

Graffiti Epidemic Hits Businesses, Homes and Public Spaces

By Nancy Buschert

What kind of person has the audacity to deface parks and businesses? Who would have the nerve to spray graffiti on someone's house, fence or vehicle? An increase in graffiti has plagued our community in the past few months. Steve Mahler, Crime Prevention Officer with Hamilton Police Services explained that the graffiti "artists" do not view their acts as a crime.

Mahler explained that the perpetrators rarely deface residences aside from fences; however, Corktown is starting to see instances of vehicles and residential property marked with graffiti. "You try not to give them that canvas," he explained. "There are many ways to attack it." Quick and continual clean-up are key strategies to make the "artists" lose interest in a particular canvas. Mahler also suggested that communities are more effective when they establish a system and everyone participates in a consistent manner.

Police officers in the Corktown area are making progress in combating the

neighbourhood's sudden surge in graffiti vandalism. Angela Abrams, Hamilton Police A/Sgt and Corktown's Crime Manager, reported that eight individuals have been identified and two arrests were made in conjunction with recent graffiti activity in early March. Investigators are actively following up on other leads and are updating a graffiti database.

While graffiti is often associated with gang activity, the Hamilton Police Service identifies eight types of graffiti on its website. The most common type, hip hop graffiti, accounts for nearly 90-percent of all reported incidents. Hate graffiti ranks next at five-percent.

Gang, political activism and stencil graffiti each account for one – two percent of reported graffiti. Even graffiti that appears in bathrooms has its own category-- latrinalia graffiti, and it accounts for two -three percent of graffiti incidents.

Graffiti is an outcome of a sub-culture within our society. The messages and the placements are often intentional and riddled with hidden meaning. Fortunately Mahler does not believe that the majority of graffiti showing up in the Corktown area is gang-related. In fact, there is very little to suggest that Corktown has any hardcore, authentic gang activity. Gang graffiti is often filled with

warnings, threats and attempts at establishing territory. The majority of Corktown instances fall into the hip hop category which includes tags (leaving a name or nickname) and throw-ups (two dimensional or two-colour tag lines). Motivation for this type of graffiti is typically recognition within the sub-culture.

Hamilton Police Services has a formal strategy to combat graffiti. The Graffiti Prevention Strategy (GPS) is a three year program funded by \$125,000 in federal grants and nearly \$110,000 in City funding. The purpose is to reduce visible graffiti in neighbourhoods, educate residents about graffiti and related issues and encourage them to participate by reporting graffiti incidents on the graffiti hotline. The graffiti hotline is 905-546-GRAF (4723). If someone witnesses graffiti activity, they are advised to phone 911 or Crime Stoppers at 905-522-TIPS (8477). Visit the police website: www.hamiltonpolice.on.ca. Click on *Preventing Crime*, and then click on *Graffiti*.

The GPS project is focused on Beasley, Gibson, Stinson and Westdale neighbourhoods, but Corktown can benefit from the GPS team's recommended prevention strategies.

Graffiti can suck the life-force right out of a community, but in order for the vandals to accomplish their domination of the concrete, wooden and metal canvases, the community must exhibit a high level of indifference and apathy. It's time for Corktown to make a stand, persevere and be vigilant about watching and reporting acts of graffiti. Please see *Combating Graffiti: Actions to Take* on page 5. ♣

Letters from our Neighbours



People Make Neighbourhoods Joyful

Nine and a half years ago, there was a reunion for past and present Corktown residents. Since then, my wife and I have heard nothing from or about the Corktown community, so we applaud you and the members of your executive for making the effort.

The joy of living in a neighbourhood depends not on how pretty the parks or how magnificent the buildings, but upon caring and kind neighbours. The commitment of your association has already been demonstrated by the high quality of the *Corktown News* and the encouraging note left in our mail box recognizing our very modest outdoor Christmas decorations (It made us feel good).

Your example has made us determined to attend as many meetings, clean-ups and events as possible. Please add us to your mailing list. Thank you.

Brian Pennell & Pauline Campion

Concern Regarding Political Slant

I was reading your December Issue which is the first one that I have seen distributed to my apartment building.

