



Boushey's remembered, 7



Dundonald Park, an urban oasis 11

THE CENTRETOWN BUZZ

The Centretown BUZZ turns 25!



The BUZZ's issues, from 1995 to 2020, have been a reflection of what's happening in Centretown and what's affecting Centretowners.

BRETT DELMAGE/THE BUZZ

Where can Gatineau transit fit on Centretown streets?

Alayne McGregor

Where should the Gatineau buses go? While Ottawa's light rail system has removed most of its buses from downtown, buses from across the river still clog Wellington Street in downtown Ottawa.

The Société de transport de l'Outaouais (STO) is now working on a replacement service: an electric tramway from Aylmer to Ottawa. It presented possible routes to Ottawa councillors in September, but the presentation left as many questions as answers – and whatever route is chosen will have major implications for Ottawa's downtown.

Ottawa City Council is scheduled to make a choice in November. But, according to both Councillor Catherine McKenney and the Ottawa Transit Riders Association (OTRA), a lot more information is needed first.

After crossing on the Portage Bridge, the proposed STO tram would either run in a tunnel under Sparks Street (with two stations), or go along Wellington Street on the surface (with three stations). The Wellington Street option could either have the tram share space with traffic on its entire length or run without traffic between Bank and Elgin Streets. From Portage Bridge onward, the surface tram would run on batteries (without overhead catenary wires) to preserve the visual aesthetics of Confederation Boulevard.

No costs were given, but the city staff report noted that "underground construction is more complex and more costly than the surface option."

Currently, there are more than 200,000 inter-provincial crossings daily, with about one-quarter on public transit. The report said that the tramway would replace about 70 per cent of the STO buses running into Ottawa.

McKenney said the city needed a plan

to remove STO buses from the downtown, "so that we can reallocate that space to pedestrians, to cyclists, ensure we are providing as much public space as possible. So I think that it's very important that we have the link."

However, they thought that "things have changed significantly enough" since the link was first proposed. "We're in different times now, so I think that much of it will have to be reconsidered."

They didn't care for either STO proposal. "I know it's called a tramway but it's a large system that, if it did run down Wellington, it would require fencing and it would block access to the street. I would prefer almost an electric streetcar that just did that loop, between Portage, Wellington, back up the Alexandra Bridge, just to do that loop into the city where we could leave Wellington open. We could close it to all other traffic and it becomes pedestrianized."

OTRA board member Stuart MacKay said OTRA needed to see much more detail before supporting any proposal.

"Our main concern is just making sure that there's reliable connections between any proposed site and the LRT stations which are already there. We'd like to see more on how that's going to work, how those connections are going to be made. At the end of the day you want to make sure that these two systems are easy to access, easy to connect for riders because if you don't have that, especially in the wintertime if people have to go outside on the street and then connect to an LRT station or vice versa, that's going to be an issue."

Currently, he said, riders working at Place du Portage still report that STO inter-provincial buses are unreliable. "You're still waiting to make those connections." And pre-pandemic, in the

cont on page 10

This month marks the 25th anniversary of the publication of our first issue in October 1995. In its honour, the City of Ottawa has proclaimed *Centretown BUZZ* Day on October 19.

Originally started as a publication by the Centretown Citizens Community Association (CCCA), *The BUZZ* was strictly a volunteer effort until 1999 when a business model was adopted that would enable us to pay for a managing editor. At the same time, the paper became a jointly owned publication of the two community associations in Somerset Ward: CCCA (now renamed the Centretown Community Association) and the Dalhousie Community Association.

Aside from the managing editor, everyone else who works on the paper is a volunteer whether that person be a writer, a proof-reader, a copy editor, or a deliverer.

The last group, numbering over 40 people, ensure that the paper is delivered to nearly 10,000 businesses and residences in Centretown each month (except for July). Over the last 25 years, hundreds of Centretowners have given their valuable time (not to mention literally thousands of dollars of gas purchases and vehicle wear and tear) to produce and distribute the paper so that we fulfill the key mandate of the paper "Centretowners talking to Centretowners".

This means that our edi-

tors encourage residents and friends of Centretown to submit their written thoughts and observations to make readers of the paper aware of what is going on here in central Ottawa. *BUZZ* articles may not always adhere to strict rules of journalistic standards, but we hope they give readers of the paper a sense of the concerns of Centretowners.

The two community association owners use the publication to make readers aware of current land use planning proposals for the ward, along with their other activities and to advocate for issues that they wish to gather support for from Centretown residents.

Over the last 25 years, the paper has been financially self-sufficient thanks to our advertisers. This advertising support would not be there if it were not for you the readers. Thank you for your support and do not hesitate to let us know how we can improve our publication.

If you like what we do, come help us out! We could also use more writers and deliverers. As we begin our next 25, we hope that the paper will continue to grow as a community newspaper due to the contributions from more Centretowners, so that we all learn about and learn to appreciate this wonderful downtown community.

Archie Campbell
Chair
Centretown BUZZ Board of Directors

Read more about the BUZZ's history on pages 4, 5, and 6.

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THE CENTRETOWN BUZZ

AT THE HEART OF OTTAWA SINCE 1995.

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The Good, the Bad, and the Bumpy: Celebrating 25 years

Ryan Lythall

This month marks the 25th anniversary of the publication of *The Centretown BUZZ*. I want to talk about how the paper has played a vital role in keeping me informed, how I became involved with the paper, and what writing a monthly column for *The BUZZ* has meant to me.

Keeping us connected

As a long-time resident of Centretown for almost 27 years, *The BUZZ* has played an essential role in keeping me informed about what's happening right outside my door, especially during times when I'm stuck at home.

Before the Internet and other social media made communication so much easier, one of the only ways that I could stay connected to my neighbourhood was by picking up and reading a copy of *The BUZZ*. The paper continues to

give a voice to many in our community and to shine a light on topics typically ignored by the mainstream media, for example, issues that are related to people with disabilities such as myself.

I've been part of the team for just over a year now. In that short period, I've had a better opportunity to see the impact that *The Centretown BUZZ* has, both in Centretown and beyond. The paper continues to give a voice to many in our community.

Becoming involved

Over a year ago, a friend of mine heard about an opening at *The BUZZ* and suggested that I reach out to it. I was nervous, at first, because I had no experience writing a monthly column. However, I had been outspoken in the media regarding wheelchair accessibility and transportation. Writing a monthly column has allowed me to discuss issues that I'm passionate about. It's a

bonus if I can do it regularly.

Over the past year, I've been able to talk about ParaTranspo, the lack of wheelchair accessibility and, more recently, how COVID-19 has impacted people with disabilities. I'm grateful that the paper continues to give me an opportunity to discuss issues that impact the disabled.

Many thanks

Thank you to everyone who continues to read this column. I've had the pleasure of meeting and interacting with some of you. I always enjoy hearing your feedback and your support. I genuinely appreciate it.

I would also like to thank everyone on the team for all the hard work they do to put this paper together both in print and online monthly.

Happy 25th anniversary to *The Centretown BUZZ*! Here's to another 25 years.

Comment

An simple change for the environment: drink Ottawa's excellent tap water, instead of from plastic bottles



The Jack Purcell Community Centre now sports a BlueW sticker, indicating that residents are welcome to refill their reusable water bottles there with high-quality Ottawa tap water. Eleanor Sawyer, past president of the Jack Purcell Recreation Association (left), Sarah Routliffe, general manager of the association (centre) and Karen Mitchell-Morrison, centre manager, (right) helped attach the sticker.

DIANE HOLMES/*THE BUZZ*

The Ottawa Water Study/Action Group

For many generations now, we have been building our world without considering the environmental costs. (Think fracking and pipelines.) Change is going to require different expectations and attitudes, more local and less international dependency, better insulated homes, and more neighbourhood farmers' markets and less importing of food. The list is a long one.

There are, however, some issues which are very easy to understand and very easy to resolve. No longer using bottled water is one of them. Drinking water from the tap, instead of plastic bottles, is easy, safe and has no extra cost. So why not use tap water instead of water bottled in plastic?

This is where it gets complex. Bottled water makes immense amounts of money for some very large international corporations. For example, Coca-Cola posted a \$30 billion profit last year. These corporations have enormous budgets and cities have always been financially fragile. Cities get eight percent of your tax dollars but deliver more than 60 percent of your services.

Former Ottawa City Councillors Diane Holmes and Clive Doucet have prepared a simple A-B-C guide to the bottled water issue at City Hall.

A. City water is safer: The City of Ottawa's tap water is tested many times a day. Municipal tap water is rigorously tested and tested more frequently for more elements than bottled water.

B. City water is healthier: Ottawa's water includes the minerals calcium and magnesium that are naturally occurring in the water. Bottled water has been demineralized, therefore, making the water less healthy.

C. City water is less expensive: A plastic bottle of water can cost up to 1,500 times the cost of a glass of tap water.

D. Recycling in Ottawa is a sham: It is estimated that less than 50 percent of plastic water bottles are recycled. The City of Ottawa has one of the lowest records for recycling in the province of Ontario. There is little money to promote recycling in the city budget. We need single-use plastic bottles removed from the environment.

