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THE CENTRETOWN BUZZ

Hydro poles vanish from Elgin Street

Alayne McGregor

The hydro utility poles and overhead electrical lines have vanished from Elgin Street, never to return.

It was one of the final stages in the street’s reconstruction, which lasted almost all of 2019 and restarted in January. The city’s website states that the street will be closed until early August.

From May 27 to 29, Hydro Ottawa brought in large bucket trucks to remove the old wooden poles and the overhead power lines, doing several blocks each day. It had put in new underground ducts to hold the lines last fall, installed underground electrical cables in the winter, and then energized the buried lines this spring.

With the poles and overhead lines gone, “just visually it looks better. It opens up the sky,” said Councillor Catherine McKenney.

“I found it almost shocking when I went down to Elgin the first time and looked up. It gives you that nice openness. You feel that you’re not constrained in a sea of big poles.”

The poles also took up considerable space on the sidewalk.

“To redesign and to reconstruct a street like Elgin and to widen the sidewalks the way we did, and then to put poles in the middle of them, just was counter-productive. It really gives so much more space to pedestrians, to people.”

McKenney said it was a struggle to get the lines buried on Elgin. That wasn’t in the original plan, because the City of Ottawa’s policy is that it will not pay for burying hydro lines – a third party must bear the cost.

The original estimate for burial was between \$8 and \$10 million, but McKenney and the community “kept pushing for it and worked closely with Hydro to get that number down.

“Because once you take into account the cost for poles, the cost for life-cycle renewals for poles, you can start chipping away at that estimate.”

After almost a year, city staff agreed to the burial as part of the reconstruction. On its website, Hydro Ottawa said that burial was the “logi-



Hydro Ottawa brought in multiple large bucket trucks each day to remove the old wooden poles and overhead wires.

HYDRO OTTAWA/THE BUZZ

cal choice” because the new non-linear road geometry would require a complicated support system to anchor new wooden hydro poles, and because the overhead lines would be too close to buildings. McKenney said the city policy should change when completely reconstructing traditional main streets. “It’s obvious we should be removing hydro poles.”

Tree removal pushes city tree bylaw forward



On May 21, a grove of large trees at the corner of Metcalfe and Somerset Streets was cut down.

JOHN PEDERSEN/THE BUZZ

Alayne McGregor

The loss of a grove of trees at a major downtown corner has inspired Councillor Catherine McKenney to push forward tighter re-

strictions on cutting down urban trees.

McKenney is asking City Council to bring forward the implementation of the new city Tree Bylaw to January 1, 2021.

On May 21, several large

trees were cut down at 237 Metcalfe Street at Somerset, at the Soccer Canada headquarters. Centretown resident John Pedersen said he looked out from his balcony and saw the first tree coming down about 8:30 a.m.

“When I saw they were preparing to cut down another tree, I went down and asked them how many trees were they planning to remove. They said all of them. I couldn’t believe that this magnificent green wall of trees was going to disappear.”

McKenney said they were not informed in advance of the tree removal but quickly heard about it. They said, “The day they

(the trees) came down, people were devastated. People were emailing me. They felt distraught. Going out on that corner now is not going to be the same.”

Soccer Canada General Secretary Peter Montopoli said that the foundations of the heritage building at 237 Metcalfe incurred structural damage in 2009 and 2016, which engineers concluded was caused by moisture

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The BUZZ is online

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Dorothy O'Connell lived in public housing - and fought to improve tenants' lives with humour and stories



Dorothy O'Connell at an Ottawa StoryTellers event for World Storytelling Day in 2016.

PAT HOLLOWAY/OTTAWA STORYTELLERS

Alayne McGregor

Dorothy O'Connell, who used pointed humour and engaging storytelling to push for better treatment of people in social housing in Centretown, died on May 22 at the age of 80.

O'Connell famously distributed a button saying that then-Prime Minister "Pierre Trudeau lives in Public Housing"—and got Trudeau to not only wear the button in the House of Commons, but to pay for it! She and Trudeau continued to correspond for years.

The button was one of her fundraising ideas for the Ottawa Tenants' Council. When she found herself and her family poor and in social housing in Rochester Heights, she helped found the council in 1968.

Based on her experiences, she invented an alter ego named Chiclet Gomez, and wrote a series of stories featuring the adventures of Gomez and her friend Tillie, and their antagonists King Kong, Fat Freddie, and Housing Authority bureaucrats.

Her characters were single mothers struggling to bring up children with little money in cramped rooms, never sure if the welfare or Mothers' Allowance cheque would arrive on time. But led by the indomitable and

constantly inventive Gomez, they ran a fat farm, set up a vacation camp for moms and kids, and organized a wheelchair cordon to catch a bandit who tried to steal from their co-op store. Their ventures didn't always succeed—like their themed toilet cover business—but they were always fun to read about.

The stories are "funny, warm hearted, and educational," said former City Councillor Diane Holmes. "She was a smart, witty woman and was much appreciated for her sympathetic rendering of the difficult lives of many of her neighbours."

O'Connell gained a large audience when her stories were regularly featured on CBC Radio's Morningside. The stories were collected in two books, *Chiclet Gomez and Cockeyed Optimists*. She also published a children's book, *Sister Goose: Feminist Nursery Rhymes and Cautionary Tales*.

O'Connell worked as an author, playwright, film editor, teacher, organizer, and journalist, while raising five children. She helped establish Ottawa's first community legal clinic in the early 1980s, and served on the board of West End Legal Services of Ottawa. She co-founded the Ottawa Women's Credit Union, in order to give low-income women

employment and more access to bank services. It was the first local financial institution to lend to women in their own names.

At conferences across Canada, she spoke about housing, women, and poverty. She served on the Social Assistance Review Board of Ontario, the predecessor to the current Legal Aid Ontario, the first non-lawyer to sit on the committee.

"She was an astonishing person," Holmes said. "She along with Aline Akeson were the leaders of many other women living in Ottawa Community Housing."

"She was a born organizer and organized tenants of Rochester Heights to fight for their rights. She was appointed to the Social Planning Council of the day to ensure that the voice of public housing tenants would be heard and appreciated. Marion Dewar was mayor at the time and supported and encouraged Dorothy in her many endeavours."

One of O'Connell's maxims was "Poverty stops equality. Equality stops poverty." That motto is engraved

on the Dorothy O'Connell Monument to Anti-Poverty Activism in the grounds of Ottawa City Hall. The granite sculpture by local artist c.j. fleury, which was unveiled in 2004 with O'Connell in attendance, is in the shape of a slice of bread with a house removed from it. The removed piece forms a podium, symbolizing the hard choices poverty imposes on people.

In a tribute to O'Connell published in the journal *Canadian Women Studies*, Mary Garrett said that O'Connell's stories empowered women she was working with "by showing them they can fight and take chances because there will always be a Chiclet there to stand beside them. ... She has shown outsiders that we are not the villains of society we are sometimes thought to be. She has shown Canada who we are and made most of its people—well some of them—like us."

O'Connell's obituary said that memorial services will be held at a later date, and suggested those wanting to donate in her memory give to the Ottawa Food Bank.



The Dorothy O'Connell Monument to Anti-Poverty Activism was unveiled at Ottawa City Hall in 2004. BRETT DELMAGE/THE BUZZ

The Good, the Bad, and the Bumpy: When nature calls

Ryan Lythall

As the weeks have gone by during this pandemic, I have become restless, as I am sure many of you have as well. Typically, during the warm weather of spring and summer, I try to get outside every day or as often as possible. Either I go for a stroll along Bank Street or the Canal with or without friends. And soon—er or later, nature calls.

Before the pandemic, it was possible to find public

washrooms at City Hall or at a mall. With most businesses and malls closed now, it is difficult to find public washrooms and even harder to find a washroom that's wheelchair accessible.

These days I am not able to stay outside very long largely due to the lack of wheelchair accessible washrooms. While I've come across random port-a-potties, most are not wheelchair accessible despite signage that says they are.

It is also important to note that public washrooms

are often used for medical reasons as well, including by me. This ongoing issue has also been discussed as it applies to LRT and OC Transpo stops but the city seems to be ignoring it.

Public washroom accessibility is very important to many people. Parents use them to change a baby's diapers or a mother may nurse her infant there. In fact, family washrooms downtown are scarce and these washrooms are good for people with disabilities, especially if with a personal support

worker (PSW). I have had some PSWs who are not comfortable, especially if they're female, assisting me in a public washroom.

While I understand the safety issues around public washrooms, where used condoms, needles and other illegal items have been found, accessibility to public washrooms for people with disabilities needs to be addressed. And City Hall needs to keep in mind that not all disabilities are alike.

Find Ryan on Twitter: @rolling_enigma

From ore processing to shops and homes: Booth Street transforms

Alayne McGregor

From federal government labs to homes, shops, restaurants and offices, a three-block area in southwest Centretown is beginning a major transformation while preserving its history.

This summer, Canada Lands Corporation (CLC) is demolishing four buildings in what is to become the new Booth Street Complex, located between Booth and Rochester, and Orangeville and Norman Streets. It will retain seven of the red-brick heritage buildings that date back as far as 1911, as well as the site's iconic tall smokestack of its central heating plant.

Mary Jarvis, the CLC's director of real estate, said the ultimate goal of the development is to create a "full-day population in the neighbourhood," much like the redeveloped Distillery District in Toronto. "The site has been dormant for a number of years and, with the redevelopment, we'll have activity at various times of the day, which is important for the community."