I do not understand why Andrea Horwath is part of your issue. She does not represent the area; we have a different MPP who was elected by the residents of this riding.

In having Andrea included you leave the impression that your newsletter has a partisan political bent and this should be stated. The other solution is at the provincial level have articles from all political parties.

If the purpose of the newsletter is promote the neighbourhood or raise issues of concern then I see the advantage of building connections to the representative politicians but I do not believe you can just pick and choose who you want but who was elected at the last election.

David Dawson

Editor's note: *Thank you for your feedback about the first issue. We erred in our headline—"Message from Our MPP." Ms. Horwath is the MPP for Hamilton-East which does not include the Corktown neighbourhood. We did not intend to convey a political slant; we felt the appearance of the ads and messages from Mr. Christopherson and Ms. Horwath were relevant based on their past involvement (current for Mr. Christopherson) with this area.*

Thanks for the Corktown News

Thanks for writing the news, I really enjoyed reading it and think it will go a long way toward promoting our neighbourhood and enhancing it. ♣

Lena Valdes

The Streets of Corktown

Ferguson Ave

Ferguson Avenue, once known as Cherry Street, was named after Peter Ferguson, one of the earliest settlers at the Head-of-the-Lake. He arrived here in 1795 and was given a grant of 100 acres of land in Barton township. Ferguson Avenue was once one of the major arteries for railway traffic.

News Briefs

Contest Winner

Congratulations to Reta Meloche, winner of our name the newsletter contest. There were a number of great suggestions including keeping the inaugural, temporary title—*Corktown News*. However, since the executive committee proposed the contest in the first place, it was decided that a new name should be selected and the *Corktown Crier* was chosen from the submissions.

Also, special thanks to the **Pheasant Plucker** for providing the winner's gift certificate.

Winter Play in the Park Day

Approximately 35 brave souls, young and old, joined members of the executive committee for the first-ever winter Play in the Park Day held January 28 at Corktown Park. Attendees chatted under the park pavilion, sipped coffee and hot chocolate and snacked on cookies, fruit and chips. Special thanks to the Corktown Pub & Fare for donating the coffee and hot chocolate supplies. Also thanks to the residents who came with snacks to share!

It was a fun afternoon of playing games and visiting with others. Plus we were surprised with a nice new blanket of fluffy snow.

Beautification Committee: Help Clean it Up!

By Barry Bogusat

As the snow melts away you have surely noticed litter popping up faster than weeds in the spring. It's a sure sign that winter is passing, and the earth is awakening from its slumber.

So in honour of Earth Day, April 22, we respectfully request that all Corktowners do their part in cleaning up their neighbourhood. Please

Publication information

The *Corktown Crier* newsletter is published by the Corktown Neighbourhood Association. Advertising and sponsorship from local business make this newsletter possible. For information on advertising, email corktown_news@yahoo.ca. The newsletter will be published quarterly—approximately every three months: December, March, June, and September.

Communication & Newsletter Committee

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Marla Pilkington	Advertising
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Cathy Emick	Sponsorship
Julie Spicer	Contributor

Editorial Policy

The Corktown Neighborhood Association reserves the right to edit newsletter submissions due to space limitation. In order to ensure the newsletter promotes an inclusive and respectful tone, letters deemed slanderous or profane will not be printed. All letters must be signed by the author; anonymous letters will not be printed. In the event that a letter's content is questionable in the eyes of the editor, the neighborhood association executive committee will be consulted to determine whether or not to print some or all of the submission. Submit letters to: corktown_news@yahoo.ca.

organize your own clean-ups, involving friends, neighbours and children, by property, block or street. By cleaning up litter that may have found its way to your own address, the whole neighbourhood can benefit. Please do your part because it is, after all, your neighbourhood and your responsibility.