E. The city does not promote its own tap water: The city budget for water is \$95 million per year. Of that annual budget, \$10,000 is spent on promotion materials for city water. If you add in staff time, the amount goes up to \$100,000. The reality is that there is little promotion of city tap water, so it doesn't register in the minds of the people who pay for it, that is, you.

F. Selling out to Coca-Cola: In 2010, the city removed several million dollars from the Parks&Recreation departmental budget and told the department to find private-sector dollars to fill the gap. The suggestion was made that they could procure naming rights and pouring rights. Not surprisingly, there were no companies interested in naming swimming pools, baseball

diamonds and gyms. But Coca-Cola was happy, over Ottawa Public Health's objections, to secure the contracts for pouring rights in city community centres. We now have Coke™ and Pepsi™ dispensing machines conveniently located at City Hall and in our community centres.

We can easily live without Coke™ and Pepsi™ vending machines in our city facilities. We have in the past and can do so again. The sale of water and sugared drinks in City of Ottawa facilities is no longer in the public interest.

We need single-use plastic bottles removed from city buildings to reduce their use and their disposal in our garbage trucks and in our environment. Let's stop selling bottled water in city facilities. The best water in town is on tap.

The Ottawa Water Study/Action Group is a group of concerned residents, scientists and engineers working to stop the sale of single-use plastic bottled water in municipal buildings in Ottawa: www.owsagottawa.org

E-scooters: a benefit or a blight?

The BUZZ is planning to run a story about the e-scooter pilot in our next issue. Let us know your experiences: did you use the scooters? Did you stumble over them?

Email editor@centretownbuzz.com

Skyline: Second thoughts

Developers trim their towers



The revised proposal for 593 Laurier Avenue includes a nine-storey tower to be built around Alexander Fleck House.

Robert Smythe

Developers have recently scaled back plans for two Centretown projects following public consultation.

They have filed revised applications for zoning by-law amendments, which, if approved, would significantly reduce the previously

requested height. Both developments are large modern additions to existing heritage buildings.

At 593 Laurier Avenue West (on the northwest corner of Bronson Avenue), the mighty Alexander Fleck House was proposed to be partially wrapped in a 17-storey, glass-walled tower.

This elbow-shaped new

apartment building has now been reduced to nine floors. The proposed plan will still require major reductions in the building setbacks from the rear, front and side yards. To continue the zero parking trend, the 37 residents' parking spots, which the zoning requires, would be totally eliminated, while two visitor spaces are to be provided.

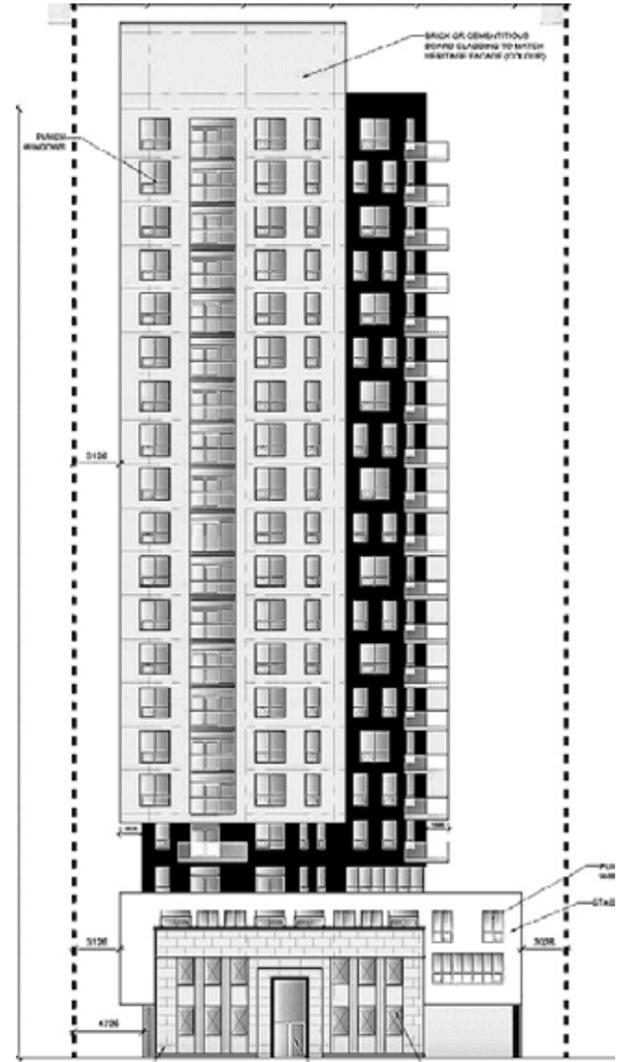
The site is currently zoned for high-rise development, so the proposed height is well within the maximum allowable limit. However, approval for an addition to a heritage-designated building is necessary.

Over at 100 Argyle Avenue, a previous proposal for a 21-storey tower atop the former Canadian Labour Congress headquarters (see [The Centretown BUZZ, January 2019](#)) had contravened the height limits set by the Centretown Community Design Plan. This has been scrapped for a 10-storey version. The revised design is said to be much more sympathetic to the heritage building. Its exterior will now harmonize with the stone cladding of the older structure's facade, which is now to be preserved in its entirety.

The 99 units will have 50 below-grade parking spaces, with parking for 118 bicycles. As well, an application under the Ontario Heritage Act is needed because this is a new building located within the Centretown Heritage Conservation District.

The 100 Argyle Avenue rezoning request is expected to be in front of the city's Planning Committee on December 10, 2020.

All photos are from, City of Ottawa Development Application files



A proposed 21-storey tower on top of 100 Argyle Avenue contravened the Centretown Community Design Plan...



...the developer is now proposing a 10-storey tower, with more of the old facade to be preserved.

McNabb respite centre: "it feels amazing to feel clean"

Alayne McGregor

The city closed its respite centre at McNabb Community Centre on October 9, right before Thanksgiving. The centre had offered accessible toilets, showers and meals to more than 300 visitors each week—as well as a cool place, including the centre's hockey arena, on hot days this summer.

Gotta Go, a community group which campaigns for a network of clean, safe and accessible public toilets in Ottawa, strongly objected to the closure, saying that it would "greatly reduce access to basic sanitation for homeless and precariously housed people in Ottawa."

At press time, Councillor Jeff Leiper announced that the respite operations would resume at Tom Brown Arena, just outside Centretown, "likely in early November."

Councillor Catherine McKenney also opposed the McNabb closure. "I did not feel we had the necessary day programs. Staff are working with some of the day programs to extend their hours. My concern really is that we're going into winter. The number of people unsheltered has doubled since last winter. We're probably

going to see more people in precarious and lost housing through the winter."

In August, [Gotta Go released a report](#) about the McNabb Centre, based on interviews with staff members who played a key role in the day-to-day delivery of services there. The centre, which opened on April 24, was run as a partnership between the city and the harm reduction teams from Somerset West Community Health Centre (SWCHC) and Centretown Community Health Centre, with the two centres providing informal case management, crisis management and harm-reduction services needed by street-involved people.

It ran Monday to Saturdays from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Located at Percy and Gladstone, it attracted people not only from Centretown but also, increasingly, from the ByWard Market area and Vanier, the report said.

Those using the centre were primarily either living in poverty, precariously housed (living in rooming houses or couch surfing), or homeless. Ninety to 95 percent were male. They were mostly from 35 to 55 years old, with another large group in their early 20s. There was also an increasing number of

families accessing the centre.

The report quoted one client as saying, "It feels amazing to feel clean. People take it for granted, being able to just have a shower, but it makes a big difference."

There was also a steady increase in the use of the toilets by community members who were out walking and biking and didn't have an alternative because many locations were closed.

To get through the winter, McKenney said the city needs at least three respite centres throughout Ottawa. "People are going to need a place to shower, to eat, to be able to use the washroom, to be able to get referrals to housing, health care, harm reduction. This is not going to be the winter to just keep our fingers crossed. So I'm watching this daily and will continue to ensure we are asking what's needed for people."

McKenney had asked city staff for a plan to replace the centre's services. They said other centrally located nonprofit volunteer agencies which might be able to fill in include Centre 454, Centre 507, the Well, St. Luke's Church and St. Luke's Table, and St. Joe's women's centre, as well as the community health centres. "So there are places where there are some

shower services, some places where they have some food services. But, again they're at capacity right now, especially SWCHC."

The Gotta Go report concluded that the pandemic has "laid bare the inequalities in access to facilities to meet our basic human needs", including showers, drinking fountains, and safe, clean and accessible toilets. "COVID-19 has exposed cracks in the system: we need to invest in humans. This lack of basic resources around meeting the hygiene and health needs of all of Ottawa's citizens is exposing fundamental gaps in our city's social and health infrastructure."

Pedestrians: what are your sidewalk problems?

The BUZZ is planning to run a story about winter and summer sidewalk issues in Centretown in our next issue.

Let us know your experiences: email editor@centretownbuzz.com

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The Centretown BUZZ: Our first five years

Robert Smythe
The notion for a new community newspaper, with a progressive voice, was hatched around the big chipboard table in the Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corporation's (CCOC) meeting room during late summer 1995.