Local city Councillor Catherine McKenney said the complex will also "provide services and amenities not just for the new residents but the community as a whole. There's a new park. There's options for things like indoor farmers' markets. A lot of the heritage was maintained."

For most of the 20th century, the buildings in this block housed a major federal research facility critical to the development of Canada's mining and energy industries. Metallurgy, fuels, explosives, and industrial minerals and ceramics were investigated there. Raw ore was crushed, ground, and separated using flotation or magnetism in the ore-dressing laboratory at a rate of up to five tons per hour.

The complex was constructed between 1911 and

1952, largely under the supervision of prominent Ottawa architect Werner Ernst Noffke, who also designed the Medical Arts Building on Metcalfe Street and the former Ogilvy's department store. Seven of its buildings have received federal heritage status, and the city has designated the site as a property of cultural heritage value under the Ontario Heritage Act.

Only the outer shells of the heritage buildings will be retained, since their insides (labs and special-purpose offices) were not given heritage status. They will be completely redeveloped inside, Jarvis said.

The demolition on the Booth Street complex site had initially been halted by the province because of the pandemic but restarted in May; it should be finished before the end of the summer, she said. By the end of 2020, site soil remediation and removal of contaminants such as asbestos from inside buildings will also have been completed.

The city has approved a plan for the complex, which also includes new towers ranging between 10 and 25 stories for a total of one million square feet of new development. Jarvis said the building heights were designed to feature the heritage buildings, rather than hide them. "The higher buildings are located away from the heritage buildings, along the north part of the site along Orangeville or at Aberdeen and Rochester."

She emphasized that the new buildings will be subject to specific architectural design guidelines, enforced through the CLC's agreements of sale with developers. The guidelines were developed with local community feedback.

The site is also subject to the CLC's Public Realm Guidelines "which were created to ensure the highest level of design is incorporated



The Booth Street complex was a research centre for mining and fuel technology in the 20th century. In the 21st, it's planned to contain shops, offices, restaurants, and homes - but not affordable housing.

BRETT DELMAGE/THE BUZZ

ed in the site. They vary from the treatment at the pedestrian level, to the expression of the tower, to landscaping, lighting, materials. This is standard within the CLC mandate."

The city will also have some influence on the buildings' architectural design through its site plan review process and urban design review panel.

"A lot of synergies"

It's a major increase in density for this area, which borders on both the Preston Street shopping/restaurant strip to the west and Rochester Heights, a major community housing complex to the north.

McKenney said the complex will complement the current redevelopment of Rochester Heights and the proposed development on Preston at Aberdeen Street. "There are a lot of synergies in those three developments that will create an entire neighbourhood of mixed-income, mixed-use, close to rapid transit, close to a traditional main street. I think it will be a great addition."

Canada Lands Corporation is a self-financing federal Crown corporation. It ensures that "former government properties are redeveloped or managed in accordance with their highest and best use, and that they are harmoniously reintegrated into local communities."

It took over the Booth Street complex in 2015 and, in 2017, began to work with the community to create a vision for the site. The property was rezoned in 2019.

McKenney described the process as "quite exceptional," and said the community's reaction to the development was positive

overall. They said, "Canada Lands did a very extensive and inclusive consultation with the community, with the Dalhousie Community Association and residents. We spent a lot of time together, walked the neighbourhood, looked at the buildings, not just the immediate area that's being developed but how it links to other parts of the community."

In March, CLC did a further consultation with the community about the detailed design of the new park to be located at Norman and Rochester Streets. They may hold another session about the final park design.

McKenney expected the park to be built as development commences. Once it's completed, it will be transferred to the city and become a publicly owned park.

No timeline yet for selling

The area has been zoned to allow a wide range of uses: residential, office or commercial. Exactly what will be built there will depend on the developers that buy part or all of the area and that pro-

cess hasn't started yet. Nor is it clear when it will start.

Jarvis said that, once Canada Lands has prepared a property for development, it hires a broker to dispose of it. However, it has not yet determined its timeline or strategy for selling the property, Nor has it decided how it will divide up the site, she said. Jarvis was not aware of any developers who had already expressed interest in the complex.

McKenney noted that Canada Lands has been working through the process of rezoning and remediating the property "with intention. I've always been under the impression that they are ready to go and want this. And there's a demand for housing in this area! So I see it happening. I don't see it taking five, 10 years." Developers will not be required to provide affordable housing as part of the complex, because the city does not yet have inclusionary zoning in place, they said.

Residents of this community have been pushing for many years for a local gro-

cery store. It's allowed under the zoning but McKenney said that would depend on the developers.

But the councillor was hopeful. "We always are promised grocery stores. The development at Preston and Aberdeen has a proposal for a grocery in there and they're building their ground floor to provide for that. But that doesn't mean that you can't have a smaller-type grocer at this development. With Ottawa Community Housing just down the street, we're always talking to non-profits and others about grocery co-ops. As this area grows, and it is, it really is intensifying. Grocers want in. So, almost every development that developers come to see me about these days brings a marker for a grocery store."

In the long term, McKenney expects the development to improve the neighbourhood, which is very close to the LRT, already serviced, and has been underdeveloped. "It will be a vibrant block that contributes to that growing area of the city," they said.



The centre's iconic smokestack.

BRETT DELMAGE/THE BUZZ



The Fuel Research Laboratory is one of the heritage buildings whose insides will be gutted and redeveloped for new uses.

BRETT DELMAGE/THE BUZZ

Centretown residents reflect on the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement

Mariam El-Behiry

After the death of George Floyd at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer, weeks of global protests, and further deaths of Black men, the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement is the biggest story globally. And the issues behind it also touch those living in Centretown.

Whether by signing petitions, donating, or attending a protest, allies are examining how they can make a difference and start conversations about similar issues in their own communities.

During the second week of June, I spoke by phone with two Centretown residents involved with these issues: Robert Alsberry, an African-American nurse, and Melissa Redmond, a professor at Carleton University's school of social work. During our conversations, we discussed the historical importance of intersectionality in activism, how media propaganda has shaped the global response to protests,

and what's next for Black Lives Matter.

Racial injustice exists here too. Robert has dealt with overt racism and homophobia in Ottawa and in Centretown. As an African-American, he recognizes Canada has its own systemic issues, "I don't feel any less or more safe in Ottawa than I do in any other city I have been to. Being a queer Black person, there is always a sense of vigilance. That fear is constant."

Melissa says that Ottawa is no more a safe haven for people of colour (POC) than any other city. "Ottawa is a very white town. Any POC knows that. Centretown is a community I am proud to live in but I don't feel any safer in it than any neighbourhoods in Ottawa."

As the discussion shifts to the exclusion of black people from social justice movements and milestones, both Robert and Melissa highlighted the importance of recognizing intersectionality (where people are disadvantaged by multiple sources of oppression, such

as both race and gender).

"Many movements use the labour of Black people without inviting them to the table," Melissa says. "The reason that we are experiencing anti-Blackness is because they thought that they can carve Blackness out of humanity without understanding how it intersects with other movements. Pushing the concept of Black intersectionality is the responsible thing to do."

Referring to the past exclusion of LGBTQ and women from the BLM movement, Robert adds, "It is important that we don't recreate structures around ourselves that oppressors have built upon us in the past."

On the future of the movement and its progress thus far, Melissa asks, "It's interesting that we are looking for progress when it's only been a few weeks. What does progress look like relative to a hundred years of history?"

When asked about whether she would consider the arrest of the police officers involved in Floyd's

death, progress, she says, "The police officers arrested are symptoms of the problem but not the problem. Systemic racism is the problem. The idea that we would consider four people caught in a snuff film getting arrested as progress is absurd to me."

The trending abbreviation ACAB (All Cops Are Bastards) is controversial; many are behind it, while others believe it is an over-generalization. Robert's view is that, "The police, as an institution, has not served communities I am a part of. Some people are well-meaning and join the force to make a difference but, as an institution, they have done more harm than good."

To end the conversations, I ask Robert and Melissa how they think allies should support the BLM movement in ways other than protest, as we are still fighting a global pandemic.

Robert urges young people to do a self-assessment of their own strengths and weaknesses, as well as those of their communities.

On the other hand, Me-



This multilingual poster calling for Justice for George Floyd was posted this month in Ottawa's Chinatown. CAT MEIER/THE BUZZ

lissa urges us to start asking questions that are not rooted in white supremacy—and to start taking Black people at their words and proceed accordingly.

"Hearing stories about how I was treated differently because of my race does not shift the way you think but

only cements the idea that I should be treated like this. If this was an issue of education, facts would rule.

"This is an issue of privilege. People of privilege, specifically old white men in power, are choosing to deny facts."

Black Lives Matter posters are going up - and being ripped down

Marna Nightingale

Residents of Centretown and the Glebe have been out posterizing to show support for the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, and to demand justice for, among too many others, George Floyd, killed by police in Minneapolis in May; Regis Korchinski Paquet, killed in Toronto during an encounter with police, also in May; and Abdirahman Abdi, killed during his July 2016 arrest in Ottawa (closing arguments in the manslaughter trial of Ottawa Police Constable Daniel Montsion have been postponed due to the pandemic.)

Almost as quickly as the posters go up, though, they're being taken down.

A small group of downtown residents gathered in the Glebe the night of Monday, June 14 to put up yet another round of posters, this time with staples as well as tape, and supplemented with chalked slogans of support.

The group began posterizing and chalking at 9 p.m.—and by 10:30 p.m. all but two of the newest batch of posters were already gone.

Downtown Ottawa has been telling stories about



Posters went up...



