



This Week in the Annex:

July 12, 2023

The Livin' Is Easy. . .

We're now into high summer when so many of those Annexonians who have the means and desire desert the city and leave the rest of us to enjoy quieter streets. So, as is the ARA tradition, our Board has also taken a hiatus and won't be holding its regular monthly meeting tomorrow, the second Thursday of the month. Instead, we will reconvene on September 14, 2023. (Please note, as always, that every Annexonian is welcome to attend these Board meetings. Just email info@theara.org for location details closer to the date.)

That said, you can be assured that our Board members stay on the case no matter where they find themselves, whether in the city, province, country, or even abroad. That's why, for example, our super-busy Planning and Development Committee was able recently to produce an official [Project Position Statement](#) on the development currently proposed for the northwest corner of Spadina and Bloor.

Also in the works – another **Meet and Greet** evening – this time on Tuesday August 15 at [Indian Desire](#) on Bloor Street. There's also the [Heritage Toronto: Writing Change in the Annex](#) walking tour to look forward to (next repeat is on August 10 at 6:00 pm). And of course, we're already hard at work planning September's annual Cornfest.

That said, in this issue of the newsletter, we're going to look back on a few of the events that made life in the 'hood last June remarkably festive.

Walmer Road Street Party

So who would'a thunk it? The Walmer Road Street Party has been held annually for at least thirty years – yet for some of us in the 'hood, it's been running

unawares. At the very least your not-so-cub reporter confesses to having been blissfully ignorant of the frivolities for Lo! these many decades. We were consequently delighted to catch the action last June 17th as Walmer was closed to vehicular traffic from Dupont down to Bernard.



Things really got going once the Bouncy Castle arrived and the barbecues were lit up.



Julia and Robert sold tickets for both the BBQ and the raffle. (*Ed's note: don't forget to bring cash next year if you come!*)



Face painting artist Zoë L. Hill made dozens of kids' dreams come alive.



Mart and companion Luna manned their traditional waffle stand.



And Jesse and Shawn, the duo who style themselves as *Starship Experience*, obliged us by interrupting their break to give us a taste of their sound. You can check it out [by clicking here](#).

Most important lesson learned – you don't have to be a denizen of Walmer to join in the fun. So next year be sure to watch for invitations posted on utility poles. And if we know about it soon enough here at the ARA NL (how's that for an alphabet soup?), we'll be sure to let you all know when it's happening.

Mulberry Picking Festival

We'd had our doubts, but Mother Nature was right on time, and the teams who set out to pick mulberries last June 25 came back with buckets filled.

The task is pretty easy – gently whack a few fully loaded branches and allow the berries to drop into a blanket you've stretched below. But make no mistake, it does require a bit of effort if you want to get the full bounty from a tree. See below.



Would-be pickers swarmed the sign-up table as Terri Chu organized teams to head out to the field.



And Becky and Dele, grad students from UofT who will be conducting this summer's tranche of the Annex Tree Survey, were on hand to explain the basics of tree identification.



Even the youngest pickers got caught up in the fun, being taught by UofT grad student, Bhavika, on how to use a simple instrument to assess the height of a tree.



And of course, the ARA Communications and Membership Committee members were on hand to encourage passersby to join our association.



Kudos to Membership Secretary Tija Dirks and her sidekick, partner Jeroen Dirks, who turn up faithfully to every one of these neighbourhood events to promote the ARA.

Dancing on Line One

We've been following the progress of the [KESKUS project](#) on Madison from its earliest days. So we accepted with alacrity Ellen Valter's hush-hush invitation last June 1st to witness [Kungla](#), Toronto's Estonian folk dancing troupe, give their season finale – a closing performance which simultaneously marked the first to be staged on the site of the new centre.

The dress code for this exclusive invitation-only affair was hard hats, not black tie, because, to be clear, we in the audience were assembled well below what will be the new KESKUS concert hall. We were standing plumb on top of the tunnel for Line One – before it is once again buried so the main structure can rise from its foundations.



The weather was muggy and temperatures sweltering, but that didn't stop the dancers clad in traditional Estonian costumes from [giving the performance their all](#).



Ellen Valter set the scene by describing just where we were standing in relation to the soon-to-be courtyard and concert hall. You can find updates about the project [by clicking here](#). And don't forget, this Annex gem is being funded largely through (tax receipted) donations – [any and all of which are gratefully received](#).

Notes and Queries

Last Call for Goulash

Time to hurry! There's only a fortnight to go before that beloved Annex staple – [Country Style Hungarian Restaurant](#) – shuts its doors for good. News of the August 1st closing flooded the media last June, prompting [journalists](#) to chart the history of the Goulash Archipelago – that cluster of Hungarian restaurants and delis that sprang up along Bloor after the Hungarian revolution of 1956.

Be prepared to get in line if you want one last taste of the Archipelago nostalgia. Checkered red and white tablecloths and gargantuan platters of schnitzel and sausage: not for the faint of heart, nor for vegetarians of any stripe, for that matter. But the end of an era, that's for sure.



Country Style's famous platter for two. *Photo courtesy Steve Russell/Toronto Star*

We'll Be Back . . .

Don't go checking your junk folder for the ARA newsletter next Wednesday. Nope. We didn't get one prepared. Truth is, we're taking a week's break but plan to be back in the ether on July 26.

In the meantime, please do keep those tips, images, and story ideas coming: Be assured that each and every one is most appreciated. Cheers All!



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.

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