

RANKIN CRESCENT NEWS

Issue #1 – published July 4, 2010 – Printed Circulation: 100

1. Perth Avenue Junior Public School Needs Our Support – Now.

Enrollment numbers are down at Perth Avenue Junior Public School and if we hope to ensure the survival of Perth Avenue J.P.S., we have to show our support for the school. To help boost enrollment, Perth school would like to add French Immersion and grades 7 and 8 to its programming. However, it is up to us, as parents and local residents, to convince the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) that access to these programmes is desirable for the children who live in our neighbourhood. In particular, those of us who have pre-schoolers who we would like to benefit from a French immersion education at a local school, as well as being able to attend Perth school until the end of grade 8 must make every effort to communicate their support for these initiatives to the TDSB, in particular to our elected education trustee:

Maria Rodrigues – telephone 416-397-3069 e-mail: maria.rodrigues@tdsb.on.ca

MEETING TOMORROW – *Please try to attend the meeting with Maria Rodrigues tomorrow evening.*

Date and Time: MONDAY, JULY 5TH, 6:30 PM Place: Perth Avenue Junior Public School

It is vital for as many parents as possible to attend this meeting, and to tell our elected trustee how important it is for our children to have local access to a French Immersion programme. Let's keep our children in the Junction Triangle!

For additional information, see: JunctionTriangle.ca/PerthPS

2. Electric vs. Diesel Trains – The Georgetown → Airport → Union Station GO Train Project.

Metrolinx, an agency of the Government of Ontario, is planning an eight-fold expansion in diesel rail traffic, from 50 trains per day to *over 400 trains per day*, on the Georgetown GO line along the western edge of our Junction Triangle neighbourhood. This expansion will make this the busiest diesel-rail corridor on the planet. With the prevailing westerly winds, our neighbourhood is directly downwind of the Georgetown GO line. As most of you are aware, exhaust from diesel locomotives has been linked to cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, cancers and premature death. It poses an especially potent danger to children and the elderly.

Furthermore, diesel train emissions contribute to climate change, and they are heavy, loud and in other ways disruptive to local quality of life in the neighbourhoods they pass through. According to the International Energy Agency, petroleum production is falling in many oil-producing countries, and an irreversible decline in the annual global supply of petroleum is predicted for the not-too-distant future. As petroleum becomes scarcer and more costly to extract and refine, the result will be ever-increasing prices for all petroleum products, including diesel fuel.

This rail project represents a good alternative to road traffic, but it is difficult to understand why diesel locomotives are even being considered by Metrolinx and the Ontario government. Countries with the most highly developed rail networks – Japan, for example – use almost exclusively electric trains, in particular wherever rail traffic is high. Why? Because electric trains are lighter, quieter, safer (e.g. much faster stopping distances), less polluting, more efficient, and, in the long run, substantially cheaper than diesel. Unlike non-renewable petroleum, electricity can be produced by renewable, everlasting sources such as solar, wind, and hydro power. Our TTC subway and streetcars are electric. Bombardier, a Canadian company, is the largest manufacturer of electric trains in the world.

(continued on Page 2)

We should NOT be investing in a past technology based on non-renewable oil. Instead, we should be investing in the current state-of-the-art technology based on electricity. Electric trains are the only logical option for the Pearson Airport rail link, and the electricity-powered train option should be chosen from the outset.

Contact Premier McGuinty and our local MPP, Tony Ruprecht, as well as our federal and municipal representatives to voice your concern about the negative impact on our neighbourhood of choosing diesel over electric for the airport rail link.

Hon. DALTON MCGUINTY, Premier Tel: 416-325-1941 Fax: 416-325-3745
<http://www.premier.gov.on.ca/feedback/>

TONY RUPRECHT, MPP Davenport Tel: (416) 535-3158 Fax: (416) 325-9961
truprecht.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org

For more information go to the Clean Train Coalition website at: www.cleantrain.ca

3. West Toronto Railpath.

Most of you have had an opportunity to stroll or bicycle on the attractively landscaped Railpath which forms the western edge of our neighbourhood. Congratulations are in order to the Friends of West Toronto Railpath for their vision and hard work. In particular, they inspired the community and our politicians to undertake the project leading to the completion of Phase One of the railpath last fall.

Subsequent phases will extend the Railpath further south and east towards downtown Toronto, ultimately, it is hoped, all the way to Union Station. Once completed, the Railpath will give more than 250,000 Toronto residents a safe, convenient, attractive, car-free transportation link with the downtown core. Continued pressure on our elected officials will ensure that the Railpath is completed in a timely fashion.

For more information visit the Friends of West Toronto Railpath website: <http://railpath.ca/>

4. Solar Energy on Rankin Crescent.

As you are no doubt aware, the unshaded and flat or gently-sloping rooftops of our houses here on Rankin Crescent are ideal for solar systems.

