

## BBIA: keeping it clean

**By Jody Didier**

As you know, the BBIA is responsible for beautifying municipally owned property (beyond what is already undertaken by the municipality). BBIA members are the local businesses and commercial/seasonal decorations.

A BIA or business improvement area is in the Municipal Act, which you can find online quite easily. It's one of those things that people are expected to understand as it is incumbent upon every citizen to familiarize themselves with legislation. It's known as 'civic responsibility' and it encompasses a number attitudes and actions that are associated with democratic governance and social participation.

Social responsibility is more than voting for municipal representatives. It is also about being well-informed and making a commitment to constructive, evidence based decision making. Both political and civil participation shouldn't happen just when someone suggests that our community is marginalized in some way, it should be something we practice every day.

As citizens of a community, we are all obligated to each other. Civic responsibility is a way of being, it's about working together, working toward the common ends and working to cultivate the best possible outcome. Recently, the Town of Bancroft installed discreet signs asking dog owners to pick up after their pets. It's unfortunate that some people need to be reminded of something as simple as keeping the sidewalks clear.

In spite of decade's old anti-litter campaigns that began in the '50s, people still drop garbage as they walk and drive through our area. It isn't uncommon to find cigarette butts, pop cans, soiled diapers or soiled adult incontinence pads, plastic bottles and sometimes, bottles full of urine and assorted other stuff at the side of the road. We aren't alone ? it is a problem all over ? which just goes to show you that human beings are a careless, thoughtless lot and some are just plain rude.

I've heard people say it's because there aren't enough waste bins, however, there are several along the main drag of our town. Town staff have their hands full with litter, dealing with garbage ? not to mention the larger receptacles in our parks, which overflow with household garbage that some folks drop there, rather than taking it to the dump.

Many communities have created fresh litter prevention campaigns and some locales have started issuing substantial fines to offenders. In some instances, using forensics to locate perpetrators. A number of places claim they have seen a reduction in littering just by creating awareness and reminding people about the damage that litter causes to our environment, our people and wildlife.

Remember, when you throw something horribly unpleasant to the side of the road, you are just leaving it for someone else to clean up. The BBIA urges all residents and visitors to 'keep it clean,' tidy up after yourself and commit to leaving everything in better shape than you found it.