IN MY OPINION

BLNA thanks everyone who made concert possible

THE BLNA (Beach Lakefront Neighbourhood Assocaition) is a community based not-for-profit organization which was established in response to a proposed condo development on our waterfront. The BLNA hosted the Beach Awareness Concert at Kew on Sept. 7th.

Here is a letter from the organizer, Harold Tabone:

Three months ago I took the initiative, as a BLNA committee member, to throw a concert in Kew Gardens as a way to create awareness about a proposed condominium development on our lakefront here in the Beach. When I first introduced the idea I was told that, even if I could rally the support of local musicians and artists and even if I could get it together in three months, the City Parks Special Permit department wouldn't allow me to host such an event in Kew Gardens. When I spoke to a local veteran concert organizer about my idea, he laughed and told me to forget about it.

At first I was discouraged. All I had so far was an idea and no money. People told me to think of another way to create awareness. I thought carefully about this and decided that neither I nor the Beach had anything to lose by putting out a general email to all my contacts looking for volunteers, musicians and money.

The first thing I did was call Councillor Sandra Bussin. She had already been very active with our group, supporting our cause and speaking up against this development at council. Her support enabled me to call the city's permits people and get their support. After calling the City parks staff and explaining why I felt Kew Gardens was the best place to create awareness (preserving our Beach Lakefront in a park that needs to be preserved), I was given the green light. The next thing I knew everything started to fall into place. We began to gather financial and other support through sponsorship, and dozens of people came calling, many of them professionals in the entertainment industry, who donated incredible support and knowledge. Musicians began to line up, and some even gave up paid gigs to perform for the BLNA.

How lucky are we in this community to have so many active, connected and concerned people? Over half of the volunteers who came to help and most who came to perform don't even live in the Beach. They simply felt it was their responsibility – as Toronto residents or as plain old lovers of the Beach and all that it is and has to offer – to help spread and make louder the word that building condominiums in inappropriate places is just not acceptable. The volunteers shared the goal and dream of preserving our unique city neighbourhoods, of which the Beach is one. These people agreed with the BLNA's position that developers should build condominiums in areas which have been approved for intensification, and not in historic neighbourhoods where families live and trees flourish.

I want to personally thank the many volunteers and musicians who came out to show their support for this important cause. Even in the rain, all the musicians and performers played and sang their hearts out on Sept. 7.

Thank you to Batucada Carioca, Revival Dear, the Peirson Ross Band, Ron Korb, Makoto Tani, Funktagon, the Mississippi Hippies, Fludd, Stephan Moccio, the Skydiggers and Jesse Cook for such amazing performances! I'd also like to thank Spider Jones, Frank Domagala and Michael Danso for hosting the event and keeping the audience entertained and informed. Thanks to MPP Michael Prue who conducted our live auction and to Sandra Bussin for her inspirational comments and support.

I also want to thank the many volunteers for the countless hours and days each put into this. Ours was a terrific team of hard working and dedicated people who cared enough to put their personal lives aside for a while, so that they could help to build and create awareness of such an important cause.

Thanks to the community that helped to sponsor this event. These include Community Centre 55, Pansy Henderson of Remax/Hallmark, MGI Securities, Jovian Capitol, Varsity Tents, Eventrix, Marcon Kitchens, Wayne Ferguson Piano Tuner, Thrust Forwarding, Coll Audio, Yamaha, Media Sales and Hotsets Film. Thanks go to the many Queen Street East retailers and audience members who gave generously for our raffles and prize draws.

I feel very blessed to be part of a community that steps up and lends a helping hand to a cause it believes in. Our concert was a huge success in so many ways.

Please continue to say no to inappropriate condominium development. On Sept. 9, just two days after the concert, the Toronto and East York Community Council unanimously supported Sandra Bussin's Motion to support the Refusal Report by the City Planning Department to reject the developer's application to build its four-storey condominium on the lakefront between Munro Park and Neville Park. On Sept. 24, the full City Council did the same. Sandra Bussin told Community Council she had never seen such huge community support or interest as has been directed at this development issue. This, to me, says community.

You can contact the association at www.blna.net.

Editor's Note: In our Nov. 4, there will be an interview with developer of the proposed project, Dermot Sweeeny, giving his side of the controversy.

BEACH METRO
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GENERAL MANAGER: Sheila Blinoff (ext. 24)
EDITOR: Carole Stimmell (ext. 23)
ADVERTISING MANAGER: Dianne Marquardt (ext. 26)
EDIT. ASST. AND AD REP.: Bill MacLean (ext. 22)
REPORTER/PHOTOGRAPHER: Jon Muldoon (ext. 25)
CLASSIFIEDS/ WEBMASTER: Melinda Drake (ext. 27)
ACCOUNTING ASSISTANT: Judy Doucette (ext. 21)

OFFICE: 2196 Gerrard St. E., Toronto, M4E 2C7
PHONE (416) 698-1164 FAX: (416) 698-1253
(BMN uses a Voice Mail system. Please be patient)
E-MAIL: admin@beachmetro.com
accounts@beachmetro.com
editor@beachmetro.com
ads@beachmetro.com
classifieds@beachmetro.com
WEBSITE: www.beachmetro.com

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Polling stations need to be accessible

AND SO I sat in my buggy and went up to Kew Beach school to vote. I was happy to see my friend, Kristi with her cute little dog, Buffi, standing outside the school. She kindly opened the school door for me, but there was no little ramp.

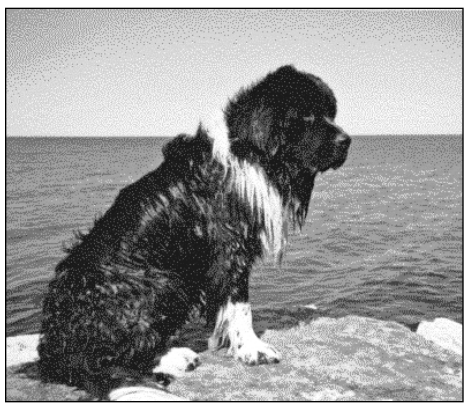
I took my buggy about six metres back, set my electric motor at top speed and roared to the door, took a terrific bump at the step and crashed into the hall and stalled.

After much to do, my buggy was restarted. Then a second set of doors were kindly held open for me, and I went in and voted.

Pamela Bolton,
Kew Beach Avenue

Thanks to the many who responded to sad demise of dog

On Saturday, Sept. 13, my husband and I were out playing with our 11-year-old Newfoundland dog, Skipper, on the beach at the base of Neville Park Boulevard. Unfortunately, Skipper collapsed in the water while he was playing and we were unable to revive him.



Many people on the beach at the time offered support and assistance. One lady let us use her cell phone, two City of Toronto workers helped by driving us to our vet, a gentleman helped lift Skipper into the truck and several others offered condolences and sympathy.

As you can imagine, we were totally overwhelmed at the time but we want to make sure that everyone there knows that their concern and caring did make a difference to us. We were amazed by our wonderful Beach neighbours! Again, a huge thank you to all of you.

Jo-Ann and Doug Bush
Elmer Avenue