Joining reps from the non-profit housing corporation were delegations from both the Centretown Citizens Community Association (CCCA) and the Centretown Community Health Centre, with a nod from the Dalhousie Community Association (DCA).

The driving force behind what would eventually become *The BUZZ* was Marie Keasey from the board of the Jack Purcell Recreation Association (JPRA). She would later act as our business manager and corporate brain trust. I was the other driving force.

I can't remember if we actually wrote out a Mission Statement. They were a thing back in the nineties. Right from the outset, we had planned for an unashamedly good-news vehicle, an organ for our various community groups. The existing *Centretown News*, which had

begun as a community-based paper in the late 60s, and later turned into a student project at Carleton University's School of Journalism, had started to paint our neighbourhood as a needle-strewn, inner city battleground.

From the beginning, we enjoyed strong working partnerships with Centretown's community organizations. From the CCHC we had "The Advanced Page" for seniors' interests and Olly Wodin's "Good Food Column." To this, we added a page for the The Door Youth Drop-In Centre and, most importantly, the JPRA sustained us with its regular advertising—later to become the four-page insert—of recreation programs at the community centre.

Producing the first dozen issues proved to be a sequence of all-nighters on my dining room table.

Thanks to Carol Toone, a laser printer was purloined from the CCOC on Friday nights after their office closed and hooked up on my dining room table. Paste-ups of each page had to be pieced together with tiny scraps of paper—some manipulated by tweezers. Finally, after many hours of labour, the whole

thing was ready to be delivered to the printers, deep in an anonymous industrial park in the west end. Drivers were scarce and we relied on Bill Virtue to ferry me and the final design to an elderly manager.

Finally the results of all this sweat came back from the printer. Ten thousand copies of *The BUZZ*, bound in bundles of 100 papers, were dumped in front of 210 Gloucester Street and then lugged up one floor to our office, where it was parcelled into bundles for individual routes, only to be dragged down again and sent on their way to the awaiting doorsteps of our small team of deliverers.

David Seaborn of the DCA, later joined by Archie Campbell, was critical to the success of our delivery system fanning out to the doorsteps of volunteer carriers throughout the area.

Advertising was the only source of our revenue and remains so today. Luckily, we had Denise Harper, treasurer of the JPRA at the time, who was able to win over many Elgin and Bank Street businesses.

Of course, we had a stable of regular contributors



The first edition of the Centretown BUZZ, in October, 1995.

like the redoubtable David Gladstone, firing well-aimed missiles at the development industry; Joan Katz penning restaurant reviews; and Shelley Pearen on the design beat scouring the area's shops for nifty discoveries.

All three local politicians, City Councillor Elisabeth Arnold, Regional Councillor Diane Holmes and Ottawa Board of Education Trustee Gerald Halpern were on board and willing to use *The BUZZ* as a vehicle for regular reports to their constituents.

A confession: I never did much editing of text. So grateful for our volunteer

writers' efforts were we that we pretty much printed every word that was submitted.

The design and production was another matter. With ancient desktop publishing software (a boot-legged copy of PageMaker 5.0), I pursued a visual identity that was sometimes crowded, chaotic and grungy. Asked about my inspiration for the design, I immediately said *The Village Voice*, which was aiming pretty high.

No two pages were ever the same. And in five years of production the paper's front-page banner was different in every edition. So much for branding!

When it came time to name the new paper, I chose a word that wasn't actually meant to evoke the idea of a general hubbub; I can now reveal that *The BUZZ* was flippantly named after my brush cut.

We managed to produce and distribute 12 issues a year until late in 1999 when I ran out of steam. Archie and Marie came to our rescue by reorganizing the paper, with financial backing from the two community associations. The CCCA and DCA are now the owners of the paper. *The Centretown BUZZ* is able to pay its editor a very modest stipend and digital printing has become a much more streamlined process.

When we gathered that summer evening 25 years ago, none of us could have dreamed that *The Centretown BUZZ* would still be around today.

I am so grateful that I was able to pass the torch on to such talented successors.

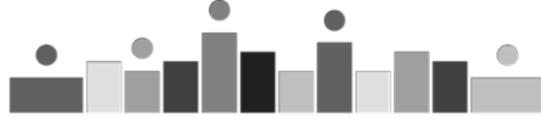
Happy 25th birthday!



Keep doing what you do so well

The Centretown Community Association is proud to be co-founder and co-owner of the

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Editors reminisce: Memorable stories & people in *The BUZZ*

Alayne McGregor

Each month, *The Centretown BUZZ* balances news, features, arts stories, and commentary – written and photographed by a wide range of volunteer contributors. It's the job of the paper's managing editor to fit this all together into a snapshot of our community.

In its first 25 years, *The BUZZ* has had 14 managing editors. Our founding editor, Robert Smythe, is still a regular columnist and has written separately about the paper's first five years (see page 4). Three other former editors who are still in Ottawa agreed to tell us about the paper's history while they were editor, the stories they covered, and why they think community news is important.

How did you become editor of *The BUZZ*?

Glen Gower (1991 to 2001) was in his second year of a journalism degree at Carleton University when he became editor. At the same time he was running the websites ottawastart.com, a guide to info and events in Ottawa, and ottawagasprices.com, a website letting motorists know where to find the cheapest gas.

At that time, *The BUZZ* was in friendly competition with another community paper: *The Centretown News*, which Carleton's Journalism Department published every two weeks during the school year (it shut down in 2015). Students were supposed to write for it in their second and third years; for Gower that would have been a conflict "so I managed to get an exception so that my practical newspaper work could be with *The BUZZ*."

Sarah Hoy (2009 to 2011) had recently come to Canada from Britain, where she'd worked in journalism, and had volunteered as writer for *The BUZZ*.



Kathryn Hunt (2012 to 2019)

Kathryn Hunt (2012 to 2019) came from cycling activism. She had been writing a cycling blog and her interest in urban politics had steadily increased as

she used "city-directed infrastructure and systems. If you're riding a bike around or you're walking primarily, the decisions being made at City Hall start making a lot of difference to you. You start seeing how more than just provincially or federally the rubber hits the road at the municipal level."

When Hunt was a child, her mother had worked on a community paper in rural New Brunswick which covered the area of their local telephone exchange. "And I think maybe I imbibed it from that, that this stuff is important, that community cohesion is important."

What were the major issues you covered in the paper?

"Telling the past of the community was always something we focused on every month, a story about a person or a place or an event in the past," Gower said. "Also I remember quite a bit about light rail. The city was just embarking on the first light rail pilot going from Bayview to Carleton University down to Greenboro and South Keys so that was a focus."

"I was interested in, trying to understand the different parts of the community and how things were changing. There were a few articles where we tried to look at some of the social issues in the community. I remember in particular writing about one of the churches that was doing something out of the ordinary, helping with housing issues with homeless women."

The BUZZ covered city elections when Hoy was editor – and the Queen's visit in 2011. "For me being from the UK that was pretty nice to cover! That was really exciting." She tried for a mix of articles, from arts to politics to local charities, and particularly enjoyed covering local entertainment and theatre productions.

Land development was a perennial issue for both Gower and Hunt. "There was always an interest in the development end of things: the built heritage and intensification – and the tension between those two," Hunt said. "We have this neighbourhood that has been there forever and has put down its roots, and then how do you also put in new developments?"

One ongoing story throughout Hunt's eight years on *The BUZZ* was Somerset House, the half-demolished heritage building at Bank and Somerset. "Every time I went back to cover it, I would think, 'This is it. Eventually it's going to get resolved.' And it never got resolved."

The BUZZ also covered "local people who were doing something to contribute to the community, the soup centres, Centretown United Church and all of its outreach. You would cover people who were contributing to the street life," she said.

What stories do you remember best?

One of Hunt's favourite stories was a piece about [the two brothers who ran the Roma Barber Shop](#). "They'd inherited the barber shop from their father and neither of them had ever thought they were going to grow up to be barbers. But their dad had this shop, and then they took it over. It was one of those wonderful little 'here's that shop and the story of these people on your corner.' There was a great shot of them with the chair."

The BUZZ would also get "great response from Robert Smythe's heritage columns, looking back at the history of the community. We would get a lot of people really looking forward to those. I think people want to know the stories of the place they live in. People are interested in here's this building, here's what was there before."

One memorable piece covered [the dog sled derby that local jeweler Jack Snow organized in 1954 and 1955](#), with the race running from Union Station downtown along the frozen Rideau Canal all the way to Bells Corners and back. "Those kinds of stories, I think, always got a lot of uptake because people liked to know that there's a history to their community."

In 2015, Hunt wrote a story about the [Centretown link to Igor Gouzenko's defection in 1945](#) and his historic revelations of Soviet spying in Canada. October 2020 was the 75th anniversary of that event, and her story and a [later related one by Marna Nightingale](#) were viewed almost 1800 times that month on *The BUZZ* website.

And people ...

Both Gower and Hunt volunteered special memories of long-time *BUZZ* contributor **David Gladstone**. Hunt, in fact, had known him years before when she was working with the Dusty Owl reading series at a downtown bar. After attending several Dusty Owl events, he volunteered to get the series written up in *The BUZZ*.

