

## **150 Great Things About Our Neighbourhoods**

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**This is the original. LFP version was edited to make it fit one page.**

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What contributes to a city's identity? Among many things, and among the most desirable of attributes, is a sense of community - a leading indicator for healthy municipalities.

According to Calgary's Sense of Community Project Newsletter, Spring 2002, "research shows that strong sense of community reflects in greater feelings of safety and security and in increased levels of voting, recycling, helping others and volunteering."

Responses to what provides the most sense of community included connection and involvement, contribution to community efforts, finding a niche in the community, getting support, feeling safe and having recreational opportunities for children.

To commemorate London's 150<sup>th</sup> year as a city, the Urban League undertook to ask its members to determine 150 great things about their neighbourhoods. What makes their neighbourhood special, great, neat, work, fun and liveable?

Londoners love their green spaces, bike/trail paths, connectivity, heritage and village atmosphere maintained in a number of neighbourhoods.

Strong cities exist as a result of strong neighbourhoods. Strong neighbourhoods are just as an important economic investment as other more traditional economic development investments.

In fact, strong neighbourhoods could very well be considered the differential; the fulcrum; the swing factor; the sucker punch; the raison d'être. Because while other factors may bring people to London, neighbourhoods and sense of community are the reason why they stay.

London's neighbourhoods – a reason to stay. Home for the next 150 years.

- 1 A ribbon of green - the linear park along much of the Thames River with connecting pathways and bikeways
- 2 Street parties, apparently all over our city!
- 3 Diversity of our neighbourhoods – among all spectrums bringing history, customs, creativity, flavour and colour to our neighbourhoods
- 4 Hamilton Road Justice Circle; Byron Justice Circle
- 5 Our neighbourhood bakeries

- 6 People who take leadership roles in representing the voice of the community – civic innovators and agents of change who find new ways to take on old problems
- 7 Merla Mae's – a fixture on Adelaide Street for decades
- 8 St. Julien Park's revitalization which was part of the Celebrate the Thames project – significant cleanup and tree planting completed by the community for this jewel along the Thames; first tree planted in April of 96
- 9 The efficiency of Old North's grid road system
- 10 Our neighbourhood schools, demonstrative of community spirit and caring. Well-documented that the first sign of demise for a neighbourhood is the loss of their local school.
- 11 Old East's Heritage Designation, expected in Jan/06. This will be the 3<sup>rd</sup> heritage district so designated in London. Studies indicate Old East apparently has about 68% of the original architecture still intact.
- 12 Springbank Park and E.V. Buchanan Thames Valley Golf Course provide extensive public parkland on both side of the Thames River. The latter is one of the earliest public golf courses established in the province (and at no cost to taxpayers!)
- 13 100+ year tree canopy of Old North
- 14 The Jewish Community Centre at Huron and Adelaide
- 15 Killaly ESA which provide an urban refuge for many species of plants and animals and is also extremely popular with walkers, biking (only along main paths), dog walking (leashed) cross country skiers, and more. The Northridge-Grenfell CA organizes the annual community cleanups and sometimes guided nature walks in this area.
- 16 Great libraries in all our communities
- 17 The Riverforks Community has a gem is referenced by the locals as "Lawyer's Hill"- a great little green space, shaped like a bowl - perfect for tobogganning in the winter, and recently left unmown in the summer, creating a more natural space.
- 18 London Community Hebrew Day School – A two-room school opened on Epworth Avenue in 1920, and then expanded a few years later. Although Broughdale School closed its doors in 1977, the building almost immediately re-opened as a school, and children still cross the street to the Broughdale Playground.
- 19 Windermere and Adelaide's soccer field complex
- 20 The lamp on all night in the neighbour's front window, a beacon of warmth and comfort 365 days of the year
- 21 Our Service Clubs - Optimists, Rotarians, Lion's, Shriner's and the like
- 22 Carol Leffley of Jennifer Road, who spearheaded the drive for Jack Chambers PS (north of Fanshawe Park Rd) to be built, the last public school built in the City