We would also like to invite all residents to participate in a clean-up of Corktown Park on Saturday, May 5 at 10 a.m. Meet at the concession building. If you would like to participate in the clean-up, contribute or join the Beautification Committee, please send an email to corktown_news@yahoo.ca. ♣

Message from the President

It's been a busy and fun winter for the Neighbourhood Association so far. Our "Fun in the Park" day at the end of January was a success. It was a bit cold and snowy but we had a great group of about 35 people come out for some coffee, hot chocolate (thanks to the Corktown Pub!) and yummy treats. It was a wonderful chance to meet and get to chat with some of our fellow neighbours. We will be having more events as the spring and summer approach, so please think about taking some time to come out and meet your neighbours. The more we all get to know each other, the better our neighbourhood will be.

I am involved with a Ward 2 Neighbourhood Group, where a representative from each of the neighbourhoods in the ward get together to discuss issues. It is great to know that as downtown neighbourhoods we all have the same issues and concerns. I think it will be a valuable experience.

We had our General Meeting on February 22nd at the McMaster University Downtown Centre at Main & John. The Police Crime Manager for our area, Sgt. Angela Abrams gave an update on what they are doing in the area and Officer Steve Mahler did an interesting presentation on graffiti.

At that meeting we also had a great general discussion about the Assets and Potential Improvements we'd like to see for the Corktown neighbourhood. The things we came up with were:

Assets

- 1 Number of parks
- 2 Diversity—multicultural and other
- 3 Mature trees
- 4 Architecture
- 5 Pedestrian friendly
- 6 Sense of community
- 7 Historic name and vibe
- 8 Proximity to downtown
- 9 Future new school
- 10 View of escarpment

Potential Improvements

- 1 Better lighting and more trees in Corktown Park
- 2 Promotion of neighbourhood as a place to set down roots
- 3 Promotion of "Corktown" name through businesses and historic signage
- 4 Anti-litter campaign and frequent cleanups
- 5 Block parties
- 6 All age movie nights
- 7 Encouraging residents to shop, dine and use other local businesses
- 8 Beautification of streets and alleys with plantings/gardens
- 9 More garbage cans in the parks
- 10 Lighting in yards for security

It was a great brainstorming session and I encourage you all to think about these things and talk about them with your neighbours. If you have any suggestions, ideas or anything you would like to add, please contact us at corktown_news@yahoo.ca.

The executive group will be devoting time in our upcoming meetings to determine how best to promote our assets within and outside of our neighbourhood. We'll also be looking at opportunities to work on the suggested improvements. Some we can focus on immediately while others may take the assistance of the City and possibly fundraising. ♣

— Peggy Freeman

WWII Medal Recipient Resided in Corktown

By Julie Spicer and Donna Portree

You can see that the 2-1/2 storey brick Victorian house at 238 Hunter Street East has seen better days. In fact, it was once the home of a *bona fide* war hero.

At the beginning of World War II, 238 Hunter Street East was the home of Donald Portree and his wife, Lilian. Donald Portree was born William John Alexander Portree on August 19, 1911 in Winnipeg, but became known as Donald after the Gaelic "Domhnall" meaning "brave warrior."

Portree worked as an iron molder, and in the Depression of the 1930s, rode the rails east to Hamilton in search of work, which he found as a foundry foreman at Westinghouse and with John Bertram & Sons in Dundas, where he was working when he enlisted in October of 1940.

Although his experience as an iron molder was in high demand, Chief Petty Officer Portree wanted to go to sea, and was assigned to HMCS Assiniboine as chief engine room artificer. On August 6, 1942, while the Assiniboine was escorting a convoy about 200 miles east off the coast of Newfoundland, they were confronted with the German submarine U-210.

According to the September 21, 1942 Hamilton Spectator coverage of the nine-hour battle, "they were in serious difficulties when fire broke out and destroyed the gun controls, but the weapons sent forth their volleys in independent action. The crew members stood by their post and battled it out until the destroyer caught the sub at close range and rammed it, sending it to the bottom." The surviving



German crew were then brought aboard and transferred to an English destroyer.

It was in fighting the fire that Chief Petty Officer Portree distinguished himself. His citation states, "he did particularly valuable work in the forward fire party which extinguished a bad fire on the flag deck". Portree's daughter Donna recalls the story that he was holding a fire hose when the pressure came on and flipped him off of the side of the ship, and if the crew hadn't seen him go, the sea would have taken his life there and then.

