



# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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## Our annual BBQ!

by Martha MacLachlan

Once again, with almost 100 residents and friends in attendance, our BBQ was a huge success. The weather cooperated by raining only in the morning, giving us a mixture of sun and cloud cover from 5:00 pm onwards and an absence of the recent humidity. Two lucky winners went home with \$25 gift certificates to the Blake House, and one very lucky guest went home with a \$185.00 win from the 50/50 draw.

A big shout out to the Social Committee members. From buying supplies to stock the bar, selling tickets in the lobby, securing draw prizes, setting up the tables and chairs inside the party room and on the deck, to finishing off the night by putting all the tables and chairs away and washing endless runs of wine glasses. It makes all the work worthwhile when they see the party room filled with neighbours and friends enjoying themselves.

David and Gabriel of Absolutely Famished served up a feast of multiple salad choices, grilled vegetable platters, burgers, hot dogs, chicken skewers, tofu and vegetable skewers, watermelon and Nanaimo bars. The food was so plentiful; many took home leftovers.

After 25 years of catering, David is hanging up his apron and closing his catering company. He chose our BBQ to be his last extravaganza. We cannot express enough gratitude for the years he has presided over our BBQs, our holiday dinners, and our building's 40th and 50th anniversaries. David and Gabriel, our neighbours from Upper Homewood, often stayed and partied with us once we were all well-fed. They have become friends, and we will miss their dinners. It may be wishful thinking, but perhaps they can be convinced to come back into service if we host more stand-up type celebrations similar to the successful format of the 50th-anniversary party last year. Stay tuned for future plans.



# Good eats, cheap eats & sweet spots

by Dr. Cammy Lee Bostwick

Summer is all about patios! And what is a better restaurant than one that is literally in our own backyard? Take a short walk down the path behind our building, and you will find the Blake House on Jarvis Street.

We went for brunch, which is their specialty, and had a great time dining al fresco on the patio. I ordered Eggs Benedict with sautéed mushroom and baby spinach (\$16.00). The eggs were poached to perfection. The hollandaise sauce was buttery and smooth, and when mixed with the runny yolks and fried hash browns, it created the perfect bite. Service was friendly and competent.

Sitting on a patio in the warm summer sun and eating great food with loved ones is truly living the good life! Happy patio dining!



## RETRO REVIVAL

by The Green Committee

Have you ever heard of a sponge that grows like a cucumber? Well, you might be familiar with the synthetic version that is looped up into a fluffy ball called a loofah. Before World War II, plastic sponges were not commercially manufactured, and the plastic sponges we know today didn't exist. People around the world would use a naturally grown sponge from the vine-growing "luffa plant".

This is our new favourite eco-friendly alternative tool in the shower to clean and exfoliate our skin. Some people think that "all-natural" loofahs (as they are commercially called) are made of sea sponge or dried coral because of their coarse, spongy consistency. However, natural loofahs come from a gourd in the cucumber family.

After being harvested, the mature fruit of the gourd is dried, the skin peeled off, and the seeds removed; the resulting skeleton of the fruit remains and holds the structure of the luffa. Loofahs should be replaced often, about once a month or if any signs of mold or lingering musty odour are detected. To clean your loofah, you can sanitize it in boiling water.



While loofahs are a popular, eco-friendly, plastic-free product, they can be abrasive for those with sensitive skin types. However, loofah could be used for more purposes, such as cleaning dishes, sinks, tiles, or walls. You can easily modify your loofah to suit your needs by cutting it to the size you want.

Traditional bath poufs are outdated, with most of them getting tossed after a short, useful life and end up sitting in the landfill for countless decades. Many plastic products also end up in our water streams as microfibres from the plastic that can flow down our shower drains.

Since it's an all-natural product, the loofah sponge is 100% biodegradable and compostable. If you believe your sponge or brush is getting dirty or old, you can easily toss them right into your compost bin, where the City of Toronto creates usable compost for local farmers and residents.

There are plenty of other useful and sustainable products for your shower and home. Feel free to let us know what you use by emailing us at [40hgreencommittee@gmail.com](mailto:40hgreencommittee@gmail.com)



# Obituary

## Martha McGrath

A friendly and kind neighbour of ours passed away in July. Martha McGrath had lived on the 6th floor at 40 Homewood since 1995.

After a spring hospitalization, Martha died at Providence Healthcare Palliative Care Centre on July 13th, 2023. She had lived with a variety of health issues for some years.

Martha was born on August 10, 1940 and grew up in Montreal. She took secretarial studies in high school and then worked for CPR and an insurance company before joining the Royal Bank. RBC transferred her to Toronto in 1978, and she ended up working there for 27 years before her retirement in 2000.

She became quickly involved in the affairs of 40 Homewood, being elected to the Board of Directors first in 1998. She served several terms on the Board, including as Secretary. In 2003, she began the 40 Homewood Community Newsletter, which she edited until 2019. It followed a previous annual newsletter when that editor, Ruth Kelner, retired after 30 years.

Martha was also an active member of the old Recycling Committee and continued on when it became the Green Committee in 2009. She and the late Dave Campbell were the team that passed out Halloween candy in the lobby each year.