- 23 Safe, quiet streets
  - 24 The Northdale Woods trail system is starting to come together. Once the section joining Northdale Woods to the trail west of Adelaide, a truly remarkable trail system will exist
  - 25 Our family doctors
  - 26 St.Julien's Festival – a celebration of the Hamilton Road community
  - 27 The Arva Moraine Wetland Complex across the north end of the city – a significant ecosystem
  - 28 Well known architect, "Roy James" designed neighbourhood homes on Colborne
  - 29 The Annual Spring Cleanup - lots of neighbours armed with gloves & garbage bags on a mission to clean up our park and streets, usually coinciding with Earth Day.
  - 30 Adopt-a-Family in our schools – providing gifts and necessities to families throughout London for well over 10 years
  - 31 The Springbank footbridge that brings communities and people together. Allows continued access, to more people, to use Springbank Park without using a motor vehicle to get there. Originally built in the 30's and arguably one of the most elegant London bridges, the sole remaining suspension bridge in London was rebuilt in 2000.
- Many of London's neighbourhoods were defined by over 33 road, rail and foot bridges across the Thames.
- 32 Tommy Hunter Way – a tribute to Canada's Country Gentleman who took guitar lessons in the Hamilton Road Community
  - 33 Our community newspapers, magazines and editorial cartoonists
  - 34 Peter's Drive-In Dry Cleaning – another fixture on Adelaide Street for decades
  - 35 Being within walking distance to the river and cast a fishing line into the Thames
  - 36 Sifton Bog is the jewel in the heart of the Oakridge community and is recognized as being the most southerly acidic bog in Ontario. Here, the neighbourhood and indeed all who visit experience a habitat that is more commonly found 400 miles further north.
  - 37 Reservoir Hill which provides more than a kilometre of continuous tree lines as viewed from the river; also provides great appreciation in the change in topography
  - 38 Northridge-Grenfell's community hub is the park between the two elementary schools - St. Mark's School Catholic SSB And Northdale PS with the public pool, the neighbourhood plaza which incorporates Broughdale Hobby, drawing hobby enthusiasts from across the city; Northridge Neighbourhood Branch Library; Martial Arts Centre and the variety store all ensconced within walking area of the neighbourhood
  - 39 Londoners flock to Springbank Park to enjoy Storybook Gardens, the pathway system, picnicking in the park and the peaceful ambience. This is the only stretch of the Thames River in

London where the hills to the south are high enough to be seen by boaters right down on the river. There are beautiful vistas along the river valley going westwards from Guy Lombardo Bridge.

40 Our neighbourhood community centres, some with swimming pools, are wonderful recreational resources for local residents with sports and recreational programs offered for all age groups.

41 Labatt's Park located in Blackfriar's neighbourhood – oldest continuing use ball park in North America

42 Multi use pad in Carriage Hill Park in Masonville; skating rink in winter; basketball court in summer with nets provided by Masonville Place

43 The King of Pigs restaurant on Hamilton Road – great food

44 The small town feeling one has when walking down Wortley Road

45 Sisters of St. Joseph on Windemere and their visible commitment to the community as it relates to consultation with the neighbourhood and working with our citizens

46 Street yard sales

47 Philip Aziz Avenue, named after one of London's well known artists

48 The Huron House on Highbury – a neighbourhood meeting place for decades

49 Wide open streetscape to Jack Chambers PS and Virginia Park - Repton and Hastings, north of Fanshawe Park Road

50 Hamilton Road Area Business Association who guide and promote business along the strip which abuts residential development, affording easy access to residents

51 Kipp's Lane Fish and Chips

52 The incredible number of artists who ply their crafts in their homes, nestled in our neighbourhoods

53 The mature trees that are allowed to stand and the planting of more trees.

54 Police, fire, paramedics and city workers who keep our neighbourhoods safe and clean

55 The City of London Greenhouse and Civic Garden Complex on Springbank Drive - the City of London has been growing its own, high quality, annual flower displays for nine decades. The original greenhouses were replaced in 1985 and added on to again in 1996. At the same time the Samuel R. Manness Conservatory and Civic Garden Complex was created through a donation from the Ladies Garden Club of London and Federal and Provincial Government grants. Recently threatened by closure until the community at large voiced its opposition.

