation Department has not given this a high priority over the last few years but we hope that along with Civitan we can work on a satisfactory solution so that plans may go ahead within the next year or so. The physical plant of the current Arena is well past its "best before date", such that the issue is now becoming urgent. We believe that it is possible to develop a plan whereby the building of a new Arena will cost the City either nothing or very little, and the DMRI is prepared to work along with the Civitan organization and the City to develop a plan that will see this happen. Our future Community Centre will be built and operated at no or little cost to the City and we believe that this can also be done with the Arena. Civitan have offered to put up the money to build and operate the Arena provided that the City can come up with a viable site. As a Community we must both support and accelerate these efforts.

This, the first edition of our four annual Newsletters is once again being distributed to all households in our membership area.

The next three (June, September and December) will only be distributed to members. Don Mills Residents Inc. (DMRI) is one of the largest resident associations in the City. We have a history of working with our Councillors and City staff to make our community a better place in which to live. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to agree with everyone, but we take every effort to try and reflect the overall wishes of the community on any given issue. We are respected at City Hall and are familiar with the planning process, including representations at the Committee of Adjustment and the Ontario Municipal Board. These and other processes may not be evident to many homeowners until a proposal suddenly comes along that is likely to seriously effect the quality of life on your street or your neighbourhood, and possibly the value of your home. Do you have problems with wildlife, traffic, bus service, or any other municipal service? Along with our Councillors the DMRI will work with you towards solving these problems. This is why a strong residents' association is vital to the well being of any community. We must constantly be on the watch for issues both local and city wide that can directly affect our way of life. On the brighter side we are pleased to report the success of our first theatre party and are planning on further outings throughout the year. See details later in the Newsletter.

The DMRI is an active member of the Federation of North Toronto Residents Associations (FoNTRA) as well as a supporter of the Coalition of Residents and Ratepayers Associations (CORRA) that is open to all residents associations in Toronto. These two organizations give our members access to a wealth of both expertise and support in dealing with municipal issues. It is our municipal government that has the biggest effect on our daily lives. We ask for your strong support by taking membership and perhaps even volunteering to assist with our many activities. Membership in the DMRI is just \$20 per year and details of how to join or renew are at the end of this Newsletter. If you are not already a member we look forward to your membership. Let us follow the example of the people of Egypt and show strength through numbers. Remember, our taxes pay the City Councillors and staff; by being organized we can more effectively express our mutual opinions.

—Terry West, President

NEWS ROUNDUP

Food Bank

Now that the Christmas season with its feeling of “goodwill to all” is behind us we unfortunately continue to have those in our midst who through circumstances beyond their control still require assistance from the Food Bank to feed themselves and/or their families. Our Community Share Food Bank in Don Mills provides food for between 120 and 130 families each week. This is made possible by the support of the North York Harvest Food Bank, Second Harvest, and donations from the Don Mills Community. The Food Bank is currently holding a Fund Raising drive by selling premium Olive Oil at \$15 per bottle and this may be ordered by phone from the number below. Donations of Food or money are also welcome as each week we need to augment the food supplied by North York Harvest.

The Don Mills Food Bank is open on Tuesday and Saturday mornings from 10am to 12.00. It is the busiest Food Bank in the GTA that is staffed and operated completely by volunteers, many of whom have been volunteering since it opened six years ago. Additional adult volunteers are always welcome to join one of our six teams who work one morning every three weeks on Tuesday or Saturday, or one of two teams that work on alternate Mondays to sort supplies that are delivered from North York Harvest. To order Olive Oil, learn about volunteering, or to make a donation see our web site at www.communitysharefoodbank.org, email communitysharefb@hotmail.com ,or contact Terry West @ 416 445 7841

Theatre Group

Thirty-three members and guests attended our first theatre group performance of “Barefoot in the Park” on January 30th. It was an excellent play with many laughs and a good

time was had by all. The Fairview Library Theatre is a small theatre that provides excellent viewing from all seats, which establishes a close relationship between audience and performers. Our next event will also be on a Sunday afternoon at the Fairview Library Theatre on April 2nd. This time it will be the musical “Sweeney Todd” with music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim. Tickets for our last event were sold out well before the event so

we encourage anyone interested to book early. The cost for this production is a little higher at \$22 per person, which also includes intermission refreshments. For tickets contact Ursula von Rainer at 416 444 3217 or Terry West at 416 445 7841. We are also considering another event before the summer and our next Newsletter so if you would like to be added to our theatre list please let us know.

