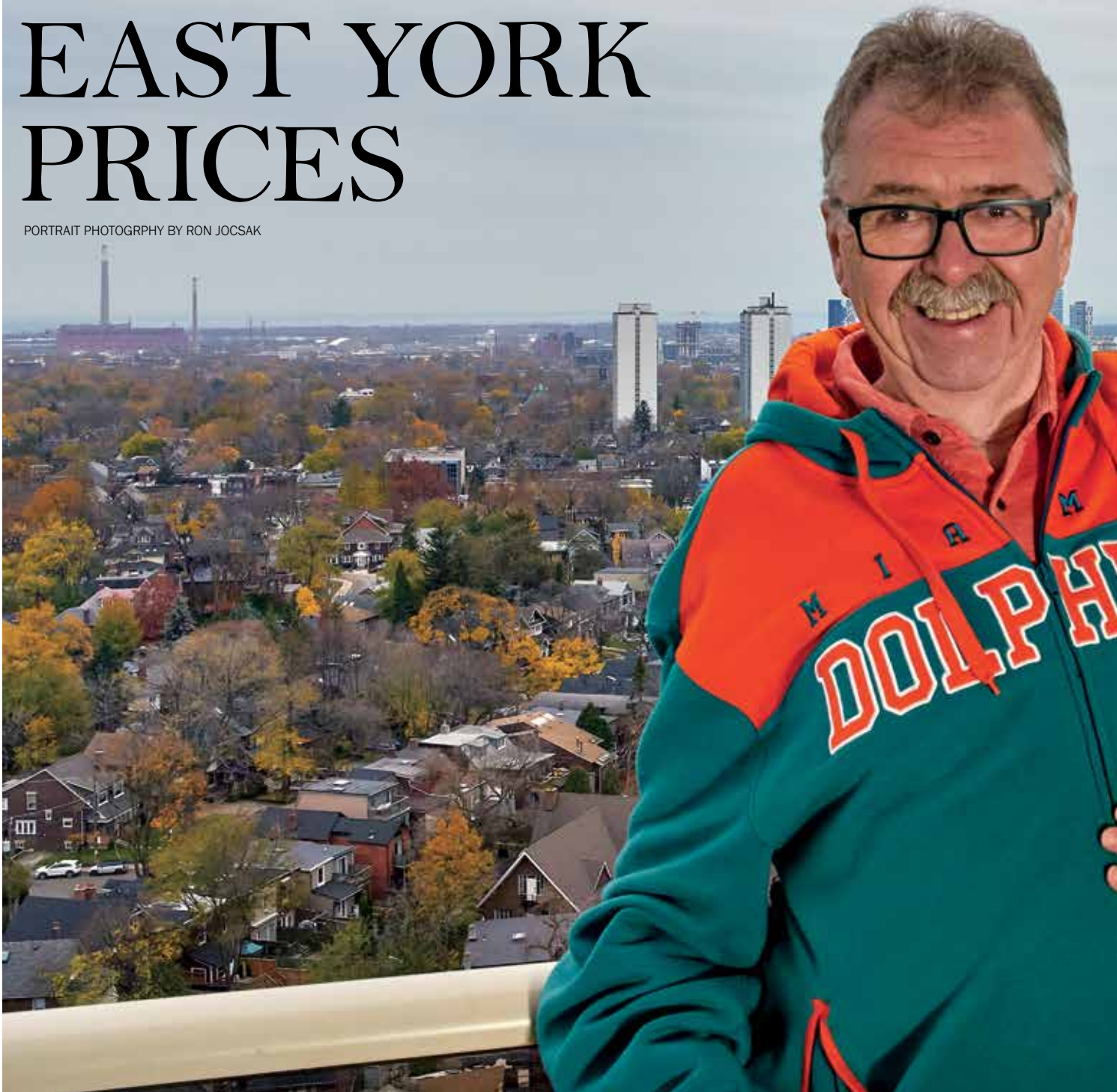


CCI- HELLIWELL PLACE - YCC 104

# ROSEDALE LIVING AT EAST YORK PRICES

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY BY RON JOCSAK





**James Russell**  
Newsletters et Cetera

It only takes one visit to Helliwell Place to realise that Antonia’s description is rather modest. In fact, Helliwell Place towers above the perks of “Rosedale living” when it comes to amenities, good governance and community spirit.



Glenn Fuller and his wife, Nadia, on the balcony of their Condo, overlooking the city.

“We have the Don Valley bike and nature trails at our back. Rabbits run across our grounds. Hawks circle overhead. Deer have been spotted just below our rear retaining wall,” says Antonia.