56 Pumpkin patch at Hyde Park – orange for as far as one can see

- 57 The naturalization of Thames Park in the spring of 2005 through a partnership with Reforest London and OSCO (Old South Community Organization)
- 58 Tuckey's Hardware – a mainstay of Old South
- 59 The Old East Garden Club's annual Garden Crawl. Mix a half-dozen unique gardens with equal parts cocktails and beer, add fun-loving neighbours, stir vigorously, and top with a barbecue. Mmmm good!
- 60 Effective integration of a small development into a community, working with our community to understand its needs and wishes as evidenced by Ryan Finch's new development on Riverside Drive
- 61 Birds - mature trees and protected wetlands and woodlots bring lots of interesting birds to our community
- 62 Our musicians – Lombardo, choral groups, orchestras, folk, jazz, blues, various ensembles, rock, rap, pipe bands, school bands, celtic, barbershop, and related musical festivals – keeping London upbeat.
- 63 The co-operative efforts between the community, the BIA and the City that have led to various revitalization initiatives including: the designation of Aeolian Hall as an historic building and its transformation to a performance centre and music school; the re-development of Queens Park (stage 1 now in progress); the establishment of a Heritage Designation District within Old East Village: the current work being done to redesign traffic flow on Queens Ave. between Quebec Street and Adelaide to better suit the residential nature of the area: and, the ongoing work to have property owners restore/renovate our historical buildings on the Dundas Street strip (check out the Guildhouse Gallery, Father and Sons, Mash McCains).
- 64 Local art shows at Masonville Library and north end Chapters
- 65 The annual Gathering on the Green held on the grounds surrounding The Monsignor Feeney Centre
- 66 People – those who care and take an interest in the community from all age groups. It takes a street to raise a child and watch out for our seniors.
- 67 The Disc Golf Course located in the Hamilton Road Community
- 68 Ted Gooden's stained glass windows in the Landon Library of Old South
- 69 The Broughdale Community Association – BCA was organized by three neighbourhood women in 1972, and has been active ever since with meetings, potlucks, and even the writing of a book about the history of the community (*Broughdale: Looking for its past.* by A.J. Shawyer).
- 70 Thursday night social gatherings on Belgrave Avenue and countless other social activities which bind this unique street together. This included the May 24th fireworks, which alas, have been deemed to be unsafe and are therefore a thing of the past.
- 71 The places of worship in our neighbourhoods - diverse, historical, havens of reflection, celebration and community

- 72 New off-leash dog park on Adelaide Street N (but don't park on Adelaide Street – dangerous for man and beast!)
- 73 Wortley Road Commercial District which gives Old South a sense of community
- 74 Cruise Nights
- 75 The Cottonwood along the bank of the Thames in the Riverforks neighbourhood make a wonderful noise in the wind, and every spring send "snow" throughout the area from their blossoms/seeds.
- 76 Richie's Family Restaurant at the corner of Richmond and Fanshawe Park Rd, a neighbourhood meeting place for 50 years
- 77 Our local neighbourhood variety stores
- 78 Streets placing candles along house entrances on Christmas Eve on Windsor Ave (between Ridout and Wortley)
- 79 Bike paths and maps
- 80 Monsignor Feeney Centre- Ontario's oldest standing normal school, in Worley Village
- 81 North London Mini Golf, The Waltzing Weasel and the Stoney Creek pathways through the north east side of that corner
- 82 Woodlands - please save more
- 83 The multitude of stained glass windows especially in the Bishop-Hellmuth and Woodfield Districts
- 84 Neighbours in Old East who actually know your name, and your dog's name, and holler at you from their porch as you pass by.
- 85 Campbell Memorial Park on Dundas Street – a little patch of green in the midst of concrete
- 86 July 1<sup>st</sup> fireworks in Zeller's Parking Lot put on by Masonville RA
- 87 Goodholme - J. D. Good, co-founder of Supertest Petroleum, the "all-Canadian" oil company, built a Tudor Revival residence at the southwest corner of Waterloo and Epworth in the 1930s. The building is now called Dante Lenardon Hall and belongs to King's University College.
- 88 South Secondary School where many students and teachers are are the children of children who attended South
- 89 C.J.F. Ross Park - This field along the Thames River at Brough's Bridge was designated as parkland in the 1970s. It was named by the P.U.C. in memory of a former chair, who lived in Broughdale, but the older name "Broughdale Lands" is also on the park sign. Birdwatchers have seen buffleheads nesting in a cove near the park.