"David would just show up to whatever was happening in Centretown, looking like the roving reporter. He would show up with the trench coat and the hat – he just looked the part. He was just everywhere," she said.

Gower said he worked really closely with Gladstone and was sad to hear of his death. "He was an eccentric character who cared a lot about the community."

What were the special challenges of editing a community paper?

"You're dealing with so many different people," Hoy said. "Everyone has their own personality and everyone's got their own passions. But at the same time it was a really nice thing to deal with. It was a really great way to get to know the community and to see how Ottawa comes together."



Sarah Hoy (2009 to 2011)

"Your writers and all of your contributors are going to be volunteers," Hunt said, "and that comes with particular challenges because the people who step up to write and contribute, sometimes you have to go back and edit them. And then you have to pick and choose – you have to get a balance in the newspaper of what kind of coverage you have. So sometime you have to make those calls on how do you reconcile newsworthiness and community news and community interest and supporting your volunteers and giving them some column-inches."

Because *The BUZZ* is completely funded by advertising, that was always a challenge for Gower. "The paper got published or it didn't get published based on how many ads we had, but I don't think we ever missed an issue."

The paper is distributed throughout Centretown by volunteers. "I was always totally impressed by the volunteers' dedication to taking the bundles of newspapers by the hundreds and getting them out to the distribution points. It's one thing to get articles written and to get printed, but that last step of the process to get it into the readers' hands was always something that took an army of people to get organized and make it happen. But it always happened! It was great," Gower said.

What did you learn from being editor?

Hunt "learned a lot about storytelling, a lot about angle, and about tightening a story up to figure what it was really about. Here's this thing that's happening – who will you go talk to? And where's the person to speak to? But I also learned so much about how the city works. I turned into a complete municipal politics nerd. I have friends now who look at me and ask, 'How do you know all of this?' I'm quoting Section 37 regulations at them and they're like, 'What are you talking about?'"

"Sure I vote for my local MP. But I care more about my councillor because that's going to affect my day-to-day life so much. And I learned a lot of that when I was working with *The BUZZ*."

Gower, who is now a city councillor for Ottawa's Stittsville ward, said his most important lessons were about "working with the community. It's more than just a newspaper in a way. It's a group of volunteers who are trying to make a difference in the community. Appreciating what it takes to get people together, to motivate and encourage people, to develop good relationships with people in the community, to keep something like that going: those are skills that I've taken with me. Many of the people I interviewed I still see coming out to community activities and to committee events."

Writing about issues around heritage, development, diversity, or social issues in the community in *The BUZZ*, and working with volunteers on exploring these issues gave him a different perspective, he said. "Several years after I left *The BUZZ*, I ended up moving out to Kanata and then Stittsville. I've focused on many of the same issues in my community out here."

Hoy said the paper introduced her to Ottawa and to many contacts in the city. "I learned how to work with a variety of different people. There's an amazing volunteer board behind the paper, which were always so great to work with."

Hunt valued the "decades of institutional knowledge" that *BUZZ* volunteers like Robert Smythe and Archie Campbell had. "They had been there for ages and they knew everything and everyone."

How important are community papers?

Hoy said community papers are a way to feel connected, "and I did find that about *The BUZZ*. People picked it up. I actually made



Glen Gower (1999 to 2001)

good friends from people who contacted me from reading the newspaper and wanted to volunteer. I think there's still that big sense of people just wanting to know what's happening in their community."

"As much as we're in the digital age, as a councillor when I can put out an article or a weekly column in a newspaper, we still get so much response from people," Gower said. "People are looking to see their community reflected in newsprint and it carries a lot more weight, and a lot more value than social media posts might."

Newspapers also provide access to community groups, he said, for example, the community resource centre in his area relies on the paper to distribute information about their programs to seniors, to youth, or to newcomers to Canada. "A lot of these people aren't connected online and it's the print newspaper that gets to every mailbox, every doorstep. It really connects the community. So it's incredibly important for just that cohesion and the spirit within the community that we have physical newspapers that you can see at the library or at a coffee-shop or that comes to your door. It's really important to the health of the community."

"The thing about a newspaper is it arrives on your doorstep," he said. "You get that reminder. You don't get that with websites necessarily the same way. With social media, the algorithms favour national or international news over local news. So just to have a paper showing up on a predictable regular basis it gives people the opportunity or the reminder that there is local information that's important to know about."

To Hunt, the importance of *The BUZZ* is related to the importance of the area it covers. "Centretown is a really fascinating ward and neighbourhood. And it's really crucial. Centretown is the heart of Ottawa. I think if you don't care what's going on in Centretown, you're

cont on page 6

BUZZ editors remember

cont from page 5

disconnected from what is the heart of Ottawa, really.”

“I used to say when I was editing *The BUZZ* that it astounded me that community papers survived when the big papers were foundering. I think it’s because community papers are where you’re going to get news that you can’t get anywhere else.

“The main media outlets are covering national and international stuff but if you want to know what’s happening with the zoning regulations for that building that’s going to go up and possibly block out the sunlight to your street, or you want to know why a structure is going up in that park, you have to go out and actually search for it.

But a community paper finds the stuff you need to know as a member of this community and puts it in one place, and then puts it on your doorstep in the morning.

“It’s where you discover stuff that you wouldn’t have known to go looking for. And I think that’s probably why they’ve survived. I think maybe even more now that there’s a pandemic going on, people want that sense that they’re in a little village inside the big city. Everybody’s looking for that much more local sources of everything, including news. The vast international network is real vulnerable, and not really reliable, and maybe we need to start forging those

ties with our neighbours.”

Hunt said she had “a big soft spot in my heart for *The BUZZ* and for community papers in general. It makes me happy to see *The BUZZ* continuing to be a great little paper.”

The BUZZ has been “a real labour of love for anyone who has been involved, whether an editor or a writer or a volunteer helping out in any way,” Gower said.

“The fact that the paper is still going now, after 25 years, reflects a lot on the Centretown community and how much people do care about their neighbourhood and about working to continue to improve and make it a better place to live in.”



Mashing up beets with the other ingredients for Whole Beet Patties.

PEARL PIRIE/THE BUZZ

Planet of the Scapes: happy anniversary!

Pearl Pirie

Can you believe it? 25th years of *The Centretown Buzz*! That coordinated effort for a silver number of years deserves a standing ovation, bringing news to and from the community.

Sweet to see a milestone number that isn’t COVID-related.

This makes a sexy 69 columns of two, sometimes three recipes each. That’s nearly 150 meal ideas I’ve served up since 2014. Since then we’ve moved house, gained a dog. I published two poetry collections. We went off dairy for years, and moved from vegan to restart eating eggs.

Remember the dandelion pesto column? Spoon pudding with endive canapés was a great time. How many of you have been here since drying linguine fell from the ceiling to the cat’s delight? It’s tempting to share again the curry that had chocolate milk added.

In the name of reminiscing, how about those whole beet patties from 2015, years before the A&W got on board? And cookies from 2014, because as the leaves fall, you can’t go wrong with ginger.

Side Dish: Whole Beet Patties (serves 2)

Mortar and pestle the seeds then let soak 10 minutes:

- 1/8 cup flax seeds
- 1/8 cup water

Add:

- 1 Tbsp each chopped fresh dill, mint, parsley

- 1/2 tsp ground cumin
- 1/4 small onion
- 1 cup cooked beets, peeled (4 small ones)
- 1 Tbsp sesame oil
- 1/2 cup garbanzo bean (chickpea) flour
- the zest of 1/2 lemon or 1 Tbsp of lemon juice



PEARL PIRIE/THE BUZZ

The garbanzo flour and flax work as binding agents. Form the mixture into small patties and put on the ever-useful indoor grill, or better yet, a cast iron pan if you have one. When browned and crisp, serve on buns or as a side dish.

Snacks: Ginger Crinkle Cookies (Makes 2 dozen)

This makes a semi-regular appearance around here, briefly.

- Mix the dry:
- 2 cups whole wheat flour, stone ground if you can find it
 - 1/2 cup brown sugar (+ more for rolling in*)
 - 1 1/2 Tbsp ground ginger
 - 1/2 tsp cinnamon
 - 1/4 tsp allspice
 - 1/4 tsp cardamom
 - 2 tsp baking powder
 - 1/2 tsp baking soda

- pinch of chipotle (optional)
 - pinch of salt
- *As good as it smells, remember the brown sugar is for rolling the cookies in, not yourself.

Warm the molasses by setting the container in a bowl of hot water.

- Mix the wet:
- 1/4 cup hot water
 - 1/4 cup molasses
 - 1/3 cup melted butter or margarine
 - 1 tsp vanilla extract
 - 1 1/2 Tbsp finely grated ginger

Add the wet to the dry ingredients.

Add more water if it crumbles but you want the dough to be fairly stiff and firm.

Flour or sugar your hands and palm-roll the dough into small balls, about 1 1/2 inches across. If they’re for later, roughly shape a tube of dough on parchment paper, roll into a tube and freeze to slice anytime.