... and were ripped down within a few hours

MARNIE WELLAR/THE BUZZ

poster vigilantes for years (see [our April 2014 story on this controversy](#)) but typically they act against posters advertising businesses or shows. These removals have

a different feel.

Marnie Wellar, who has put up at least three sets of BLM posters, said she confronted a man removing posters on Bank near Third on Monday night and had a loud argument with him about his reasons for removing them.

As Wellar was posterizing, others had spread out to chalk messages on the sidewalks, posts, and planters of the Glebe, determined to at least make life difficult for anyone who wanted to obliterate the messages.

"It's dispiriting for us to see so much effort wasted, but it has to be worse for Black or otherwise racialized residents of the Glebe to see this happening," one said. "If posters aren't safe, how can people be?"

As of June 15, the chalk was still there, although Wellar had had an argument with police about whether chalking was legal.

Several Glebe residents had set up web security cameras to capture images of anyone who violates city bylaws by removing posters. Section 22 of the *Signs on City Roads* bylaw says only the original poster or authorized NCC or city staff can remove lawfully placed posters.

McKenney's aim: to save the canopy of large trees in Centretown

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depletion attributed to the fast-growing deciduous trees removing water from the soil. At that time, they installed an exfiltration trench and increased tree watering.

With increased heavy vehicle traffic on Somerset in 2019 caused by Elgin Street reconstruction, he said, there was further subsidence and damage to the foundation and the north side of the building.

At that point, they took the engineering advice that "there was no longer a viable alternative to the removal of the trees and roots. Not doing so would have, in the long term, resulted in the building being uninhabitable. We have plans to landscape the area in the coming months upon completion of renovations."

The current city tree bylaw requires property owners to obtain a distinctive tree permit in order to cut down a tree whose diameter at 1.2m high is 50cm or greater. McKenney said that a permit was obtained for one tree at 237 Metcalfe but the other trees were just under 50cm in diameter. "They were on private property. There was no way for us to stop that from happening," they said.

A permit is granted for one of five possible reasons:

- The tree is causing structural damage to a building or septic systems.

- The tree has been damaged, for example, by being hit by a car.

- The tree is dead.

- The tree is dangerous, with large cavities, splits, or cracks.

- An approved building plan or infrastructure modification requires the tree's removal.

The removal of dangerous trees, or those infected by emerald ash borer, is automatically allowed.

McKenney said at least once a week they hear from staff, a developer or a resident that there's a really good reason for cutting down a tree in Centretown. "And it's difficult. Because if you just said yes to all of them, we would have even less of a tree canopy than we do now."

"But really we just need a whole change in culture around preserving our trees and around our urban tree canopy. Unless you live downtown, I think it's hard to imagine what four or five trees mean. If you walk down a street in the downtown without trees, it's unpleasant. If you walk down a street just a block over that's tree-lined, it's a completely different experience. And it doesn't take much to lose it."

In January, City Council passed a new tree bylaw, which, when it comes into force, will make it more dif-

icult to cut down large trees. One of its provisions reduced the diameter requiring a permit from 50 to 30cm in the inner urban area (the urban lands within the greenbelt).

That provision "means we will save more trees. We will have a defence against taking down trees," McKenney said. "For anything over 30cm, you have to get a distinctive tree permit. You have to have a good reason for removal."

But the change wasn't to come into effect until Phase 2 of the bylaw implementation. That date was pushed back even further to the fall of 2021, when staff were re-assigned because of the current pandemic.

This is just too late for McKenney. City staff have agreed that it would be feasible to enact the bylaw as of January 1, 2021, including the reduction in the distinctive tree diameter. McKenney will bring this as a motion this month to the city's Standing Committee on Environmental Protection, Water and Waste Management, and then to City Council.

"I'm hopeful that my council colleagues agree and that we can get this through and, come January 1, we'll be able to save many more trees."

Centre 507 keeps the boat afloat for all

Linda Pollock

This COVID-19 crisis has affected people differently. As the poem says, “We are in the same storm, but not in the same boat.”

For some, quarantine is a moment of reflection, of reconnection. For others, it is a desperate financial and family crisis. Some who live alone face endless loneliness. Those without a home have had to watch many community supports scaled back or closed down.

But the downtown community service agency Centre 507 has quickly adapted its operations to continue serving its clients while mitigating the risk of infection to clients and staff.

Centre 507 is a city-operated drop-in program located in Centretown United Church. The church, at the corner of Bank and Argyle, has welcomed and supported some of Centretown’s most vulnerable community members for over 35 years.

In 1983, the church began the centre as a simple outreach project. At that time, there was a small food bank in its basement. Some church volunteers noticed that clients, after picking up food staples, would often hang out and chat with other clients and volunteers. It was apparent that some people were lonely and seeking company, conversation, and connection. The church folks set up a large coffee urn, gathered some comfortable chairs, and created a modest space in the church for conversation.

From these humble beginnings, Centre 507 grew into today’s city-run operation. The city provides 70 percent of its current budget, with the remainder coming from donations from the United Church of Canada and many faith groups, organizations, and individuals from across Ottawa.

Pre-pandemic, you would

have seen mostly single men, from 30 to 70 years old, in the centre. They live in Centretown—in rooming houses, community housing, or at the YMCA. A few sleep rough in the streets. During this COVID crisis, staff have noticed new faces coming into the centre: families with children, some older women, and those whose income has disappeared because of this shut-down.

In non-pandemic mode, the centre served hot, sit-down lunches, augmented by fresh vegetables grown in the community garden beside the church. Clients could access the internet and join cultural and recreational activities organized by staff such as baseball games, movie nights, visits to art galleries and theatres, and a BBQ at Mooney’s Bay.

Nurses from the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre and the Centretown Community Health Clinic regularly met with individuals. Centre staff also did one-on-one referrals to find better housing and work readiness opportunities. And the Centre’s volunteers provided everything from hair cuts, repairs to clothing, singing groups on a Sunday afternoon, book discussions, renovations to the Centre’s kitchen, and much more.

All this activity had to be shut down in March. For centre participants this has been devastating—not only the loss of all these supports but, just as critical, the loss of community, friends, connection. Many regard the centre as family.

Centre 507’s executive director, Richard LeBlanc, and his team found alternative, safe ways to continue supporting 507 participants.

In conjunction with Centretown United Church, they relocated some of the centre’s operations from the second floor of the church to the former chapel space on the ground level. The chapel

has two doors, one opening to Bank Street and the other to the church’s parking lot. Each door has an accessible ramp. This allowed staff to design a safe, physically distanced pathway through the chapel where clients can pick up food parcels, prepared fresh each day.

When the centre initially reopened, each parcel contained a hot soup, sandwich, and a small salad. More recently, they have been able to add a more substantial hot meal, snacks, and breakfast items as well. Thanks to the generosity of the Centretown BIA, they have distributed over 100 individual hygiene kits. Carleton University showed up with 150 meals.

The centre’s biggest challenge throughout the pandemic was finding sufficient hand sanitizer, and masks, gloves and gowns for staff. Volunteers, working from home, have since sewn over 100 masks for Centre staff and participants. North of 7 Distillery, which switched from producing spirits to hand sanitizer, gave the centre 36 large bottles.

This was the start of re-inventing the centre to be able to safely reintroduce services and the comfort of community to clients.

Participant Melanee K. is grateful to the Centre for reopening so quickly. She said that “this pandemic is affecting people psychologically. Without 507, we would be in despair.”

David Seemungal, a regular 507 participant and volunteer since 2012, said, “My life under COVID is very depressing. The Centre is like my home and, when it had to close for a couple of weeks, I felt all my routines disturbed.” When operating in full service mode, the Centre gives structure and meaning to David’s life. He enjoys volunteering in the kitchen, acting as a guide on some of the outings, using his artistic skills to prepare posters and



Centre 507 staff distributing bagged lunches.

TIM DESJARDINS/CENTRE 507

ads for upcoming events in the Centre.

By mid-June, the centre plans to offer access to the internet by having participants schedule time on the computers. This will enable safe distancing. Centre staff are also researching how they might provide

safer one-on-one assistance through greater use of technology like tablets and mobile phones.

The congregation at Centretown United Church is grateful to the centre’s staff for continuing to serve a vulnerable community safely. The congregation,

whose mission is outreach in response to the needs of our community, is happy to see their space supporting a critical service during this COVID time.

Linda Pollock is a member of Centretown United Church and a former Board member for Centre 507.

City Council didn’t hold the line on sprawl

Jack Hanna

Ottawa has embraced increased urban sprawl.

In one of its biggest decisions in years, City Council voted in May to add about 15 square kilometres of new land for subdivisions over the next quarter century.

The issue was hotly debated. At the committee stage, before the full-council vote, debate raged for three days with 93 presentations from the public.

Developers urged the maximum amount of new land for new subdivisions to meet demand for housing.

Environmentalists and activists argued for no sprawl, claiming that a 40 percent increase in Ottawa’s population can be housed through intensification in homes and apartments con-

structed in the already-built cityscape. They said sprawl will force people to rely on cars, feed climate change, and increase taxes (for upkeep of roads, sewers, water lines and police and fire-protection services over a bigger area).

Council approved the “middle” response recommended by city staff, with a push for greater intensification as well as sprawl. The vote reflected a split on council, between councillors

who take election-campaign contributions and those who refuse them. All six councillors who voted against sprawl accepted no developer money in the 2018 election, including Councillor Catherine McKenna.

On the other hand, all 15 councillors who voted as developers had advocated, in favour of the staff recommendation to expand the urban boundary, accepted developer money to fund their election campaigns.