Bob and Sachiko at #209 are pleased to report that as of July 1st, the 2 kilowatt photovoltaic system on their rooftop has produced over 5600 kilowatt hours of solar electricity since its March 2008 start-up. This solar electricity is supplied directly to the electrical grid on Rankin Crescent and as a result is used to partly power Rankin Crescent homes. The initial cost of a photovoltaic system is high, although less than the price of a new car (according to Statistics Canada, the average cost of a new car in 2009 was \$25,683). However, the income from the sale of the solar electricity to Toronto Hydro represents an annual rate of return on investment of about +8% (guaranteed for 20 years), which in today's investment climate is quite good. This certainly compares very favourably with the rate of return on the purchase of a new vehicle, which averages about *minus* 16% annually over the first 5 years, i.e. depreciation, all of which explains why Bob and Sachiko's car is 19 years old.

Similarly, their rooftop solar water heating system supplies virtually 100% of household hot water from April to September, and over 60% from October to March.

By going solar, we replace polluting, non-renewable fossil fuels, such as coal, with a clean, green, free source that will never run out. Renewable energy is our future; the technology is available today; and the economics of going solar have never been better.

For more information, see: OurPower.ca

Also, Bob and Sachiko would be happy to give you a tour of their solar systems and answer any questions you might have. Give them a call at: 416-539-8558.

5. Central A/C Unit Available for Free.

Due to exterior wall and roof insulation upgrades at #209 (still ongoing), interior temperatures in our house remain much warmer in winter and much cooler in summer than when we first moved in. As a result, we no longer need our central air conditioning unit. It is the Weather King unit initially installed by the builder in all of the Gardrose homes on Rankin Crescent (#158 to #225). The unit has been used increasingly little over the past few years. It is still in good working order. It has been professionally disconnected from the furnace and the refrigerant has been pumped back into the compressor unit. If you know of anyone who may be interested in this unit for free, please contact Bob at 416-539-8558.

6. Rankin Crescent – Some Personal Reflections.

Back in the summer of 2002, we were looking for an affordable house located generally west of downtown. Most of the houses we looked at were just too expensive and we had almost concluded that we would end up in Mississauga or elsewhere in the burbs. Fortunately, we discovered the Gardrose Rankin Crescent development, which with its tall, narrow, mainly semi-detached houses and tiny yards was just within our price range. We chose a lot and a plan and signed a contract. In March 2003 we moved into our not-exactly-complete new home at #209 – more commonly known then as Lot 9. There were no sidewalks, no front path, just a few uneven planks to traverse the mud between the unpaved street and our front steps. I am sure that those of you who have been here from the beginning remember it all too well. There were no garages, no lawns, and in our back yard there was a huge conical pile of dirt and debris, which we soon nicknamed Mt. Fuji. On closing day, workers were still busy inside – I wish I could say that they were just putting the finishing touches to the interior, but that sporadic process extended over many months, and some things they never did finish properly. Quality and service were not exactly Gardrose strong points, but the house was new and more affordable than any other we could find close to the Bloor subway line, so we were excited to move out of our apartment and into this new home.

At the time, we didn't know so much about our new neighbourhood, but as it turns out, the Junction Triangle has almost all of the features and amenities we had hoped for in a neighbourhood. As you all know, we have good TTC access, and located within a 15 minute walk of Rankin Crescent are several local parks, Wallace-Emerson Community Centre, three malls, schools, libraries, convenience stores, green grocers, art galleries, restaurants, coffee shops, and a wide variety of other local businesses, most of which are family-owned and operated.

Yes, our neighbourhood has issues – what neighbourhood doesn't? – but it continues to evolve, mostly in a very positive way. All in all, we feel very fortunate to have discovered the Gardrose Rankin Crescent development in the summer of 2002. Early memories of the complaints and conflicts we had with Gardrose are fading. Even the obstinacy and bellowing of Tony, the Gardrose site supervisor that we dealt with most, has become a fond memory for us – well, almost.

Over the seven years that we have lived here on Rankin Crescent, we have come to strongly identify with this neighbourhood. The Junction Triangle is our community and we are proud of it. Of course, what really makes a community successful are the people who live in it, and here on Rankin Crescent in particular, we think we have great neighbours. Thank you to all of you for making this part of the world a great place to live – a place we are very happy to call home.

For more information about community events and issues, our neighbourhood in general and the people who live here, visit these local area websites:

Junction Triangle website: junctiontriangle.ca Dig-In website: digin.ca



This is Issue 1 of what will be an occasional newsletter distributed to residents of Rankin Crescent. The print version is on 100% recycled paper. Your comments and feedback are welcome. If you have information, local news, or personal stories you would like to share with Rankin Crescent neighbours in a future issue, please contact Bob at 416-539-8558.