PEARL PIRIE/THE BUZZ

When ready to cook, roll cookies in sugar and put them on a baking sheet. They crinkle. They flatten. They spread.

You will need two sheets for a full recipe. Bake at 375 F for 8-10 minutes.

The cookies should be very soft when you take them out. They firm up on the sheet when cooled.

Pearl Pirie’s fourth poetry collection, *footlights is out(!)* with Radiant Press: www.radiantpress.ca/shop/footlights Author site: www.pearlpirie.com. Keep washing your hands and wearing your masks. This could take many months more.

Please wear your mask!



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Catherine McKenney

City Councillor for Somerset Ward

Happy 25th anniversary!

Congratulations to Centretown Buzz for 25 years of informing and serving our community!



Keep in touch!

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Kerry Kaiser, the CEFC's welcoming face, steps down



Kerry Kaiser has helped people at the Centretown Emergency Food Centre for 26 years.
Martha Musgrove

ROBERT BURR/THE BUZZ

Kerry Kaiser, the long-standing and much-loved coordinator of the Centretown Emergency Food Centre (CEFC), is stepping down at the end of 2020.

Established in 1978, the CEFC is one of the busiest food centres in Ottawa, serving a catchment area that includes Centretown, the Glebe, and Old Ottawa South and East. In recent years, about 800 clients visit the centre each month at its location at 507 Bank Street. They receive a three-day supply of nutritious food, along with a

friendly greeting and advice on services available from other organizations.

For the past 26 years, Kerry has been the welcoming and compassionate face of the Food Centre, helping countless clients who struggle to maintain their families and themselves while living on limited incomes. In her many public speaking engagements to enlist support for the centre, Kerry always relates stories of clients who were able to turn their lives around thanks to the help they received.

Allison Dingle, chair of the CEFC management com-

mittee, describes Kerry as "a tireless champion for our clients and for the high standards of our food centre. She will be greatly missed and challenging to replace."

Kerry will leave the Food Centre with an impressive list of accomplishments. She has attracted, trained and retained a corps of dedicated volunteers. She has mentored many social work students and student interns, giving them a firm foundation for their future careers. She has established strong ties with other social service organizations in the downtown core, and she has ensured that donor contributions to the centre are used efficiently and effectively for their intended purpose.

On Sunday, October 4, the annual Walk for the Centre took place. Because of the constraints imposed by COVID-19, this year's event was virtual. However, whether walkers followed the traditional route around Parliament Hill or walked in their own neighbourhood, no doubt their thoughts and gratitude were directed to Kerry Kaiser who has served the Ottawa community so faithfully for so many years.



The new square will be just south of where Boushey's was located.. CHARLES AKBEN-MARCHAND/THE BUZZ

Boushey's remembered in new city square

Alayne McGregor

A beloved Centretown grocery store will be remembered in a newly renovated downtown square.

On September 23, Ottawa City Council voted to rename the pedestrian space at Waverley and Elgin Streets to Boushey Square to honour Boushey's Fruit Market, which operated on the corner for 70 years.

Boushey's held "a tremendous amount of history for the City of Ottawa," recalled Councillor Catherine McKenney, who moved the motion at council. The store opened at 348 Elgin Street in 1946, selling groceries and imported foods, including then-less-common Lebanese delicacies like hummus and baklava.

After being run by three generations of the Boushey family, it closed on July 31, 2016, when owners Mark and Peter Boushey decided not to continue.

McKenney was a regular customer there. "I think everybody was a customer of Boushey's. There was something about Boushey's. When I sent out the notice and tweeted out that we were looking at changing the name to Boushey Square, I got so many emails and responses back from people, giving me their history with Boushey's; how they had met their current spouse there 25 years ago. That's where they went when they lived downtown, they did their groceries there. There's so many cool stories about Boushey's."

People remembered the aroma of the store, they said,

all the types of food it sold and "just the ambiance of the place, the people, the family."

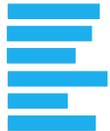
The motion said that the renaming proposal was overwhelmingly supported by businesses along Elgin Street.

McKenney said they hope to officially open the square in an outdoor event next spring. It's still partially under construction with a water main and sewer line being rebuilt nearby, which is expected to be finished within weeks and definitely by the end of this year.

The opening will include unveiling a plaque giving a brief history of the store. The family has shared old photographs of the business with the city, McKenney said, and copies of some of those may be displayed as well.

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m Albert St.

A section of a concept drawing for the small proposed park at 400 Albert Street (from City of Ottawa consultation documents).

McKenney aims to dot Centretown with green parkettes in new developments

Alayne McGregor

As large projects continue to fill in Centretown, residents can expect to see more small, green parkettes as part of those projects, says Councillor Catherine McKenney.

This month, the city asked residents to suggest ideas and review a proposed design for a small park at the corner of Albert and Lyon. The park will be part of the 400 Albert mixed-use development, which replaces the current parking lot. The developer will build the 400m² park and then give it to the city.

In the past, McKenney said, the city usually asked developers to provide cash in lieu of parkland and would combine the funds from several developments for a single larger greenspace.

But, in the downtown, they said, “It can be more difficult to find space for a park or a parkette. Over the last couple of years, I’ve pushed developers to provide the space rather than just the funds. I think that we have to

take advantage of good public space. It’s difficult, when you have the funds, to find empty space that’s available, that’s affordable. This way, rather than take the cash in lieu, we asked for a publicly owned park.”

The pandemic has made the city “really realize how important public spaces are, how important social interactions are,” they said. “I know, sometimes, people would rather see something larger. But every small square space can provide the types of either passive or active park space that we need in a downtown. It doesn’t always have to be large but it has to be well designed, and it has to meet the needs of that neighbourhood.”

McKenney hoped to get ideas from residents across Centretown. “I did a parks survey about three years ago and one of the things that surprised me was how many people asked for a performance space outdoors – a few benches, a bit of a rise so that you could have small

performances or maybe busking. So maybe we’ll see something like that.”

The current proposal for 400 Albert shows seating, planters for ornamental trees and small plants, bike parking and a water-jet feature that children might enjoy. McKenney hoped that the project would attract some families and expected that “there will be a large number of new residents in that area. We have several towers going up in that immediate vicinity. I think we’ll be looking at, probably, a nice mixture between some passive and some active use. I would love to see a splash pad on that corner.”

Both Lyon and Albert Streets carry heavy traffic on weekdays but McKenney said that park users could be sheltered from traffic noise by screening with greenery. “It is a busy corner, there’s no doubt. I don’t think it’s going to be a place to go and sit, and contemplate, probably. But, maybe, a fun place to play! It will be active.”

VERSeFest 10 finds new avenues to convey poetry to online audiences

Alayne McGregor

The pandemic has made VERSeFest more creative by using its virtual format to find new ways of interacting with poetry.

The 10th edition of Ottawa’s international poetry festival, cancelled this spring, has been rescheduled to November 6 to 22. Entirely online this year, it will feature some 60 poets in English and French in a mix of live and pre-recorded readings, lectures, poetry slams, interviews and panels. It’s organized by volunteers from Ottawa’s poetry community.

Headliners include “Canisia Lubrin, a prominent political poet; Griffin winner Karen Solie, a lyrical poet who subverts the expected; Brandon Wint, a national champion slam poet; Angye Goana, a Columbian poet and activist; Albert Dumont, also known as ‘South Wind,’ a poet, storyteller and Algonquin Traditional Teacher; Anne-Marie Desmeules, winner of the 2019 Governor General’s Award for French-language poetry; and Éric Charlebois, a prolific poet inimitable in technique and bold imagery,” the festival said.

Poets from Iceland, Ireland, Germany and the United States will join Canadians in the line-up.

Seeing into poets’ lives

In previous years, the festival was held at Knox Presbyterian Church downtown. This year’s virtual format has inspired the festival to experiment with new ways of experiencing poetry.

Festival Director Monty Reid said that, as bonus segments in a number of events, different poets will take the audience on short tours of their workspaces, significant locations in their communities, or even their desks. “Each segment will be short and we’re leaving the con-

tent up to the respective poets, but we’re expecting some unusual tours.”

Experiences only possible online

VERSeFest Communications Director Vivian Vavassis said they were “determined to create events that wouldn’t feel like a lesser experience than our usual fare, so we tried to generate ideas for the types of experiences that opened up in a virtual medium and could only be possible online.

“I’ve been attending a number of virtual poetry readings, and one of the things that I found myself enjoying the most was when fellow audience members, often known poets themselves, would be following the reading, while milling about their dwellings, boiling pasta, gnawing on chicken wings and sharing what their lives. And that was a key moment for me when I realized that the virtual medium offered the opportunity for poets to share their physical spaces—or other important spaces to them—and how these spaces influence their writing and processes.”

The audience will also be part of the events, Reid said, for example, in Dial-a-Poet segments. “We expect most events will have an opportunity for audience interaction, most likely in the form of a Q&A session. But, in some cases, we plan to allow one participant to have an exclusive chat with the poet. We’re not sure yet how we’ll make that selection, but it should

provide the real enthusiasts an enviable opportunity.”

Other events will “blur” performance and poetry, including the sound experiments of Oana Avasilichioaei and Kaie Kellogg.