Lawn Bowling

A Sport For All – A Sport For Life



We occasionally get asked if there is a lawn bowling club in Don Mills. Unfortunately the answer is no, our nearest location is in Leaside. During the past three months the Leaside club has undergone extensive renovations and will reopen in May.

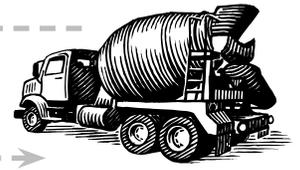
Lawn bowling is similar to curling, no expensive equipment required to get started and one doesn't need to be athletic to play. All that is needed is a pair of flat soled shoes and a sense of fun. It is played on natural grass during the summer months from the beginning of May to the end of September and is quickly learned, but like all sports not easily mastered. It is a game where after a couple of lessons and some practice on the greens you can turn up when you want, put in your tag and play. No partners to find and everyone is prepared to accept that you are new to the game and provide you with lots of assistance in learning the rules and etiquette of the game. All for the cost of a couple of rounds of golf each year.

On Saturday and Sunday 1st & 2nd of May, Leaside Lawn Bowling Club will be hosting an open house from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. so why not come and give it a go.

The Leaside Lawn Bowling Club is located at 190 Hanna Rd at the east end of Talbot Park, an easy ten minute drive from Don Mills and Eglinton. For further information see the club web site at www.leasidebowls.ca or call Phillip Francis at 416 488 4695.



DEVELOPMENT UPDATES



Don Mills Centre

The final draft of the amended Zoning By-law and Official Plan Amendment has now been finished and will shortly be forwarded to the OMB for final approval. Once that is completed the building of the Condominiums will be able to start and it is hoped that this will commence in late March or Early April. Meanwhile, renovations to 75 The Donway will continue with an expected completion date by 2012. At the time of writing there is no decision as to what will happen on the old Post Office Site. We have received a number of enquiries regarding the sculptures that were outside the Post Office and 75 The Donway West. The 75 Donway West sculpture will remain but will be re-located to a slightly different location outside the building. The Post Office sculpture has been removed by the Post Office but we are uncertain as to what will happen to it. Cadillac Fairview have expressed an interest in keeping the sculpture on site as part of the Don Mills Centre history but it is not known if this will be possible. The large sign advertising the 75 The Donway Lofts will be removed within the next few weeks.

English Lane/David Dunlop Circle

An application to amend the Zoning Bylaw to increase the number of units in an approved 8 storey condominium building at the south end of the Circle from 192 units to 350 units has been received by the City. It is proposed that the building will remain the same overall size with the recreation amenities moved from the roof to the lower floor and replaced by a full floor of condominium units, in effect making the building nine storeys in height. At a recent meeting sponsored by the City, residents expressed many concerns regarding this application, particularly regarding the traffic and parking issues that have already become evident in this community. When an application to increase the number of town houses to the original approval was being considered at the OMB, the DMRI opposed them on the grounds that there was insufficient parking for the number of residences, particularly when some of them were being considered as live/work residences. Unfortunately, the OMB approved the application in spite of the fact that the traffic consultant for the developer had included parking on Greenbelt Drive as part of this development. The parking problems forecast for this community are now evident. In particular, the design of the overall development, with narrow roads, multiple driveways, and very little land between the road and the houses, means that in winter the snow piles up because there is nowhere to store it. Snow piles of up to six feet on either side obstruct views of the road from drivers coming out of their driveways. They also make

emergency vehicle access difficult as the snow piles in some places extend on to the road, narrowing it to one lane. Although we have had a reasonable amount of snow this year we have avoided the major storms that have hit other areas. It is obvious that should a large storm hit Toronto that access to this community could be severely compromised. Experience suggests that even with the approved number of units, the increase in traffic and lack of parking will be a major concern for this community. Increased traffic using Moccasin Trail is also a major concern. This application will be considered at a future Community Council meeting in North York and the DMRI will be working with residents to oppose the application.