The December 5, 1942 issue of the *Hamilton Spectator* announced "decorations have come to 21 Canadian sailors who wrote a stirring page in the Dominion's naval annals when the destroyer Assiniboine rammed and sank a German submarine after a blazing gun battle in the Atlantic. An extra edition of the *Canada Gazette* last night made known that 'the King has been graciously pleased to approve' the awards, which went to four officers and 17 ratings of the warship. Among those to receive honours is Donald Portree, engine room artificer, whose home in Hamilton is at 238 Hunter Street East. He will receive the Distinguished Service Medal."

Five other Hamilton men were aboard the Assiniboine at the time: Leonard S. Seager of Francis Street, Bert Lindsay of

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Important Community Contacts

Keep this contact list and refer to it when you have concerns, see something suspicious, want to report something, or have a question.

Hamilton Police Service

Emergency	911
Non-emergency	905-546-4925
South Town Crime Manager A/Sgt. Angela Abrams	905.540.6074

City of Hamilton

General Inquiries	905.546.CITY (2489)
Ward 2 Councillor Bob Bratina	905.546.2711 bbratina@hamilton.ca
By-Law Parking	905.546.4925

Corktown Neighbourhood Association

Any executive member by email corktown_news@yahoo.ca

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Fax: (905) 383-1951
John Runco
Frank Runco

Distribution List

Want to hear news, announcements or receive this newsletter via email as a PDF? Join our Corktown Neighbourhood email list. The communication committee maintains a distribution list and sends out notices related to community events and information. Also, residents will receive a PDF version of the newsletter directly in their email inbox. To join the distribution list, send an email to corktown_news@yahoo.ca with "D-List Add" in the subject line.



Message from our Ward 2 Councillor

I think most of us have been looking forward to Spring in Corktown...we even have a street named after this beautiful season, and like Ontario springs, it's pretty short. There are many projects ahead for the neighbourhood, including a good clean-up. There are a lot of us interested in doing more with the history of Corktown, including an inventory of its special buildings. The historic Hamilton Club is a good place to begin. It's had a face lift and is a graceful, if not somewhat elite, gateway to Corktown from our North West corner. Most of our historic places are unique in that they are fully functional, still serving the community after, in many cases, over a hundred years of existence. Not quite that old but still impressive is the GO Train station, formerly the T.H. and B. Railway headquarters. It is actually the focus of expansion plans, with another train to be added to the schedule and quite possibly the downtown transit hub of the future as the H.S.R. considers where to locate a downtown terminal. This would bring together GO Trains, buses, intercity highway buses and local transit which would make a true full service intermodal transit hub. You'll hear more about those plans in the near future.

There is also talk of a boutique hotel in the old nightclub on Haymarket Street behind the station. I remember telling a neighbourhood meeting some time ago in Queen Victoria school how lucky we were that the Corktown Tavern had been purchased by Gary Cepetelli. Everything Gary does is first class and since the opening last September, already there have been some memorable evenings there. Performances by Ian Tyson, Ashley McIsaac, the Ennis Sisters, Steve Strongman and Crooked Jack just to name a few have created this amazing opportunity for us to be able to walk to a place where we can hear some of the best in Canadian music, as well as up-coming local artists. This is a great addition to some of Hamilton's most authentic taverns and restaurants like the Cat and the Fiddle, the Lionshead, Slainte, The Winking Judge, the Pheasant Plucker, Delicieux, La Cantina, Lo Presti's, and on and on. I'm going to highlight from time to time the restaurants and other businesses that add to the unique character of Corktown. I think we are the envy of any neighbourhood in Canada for the quality and variety of the food and entertainment we can enjoy within a short walk of our homes and apartments.

We have a superb opportunity as residents to continue to make a difference to a great old neighbourhood that has had its ups and downs, but has improved dramatically over the past few years and the easiest way to take part is to support your Corktown Neighbourhood Association and many great events that you'll be hearing about in the weeks and months ahead. ♣

Bob Bratina
Councillor, Ward 2



Bob Bratina
Councillor Ward 2

Hamilton City Hall 2nd Floor
71 Main Street West

Tel: 905.546.2711 e-mail: bbratina@hamilton.ca

► Continued from page 3...