YCC 104 was named in honour of Helliwell Estate, an industrial complex that once occupied a swath of land on the east side of the Don Valley. Owned by William and Joseph Helliwell, the English brothers ran their successful brewery and pulp and paper mill until a devastating fire convinced them to sell their enterprises and their two storey, part adobe brick and part wooden house, which still stands on the grounds of what is now Todmorden Mills. Not much is known about Joseph but after the fire William moved to Highland Creek in Scarborough where he built a larger house - one more suitable for himself, his wife, and their seventeen children.... yes, I said seventeen.

“Opening in 1973, we were one of the first condos in Toronto. YCC 104 was so unusual at that time that a Toronto Star article about the development actually had to explain that condo suites are owned and not rented,” says Antonia Zerbisias, the board’s president.

Helliwell Place is comprised of 198, two and three bedroom suites. All the two bedroom suites are 1075 sq. ft., while all the three bedrooms are 1175 sq.ft.

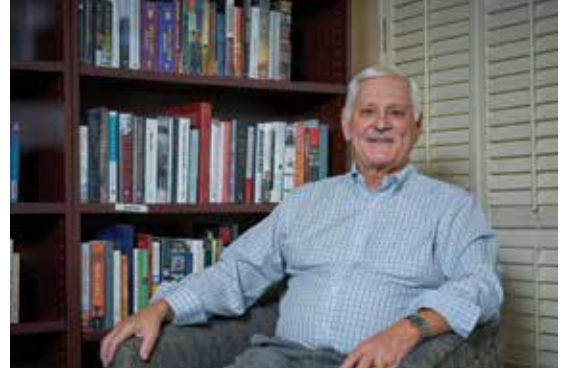
Property Manager Michael Shilensky points out that just fifteen units are rented and Antonia adds, “Almost every rental is owned by somebody who inherited it or grew up in it and plan to one day downsize into it. Or it was bought by Baby Boomers living nearby who intend to eventually move in.” Part of Helliwell Place’s attraction to downsizers and mobility-challenged Baby Boomers is that the building and grounds are fully accessible.

In addition to amenities such as: 24/7 concierges, gym, indoor pool, saunas, as well as library, golf driving range, and



**LEFT TO RIGHT:**  
Michael Shilensky,  
Crossbridge  
Condominium Services

Edward Schlauch, YCC  
104's librarian



**THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS LEFT TO RIGHT:**  
Henry Wright, Secretary  
Antonia Zerbisias, President  
Glenn Fuller, Director  
Phil Elston, Vice President  
Alex Thomson, Treasurer



**ABOVE:** Verla Gagnon, Concierge

a bike storage room, the residents of Helliwell Place enjoy a lovely sheltered sundeck nestled within their twenty-three-storey tower and an impressive view of one of Canada's most famous river basins. "We have the Don Valley bike and nature trails at our back. Rabbits run across our grounds. Hawks circle overhead. Deer have been spotted just below our rear retaining wall," says Antonia.

Helliwell Place also enjoys a degree of fame in the urban world. The Toronto Star's architecture critic Christopher Hume referred to Helliwell Place in a 2010 column as, "An architectural dinosaur," then further mocked the design by saying, "with its rough-cut stone entrance, Helliwell Place takes on the feel of a country club." Interestingly, The Globe and Mail gave Helliwell Place a glowing review, once in 2017 and again in 2018.

Contributing to the continued success of Helliwell Place are its amazing resident volunteers. People like:

- Cathi Gibson-Gates and Wayne Gibson (not related) who were responsible

for launching Helliwell Place's soup kitchen where the edict is, "No bowl, no spoon, no soup for you!"

- Hazel Sangster leads Helliwell Place's annual Holiday Party team. Helena Hughes and Mira Mitrovic work the AGM, either staffing the registration desk or acting as scrutineers.
- Edward Schlauch, a retired University of Toronto librarian, who keeps Helliwell Place's library organised and accessible. How? "I keep it simple," says Edward who organised their collection alphabetically into three broad categories - fiction, non-fiction and biography. "We have a fair bit of literary fiction. No Shakespeare or the classics. The very popular stuff disappears pretty quickly."
- Residents for the past four years, Gloria Elston and Board Vice-President Phil "The Quiz Master" organize Helliwell Place's monthly 'Let's Get Quizzical' trivia nights. Comprised of seven teams of four residents, each cover such topics as: Canadiana, show tunes, geography, science, celebrities, and current events.

- And key volunteers like Jim Houston, Glenn and Nadia Fuller, and Evelyn and Vince Creees who lend their hand producing and distributing the Helliwell Herald, the building's eight page, monthly newsletter.