Reid said the festival, if not as large as planned for in March, is “a whole lot safer. Poetry never goes away.” He said that some poets did drop out because they weren’t comfortable with a strictly online presentation. “We hope to bring them back next year, when we expect to host a festival with both live and virtual streams. But the great majority of poets were happy to participate online—they understand there aren’t many other options at the moment.”

Outside and inside

“We’re fortunate that, so many months into the pandemic, the literary world is better at this,” Vavassis said. “We’ve had time to explore what works and learn from our sister festivals; the poets are more familiar with what an online presentation entails; and everyone and their dog—quite literally—has poked their heads into a couple of Zoom meetings.”

Poets also contributed “interesting ideas,” Reid said. “One wants to take us on a walk around Dublin. Another group will be recorded in a backyard garden. Some want to include music.”

All events are free for all audiences. The full schedule will be posted at versefest.ca

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Greyhound buses used to flow into Ottawa's Central Station

CHARLES AKHEN-MARCHAND/THE BUZZ

Greyhound abandons Centretown - what's next for inter-city bus service?

Alayne McGregor

Ottawa's intercity bus station – a Centretown institution – is facing the end of its road now that Greyhound is pulling out. The decision removes an easily accessible travel option for Centretowners.

Greyhound, which had put its Ottawa service on hiatus on May 12 because of lack of demand during the pandemic, said this month that it would not be returning to Central Station when it resumed operations here. Spokesperson Crystal Booker told *The BUZZ* that Ottawa will “continue to be a vital part of our network,” but would not say where Greyhound would be moving its local terminal.

“We will communicate well in advance our new location prior to a start-up date,” she said. “While we are eager to begin service again in Canada, we are using this time to ensure our future Ottawa location will continue to meet the needs of both our customers and our business.”

Greyhound operated almost all the passenger buses arriving and departing from the station, as well as a parcel express service. Remaining at the station are the government-owned Ontario Northland, with a limited daily service to destinations in northwestern Ontario, and Autobus Gatineau with a once-a-weekday service into western Quebec as far as Grand-Remous. Transcolines operates occasional, on-request service into the Pontiac region of Quebec from the station.

Intercity bus service has operated from 265 Catherine Street for almost 50 years. In normal times, it was open from 5 a.m. to 2:30 a.m., with Greyhound buses travelling to locations in southern Ontario, Quebec, and other parts of Canada and the United States.

The express buses to Toronto and Montreal in particular attracted long line-ups snaking through the station. At the most popular times, Greyhound might schedule three buses for one departure slot, filling up one and then bringing in the next, and still leave a few passengers waiting at the end.

Centretowners could walk to the station at Catherine and Kent Streets. Travelers could buy tickets using cash, as well as plastic, and didn't have to book in advance.

One user commented on Reddit, “Intercity bus travel is hell for everyone, but the convenience of the location made it less so. I picked up and dropped off kids going to and coming from university regularly for a five-year period. The central location was a godsend!”

“Intercity bus travel is hell for everyone, but the convenience of the location made it less so.”

City Councillor Catherine McKenney told *The BUZZ* that they were caught by surprise by the news. “I have real concerns about losing the Greyhound station in the downtown. That intercity transit link for residents is really important. We need to ensure that we maintain it. It is federally regulated because it crosses provincial boundaries, and I know I'll certainly be calling on our federal counterpart to ensure that we have that intercity transit link reinstated.”

Ottawa Centre MPP Joel Harden was also concerned, “Losing long-haul passenger buses creates a huge gap for low and modest income commuters. Accessible, affordable long-distance bus service is sorely needed and I'm open to alternatives, including public alternatives, to ensure commuters have that option.”

Co-locating with VIA?

In 2010, then-Mayor Larry O'Brien promoted the idea of moving the bus station to the east end on vacant land by the VIA Rail station on Tremblay Road. While the idea was widely discussed, it did not go anywhere.

The following year, Stewart Robertson, president of Crerar Group, who owns the station building and land, applied to the city to have the block, containing the station, rezoned from ground transportation facility zone to general mixed use zone.

He submitted a redevelopment proposal, which included 458 residential units in residential buildings ranging in height from nine to 23 storeys, 446 underground parking spaces, and commercial and office uses. Robertson ended up signing a new agreement with Greyhound and renovating the station instead.

No current development proposals

McKenney said that there were currently no development applications for the property, as of early October, and Robertson's 2011 application is inactive. Greyhound has not contacted the city about a new location.

Did McKenney think moving the bus terminal to the VIA location could work for Centretowners?

“I think that it would certainly continue to fill that gap. The LRT does run to VIA, so it's probably even more accessible to more people.”

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Somerset Ward: Conspiracy theories don't trump public health

Catherine McKenney

Recently, two men walked into a grocery store in Chinatown, took some items from the shelves and proceeded to the checkout. They were stopped by store employees; the men were not wearing face masks, which are required under our pandemic emergency bylaw and by the store's policies.

According to media reports, the store offered the men disposable masks but they still refused to put them on. The staff asked the men to leave but they didn't. They blocked the door and loudly argued that they had a right not to wear a mask and they prevented other people from safely leaving the store. The men were shouting conspiracy theories and made many claims: The mask bylaw is not a law (it is); the store does not have the right to kick them out (it does); COVID-19 is a hoax (it isn't); and police could not enforce the bylaw (they can). Eventually, the police were called. They spoke with the men and released them, saying the “individuals left after being educated about mask requirements.”

There's a lot wrong in this story. The conspiracy theorists, who seem to will-

fully ignore science, the law and community health, have taken a position that their right to do whatever they want outweighs the public good. It does not.

I have written the chief of police expressing my concerns about this incident. I believe that the lack of any consequence sends the wrong message to the public. (You can read the letter on my website at catherinemckenney.ca.)

Everyone must wear masks when entering public spaces such as stores, malls and offices, with the exception of very young children and a very small number of medically exempt individuals. Anyone else who refuses is putting others at risk of contracting a dangerous virus that continues to threaten our health, the economy, and the health and well-being of our friends and family.

Extend the eviction moratorium

The pandemic has brought many stresses to our community. We all worry about our health and the health of our loved ones. We miss live music, big gatherings and stopping to chat with our neighbours and friends.

For many who rent their homes and are facing serious financial pressures, they

are now at risk of losing their housing. Since March, there has been a provincial moratorium on evictions but this is now ending. It is estimated that about two percent of tenants in Ottawa (around 2,500 households) have been unable to make their rental payments and could be facing eviction.

An eviction would likely push these individuals and families into already crowded emergency shelters, informal and unsafe residences, or into encampments during the cold winter months. This would create situations for a high risk of COVID-19 outbreaks. Many emergency shelters are already overwhelmed and cannot increase their capacity, especially as they need to meet physical distancing requirements to keep their clients safe.

Housing is the first defense against the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The province must extend the eviction moratorium for the protection of tenants and for the sake of our community. Please make your voice heard by writing to the premier at premier@ontario.ca and copying our member of Provincial Parliament, Joel Harden, at JHarden-CO@ndp.on.ca.

Stay safe and be well. I look forward to seeing you soon.

Centretown Community Association report

Jack Hanna

Shorter building

The developer who wants to build across the street from the Canadian Museum of Nature has revised the plans, reducing the proposed apartment building from 21 to 10 storeys. The CCA has not yet taken a position on this newly proposed design.

The CCA opposed the initial 21-storey proposal, saying the building was far too high and of pedestrian design. As well, it would have set a precedent allowing the iconic museum to be ringed by uninspiring skyscrapers.

Saving Centretown heritage

The city has launched a major initiative to consider the preservation of heritage buildings in Centretown. There is the possibility of creating new districts where heritage buildings are protected but city staff have not yet come up with their recommendations. The CCA is encouraging them to be bold.

The CCA wants the city to create new heritage conservation districts (HCDs) in two areas. One is west of Kent Street in the neighbour-



hood surrounding Dundonald Park. The other is in the Golden Triangle from Elgin Street to the canal.

Centretown already has two HCDs. The Centretown HCD provides protection for heritage buildings from Elgin to Kent Streets. The Minto Park HCD comprises the park and the buildings facing it.

The CCA is in the midst of working out recommended boundaries for new HCDs. For more information, contact Jack at jack.2014@icloud.com.

Walking-cycling survey

In refreshing its transportation plan, the city wants residents to fill in a survey about walking and cycling. The survey asks what the priorities should be for dedicated walking and biking routes: Running errands in the neighbourhood? Connecting to the bus or LRT?

Or getting to work or school?

It asks folks how comfortable they feel walking on a roadway, the sidewalk, or a multi-use pathway. There are similar questions about cycling. The survey even asks people to locate on a map specific sites where biking or walking shortcuts are needed or obstacles need to be removed.

Complete the survey by October 23 at ottawaatplan.metroquest.ca/

Fall festival victim of COVID-19

The fall festival in Dundonald Park, scheduled for mid-September, was cancelled because of the province's tightening restrictions on gatherings.

The CCA and the Dundonald Park Working Group can't wait to get back to staging festivals for everyone.