Outside of 40 Homewood, she belonged to Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic Church. She was also a member of several clubs over the years: Cabbage Patch Doll clubs on the internet, a Coronation Street Club in Mississauga, the Cabbagetown Quilters' Guild at Riverdale Farm and adorned in purple finery, and topped with a red hat she faithfully attended the Red Hat Society events. She liked to socialize out front at the bench but she had to get in by 4:30 for "The Young and the Restless."

Martha is survived by her sister, Kathy, who lives in Perth, Ontario, and two nephews, one in Montreal and one in Toronto. Her many friends and neighbours at 40 Homewood miss her, too.

## GALLERY TIME

A look at what happened last month





# A blast from the past!

This is from "Take 40" in spring 2002

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## **Dispatch to My Neighbours and Friends in the Community of 40 Homewood - Martha MacLachlan**

I have been a resident for 5 years and consider this my home. My introduction to the building was through a friend from work. He knew I was looking for a place and thought I should consider 40 Homewood. He was proud of where he lived. So central but so quiet. So accessible but so private. A building so big that it housed the population of a small friendly town.

And now I am happily settled here. I've made many new friends and acquaintances and am part of a vertical community in the midst of downtown Toronto. 40 Homewood is a great place to be. There are many people like me who feel the same way. They have found more than an apartment in a concrete building when they moved to 40 Homewood. They have found a community.

The condominium building, its collection of units, the grounds and the garage require attentive management to anticipate and budget for repairs, maintenance and to perform upgrades as required. But it is only the building that requires management, not the people.

We elect our board of directors to represent our collective financial interest and to make decisions that will protect our interests. Once the board is elected there are monthly meetings where we can communicate to our representatives, our board of directors. We are all busy people who live here. We have jobs, hobbies, families and commitments the same as the directors on the board. So this monthly meeting is a forum we can count on every month if we have concerns or are interested in finding out what follow up there has been on projects, etc. and the board can communicate to us what they have been doing. Or at least that's the way it is supposed to be.

What is really happening now is that once you cast your vote, you are signing off your right to have an opinion, to speak to the board about what you think and to know what the board is doing. (Unless you carry a magnifying glass and a large flashlight, you'll never be able to read the minute abridged minutes that are sometimes posted in the elevators.)

We have only had two open meetings this year and only one was held in the recreation room where there is enough room to accommodate people. The subsequent open meeting was put back in the little meeting room across from the laundry. Not an inviting room, not a comfortable room, nor was the president in any mood to accommodate any of the residents at the meeting. Now the board is sequestered back in their little meeting room holding private meetings. What is missing in our community is communication and participation.

I have heard many references to the original owners and the new owners, mostly in a derogatory fashion. I am friendly with many of my neighbours, and many of them happen to be original owners and they are not so different from "all the new people". They tell me about the days when they were welcomed to board meetings, of the days when there were committees that residents could

participate in. Not everyone wants or needs to be a board member. But people like to be part of a community, they like to give back to their community and they like to be involved at a committee level where they can participate and make recommendations to the board.

I am sure many of you are surprised that the Board is holding elections only six months since the last election. While the decision to do this is still debatable, the lack of communication as to the whys and hows is deplorable. At the least there should have been a meeting held in the recreation room, specifically to discuss this very important decision. And at the most, there should have been an election advisory committee to formulate recommendations for the set up of the actual election. Instead what we have is five positions that have been reduced to 18 months tenure. And, your vote is everyone's business. No more municipal style elections where you can register to vote and cast a ballot that only states who you voted for, not who you are.

Wayne Beaton and Margaret Osmond have been a beacon of hope in our community. They both advocate open meetings, clear communication and welcome others to participate in the future and stability of 40 Homewood. When Neil Gilson suggested a winter party in the recreation room for all residents, it was only Margaret and Wayne who supported it. The president denied the request, citing the liquor licensing board and its rules as a deterrent. For four and a half years I have attended social functions in the recreation room and had a glass of wine with my neighbours. Suddenly the adult residents are not allowed to have a drink and socialize in the common room that they all own. This social would have been an excellent venue for the president and other board members to circulate and communicate with their neighbours, the people they represent.

If you care about where you live, if you care about democracy and if you too want to be involved in your community, ask the right questions before you vote. Support change that reflects the old, old days of 40 Homewood where people were part of the process. For now the board meetings are closed, what will they be tomorrow, non existent?

Editor: Over the years, I have tried to be objective, but one can carry that too far. I have heard that refrain about the good old days many times. The truth is we cannot relive those days, nor would we want to try. When we first came to 40H in 1972, we were new to condominiums, we didn't yet have our own board and we knew things had to be done. Committees were formed due to necessity. There were building discrepancies, a television controversy, pets weren't supposed to be here, etc. etc. That is how Take 40 started. We were lucky to have men who knew about construction and who crawled through every nook and cranny of 40H which resulted in a long list of discrepancies. We had Doug Smith who delivered our television cable system at little cost. We had people of substance who fought for many years to have discrepancies corrected. Through their hard work, they set the groundwork for what we have now. And we made friends.

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