50 and 60 Greenbelt Drive.

We can now confirm that these buildings have been sold and that discussions with the City Planning Department have been taking place. We understand that an application to the City is expected soon and that it will involve significant changes to the neighbourhood classification, although we have no information as yet as to what this will entail.

Mallard Road/Don Mills Road

We understand that the large property that fronts on to Don Mills Road on the north side of Mallard Road may have a change of ownership. As long time residents will recall, this property has stood empty for 15 or 20 years, and was originally going to be the site of an Eye Institute. Although we have no confirmation of the owners or any discussions with the City we understand that the intent is to develop the site as a commercial site with retail and office facilities. The retail component also may include a Asian supermarket, but we are unable to confirm this at this time.

SLAPP Legislation

The Ontario Government is currently reviewing a report by a special Advisory Panel on SLAPP legislation. Strategic Legislation against Public Participation (SLAPP) is defined as a lawsuit started against one or more people or groups who speak out or take a position on an issue of public interest. The purpose of a SLAPP is to silence critics by redirecting their energy into defending a lawsuit and away from their original public criticism. The intent of SLAPP Suits is to discourage public debate. The report of the Advisory Committee can be reviewed on the government web site at www.attorneygen.jus.gov.on.ca/english/anti_slapp/default.asp . This became a reality for some Don Mills residents recently who had opposed an application that was refused by the Committee of Adjustment for a

major variance on a new home that was being built that did not meet the zoning by-laws. Most of the neighbours who had submitted a letter of opposition to the Committee of Adjustment have received a letter from the owner's lawyer indicating that they were liable to a libel suit and suggesting that they obtain legal advice. This is clearly an effort to discourage participation in the OMB hearing that will result from the applicants appeal to that body. To our knowledge this is the first time that this tactic has been used by a developer in Don Mills, but it has been used quite frequently in other cases, particularly in those going to the OMB. The DMRI will continue to monitor this situation and provide support to the residents affected.

House Demolition

We continue to have concerns about the demolition of houses in Don Mills to make way for new homes that are not compatible with the neighbourhood. Where homes are bought for family occupancy, modifications are usually minor or reasonable. When they are bought by individual small builders they design large homes (often not in character with the surrounding homes on the street) that do not comply with the City By-laws, knowing that there is a good chance that the Committee of Adjustment will approve their application to exceed the By-law. One of the criteria that has to be used by the Committee is that the variance from the By-law is minor. Unfortunately, the committees' definition of minor is often somewhat distorted, particularly when it comes to the building of monster homes. Recent approvals have been given where the variance has been as much as 40% greater than what is allowed. We find this unacceptable and are working with other resident associations to try and convince our provincial government that the Planning Act has to be more specific as to what can be allowed. There are a few builders who have targeted our community (at least two of whom live in our community) and we are trying to monitor what is happening so would appreciate hearing from anyone who is aware of a house being sold that is bought by a builder. We monitor all applications that go to the Committee of Adjustment and oppose those that we feel are not appropriate. We also make local residents know of what is happening, as often the notice to neighbours of the Committee hearings is only a week or so before the hearing and is always on a weekday when most people are at work. We would be pleased to discuss the planning issues with anyone who is planning a major renovation or re-building of their home, in the hope of avoiding a confrontation at the Committee of Adjustment or potential OMB hearing, which is expensive for all involved. We have recently appealed to the OMB a decision that awarded a 32% increase in the size of a house footprint and will also be appearing in support of the City in another application that was turned down by the Committee of Adjustment but has been appealed to the OMB. We do not oppose change and some of the

houses in Don Mills that are now 50 years or older need either major renovation or rebuilding. It is our position that if a house is being demolished there is no reason why a competent architect can not design a house that meets both the needs of the owner and the By-law. If this is not possible then the owner(s) should look for a site that permits the size of house that they wish to build. The official plan stresses the importance of keeping the characteristics of the many communities that make up our City. It is extremely important that we remain vigilant in this area if we are to retain the strengths and character of Don Mills and our individual sub communities.