Herkimer Street, George Tuck of Mary Street, James Hart of King Williams Street and Gordon Almas of Wilson Street. (Hamilton Spectator September 22, 1942).

Chief Petty Officer Portree received his Distinguished Service Medal at Buckingham Palace in 1945 from King George VI, saying upon his return home "the King's a splendid fellow."

After the war, Portree held various jobs, including working on oil tankers, as an inspector for Ontario Hydro and for the Department of National Defense, before going into farming. He passed away on August 10, 1994.

Portree's daughter, Donna Gail Portree, was born only one day after the action on the Assiniboine, and while she has lived in a few other places in the world, she returned to the Corktown neighbourhood in 2002. ♣

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► Continued from front cover...

Combating Graffiti Actions to take

Police authorities stress that having a plan is important to effectively combat graffiti. Police and City representatives offer these recommendations for handling graffiti.

- If you witness graffiti in progress, phone 911.
- If your home or business or property is defaced with graffiti, phone the non-emergency police line and file a report, 905-522-8477.
- Take photos if you have a camera and submit with police report.
- If the graffiti occurs on your own property (car, residence, fence, etc.) clean it, and re-paint it as soon as possible.
- If the graffiti occurs on City property, phone the City at 905-546-2489 and describe the graffiti, its location, etc.

The Corktown Neighbourhood Association will continue to work with officials to address this problem in our community. Be vigilant and report suspicious activity!



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- * Roasted Portobello Mushrooms, with gorgonzola and balsamic drizzle.
- * Butternut squash ravioli -with julienne root vegetables and roasted garlic.

Entree (Choice of one)

- * Incognito Chicken-parmesan crusted & stuffed with artichokes, roasted red peppers and goat cheese.
- * Beef tenderloin medallions- with green peppercorn sauce.
- * 4 bone rack of lamb - herb crusted w / red wine glaze.
- * Seafood Linguine- scallops, shrimp, salmon, tossed in white wine and tarragon butter.

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- * Crème brulee, Seasonal Fruit Tart of the Day, Fresh Fruit Cheesecake

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The Corkboard

April – June Events

Wed, April 11

City Council Meeting - 7 p.m.
71 Main St – Council Chambers

Fri, April 13

Tres Hombres
Corktown Pub

Sat, April 14

Elevation
Corktown Pub

April 16 – 22

Earth Week!
Think GREEN

Fri, April 20

The Fullertons
Corktown Pub

Sat, April 21

Trickbag
Corktown Pub

Wed, April 25

City Council Meeting - 7 p.m.
71 Main St – Council Chambers

Sat, April 28

Groove Corporation
Corktown Pub

10 a.m. Sat, May 5

Corktown Park Clean-up
Meet at concession bldg.

May 11, 12, 13

Ward 2,
3-on-3 Basketball Tourney

7 p.m. Wed, June 6

Corktown Neighbourhood Meeting
Central Recreation Centre
93 West Ave

Advertisers receive complimentary event listings. All dates and info subject to change.

Volunteer for your Neighbourhood Association!

Lead • Help • Participate

The Corktown Neighbourhood Association needs residents to get involved in special events, beautification initiatives, community safety, and communication strategies. If you have ideas, time and interest, please let us know by sending an email to corktown_news@yahoo.ca.

Coming in late April

We're developing our web site: www.corktownna.ca. Visit us April 30th.

Ward #2's 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament



May 11, 12, 13

Boys & Girls, Age Divisions: 10-12, 12-14, 14-16

- ◆ **FREE registration**, April 5th, 4 – 8 p.m. at Central Memorial Community Centre, 93 West Avenue (Corktown, Stinson & Durand residents) or at 155 Queen Street North (North End, Central & Beasley residents).
- ◆ **Volunteers wanted!!** Contact Heather at 905-730-9724 or show up at 3 p.m. May 11th at Corktown Park—meet by the concession stand. This is a great opportunity for High School students to earn service hours!
- ◆ Games to be played at Central, Corktown and Carter Parks.



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