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Borrowers dropped their items into cardboard boxes in front of the Main library's main doors on June 8, the first day of returns. All items are quarantined for 72 hours before being checked in. Note the arrows directing drop-off traffic. *BRETT DELLIMAGE/THE BUZZ*

Ottawa Public Library reopens a crack

Alayne McGregor

The doors of the Ottawa Public Library reopened a crack this month, after being shut for 12 weeks because of the pandemic. But it's still difficult to borrow physical books, CDs, or DVDs.

On June 8, the library began accepting returns at six of its largest branches, including the Main branch downtown. As of June 15, library users could also pick up existing holds at those branches.

Patrons must book an appointment online for a specific half-hour window in order to pick up their holds. Their items will be waiting for them, already checked out for four weeks, at that branch at that time. There are only a limited number of pick-up slots each day.

They receive an email telling them they have holds

waiting, and have 28 days in which to pick them up.

They can also reactivate holds they already placed to be picked up at one of the six branches, but so far cannot place any new holds on physical material. The library is accepting holds on eBooks and downloadable audiobooks.

The library is still not open for browsing. The six branches are only open for limited hours for pickups and returns: from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Monday and Wednesday, from 1 to 8 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday, and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday and Saturday.

Rachael Duplisea, the library's manager of communications, said on June 12 that returns at Main had been "steady but not overwhelming," but didn't have any numbers because items were still in quarantine. She expected more returns as people started to pick up

their holds.

With loan periods for already-checked-out physical material extended to at least September, however, there is no requirement to return an item if you're not finished with it yet.

The library has also resumed delivering materials to patrons who cannot leave their homes.

It says many of these are "elderly and often isolated, aged 80 or older, and do not have Internet access. Half do not receive assistance from family or friends, and 26 percent only receive assistance, in an average month, from their doctor or OPL staff."

However, it says that library deliveries to shared living facilities such as retirement homes, long-term care homes, and hospitals are unlikely to resume soon.

The library board will consider its next steps for opening up services at a meeting on June 23.

E-scooters: a hazard or a convenience?

Alayne McGregor

Are electric-powered scooters an easy, nonpolluting way to get around your neighbourhood and connect to the LRT, or a hazard to pedestrians and the disabled?

Now that Ottawa City Council has approved a one-year pilot of a dockless e-scooter sharing program, Centretowners will have a chance to determine that for themselves. Centretown is expected to be one of the major areas for the pilot.

The trial will start this summer and run until October 31. The e-scooters will be allowed on most Ottawa streets, in bike lanes and on raised cycle tracks, and on footbridges like the Corktown Footbridge. They can travel up to 24 km/h, and must be equipped with a bell, a brake, and lights.

Won't run on NCC paths

While the city will allow e-scooters on its pathways, the National Capital Commission and the City of Gatineau will not permit them on their paths or roads. This will be enforced electronically through geofencing (using cellular location data to prevent the scooter from operating.) Geofencing will also reduce the scooters' maximum speed to 8-15 km/h on footbridges, and stop them from operating inside transit stations.

Two companies have expressed interest in providing short-term rentals of the e-scooters, and the city has recommended having 600 available in 2020. Riders will be able to rent them by the minute or have access on a daily or monthly basis.

The city staff report said that, based on 2019 pilots

in Portland and Calgary, e-scooters could replace around 30 percent of personal and ride-hailing car trips. They could also reduce GHG emissions and traffic congestion, and decrease crowding on transit vehicles. Since they don't require special clothing, they're useful for short, spontaneous trips.

Sidewalk misuse the major concern

The controversy comes over the e-scooters' presence on sidewalks. The city is banning riding on sidewalks because of the danger to pedestrians, but would allow the e-scooters to be "parked" (left on the ground) in the "furniture" section of sidewalks next to the road, as well as in some designated on-street corrals.

Because the sharing program would be dockless, those using the e-scooters would not have to leave them in a specific place when they finish their trip.

This raised alarm bells on the city's accessibility advisory committee. Its members were concerned that the e-scooters would be abandoned by users in inappropriate places, like the middle of sidewalks, creating a barrier for people with disabilities and seniors who would not be able to move them out of their way.

The committee was also concerned about the impact on cyclists and pedestrians of adding a silent, fast vehicle to paths.

Montreal bans e-scooters after 2019 trial

The City of Montreal decided not to renew a similar e-scooter pilot project this year, because 80 percent of the e-scooter users didn't park in the designated parking areas. The

three-month pilot in 2019 attracted 50,000 riders making 200,000 trips. But many users simply left the e-scooters on streets and sidewalks when they were done. The city finally announced it would impose \$50 tickets on riders caught parking illegally.

E-scooters 13 times as dangerous as cycling

Ottawa Public Health has also raised concerns about e-scooter injuries caused by speed, losing control, or hitting a pothole or stationary object. The OPH report to City Council cited an American CDC study in 2018, which found that e-scooters were 100 times riskier than walking and 13 times riskier than cycling. In Calgary, there were 33 e-scooter injuries which required ambulances in four months in 2019.

Councillor Catherine McKenney said that, while she voted for the pilot, she'll carefully watch to ensure that the e-scooters are not ridden on sidewalks and aren't left where they block the right of way for pedestrians. On the other hand, they're "a good way to expand the use of transit. Somebody would go one or two kilometres on an electric scooter when they might not walk to the LRT."

For the last four years, McKenney has owned a push scooter (without a motor) and said it's become their main transport in the summer. "Certainly to get to work, to get around the community – you can't beat it! It's more exercise than cycling, less effort than running – and it's more fun! I love getting around that way. In the ward I represent, I can get anywhere in about 15 minutes. So it's really handy for me."

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Centretown Community Assn report

Dundonald Park heritage district?

A new heritage district could be created in the neighbourhoods around Dundonald Park, according to a just-completed report commissioned by the city.

The new report, prepared by consultants, had not been released when *The BUZZ* went to press, although city staff had sent out an email with the major conclusions.

Recently, two Centretown districts have been discussed as possibilities for new heritage districts. Besides the Dundonald Park area, the Golden Triangle (from Elgin Street to the Rideau Canal) had been a candidate. However, the new study does not recommend heritage protection for the Golden Triangle.

The city commissioned the study as part of a [major review of heritage districts in Centretown](#).

Centretown has two existing heritage districts. The biggest stretches from Elgin to Kent. A second comprises the buildings facing Minto Park.

A heritage district is a group of older buildings, streets, and/or landscaped open spaces that combine to create a special sense of time and place. Once a district has been designated under the Ontario Heritage Act, City Council regulates changes and development in the district, in order to ensure that development is sympathetic to and enhances a district's historic character.

In particular, [property owners must get permission](#) to alter the exterior of a building, demolish a building, or construct a new build-

ing. City staff plan to release the new report in mid-June and hold public consultations.

CCA wins changes to big parking garage

The Centretown Community Association (CCA) recently carried the day at City Council's Planning Committee, winning changes to a proposed huge underground parking garage.

Developer Claridge Homes is completing three apartment towers on Metcalfe Street between Gloucester and Nepean, and has built a six-storey underground parking garage beneath the new buildings. Claridge only needs half the parking garage for tenant parking and has applied for a zoning change to make the remainder, 250 spaces, into a commercial parking garage.

Speaking before the city councillors on the Planning Committee, CCA President Shawn Barber asked that the developer be required to meet with the community association to discuss changes, and that the issue be deferred until that happens.

Barber said creating a big new commercial parking garage goes against the city's policies on reducing cars in the core and fighting climate change. As well, he said, the commercial parking garage would generate additional traffic through what already is a dangerous intersection at O'Connor and Nepean Streets.

Barber urged the developer to create more bicycle parking for tenants, as well as spaces for a shared-car service such as Commu-

ting. The Planning Committee ordered the developer to meet with Councillor Catherine McKenney, city staff, and the CCA to discuss changes.

Volunteers make Dundonald Park bloom

Volunteers are once again gardening Dundonald Park.

The city banned volunteer gardeners from the park because of the COVID-19 crisis. The CCA lobbied the city, arguing the gardeners could do their work while maintaining social distancing.

Late last month the city gave the volunteers the green light to get their hands back in the dirt.

"I am ecstatic," said Brian Beaven, chair of the CCA's Trees and Greenspace (T&G) Committee. "There's still lots of planting season to make progress this year."

Volunteers from two organizations, T&G and the Dundonald Gardening Group, keep the park attractively in bloom.

Neighbours helping neighbours

The Centretown Support Network continues to match volunteers to people who need assistance during the COVID-19 crisis.

Volunteers deliver groceries and help with all sorts of questions, from where to get food to how to get advice on tenants' rights.

The all-volunteer CSN is a service of the Centretown Community Association.

To contact the CSN, phone 613-518-3908 or email: support@centretowncitizens.ca

Long-term care in Ottawa: Council on Aging recommends improvements

Patricia Marsden-Dole

The non-profit Council on Aging of Ottawa recently released a report outlining the state of long-term care (LTC) in Ottawa during this pandemic.

The city has 28 long-term care homes with a total of almost 4,500 regular long-stay beds. Thirty-one percent of these beds have been rated below ministry standards for almost 10 years. Four of the homes in Ottawa are municipally owned (accounting for 16 percent of LTC beds), 10 are non-profit homes (32 percent of LTC beds) and 14 are for-profit homes (over half of LTC beds).

The waiting list for beds increased by 52 percent from 2014 to 2018 to 5,200 people

with most people waiting in seniors' residences. Almost half of LTC residents are 85 or over and seven of 10 residents have some memory impairment. The median wait time for a bed is now 232 days.