Wynford/Concord

Work on the Ismaili Centre and Aga Khan Museum is progressing on time with the underground garages and other underground construction covered in before the start of the cold weather. It is expected that the outlines of the two buildings will be visible within the next two to three months as construction is moving ahead quite fast. The excavation of soil etc. for under ground garages etc. is always a job which results in much mud and other disruptions to local streets and facilities. The contractors in this case are be congratulated on the excellent job that was done in keeping Wynford Drive clear of mud and other construction debris. Although there will continue to be construction traffic as the buildings go up the worst part is now completed. The construction is scheduled to be completed in 2013.

Two new bus shelters have been installed at the junction of Gervais and Wynford and it is anticipated that a shelter will be provided outside the Highgate Buildings soon. A motion to move the taxi rank on Wynford to Gervais Drive is expected to be presented by Councillor Parker to Community Council within the next few months. Benches half way up the slope from the valley to Wynford Heights is also under consideration. It is hoped that the trails through the valley to Lawrence Avenue and Don Mills will be open this spring, a much awaited opportunity for local residents to enjoy the beauty of the valley. Members of the Wynford/ Concorde Committee are hoping to arrange a meeting with representatives of the TTC to discuss the issue of the Eglinton LRT. If it is decided that this will be changed to a subway through the already agreed upon east/west underground tunnel it is important that this terminate at Don Mills Road and not Laird Drive as has been reported in the press. Unfortunately, there will be further a delay in the opening of the Supermarket on Wynford Heights Drive. This is due the construction and changes needed and we do not have an opening date.



OUT AND ABOUT

Bringing you news of activities within and around Don Mills

Regular Events:

Donway United Church:
Monday nights in the church library at 7pm. - **Bible Study** on the Gospel of John. Wednesdays from 1:30pm to 3:30pm - **English as a Second Language Conversation Group**

Donway Baptist Church: Monday and Wednesday. 9.15 to 10.15 **Shape Up Group**. Exercise programme for seniors. Mondays 7.00 pm - **Coffee and Conversation**. To assist newcomers with English. Everyone welcome: YOUTH GROUPS - Junior, grades 6 to 8. - Senior, above grade 8. Third Wednesday of Each Month 1:30 to 3:00 pm **AFTERNOON FELLOWSHIP** - This is a social group for seniors and others. Everyone is WELCOME! Refreshments will be served after the presentations. Call the Church for programme details

Church of The Ascension: Tuesdays 1:30 - 3 pm **ESL Coffee and Conversation**

March

March 2 (Wed) 1 - 2.30 pm Lecture: **INTO FILM** "Annie Hall"* Jubilee United Church

March 5 (Sat), 5:30 - 9:30 pm **Mardi Gras Celebration - Dinner & Dance**, Tickets: \$20.00. Church of The Ascension

March 6 (Sun) **Annual Meeting** - Jubilee United Church

March 6 (Sun) 7:00 pm **Something Like Church** Jubilee United Church

March 7 (Mon) 8:35 pm **Ulterior Worship Jubilee Unit**

March 8 (Tue) **Ash Wednesday Services**. Parkwoods United Church 7.00 pm, Jubilee United Church 7.30

March 9 (Wed) **Ash Wednesday Services**. Parkwoods United Church 11:00 am

The Church of The Ascension, 12 noon **Holy Eucharist**. 7:30 pm **Imposition of Ashes**.