This Centretown highrise had a green roof, but many local apartment buildings have no facilities for composting organic waste.

CHARLES ARBEN-MARCHAND/THE BUZZ

Comment

Give all Centretowners access to composting and green bins

Megan Thomas

Those bags of garbage you throw out? They contribute to global warming, especially if they contain organic waste. There are known ways to reduce those greenhouse gas emissions, but unfortunately many Centretowners don't have easy access to green bins and composting.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle! is a slogan we are all too familiar with, and yet our consumption rate and waste management is an ongoing issue. In 2017, the Ontario Waste Management Association (OWMA) came out with a troubling statistic: the province of Ontario generates 12.5 million tons of waste per year. That's roughly 850kg of garbage per person. What's more troubling is that only a quarter of that garbage is disposed of properly.

Of the 12.5 million tons of waste generated by Ontarians per year, 3.7 million is organic waste that is being sent to landfills. Decomposing organic matter is the primary producer of carbon and methane gas. These gases create half of the GHGs emitted from landfills, and landfill emissions are responsible for 27 percent of Canada's total emissions. With 880 landfills, Ontario disposes of more waste than any other Canadian province or territory.

How can we compost more of this organic waste? The problem isn't the number of composting initiatives out there, since there are plenty of green bin programs in Ottawa. It's accessibility, an issue faced by most residents of Centretown.

Home to 24,000 residents, Centretown has the highest percentage of ten-

ants in Ottawa. Most of these tenants reside in high-rise condo and apartment buildings, where composting bins are about as common as Bigfoot sightings. Unless you are one of the lucky few who live in heritage homes or have eco-conscious landlords, composting is a daily struggle. Many tenants have tried persuading their landlords to implement composting initiatives or discussed composting issues with their condo boards, but to no avail. "It's just too costly, too much of a hassle" is the ar-



Many Centretowners don't have access to city green bins.

gument. This attitude has left residents of Centretown frustrated, with many trekking their organic waste to family members' homes outside of the downtown core.

You might say, "Just get a compost bin and compost the remains yourself, or find someone to pick up your organics for you." Yes, that is an option, but why is this the only option? It shouldn't be. In 2020, everyone should have easy access to a green bin, especially when proper organic waste disposal is an efficient way to reduce our carbon footprint.

Additionally, many tenants do not have space in their apartments for a compost system. This is where green roofs would benefit

our community. Green roofs are essentially "living roofs" comprising vegetation, a growing medium, such as composted organic waste, and plants. Research shows that there are endless benefits of green roofs, including better air quality, stormwater and heat absorption to prevent harm to a building and its residents, and organic waste diversion away from landfills which reduces our overall GHG emissions. Not only do green roofs have environmental benefits, they are also an added amenity

that make residences more attractive for future tenants, and they're actually cheaper long term. Green roofs are also already in Ottawa! The University of Ottawa has found great success with its six green roofs on campus.

It's time for Centretown to follow in uOttawa's footsteps. We have an abundance of cement rooftops going to waste that could have green roof systems. Green roofs, along with access to composting bins, will improve our waste disposal system. Less organic waste in our landfills means less GHG emissions. As the nation's capital, don't we want to be a leader in the global fight against climate change?

Where can Gatineau transit fit?

cont from page 1
morning rush "you'd see people lined up 80 or 100 deep waiting for that one bus to get across the river to their office buildings."

Would demos block the tram?

He thought Ottawa City Council would most likely support the tunnel. When the report was discussed at the city Transportation Committee on September 2, most speakers favoured the tunnel, citing concerns about the aesthetics of the tram.

"The other thing that was raised during the council meeting – and we've heard this from some of our members – is that stretch of Wellington is not very pedestrian or bicycle friendly right now. I think a lot of people would like to see that street become a bit more livable, and become a bit more alive because it is pretty much a throughway right now. If you were to put an above-ground tram you just wouldn't have the room to do a lot of stuff."

He pointed out that "that section of Wellington is used quite a bit during the course of the year, not just for Canada Day but if you're having demonstrations or marches. If you're going to open up that section of Wellington and use it for those events, which will happen, then you couldn't run a tram down."

"Then you'd have to re-route with buses and you've just spent all this money on a brand-new transit system that, on the first Canada Day, Wellington would always be closed off. So, if you're trying to get people in and out of the downtown core on Canada Day or other major events on the Hill and in the Parliamentary precinct, it doesn't do much good to have a system that can't run."

"So I think the underground option probably is the best at this stage, and it's a bit closer to the [Ottawa] LRT stations so you can actually make those underground connections and make the system a bit more integrated. ... If you have those connections it will actually increase usage of the LRT in itself because they'll see it as a more integrated system."

He hoped the STO would learn from problems with the downtown Ottawa LRT stations, which pre-pandemic were "jam-packed because the stations simply weren't

big enough. We need to ensure that there's enough space, that doesn't feel cramped, and that if you have connections they're good connections, they're not just a dinky little tunnel connecting one station to the next. Take a page from other cities that have underground connections, like the PATH in Toronto which actually has a bit of a livable space which you can put shops or services down there and widen it out."

McKenney, on the other hand, didn't consider blockages from demonstrations a major problem with the surface option. "We've got electric trams in cities all over the world. I think that we can manage that here in the City of Ottawa."

A commuter-only option?

One concern with a tunnel is that it would reduce the visibility of Centretown and its businesses to commuters. MacKay said that's part of a larger concern: that the LRT is "still viewed as a commuter-only option. It's to get people in and out of the downtown core, rather than a way to connect with the rest of this central part of the city."

As well, the proposed tunnel raises the longstanding problem of what to do with Sparks Street. "How do we make that a better destination and a gateway to Centretown? [Is] the city going to take this as an opportunity to redesign the downtown core as not just a place to get through but a place to get to?"

Will this system show off Centretown?

In Washington, DC, he said, when you leave the subway at Union Station, you immediately see the Capitol Building, the Supreme Court, the Washington Monument. "Yes, I'm here now in a capital city. We don't have that. We don't like to show off or to make these stations or these connections friendly. Not just to commuters but to travelers, to tourists to ordinary people."

"That's going to be a serious question that I hope City Council talks about. Can we make these a showpiece for this section of Ottawa?"

LRT stations need to be "a bit more open, more visible and not crowded into office buildings. How do we do that? If the community doesn't step up and say this is what we want to see out of this, then we're just going to let the designers of this new system have their say. As we've seen with the [Ottawa] LRT stations, they're going to try to make them less of a showpiece than they really should be."

Not enough Ottawa responses

Public consultation on the STO proposals happened in the height of this summer from June 22 to July 19. McKenney said this was not nearly enough consultation. She was concerned at the low response rate to the questionnaire from Ontario residents: only 574 responses compared to 928 from Quebec.

The tramway left questionnaire respondents divided: half thought a tram on Wellington was compatible with preserving the image of Parliament Hill, while one-third disagreed. Forty-eight per cent of Ontario residents disagreed, as opposed to 24 per cent of Quebec residents.

The report on the questionnaire results said that, "For many, a tramway would disfigure Wellington Street and would not be appropriate, especially given that the City of Ottawa has spent significant amounts of money to conceal its transit network. For others, a tramway in the National Capital, thanks to its style, would give the city a romantic character comparable to Europe's major cities, and would send a strong message in favour of public transit."

MacKay said more individual community consultations with community members, with businesses, with transit organizations like OTRA were needed. The city needs to be much more specific in its questions and do more outreach, he said.

"Seek out different groups and get as many voices as you can at the table. It could be a very exciting project for everybody if it's done right. It's a real symbol of what we are as a national capital."

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Dundonald Park: An urban oasis in the midst of asphalt and cement

Stephen Thirlwall

Rosemary Leslie, a park neighbour, gave a beautiful online description of Dundonald Park: “It has got everything: downtown, trees, green space, kids’ play area, dog walking area, game tables, benches, outdoor movies, festivals, teens, business people, guitar players, frisbee players, gov’t workers, neighbours (like me!), people from every nationality and background, dancers, yoga, drum players, tai chi, BBQ’s, snowmen, picnics, birds, love, peace . . .”

How did this Centretown park develop? Through attention every year by neighbours, community groups, and local social agencies.

However, parks need regular attention. Even in the early days, newspaper articles asked who was responsible for the continuing care and protection of the park. Vandalism was identified as the most consistent problem facing it.

The first Friends of Dundonald Park

In 1994, Susan Kerr and Suzanne Harding made a semi-formal agreement with the city to restore and care for the park’s flower beds. A small group of park neighbours and their friends formed the Friends of Dundonald Park. They continued this beautification work on and off until early 2017, when the agreement was terminated. Susan recalled, “Gardening in Dundonald

ing; jogging, Tai Chi, yoga, games; music; children’s and community events including movie nights. The Centretown Community Association’s Tree and Greenspace Committee (T&G) collaborated with CCHC and various other groups to hold well-attended Earth Day celebrations and fall fairs. For several years, this greatly improved the park’s atmosphere and discouraged misuse of the park, particularly crime, drugs and alcohol.

As with everything, there are cycles of ups and downs. A few years ago, the CCHC had to stop its activity in the park. T&G and some other groups maintained certain activities, but other things such as garden upkeep were not happening.