The number of those 85 years plus will triple over the next 30 years reflecting a 20 percent increase from those 75 years plus since 2011. To accommodate this growth, the number of beds must increase well above the recent 0.8 percent (i.e., 84 beds) to accommodate the monthly increase in demand for beds from 1,973 in 2013 to 3,560 in 2019.

The research for this timely report began in 2018, well before the crisis this spring. Since the start of the pandemic, almost 80 percent

of deaths in Ontario due to COVID-19 have so far occurred in long-term care facilities.

The report calls for four areas of change:

- more direct care staffing,
- more beds now and as the population ages,
- reduced wait times for a bed, and
- increased attention to innovation and continuous improvements in long-term care.

It also recommends more direct nursing care by registered staff, more attention to measuring progress, and organizational changes in the health sector that ensure long-term care is more visible in the community.

More details about long-term care in the report are available at: coaottawa.ca.

Back on the street!

The Centretown BUZZ is hoping to return to a print edition for our next issue, to be published August 14.

But we need more volunteers to deliver the paper door-to-door in Centretown. Can you take a few blocks near your house and deliver the paper to your neighbours?

Please let us know at circulation@centretownbuzz.com or 613-565-6012 if you can help.

Catherine McKenney City Councillor for Somerset Ward

Stay the course!

You've maintained social distancing and flattened the curve so far. Let's keep up the good work for a while longer and keep ourselves, our families, and our communities safe.



Keep in touch!

For the latest news on Somerset Ward, sign up for my newsletter on my website and follow me on social media:

- catherinemckenney.ca
- [mckenneycatherine](https://www.facebook.com/mckenneycatherine)
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FOR
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Planet of the Scares: an hour for a sandwich

Pearl Pirie

How are you holding up? Staying safe and isolated as much as you can? We have time. Why not make The Most Amazing Sandwich?

I aimed to recreate the character of a sandwich we had in 2013 at The Goods Shed in Canterbury, England, except their bread was dense and seedy. They had a pear chutney on it as well. Still, this came close.

We ate this with a side of our garden's asparagus and guacamole. I added some guacamole to half my sandwich as well.

Main Dish: Extravagant Sweet Potato Sandwich

1 sweet potato, roasted by oven or microwave
whole wheat pita or your choice of good bread
lettuce
all the toppings

Topping 1: Radish Pesto

1 bunch or 2 to 3 cups radish leaves
2 garlic cloves
2 Tbsp virgin olive oil
1 Tbsp lemon juice
1 tsp sugar
3 Tbsp Parmesan, grated
1/4 cup almonds, toasted
pinch of salt and pepper

Add the first three ingre-

dients to the food processor and pulse until chopped. Add the rest and pulse until it is a smooth texture.

Good to add to hummus or potato salad as well. Add a vinaigrette and it makes a good salad dressing.

Topping 2: Schug Sauce

This is a derivation of Caroline Ishii's recipe in *Accidental Chef*, with chang-

ing ingredients to my palate (I don't like cilantro) and speeding up the method.

3 tsp chopped chili peppers
pinch dried chili pepper flakes
6 cloves garlic, minced
1 Tbsp cumin
1/4 tsp cardamom
1/4 tsp coriander
pinch black pepper
pinch salt

Mix all into a paste, adding olive oil to mix.

Grill until the garlic smells sweet. Remove back to a jar and add enough olive oil to be liquid again.

It keeps for a few days. It is good to add to sandwiches or soup.

Topping 3: You've got (special) mayo

1 Tbsp mayonnaise (or veg-
annaise if you can source it)
1 tsp nutritional yeast

1/2 tsp mustard
pinch of tarragon

Pearl Pirie's fourth poetry collection, *footlights*, is coming out in the fall of 2020 with Radiant Press. *Not Quite Dawn*, from *éditions des petits nuages* is available for \$12 including shipping. See all her books and sign up for her newsletter at www.pearlpirie.com



PEARL PIRIE/THE BUZZ



PEARL PIRIE/THE BUZZ

What's on(line) this summer – and where to go in real life

Tony Wohlfarth

It's the third month of the lockdown and the online film and entertainment options are more diverse than ever.

cbc.ca/music

The CBC has an online directory of live music to stream, including festivals which feature multiple artists and a more diverse range of music. Check it out at www.cbc.ca/music.

Hot Docs Film Festival Goes Virtual

Hot Docs is an annual film fest in Toronto, featuring the best of docs from around the world. When their festival was cancelled in May, 35 of the best films began streaming via www.hotdocs.ca. Each Thursday, you can also watch two of the best docs on CBC. The films are also available for streaming via CBC Gem.

European Film Festival (EUFF)

The Canadian Film Institute (CFI) is screening online a series of films – both feature length and short – for free. The films are available through June 18. A list of the films can be accessed at www.cfi-icf.ca/eu-summer or via the CFI Facebook page.

African Film Festival Online (AFFO)

The CFI just added a list of 10 films to watch about the background to the growing anti-black racism movement: www.cfi-icf.ca/affo2020.

Indspire Awards

The annual celebration of aboriginal music, originally scheduled for March 6, has been rescheduled to Sunday, June 21 at 8 p.m. on CBC, CBC Gem, and CBC Radio. Further details at: indspire.ca/events/indspire-awards/

We Are One Global Film Festival

When major film fests like Tribeca, Cannes and Karlo Vary cancelled due to the pandemic, they worked together to bring their films online: weareoneglobalfestival.com

Mayfair Cinema Goes Online

Prefer to stay home? You can watch current releases streaming via your computer while supporting the Mayfair Theatre. Check out the lineup at: mayfairtheatre.ca.

Currently, the Mayfair is offering virtual screenings of a range of recent films, including *Corpus Christi*, a compelling drama about a non-ordained priest. *Corpus Christi* was Poland's nominee for best foreign language Oscar at the Academy Awards.

Port Elmsley Drive-In Theatre Re-Opens

Remember drive-in movie theatres? It's where many of us saw our first feature films! Ontario has given the green light to re-open one of the only remaining drive-ins in our region in Port Elmsley, at 333 Port Elmsley Road between Perth and Smiths Falls.

The drive-in re-opened on June 5 and the lineup is accessible at portelmsleydrivein.com/. Remember to bring along the snacks as the concessions are not allowed to operate.

Canada's Museums

The Canadian Museum of Nature is closed but the public is invited to take a behind the scenes virtual tour (25 minutes): [youtube.com/watch?v=AEiaqk2Okus&t=1502s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AEiaqk2Okus&t=1502s)
Admission is free!

All of the exhibits of the War Museum are on-line at www.warmuseum.ca/exhibitions/online-exhibitions/

Lynn Miles releases album from lockdown

Ottawa's own Lynn Miles used the lockdown to finish her 15th CD, *We'll Look for the Stars*.

The release date is July 3 and further details will be posted on lynnmilesmusic.ca where you can preorder the album.



Lynn Miles

Folk music fans can listen to the title track and read the lyrics at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=OtLPddmq2s

Canada Day 2020

Canada Day will be celebrated on Wednesday, July 1. All activities this year will be virtual. Check out www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/canada-day.html for updates.

Heritage Canada is also exploring ways to make the annual Parliament Hill light and sound show virtual. Readers can check here for updates: www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/sound-light-show/history.html

76th Anniversary of the D Day Landing

The 76th Anniversary of the D Day Landing at Normandy, France can be experienced virtually at: <https://www.junobeach.org/events/76e-anniversaire-du-jour-j-et-de-la-bataille-de-normandie/>.

Traveling? Staycations?

Summer travel will also be disrupted due to the pandemic. Interprovincial travel could be restricted this summer as New Brunswick, PEI and Newfoundland and Labrador are prohibiting most visitors from outside of the province.

BC got into the act, prohibiting non-residents from camping in provincial parks.

In my view, Quebec may be a better option. Personally, I have had wonderful vacations to the Gaspé, Côte-Nord and the Magdalen Islands. These are places few Anglos visit and are incredibly scenic.

Tony Wohlfarth is an Ottawa-based freelance film and entertainment writer. His plans for the summer have all been cancelled due to the pandemic.

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How do you teach a child doing cartwheels?



Stephen Thirlwall's granddaughter doing practice writing for her online classes, with the assistance of her grandfather and grandmother.

STEPHEN THIRLWALL/THE BUZZ

Stephen Thirlwall

Out of necessity, my wife and I have started home-schooling our granddaughter online because both her parents were still working full time at home during this pandemic. We have learned much and share some of our experiences.

When seniors first retire, many ask themselves, Do I have any meaning, identity or value anymore? Suddenly, our social status changes and social connections with those we've worked or studied with typically end. Many elders are also somewhat disconnected from their children who have young families and live away.

In Western society, families are more separated than in other parts of the world, with seniors shunted aside and considered out to pasture. However, many can still be of great value to society, if all seniors were viewed as Elders, who have certain knowledge and wisdom to be shared and who assist in maintaining or knitting families together.

Distance learning online was promised 30 years ago when I worked with a high-tech company. Now it has become a necessity and is important for grandparents when their sons and daughters are too busy with work or occupied with finding other options to keep their families afloat.

For us, home schooling has meant teaching three hours a day, five days a week. By June 4, we passed the 11-week mark with our granddaughter and have now added another 40 minutes every few days for extra reading with our grandson, who is able to do most of his school work on his own. It is now clear we will be distance camp counsellors for the summer.