- 90 A family of beavers who have made their home in the Medway River, and the way they go about building their “infrastructure” without the blessing from the city’s Engineering Department.
- 91 Our teachers and educators – our future.
- 92 The Aeolian Hall, the gem of Old East. Its beautiful interior, stately architecture. long history, and gorgeous acoustics--along with Clark Bryan, its hard-working owner-- are what make the Aeolian Hall London's premier performing arts centre.
- 93 The 40 year arch tree canopy on Glengarry, Erindale, and Rideau Gate in Northridge-Grenfell area
- 94 Mitches Park on Riverside was formally a pond/wetland on the NW lower section, evident of orchards on site. The property was donated to the City by the Mitches to be developed as a parkland. These remaining woods are remnants of a larger Carolinian forest that once covered the area. The park was built on two grades divided by a strip of vegetation. The residents now in the surrounding housing built starting in the early 70’s are thankful for the Mitches’ foresight in providing such an amenity to their community, who have extensively replanted and tend.
- 95 Living in Old East a few years and still being surprised at what's around the corner.
- 96 Narrow laneways run behind the backyards on every city block of Bishop Hellmuth Heritage Conservation District. A century of maple and walnut trees stretching overhead, fences being mended, painted and replaced and garages constructed in every shape, size and style have made every metre of this narrow network of roads unlike any other in our city. Paved in places, gravel and strewn with potholes in others, the laneways can be either charming or challenging for a walk with the dog, a neighbourhood bicycle expedition or getting your car to and from your home, depending on the season.
- 97 St. George Grosvenor Neighbourhood Association’s Annual Giant Garage Sale to which all contribute our “junque”, socialize while we organize, price, sell, make money for our Association and have SUCH fun while we do it. A marvellous neighbourhood effort for many years.
- 98 Lambeth’s small town flavour with a strong community spirit as shown by Harvestfest and the Main Street Christmas displays
- 99 Impromptu pick-up basketball games in our driveways and schoolyards
- 100 Turner’s Drug Store at the corner of Grand and Carfrae, epitomizes the independent, neighbourhood pharmacy
- 101 Our volunteer coaches – extra curricular, minor sports, recreational
- 102 The Coach House on Maitland Street - possibly the last Post and Beam structure in London; originally the stable (bricked up in 1908) of what would have been then, the American Embassy
- 103 The tea garden, an annual fixture at the Gathering on the Green
- 104 Covent Garden Market – the heart of our community since 1845.

- 105 Byron Pizza; Frank & Gus Pizza (over 50 years) on Adelaide
- 106 The heritage paint palette for East London is the 3<sup>rd</sup> heritage paint pallet in the entire country – see it at the Benjamin Moore Paint Store on Dundas Street.
- 107 Museum London, downtown - a multi purpose museum, reflecting both London's art and history
- 108 Byron's village commerce and services such as family dentist, Dr. Andy to the kids; Dr. Sarkany to everyone else; Anna from Rivertown Galleries in Byron; Byron Pizza
- 109 Kingsmill's, London's beloved retail store, renowned for its adaptability while maintaining its commitment to service, quality and the downtown
- 110 Street holiday Christmas tours among neighbour's homes in Old South
- 111 Victoria Park – the best known public park; located in downtown London but claimed by all Londoners; considered to be one of the most important designed landscapes of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this 6-hectare park (15-acre) is a rare luxury to enjoy in the heart of a city's downtown. A hub of social and recreational activities since 1874, an estimated one million visitors come to Victoria Park specifically for the festivals and special events staged within its grounds.
- 112 St. Luke's Church - Built in 1906, the church retains many beautiful original features, including stained glass windows. Located at 1204 Richmond Street in the Broughdale neighbourhood.
- 113 Vietnamese, Somali, Ethiopian, Italian, Greek, Chinese and Thai food within a few blocks of each other in Old East.
- 114 The linear skating rink at Storybook Gardens
- 115 Any volunteer – the heart and soul of London
- 116 Quarter Master store in Wortley Village – purveyor of organic products, recyclers and source of knowledge for many treatments.
- 117 The breadth and depth of our festivals throughout the city, all year long
- 118 The incredible urbanites who make downtown come alive like: Stephen – the Doorman @ the Hilton; Frank Serratorre – The “Mayor of Galleria”; Fred at The News Depot; The Birds – fabulous landlords who believe in the downtown.
- 119 The compact shopping district in Byron, Hamilton Road and Old South where residents can complete most of their shopping without driving anywhere else
- 120 The Forks of the Thames in the downtown core epitomizes both where our community began and the inter-connectedness of our park system e.g. the Forks consists of several, interconnected park areas including the Peace Garden, Ivey Park and Harris Park.
- 121 Local world-class community theatre, located in our neighbourhoods

122 In the Oxford Park area (Thames River on the south, Wonderland Road on the west, CP tracks on the north and the hill just east of Woodward Avenue on the east), is The Cavendish Trail and Park. The trail runs from the north side of the bridge over the Thames (near Wharncliffe and Riverside) up to the corner of Beaverbrook and Riverside. Cavendish Park is located at the corner of Cavendish Crescent and Walnut Street. Many, many area residents on a daily basis use the Cavendish Trail, both summer and winter.