But Helliwell Place's resident involvement is not restricted to their property line. Quite a few residents are members of the independent Helliwell Place Residents Association, formed several years ago to participate in the city's planning process for Broadview Avenue. Most recently the Association was actively involved in the consultation process surrounding TE 16.5, the City of Toronto's Broadview Avenue Planning Study, which governs zoning and land use. The association was successful in their fight to preserve and protect local heritage sites, including the one hundred and twenty-eight-year old Chester School.

"It's an amazing community, very proactive and involved," says Phil. Where else can you find caring souls who offer to walk their neighbour's dog if the resident

is busy or out of town for the weekend. “We’re a dog and cat friendly building,” says the Board’s Treasurer Alex Thomson, and a pet safety conscious building as well. Security keeps a binder with photos of every pet so, in the case of an emergency evacuation, no pet is left behind, nor resident, as security also keeps a binder that lists every person with a disability that may prevent them from exiting the building quickly and safely.

Social activities abound at Helliwell Place and include: Book Club, Euchre, Court Whist, monthly coffee morning, Let’s Get Quizzical and BYOB (and snacks) Happy Hour. In the winter months the Social Committee revives their Soup Kitchen and a pre-Christmas Arts and Crafts Sale. Their Annual Holiday Bash, complete with a Smart Serve bartender and an Elvis impersonator, is a huge hit.

Helliwell Place’s board, management and residents have seen quite a few improvements to their ‘home’ in the past few years including:

- Renovating the change rooms
- Repairing the garage ramp
- Installing crash bar equipped perimeter doors
- Upgrading the directory panels in the garage and lobby
- Renovation of the Party Room and Library
- Refurbishing the lobby and corridors
- Repairing all balconies
- Replacing the front entrance awning, perimeter fence and sidewalk address sign
- And installing all-new exterior lighting

The membership of Helliwell Place’s Board, which includes Antonia Zerbias, Phil Elston, Alex Thomson, Henry Wright and Glenn Fuller, has not only remained stable over the years but the members wide range of experience in sectors such as construction, real estate, utilities and communications has contributed significantly to Helliwell Place’s health and prosperity. The Board’s current projects include: installing cameras in elevators, relocating the gym to a space three times its current size, and rebuilding their hydro vault, which was heavily damaged by an



exploding Toronto Hydro transformer.

Despite the board’s ambitious list of capital projects, “Our reserve fund is healthy - although we did have a \$550,000 special assessment during the 2016 ‘Balcony Summer’. Throughout that dusty, noisy renovation, we kept residents informed via a weekly paper and online bulletin called ‘The Drill’. Residents were thrilled with the military-like operation, which was completed ahead of schedule,” says Antonia.

In 2016, their 43th anniversary, Helliwell Place’s Rules Committee completed a thorough update of their decades-old document which now includes a rule against the flying of drones on the common elements, necessitated, says Antonia, when one of the residents began drone flights uncomfortably near their neighbour’s balconies.

The Board and management keep residents informed about the latest news, views and issues within and without the building with their Helliwell Herald. Antonia also authors a blog (Helliwellherald.wordpress.com), “Depending on the topic and number of posts I publish on a day, I get up to three hundred hits. The blog is very useful to absentee owners or those who are vacationing, as well as to residents who are online.”

Michael Shilensky, a man with more than twenty years of industry experience and Helliwell Place’s property manager since 2017, oversees Helliwell Place’s cleaning and security staff, their superintendent, and their concierge desk where an assort-

ment of doggie treats are kept for Helliwell Place’s four-legged residents.

Built back in the ‘Solid 70s’, Helliwell Place is incredibly energy-efficient. So much so that, “During the 2013 black-out, we remained warm for the full 72 hours that hydro was out”, says Antonia. “There’s at least eight inches of concrete between suites. I never hear my neighbours,” says Henry Wright, the Board’s Secretary, who moved in ten years ago.

Constantly reinforcing the importance of energy conservation, Helliwell Place’s active Green Committee has in the recent past not only organised a bulk thermostat replacement program for residents but has staged exhibits that demonstrate the wattage used by different light bulbs, in an effort to encourage LED use. “We encourage people to go green,” says Phil.

According to Condos.ca - a web-based search and analysis internet site, the average two bedroom Rosedale-Moore Park condominium is selling for \$1,001,178 and is likely to include a gas fireplace, marble backsplashes, heated radiant floors, freestanding tub, and perhaps a private elevator.

That same internet site lists the average two bedroom in Helliwell Place as selling for \$601,571. For that price residents share their elevator ride but as Edward points out with pride, “the people are the major asset of our building. It’s very much That’s an amenity that sets Helliwell Place apart. 