During the first one and a half weeks, we made up

our own curriculum, developing a wide reading vocabulary in English and French, as well as teaching simple mathematics. Then the public school teacher started sending class materials daily that were numerous and challenging to keep up with. In Grade 1 today, children are learning things that our generation only learned by grades 3 to 5 or beyond. The first school lesson I had to give in mathematics was not addition or subtraction but probabilities. Other math included counting to 100 in English and French, learning fractions, and counting money.

The hardest task is getting writing assignments done. Every week, the teacher asks for a presentation to be prepared on a theme such as my favourite wild animal or farm animal. The children have to write several complex sentences and learn how to present them. We start preparing on Monday and, on Thursday morning, our granddaughter presents online to the teacher and her classmates. And this is only one of the writing exercises.

One of the special things children are now learning is self-sufficiency and self-respect, based on both pride in their own accomplishments and an outward sense of responsibility toward others—to treat them with respect, care, equality, love and act toward them with good behaviour and manners regardless of who they are. One series of study books is very intercultural, including the full scope of people from diverse backgrounds and situations living together in harmony. It even touches on homeless street children. We are currently discussing with our granddaughter what good deeds she might do each day without being asked by us or her parents.

There is also the fun side: playing mathematical games, making up shop-

ping lists and budgets, singing silly songs, having an exercise break or stopping to talk about unicorns and mermaids, as well as reading interesting and sometimes crazy stories. My grandson is reading the second Harry Potter book to me, which is incredibly funny and interesting. In turn, I am reading a Doctor Who paperback to him.

A major challenge is that kids at home are surrounded by all their stuff, creating many diversions. They know we are their grandparents and not their formal teacher, so they think they can get away with more.

We also have to develop our psychological skills to deal with tantrums, children just wanting to play or talk constantly and not keeping still for even short periods of time. How do you teach a child doing cartwheels? At times, my wife and I have had to do tag-team teaching because it is difficult for both of us to be there full time. Or we have to play good cop, bad cop to get a certain lesson done. Infinite patience is required to get through the classes. All of this contributes to increasing our own stamina as seniors.

Because our grandchildren are in French immersion (even though they live near Toronto), we have had to rebuild our skills so that we can now do some teaching entirely in French. There is a translation dictionary and a French grammar reference for conjugating verbs always at hand. We have had to master some of the quirks of being online: how to convey information and keep our student engaged without being physically with them and how to coordinate what is seen and heard at each end, especially when there are special audio and visual materials to use in studies. It is not easy but, as seniors, we acquired new learning and relearned a lot. This is

extremely good for keeping our minds active and productive, which also helps to keep our bodies in reasonable shape.

What we add from our own experiences and learning is invaluable. For example, we know that you have to make an effort to learn but it eventually opens many doors for you. We can share life skills, knowing that life has many ups and downs but that you can get through somehow and move forward. We also know that life works sometimes as much on probabilities as on facts.

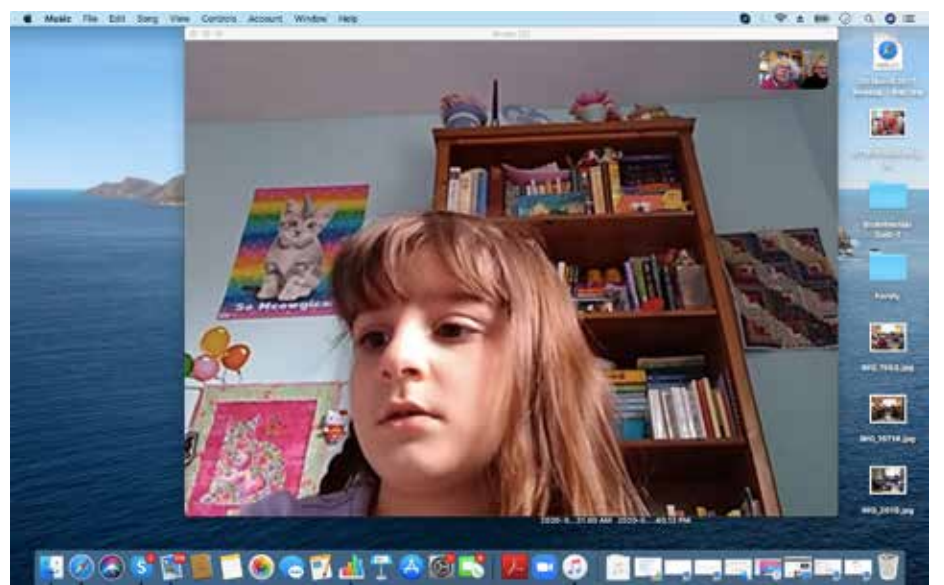
We now have a new respect for the work done by both teachers and students. We can see how each new

generation is advancing well beyond the one before, with technologies and methods we never had when we were in elementary and high school, and even university.

Engaging in distance teaching has reminded us that people of all ages can learn a great deal and must continue learning. It is also evident that extended families play a large role in the learning process. This is why grandparents need to be involved to a greater degree with their grandchildren. It is through a combination of continued learning and assisting, or serving our families and communities, that now gives meaning, identity and value to everyone but,

most importantly, to seniors. If you are a senior without children, you can still be a surrogate grandparent for children whose grandparents have passed away or who are unable to help. As I was growing up my aunt and uncle were effectively my grandparents.

In the past few years, we were with our grandchildren for only about one or two weeks per year. Our current situation has provided us with a huge opportunity to see and enjoy them regularly, to learn, to contribute, to build family and community, and to strengthen ourselves. We are very thankful, though exhausted, that we were able to take this on.



The grandparents' view in online teaching.

STEPHEN THIRLWALL/THE BUZZ

Somerset Ward: a modern and thoughtful city

Catherine McKenney

Ottawa City Council recently made a decision that we will live with for the next 100 years—to expand our urban boundary. Our children will deal with the consequences of that vote.

It was a decision that will impact the future of food security, access to greenspace and recreation, the cost of transit and other city services, and the supply of housing that everyone can afford. It will greatly impact how many cars drive into our neighbourhoods everyday and how clean the air will be across the city.

I strongly opposed the expansion of the urban boundary. The recommendation put in front of us was not for a minor rounding off of edges. It added over 1300 hectares for development, which is an immense amount of land that will take us closer to outlying municipalities, making it even easier for residents to move outside of our city and continue to commute each day.

Through this entire debate what we did hear from residents is that they want a

modern and thoughtful city.

A modern city that would ensure that we are actually building sustainable, walkable neighbourhoods for the future. A city that would ask itself: Where can I live so that I can walk or cycle to work or take affordable transit? How will that transit serve my needs to get to the library, pick up the kids from school, do groceries, visit friends?

A modern city would ensure that we can hold an entire generation in our existing neighbourhoods. That we encourage corner stores, build local parks, and ensure a healthy tree canopy. It would have a fully electric fleet of buses and housing that suits all of our needs, and would do so in a way that caters to an aging population and to people with disabilities.

Expanding the urban boundary will not contribute to building a modern city.

A thoughtful city would celebrate its history, its architecture, and its heritage, but it would also learn from it.

It would begin by listening to all of its residents, especially those who it hasn't historically sought guidance

from. For Ottawa that would mean Indigenous people, low-income residents, people with disabilities, and those living in homelessness or who are precariously housed. And it would make a decision like how we should grow and develop using a gender lens so that we are not leaving anyone behind.

A thoughtful city would ensure that we are using the land responsibly. It would enact a moratorium on urban sprawl and it would give serious thought to appropriately scaled low-rise development that uses our existing infrastructure. And it would use publicly owned land to build affordable housing immediately that is near affordable transit.

Ottawa in 2020 is faced with a climate emergency, a housing emergency, and an opioid crisis. It is getting less affordable for everyone. Going forward we must ensure that we are thoughtful in how we build new communities and support existing ones, and that everyone is involved in those decisions.

The challenges of a growing city are not easy and difficult decisions will need to be made. I look forward to making them together.

The world in miniature which is a garden



Syrphid fly

GAIL MCGUIRE/THE BUZZ

Gail McGuire

Within a small frontyard space here in Centretown, I have been developing a perennial garden. The lawn has been removed and plants have been selected that have curb appeal. From early spring to late fall, something is always in bloom.

Last fall, I planted allium bulbs and their large purple flowers, like bubbles of joy, are attracting comments from folks who pass by. They are also drawing many pollinating visitors to the garden. Alliums are a composite flower. Atop each spike, which together form the sphere-shaped flower head, is a tiny flower seeking a pollinator. European honey bees especially have been frequenting them and some bumble bees. But other mysterious diners have come by as well. (If I am fortunate enough to get a good photo of some of these insects, I may be able to get help in identifying them.)

Aside from the European honey bee, which was introduced 300 years ago here in Ontario, we have more than 400 native bees. They range in size and coloration, and some are furry, some not.

The Common Eastern Bumble Bee, a largish furry yellow and black species, looks similar to the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee, which has a rusty patch on its abdomen. While the former is indeed common, the latter, once common 30 years ago, has not been seen in Ontario since 2009 and, in 2010, was classified as endangered.

I am not an entomologist.

Nor am I a master gardener. But, of late, I am continuously fascinated by the world in miniature, which is a garden. A small table and chair provide me with a quiet vantage point and a smartphone camera is at the ready. Gardening has made me curious about the diverse visitors to it, their habits, and their needs.

Inadvertent pollination

I have learned that most plants need a way to transfer pollen in order to reproduce. Some plants are pollinated by the wind, and some by mammals and birds such as hummingbirds. However, the vast majority of plants are pollinated by insects. Among the insects, bees are the best but other insect species also contribute majorly to pollination. These include wasps, butterflies and moths, flies and beetles. Some pollinators such as bees seek pollen specifically for their brood. But, mostly, pollinators are seeking nectar and, while doing so, pollen is sticking to their bodies. They are inadvertently transferring pollen to other blossoms during the course of their foraging.