## 123 Cherryhill area – a well-planned seniors community

124 Woodfield's incredible streetscapes with tree lined avenues

125 Westminster Ponds itself and the diversity of the neighbourhood around Westminster Ponds

126 Byron's Hermitage Club on Commissioners Road

127 The vistas we enjoy in London e.g. any evening, looking out my backyard in the north end, and seeing the Selby Building sign downtown

128 Road hockey on any neighbourhood street

129 Attawondaron Residents Association, and the pioneering spirit of area residents who successfully encouraged the City to provide a less intrusive method of infrastructure within the Medway Valley Heritage Forest.

130 The front porches of Old East, and being able to walk through the neighbourhood during spring/summer/fall and porch visit with friends.

131 The Little Red Roaster in Old South, a local meeting place of community activists

132 The Optimist Sports Complex in Byron, including the fireworks on Canada Day.

133 Our global citizens like Carlotta Lemieux (Hacker), a leading Canadian editor and author who now calls the Attawondaron area, home. Born in England and educated at 8 schools in various countries and at St. Andrew's University, Scotland. Worked her way around the world (subject of her first book), and on an Easter Island expedition met Canadian filmmaker Hector J. Lemieux, whom she later married. Writer, film person, and editor for a variety of publishers. Active in her community association.

134 All the gardened boulevards in Old East. Whether beautiful or eccentric, each patch of green is a healthy alternative to urban monoculture-- just like the neighbourhood!

135 Brough House - located at 1132 Richmond Street, this house in the Victorian-Gothic style was built in the 1860s for Parson Brough, from whom Broughdale takes its name (the ending "dale" was added to make the name more euphonious). A later addition to the house expanded it to about twice its original size.

136 The deer that frequent Medway Heritage Valley Forest.

- 137 The groundswell of support around Clark Bryan's vision for the Aeolian Hall. It's truly gratifying to see folks showing up on a beautiful Saturday morning to lend a hand with drywall.
- 138 Our downtown Maitre Di's: Frank of LaCasa; Jack of Michael on the Thames
- 139 A core group of dedicated activists in Old East, whether political, historical (I know, I know, historical activists?), organic gardeners, what have you, who lead by example.
- 140 The Byron Ski Hill – tubing, skiing, mountain biking
- 141 Richmond Row's own community identity within downtown area
- 142 The London Museum of Archaeology – a museum devoted to the study, display and interpretation of the human occupation of southwestern Ontario over the past 11,000 years.
- 143 Byron, whose village spirit remains strong, allowing it to retaining its identity
- 144 A dozen very realistic chickens that appear on different front lawns in Old East on different days.
- 145 Halloween on Lorne Avenue. Cheesy dinosaur movies are projected on the side of a house. Someone else has a huge inflatable monster in their driveway. People travel far and wide to see the annual zombie orchestra perform in Beau's backyard.
- 146 London's rolling topography which means we have many tobogganing choices
- 147 Our local galleries and museums located centrally and in neighbourhoods, many of which are world renowned
- 148 Friends of Stoneycreek; Friends of the Coves; Friends of Westminster Ponds; Friends of Sifton Bog – monitoring, renaturalization, tree planting by the thousands over decades, providing protection and enhancement to our watersheds and environmentally significant areas
- 149 The reforestation of the pockets of Carolinian forest in London's neighbourhoods. The Carolinian forest is the most endangered forest region in the country. Carolinian Canada makes up ¼ of 1% (.25%) of Canada's land mass and yet contains 65% of Canada vulnerable, threatened and endangered species of plants and animals. 40% of these species are found nowhere else in Canada. Wow. Cheers to ReForest London.
- 150 The majesty of Eldon House, the city's oldest remaining residence, virtually unchanged since the last century, located in downtown London.