March 11 (Fri) 2.00 pm **Tea and Movies:** "In a Lonely Place" Humphrey Bogart and Gloria Grahame Don Mills Library

March 13 (Sun) 1:00 p.m. **Curling at Donalds Club*** Jubilee United Church

March 14 - 18 (Mon - Fri) 7:30 - 9:00 p.m. **Yoga Camp*** Jubilee United Church

March 15 (Tue) 4 - 5 pm **MYSTIC DRUMS** - Hands-On Teens Drumming Workshop (Ages 12 - 19) Don Mills Library (R)

March 16 (Wed) 7.30 pm **ROSEDALE: MANSIONS AND MORE** Marta O'Brien - Architectural Historian An illustrated talk on the history and diverse architecture of Toronto's best-known residential neighbourhoods, Rosedale - which comprises two large Heritage Conservation Districts. North York Central Library, 5120 Yonge Street, Meeting Room #1. Sponsored by Historical Society

March 17 (Thu) 4 - 5 pm Jean Purse/**Wallet Making Workshop** (Ages 12 - 19) Don Mills Library (R)

March 18 (Fri) 2 - 4pm **Coffee and Conversation** "The Living Room" -. Donway United Church

March 20 (Sun) 12.00 noon **Amnesty International Letter Signing Circle**, in church auditorium. Donway United Church

March 21 (Mon) 8:35 pm **Ulterior Worship** Jubilee United Church

March 23 (Wed) 7-8 pm **How to Look At Paintings: The Visual Language of Art** Don Mills Library (R)

March 25 (Wed) 2-3 pm **The Mitzvah Technique: an accessible way to correct your posture**. Don Mills Library (R)

March 26 (Sat) 8:30 a.m. **Men's Breakfast*** Jubilee United Church

March 26 (Sat) 5:30 - 9 pm **Family Night** - Church of The Ascension

March 27 (Sun) 7:30 pm. **Definitely NOT Church** Jubilee United Church

March 29 (Tues) 7:30 p.m. **OGC presents Ragweed*** Jubilee United Church

March 30 (Wed) 2-4 pm **Armchair Travel: Australia (part 1)** Don Mills Library (R)

March 30 (Wed) **Film and Soup series** entitled "What Happens at the End?" - 4pm showing then 6pm Soup Supper then 7pm repeat showing. Film "One Week" Tickets \$5 call 416-444-8444. Donway United Church

April

April 1 (Fri) **Audrey Grant Bridge Day*** Jubilee United Church

April 08 (Fri) 2.00 pm **Tea and Movies:** "The Pink Panther" Peter Sellers and David Niven - Don Mills Library

April 11 (Sun) 7:00 pm **Something Like Church** Jubilee United Church

April 12 (Tues) **UCW Card Party** Jubilee United Church

April 13 (Wed) 4.00 and 7.00 **Film and Soup series**, "Shadowlands" (See March 30) Tickets \$5. Donway United Church

April 14 (Thur) 2-4 pm **Introduction to Acrylics** Don Mills Library (R)

April 15 (Fri) 4 - 6 pm **Teen Poetry Workshop** (Ages 12 - 19) Don Mills Library (R)

April 16 (Sat) 7:30 p.m. **Concert "New York, New York"**. From Broadway to Tin Pan Alley, New York has given us some of our favorite tunes. Enjoy an evening of choral, vocal and instrumental music from the Big Apple* Jubilee United Church

April 17 (Sun) 12.00 noon **Amnesty International Letter Signing Circle**, in church auditorium. Donway United Church

April 17 to 24. During the Easter season of **Holy Week** there are many special church activities within our local Christian churches. They are too many to identify each one but we offer the phone numbers of local churches and encourage you to contact them directly for services and times. Phone numbers at end of Out And About section.