Plants and pollinators in the natural environment are adapted to each other and dependent on one another. Plants have various ways of attracting pollinators. Primarily, they produce nectar. The only known reason for plants to produce this sweet liquid is to attract pollinators. Once the plant has been pollinated, it stops producing nectar.

To attract pollinators, plant blossoms can produce a fragrance, have a certain coloration, or are marked

with patterns. The patterns on an iris blossom are thought to guide pollinators into the target zone, wherein the pollinator finds the nectar and pollen. Various shapes of flowers attract pollinators specifically adapted to that flower.

There are short-tongued and long-tongued bees. There are pollinators with specific techniques such as “buzz pollination.” Native bees use this technique to pollinate blueberries, a native North American plant, because blueberries hold their pollen and nectar somewhat recessed. Squash bees and squash--also native to North America--are adapted to each other.

Helping native pollinators

Understanding that native pollinators are adapted to native plants has led me to include many native plants in my garden such as echinacea, obedient plant, and wild ginger, a small green plant. Wild ginger produces a brown flower beneath the leaves at ground level and is pollinated by a ground beetle.

I have also mixed in some herbs for my dining pleasure, as well as for the pollinators. Recently, while attending to chives, which currently are full of their tasty blossoms, I saw a honey bee land on the plant and a bumble bee join it. These pollinators will forage happily on the same plant because neither is carnivorous. Rather rapidly, however, another bumble bee dove toward the first as if on attack. I was startled and backed away. Days later, I came across a description of a male bee rapidly approaching a female and realized that this was what I had witnessed. One of the reasons pollinators gather in a garden is to find mates. A male bee may use perfumed oils from blossoms to scent himself to attract a mate.

Other pollinators might gather in a garden to dine on nectar and also to hunt. Social wasps will hunt for insects to bring to the nest to feed the larva, which are carnivorous. The adult, however, cannot consume the prey. It has a narrow waist, called the petiole, and it is unable to digest anything but liquid. So it must drink nectar from the blossom. Yet it will bring home insect prey for the larva. Fascinatingly, the larva, when prompted by the adult, will emit a sugary liquid which the adult consumes.

I often see a small white butterfly flitting about the



A bee with bulging pollen baskets on its legs, perched on a hosta blossom. Bees use the baskets to transport pollen for their brood.

GAIL MCGUIRE/THE BUZZ

garden. This is the Cabbage White Butterfly. It was introduced here and has rapidly spread in range and population. The adults are seeking nectar but, in the larval stage, can destroy cabbage, broccoli and nasturtiums. So I am happy to see insect hunters in the garden to keep it in balance.

A muffled scream!

Once, last summer, while resting at my table, my at-

neous with hands to face, a head duck, and a cautious peek seconds later, I discovered that it had disappeared.

I am sorry that I caused it to leave the garden. I would have enjoyed observing it a little longer. A group called Wild Pollinator Partners identified the insect from my photo: its scientific name is *Megarhyssa macrurus*. It is a parasitic wasp and the stick-like protrusion at the back end is the ovipositor and

compound eyes which refract light in a different way and so appear grayer when compared to the shiny black eyes of the latter group.

In yet another trick of nature, as an expert on syrphid flies pointed out, there are bees which appear to be syrphid flies! I can understand that a fly with no stinger might receive protection from predators by appearing to be a creature capable of stinging, but the reverse



The *Megarhyssa macrurus*, a large parasitic wasp.

GAIL MCGUIRE/THE BUZZ

tention was captured by a stick-like protrusion flicking above a plant. I realized there was some interesting activity on the far side of a plant, so I slowly made my way around it. What I found was a largish insect, which had a very long protrusion at the back end. I took some photos and, then made a closer approach, hoping for a good close-up shot.

That was when I disturbed the insect, which flew around and behind me, circled back, and hovered eye to eye in front of my face. A muffled scream, simulta-

stinger. Parasitic wasps paralyze their prey and deposit their eggs on it. The prey, while paralyzed, remains alive and is fresh meat so to speak. When eggs hatch into larva, they consume the prey.

Syrphid flies are an interesting group among the fly pollinators. Most of them look like bees or wasps (what's called Batesian mimicry). On closer inspection, their short antenna and two wings only help tell the difference. Bees, wasps or hornets have longer antenna and four wings. Also, flies have

form of mockery is quite a curiosity.

Sometimes, while carefully balancing my steps on small stones that I have placed throughout my rather densely planted garden, and bending here, balancing there, with camera poised, I draw curious looks from the neighbours. I explain that I am on safari.

Truly, a garden full of pollinators is a garden full of activity! Savagery, variety, trickery, life cycles and nature's master plans can all be witnessed there.

Need a reusable mask?

Here's how to get one



Tessables fitted fabric mask

Marna Nightingale

Non-medical masks are now a common sight on the streets and in the stores of Ottawa. On Ottawa's buses and trains they are now mandatory.

With supplies of medical masks still critical, a legion of small businesses and individual sewers everywhere have stepped up to fill the gap, keeping friends, family and customers supplied with reusable, non-medical options.

Wonderful as this informal network of manufacturers is, it can present challenges for those not fortunate enough to "know someone" or at least to know someone who knows someone.

The BUZZ asked Centretowners where they were getting their masks and how they were choosing them. This is what we learned:

Proper use and safety

A non-medical fabric mask offers you some protection from droplets released by others. But where they really shine is in protecting others from you. Always use them as a back-up to, not a substitute for, physical distancing and other precautions.

Very young children, and anyone else who cannot remove a mask by themselves, should not wear one, unless a parent or personal care worker is present and paying close attention to ensure that their breathing remains unimpeded and that they don't become dangerously warm. For the same reasons, never put a mask on a pet.

A clear plastic visor, which covers the face but allows free circulation of air underneath, may be the best solution for those who can't wear a mask safely or without serious discomfort.

Masks become much less effective when damp; on a sweaty or rainy day, you may want to carry a spare.

The most effective mask is the mask you reliably wear. Take the time to find one that fits well, feels good and isn't too hard to breathe through or uncomfortably hot.

Fabric masks should be washed regularly, gently and by hand, typically after each day's wear, even if you have a removable-filter type. Not only will regular washing eliminate traces of the virus, it will smell better and your skin will thank you. If you've only worn it for an hour or so, you can hang it in a well-ventilated area to dry instead.

Fit

Some makers offer masks in different sizes, while others aim for a one-size approach.

Mask patterns fall roughly into two categories: pleated masks, where one piece of fabric is folded at the sides to fit against your face; and shaped masks, cut and darted to sit further away from your nose and mouth.

Preferences and facial shapes both vary so widely that we recommend, if possible, buying two or more different styles of mask and seeing which you prefer.

Some styles work better for wearers of glasses, and some for those with broader cheekbones and heavier jaws. Some have a built-in filter layer; others have a pocket you can slip a fresh cone-shaped coffee filter into each day.

Many styles come with a wire to help shape the mask over the bridge of your nose, while others rely on a snug overall fit.

Shapeable wires make it easier to keep your glasses from fogging but can press

uncomfortably into the bridge of your nose.

Elastic loops that fit over your ears can be better for those with longer hair or who wear hijabs, while cloth ties, or a long loop adjusted with a bead, offer more ability to tweak your fit for greater security and comfort.

A light, pleated mask with soft ear-loops, perfect for a warm bus ride, may slide off during a day of errands or a brisk walk. More layers and heavier fabrics mean more protection but also trap more heat.

Appearance

As you will want at least two masks, so that you can always have a clean, dry one handy, why not get ones that you enjoy wearing?

Covering half of our faces in public is a big adjustment. Having a mask we like the look of helps and, right now, almost anything that makes this easier is worthwhile.

Having given up on lipstick for the duration (it ends up smeared all over the lining of your mask and nobody's going to see it anyway), I am in danger of ending up with a whole wardrobe of masks: different colours, different fits, different weights, fun cartoon prints, fancy abstract patterns ...

Local sources for masks

FabLab ONAKI, an initiative of the First Peoples Innovation Centre (FPIC), has been making masks and plastic visors since the beginning of the pandemic. FPIC creates social initiatives in which Indigenous and non-Indigenous people collaborate to promote and realize the full potential of First Peoples, in a context of authentic and continuing reconciliation.

Ellie Campeau says, "The FabLab has been an opportunity and future for myself I never thought I would have. The nature and environment focuses on new technologies, which helps me as a person who is disabled find a place that helps instead of hinders my learning disabilities. I've seen this program help stabilize our community's youth by allowing us to focus on our cultural identities."

Although FabLab always has masks available and ready to mail for individual sale, their main focus is on larger orders. For a business or organization looking to provide their staff or clients with masks or visors, FabLab



The FabLab crew in masks.

FabLab/THE BUZZ

can do custom orders with a minimum order of 50, with further discounts as the order size increases.

FabLab ONAKI's Celine Auclair says they are able to offer masks in custom sizes in your choice of colours. They can add your company logo and can arrange a choice of closures.

She also says that, while their current visor design is comfortable and functional, they are working to incorporate a stiffer plastic head-strap, with a smaller elastic section, to reduce any pressure on the wearer even more.