April 20 (Wed) 4.00 and 7.00 **Film and Soup series**, "Last Orders" (See March 30) Tickets \$5. Donway United Church

April 20 (Wed) 7-8 pm **Keep It Green: Organic Lawn Care** Don Mills Library (R)

April 27 (Wed) 2-3.30 pm **Opening to Poetry** Don Mills Library (R)

April 29 (Fri) 2.00 pm **Vitamins: Your Guide To Longevity?** Don Mills Library (R)

April 30 (Sat) 7.30 pm **Music on The Donway presents "Antler River Project"** - World music with a classical touch
Tickets: \$20/adult, \$12/students/kids.
Call 416-444-8444 for ticket information.
Donway United Church

May

May 2 (Mon) 8:35 pm **Ulterior Worship** Jubilee United Church

May 05 (Thur) 2-4 pm **Introduction to Pastels and Mixed Media** Don Mills Library (R)

May 07 (Sat) 11-11.30 **Celebrate Mothers Day.** Don Mills Library

May 10 (Tues) 7:30 p.m. **OGC presents One Hundred Choristers*** Jubilee United Church

May 11 (Wed) 7-8 pm **Gardening is for the Birds** Don Mills Library (R)

May 13 (Fri) 2.00 pm **Tea and Movies.** "Cape Fear" Robert Mitchum and Gregory Peck Don Mills Library

May 13 - 14 (Fri-Sat) **Women's Day Weekend** Jubilee United Church

May 14, (Sat) 10 am-3.00pm. **Fair Trade Fair** in the church auditorium. Come shop for fair trade items and enjoy lunch in our Fair Trade Cafe. Donway United Church

May 15 (Sun) 12.00 noon **Amnesty International Letter Signing Circle,** in church auditorium. Donway United Church

May 16 (Mon) 8:35 pm **Ulterior Worship** Jubilee United Church

May 18 (Wed) 2.30-4.00 pm **Introduction to Chinese Brush Painting** Don Mills Library (R)

May 20 (Fri) **Louis Armstrong and Beginnings of Jazz.** Don Mills Library (R)

May 25 (Wed) 7-8 pm **Rumi - Turning Ecstatic.** Don Mills Library (R)

June 03 (Fri) 2.00 pm **Preserving Your Wealth: An Introduction To Estate Planning** Don Mills Library (R)

Saturdays March 26 - May 14 2 - 4 pm **Toastmasters Youth Leadership Program** Don Mills Library (R)

(R) = Don Mills Library/Registration required, Register at Library Information Desk or by phone 416 395 5710

*Jubilee United Church./ These events involve some cost and registration is required. Phone 447-6846 for details.

Contact Information for Out and About: (all 416 area code) Don Mills Library 395 6710. Donway Baptist Church 447 0731. Donway Covenant United Church 444 8444. Jubilee United Church 447 6846. Better Living Health and Community Services (E. P. Taylor Place) 447 7244 Ext 618. Parkwoods United Church 447 5519. Church of Our Saviour 385 1805. Franciscan Church of St. Bonaventure 447 5571.

With Sympathy...

It is with deep sadness that we report the loss of one of our key negotiators in our long negotiations with Cadillac Fairview. Erland Gustavs, an outstanding architect and loved family man died suddenly on January 18th. Erlands' architectural talents were indispensable to our negotiations and many of his suggestions re the architecture of the new Shops at Don Mills are reflected in the current buildings. He was dedicated to maintaining the physical characteristics of the community and his cheerful and positive attitude to everything will be sorely missed. We extend our deepest condolences to his family.

QUICK NOTES

- Residents of the North-west Quadrant will be pleased to know that the **Water Tank** is scheduled to be repainted in 2012, pending budget approval.
- Although the **162 Lawrence-Donway** Bus service will be extended to cover until 7.00 pm it is still a major cut of service to have nothing during the later part of the evening or on weekends. We continue our efforts to keep this service.
- We anticipate that the **Eglinton Rapid Transit** will proceed, but whether as a Light Rail or subway is still uncertain at this time. If modified in length we believe that its Eastern end should extend to at least Don Mills Road.

DMRI
MEMBERSHIP
AND CONTACT
INFORMATION:

To join or renew your membership:

Send your name, address and telephone number, along with payment of \$20 to DMRI P. O. Box 603, Don Mills, Ontario M3C 2T6

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