While they have had no trouble sourcing fabric for their retail masks, they are also working to turn out and distribute masks to the Indigenous community, and are always looking to purchase fabrics with indigenous and nature themes. They're happy to buy from individuals, as well as from companies, so if you've been looking for an excuse to thin your fabric stash, contact them! info@cipp-fpic.com

FabLab ONAKI:

Masks: \$10
medium and large
shaped or pleated
adjustable ear-loop
no wire
built-in filter
cotton

Visors: \$10
one size
elastic headband
choice of elastic colour

Thawrih

thawrih.com
Made from offcuts from their sportswear line in a variety of comfortable, technical fabrics in solid colours.

Mask: \$30-\$35 for a two-pack
adult, petite adult, child
pleated and shaped options
ear-loop, no wire
built-in filter
cotton, bamboo, polyester
zero-waste

WalyAccess

etsy.com/shop/walyaccess

Made from offcuts from their Afro-fashion line in a variety of bright prints.

Masks: \$10
one size
pleated
ear-loop
no wire
pocket for disposable filter
polycotton and cotton
zero-waste

Pacha Indigenous Art Collection

pachaarts.com

Made with offcuts from their fashion line in a variety of prints and solids.

Masks: \$14-\$22
one size
shaped
drawstring closure with bead
built-in filter
no wire
cotton/poly
zero-waste

Finawear

finawear.ca

Two styles designed by Gitxan Artist Shar Wilson, one of which covers the entire lower face, in a variety of designs.

Masks: \$16.50-\$20.50
XS-XL
two shaped styles
ear-loops

built-in and replaceable filter options
wire
polyester, cotton

Cofuse Ottawa

ottawaartists.com/pages/seller-profile/cofuseottawa

Made from quilting fabric in a variety of prints and solids. Available for delivery and for pick-up near the Canadian Museum of Nature.

Masks: \$18.50
one size
shaped
cloth ties
built-in filter
wire
100% cotton

The Light-Footed Fox

the-light-footed-fox.myshopify.com

Made with quilting cotton in a variety of prints and solids.

Masks: \$13-\$15
child, adult
shaped
cloth ties
pocket for filter
no wire
cotton

Tessables Stitchery

facebook.com/tessables.stitchery

Made from quilting cotton in a variety of prints and solids.

Masks: \$10
adult, child
pleated
cotton quilting fabric
fabric tie or ear elastic for adults, elastic only for child.
pocket for filter
wire

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MPP Report: Long-term care residents deserve answers and action

Joel Harden

What we are seeing in Ontario's long-term care (LTC) system is heart-breaking. COVID-19 has exploited weaknesses that were established decades ago.

Since the Mike Harris government came to power in 1995, governments in Ontario have given for-profit operators a larger and larger role in LTC. Today, they represent 58 percent of facilities in Ontario's LTC sector.

The consequences of that shift are clear; to maximize profit, most owners run facilities with part-time staff, often at minimum wage. They contract out cleaning and food preparation to companies who do the same.

Care staff are given impossible workloads, leaving them unable to give residents the hands-on care they need. Residents languish in soiled diapers or go without showers for days on end. Staff are burned out from the trauma of watching people suffer, and are frequently injured themselves. Many leave the profession.

Essential care workers become disposable people. Seniors and people with disabilities are hurt, often despite the best efforts of staff. These are the conditions COVID-19 has exploited.

Take the story of Peter Collins, whose story I was

made aware of after his sister Christine contacted our office. He moved to Carlingview Manor (a for-profit LTC home run by Revera) on April 1, 2020, after spending two months at the Civic Hospital.

Peter is 68 and lives with dementia. Soon after he moved to Carlingview Manor, his sister Christine was alarmed by several things. It was impossible to reach staff caring for her brother. She had given him a cell phone and was stunned by his daily updates.

Residents were using common areas without any social distancing. A non-verbal resident would wander into Peter's room constantly looking to steal things. Christine was told there was nothing staff could do given workload issues, and that she "shouldn't worry."

But, on April 22, a resident who tested positive for COVID-19 was taken to hospital. The next day, residents were told to stay in their rooms (an order that was impossible to enforce without appropriate levels of staff).

On April 26, 2020, Peter tested positive for COVID-19. Christine was told the next day and she urged staff to ensure he takes his puffer medication every six hours. From what she can tell that isn't happening.

Meanwhile, Carlingview

Manor has seen a massive outbreak of COVID-19. The facility has 303 beds; 169 residents have tested positive, along with 90 staff. 58 residents have died, and Christine is terrified for her brother's safety. (Figures provided by Ottawa Public Health)

This is well beyond unacceptable, it is catastrophic, and it continues elsewhere. According to an analysis done by the *Toronto Star*, for-profit long-term care homes have four times as many COVID-19 deaths as city-run homes and twice as many as non-profit facilities.

If for-profit care homes are unable to protect staff and residents, they must be immediately taken over by the province and run by public health officials. These officials must ensure that residents and staff are protected, and that staff are fairly compensated for their work.

The issues that are being so tragically exposed by COVID-19 are not new; they have festered for years despite the pleas of advocates for governments to act. We can never return to normal, where normal meant understaffing, poor pay and inadequate inspections.

Let's have a public inquiry, end for-profit care, and ensure that meeting human needs is always the first priority.



Ottawa Public Library offers kids stories, crafts, science projects, D&D this summer

Lise Dumas
Ottawa Public Library

Are your kids disappointed they can't attend summer camp this year? The Ottawa Public Library has you covered!

The Ottawa Public Library's 2020 Summer Reading Club is going online at bibliottawalibrary.ca/en. Join us in Summerland and meet us in our virtual branch for fun online camp programs and activities!

Here's a sneak peak of what we will be offering:

- Read a book with OPL staff in our virtual story-times.
- Love to make? Join us for YouTube videos by OPL staff that will guide you through some fabulous Arts and Crafts projects.
- More of a science type? OPL children's staff will show you some cool Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) experiments.
- Get yourself going this summer! OPL children's

staff will be hosting active games and projects via YouTube.

• We know you love your books! Connect with OPL children's staff and other kids via Zoom meetings to discuss your favourite characters and series.

• Create a story with our OPL staff Dungeon Master! Experienced and novice D&D fans welcome. New D&D programs every week.

Every summer, we host amazing special guest programmers from Ottawa and beyond. These special guests will be running virtual programs this year. This year's line-up will include Little Ray's Reptiles, Luv 2 Groove, Company of Fools, musician Joel Jacques, author Timm Holm and more.

Also available at the OPL: the TD Summer Reading Club, Canada's biggest summer reading program for kids of all ages.

The free club is an inclusive program, in English and in French, that strives to engage all children in the joy of reading, while also championing Canadian writ-

ers and illustrators. The program helps to connect families with books and to build confidence in reading.

As of June 15, kids can register online at tdsummerreadingclub.ca to access free eBooks, read a web comic, and share book recommendations, jokes, silly stories and more with children across the country.

Participants can also vote for their favourite summer read as two books go head-to-head each week as part of the new Battle of the Books feature. New this year: the Club will offer 28 author/illustrator online readings and workshops. The line-up will be announced in the coming weeks.

At the Ottawa Public Library, we are hoping to see all Ottawa-area kids participate in the TD Summer Reading Club and our own virtual summer camp. These activities will support literacy and keep children aged 2 to 12 learning all summer.

Have a great summer and happy reading!

Mayor: Stories of kindness during the pandemic

Jim Watson

The residents of Ottawa have experienced some drastic changes over the last couple of months. We've had to make major adjustments to our lifestyles, adapt to new work environments, and plan our days in an entirely new manner. As a person who loves to get out in the community and spend time in all four corners of the city, these changes haven't been particularly easy for me either.

Although much of the news we're reading and hearing about can take its toll on us, I find it truly heartwarming to see so many residents and businesses in our community coming forward to assist others in this time of great need.

A few weeks ago, I asked residents to share stories of kindness and ingenuity, and the following examples make me so proud to say I'm the mayor of this great and compassionate city.

It's residents mobilizing

behind groups like Nepean Neighbours, who are matching volunteers with residents in isolation, who need help running errands like picking up groceries and medication, dog walking, and any other need they may have.

It's local chefs like

- Joe Thottungal of Thali and Coconut Lagoon,
 - Adam Vettorel of North & Navy,
 - Tim Stock of Thyme & Again, and
 - Patrick Garland of Absinthe,
- who are providing meals to homeless residents and low-income families.

It's medicine students like Pamela Bejjani, Jamie Ghossein, and Daniel Milad, who have created a GoFundMe campaign called *Frontline Feeds Ottawa/Gatineau*—with the goal of raising money to deliver food from local restaurants to front-line workers on the job every single day.

It's musicians like Dave Kalil, who plays live shows on Facebook every Wednesday and Saturday to lift the

spirits of his friends. Dave raised \$13,000 in less than an hour during a virtual benefit concert in support of the Ottawa Food Bank. The list goes on and on.

Once again, my sincere thanks to the residents of Ottawa, who continue to do their part in planking the curve—staying home and following Ottawa Public Health guidelines. We can change the impact that this pandemic has on our city when we all work together. We can't forget that COVID-19 affects everyone, regardless of age and current health status. It is important for all of us to continue to practice physical distancing.

Let's remember there are brighter days ahead. We will come out of this as a community stronger than ever.

It is important to recognize that the COVID-19 situation is evolving very quickly. Please refer to OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Coronavirus to stay up to date on the latest information.

Joel Harden

MPP, Ottawa Centre

Our office is here for you with:

- Monthly Town Halls
- Canvasses
- Community Organizing
- Help Accessing Government Services (such as housing, ODSP/OW, healthcare, OSAP etc.)

Connect with us and let's get organized!



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