As well as the good side



The Dundonald gardening team at work, maintaining the many plants in the park. Brian Beaven is on the hose. STEPHEN THIRLWALL/THE BUZZ



The gardening group working in Dundonald Park (Barbara Sibbald in white).

STEPHEN THIRLWALL/THE BUZZ

Dundonald Park has been a fixture in Ottawa for 116 years. Before that, it was an unsurveyed “waterworks lot” known as Somerset Square that was informally used as a park.

Its formal designation came in 1904 when it was named after Douglas Cochrane, 12th Earl of Dundonald. He served in major British campaigns in Africa and the Middle East in the 1880s and 1890s, including the relief of Khartoum and the Boer War. He was the last British officer to command Canadian troops and developed plans for a Canadian citizen army.

The park comprises a full residential-sized city block, fronted by Somerset Street West on the north, Lyon and Bay Streets on the east and west sides, and Maclaren Street to the south.

The park’s initial development was arranged through the Ottawa Improvement Committee (forerunner of the National Capital Commission) and completed in 1907. During 1913, a well was drilled providing civic drinking water for the park.

Park enriched my life and I hope others will also have access to that experience.”

Oddly, in fall 2017, Friends of Dundonald Park were one of eight organizations from the region honoured by the International Tulip Festival for their decorative garden work. My wife Nathalie and I attended the Tulip Gala, receiving the award on the group’s behalf because lead members were no longer in Ottawa. Special tulip bulbs were received from the festival to plant at the park.

A vibrant and welcoming place for all

In the 2010s, the Centretown Community Health Centre (CCHC) unveiled a plan to regenerate Dundonald Park, supported by the city, other service providers, and community groups. The centre’s aim was to make it “a vibrant, welcoming place that is open and accessible to everyone regardless of age, ability, background or social status.” It encouraged a healthy environment for sunbathing, napping, quiet chatting and reading; dog walk-

ing; jogging, Tai Chi, yoga, games; music; children’s and community events including movie nights. The Centretown Community Association’s Tree and Greenspace Committee (T&G) collaborated with CCHC and various other groups to hold well-attended Earth Day celebrations and fall fairs. For several years, this greatly improved the park’s atmosphere and discouraged misuse of the park, particularly crime, drugs and alcohol.

A new team

During 2017-2018, discussions began on developing a new team to care for and develop the park’s trees and flower gardens. T&G, which looks into issues regarding Centretown’s trees and greenspaces, decided to work toward establishing this group. Brian Beaven was very much responsible for achieving this goal and obtaining a licence of occupation for the flower beds.

In the summer and fall of 2019, a massive cleanup started in the garden removing weeds and planting numerous new plants. A big challenge was to remove goutweed that was strangling the other plants. As the group rallied again in early spring this year, the COVID-19

pandemic hit the city. From July through September, the garden group continued its work while social distancing. During this period, Barbara Sibbald provided an organized plan and operation for garden development that is still ongoing.

In September, some members of T&G initiated the formation of the Dundonald Improvement Group (DIG) to address various other park issues of safety, unacceptable behaviours of individuals, a nearby public toilet and increasing park activities. So far, there have been several meetings involving various parties:

T&G, CCHC, Somerset West Community Health Centre, the councillor’s office, neighbourhood police, the Salvation Army service group, and neighbours of the park.

In compiling this brief look at Dundonald Park and its activities, thanks go to Christopher Ryan for recording some of the early history; Donna Holtom, a previous Friend, for collecting various information; and Brian Beaven for sharing materials. Thanks also go to those who offered many hours of volunteer work in the gardens: Barbara, Stuart, Luc, Brian, Donna, Michelle, Dinah, Al-

ice, Kristina, Deborah, Bonnie, Richard, Darlene and others.

Everyone is welcome to come to the park, but with this comes the hope that all will treat the park well, so that it continues to be a special haven for enjoying greenery, meeting friends and doing other activities.

It took great foresight back in the early 1900s to establish a park that still exists and thrives 116 years later. It will take immense foresight and creativity to establish some other new, urgently needed park spaces in Centretown during this time of urban intensification.

MPP report: To keep everyone safe, we need paid sick days

Joel Harden

On September 22, in the midst of rising COVID-19 cases, Ottawa Public Health (OPH) invoked a self-isolation order for people showing symptoms of COVID-19. Those who don’t comply could be fined \$5000 per day.

This is a serious matter. For months, we have worked hard to flatten the curve and now we must ensure that commitment holds fast. Dr. Vera Etches and the OPH team are making this clear and I’m thankful for their leadership.

We should, however, consider the awful choice facing people right now without sick-day protection at work. For months, we have insisted that Ontario create a paid sick-days program so people can stay home and avoid spreading the virus. As per his habit, Premier Ford waited for the federal government to act. The government he leads has done nothing to expand sick days protection. In

fact, his legacy was to strip away the minimal two paid sick days enacted by the previous government.

At the time of this writing, the federal government has announced a temporary paid sick days program, the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit (CRSB), which has passed the House of Commons and is awaiting approval in the Senate. This is happening in no small part thanks to the efforts of federal NDP leader Jagmeet Singh, who made paid sick leave a key demand in his negotiations with the Trudeau government.

While this is an important step, not everyone will be covered by the CRSB in all circumstances. We also need the province to fill in the gaps in coverage that the CRSB will leave by implementing a made-in-Ontario paid sick days plan.

As Naini Cloutier from Somerset West Community Health Centre notes, 66 percent of COVID-19 cases are in low-income,

racialized communities, where folks are more likely to hold precarious jobs without paid sick days, for example, personal support workers, cleaners and grocery clerks.

Premier Ford says these folks are our “heroes” but they don’t have his support when it matters. This is unacceptable. We need paid sick days to stay home right now. That’s why I’ve introduced a motion at the Ontario Legislature for a provincial paid sick days program accessible to everyone not covered by the federal government program. I’m calling on the premier to help me pass it without delay because no one should have to choose between public health and financial health.

If you need paid sick days, or if you know someone who does, tell them to contact us at jharden-gp@ndp.on.ca. We will make sure their story is heard by the Ford government.

What's on this month, in Ottawa and beyond

Tony Wohlfarth

October offers a range of in-person and online entertainment choices.

National Gallery of Canada

Moyra Davey is a renowned Canadian conceptual artist. *The Faithful*, a retrospective of her work, is on display at the gallery (380 Sussex Drive) until January 3. I found the exhibition fascinating.

Davey is a film director, writer and photographer. Seven of her documentary films are included in the exhibition, along with 54 photographs.

She lives in New York City while professing a siren call to Quebec. Her films are set on the New York City subway and in her apartment, and are self-narrated. She talks about her father's role in the FLQ crisis, along with the influence of writers like James Baldwin and Pierre Vallières.

Davey also pays tribute to a prominent Belgian film director, Chantal Ackerman, who died (by suicide) in 2015 on the same day that Davey tried restaging a shot from one of Ackerman's films.

The museum is open Thursday through Sunday.

Admission to the exhibition also includes the permanent collection.

Canadian Museum of Nature

The nature museum (240 McLeod Street) previewed its latest exhibit, *Planet Ice*, on October 1. The interactive exhibition is on display until January 3.

Planet Ice illustrates the role ice plays on planet Earth. I especially enjoyed the ice fishing display and the interactive facial recognition software. Prehistoric mastodons emerge to dazzle audiences, young and old. Tickets are available at: <https://nature.ca/>

European Union Film Festival

Film buffs should mark November 13 to 29 in their calendars. That's when the online edition of the European Union Film Festival will present recent films from EU member countries. Check www.cfi-icf.ca/euff for tickets and the list of films, which has not yet been released.

One World Arts Film Festival

This annual festival of documentary film (<http://oneworldarts.ca>) has postponed its 30th festival until December. The event this

year will be virtual and is organized in partnership with the United Nations Commission on Refugees.

In the meantime, to appreciate the importance of refugees in Ottawa, I recommend listening to this podcast (14 minutes) with Louisa Taylor from Refugee 613 at <https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-100-ottawa-morning/clip/15800884-ottawas-refugee-settlement-hub-turns-five>

International Vegan Film Festival

This festival is back and running virtually until October 17. Titles include *Apocalypse Cow: How Meat Killed The Planet*, *Torre Washington: Vegan Bodybuilding Champion*, *Monbiot: Arresting The Truth*, and *Lawless Lands: The Illegal Wildlife Trade In Vietnam*.

Tickets are being sold in blocks of films, each approximately 90 minutes in length for \$10. A pass including all 28 short and feature films costs \$55. Tickets/film information at www.theivff.com

Gallery 101

Svetlana Swinimer hosts *Unveiling the Goddess*, a solo exhibit of her art, until



Ceremonial Towel, a carving on red oak, is one of Svetlana Swinimer's artworks currently on display at Gallery 101. Photo courtesy the artist.

November 7. Swinimer was born in Siberia and studied math and fine arts at Moscow University. She describes her art as drawing upon "the intersection of science and humanity". To visit the exhibit, send an email to director@g101.ca. The gallery is located at 101 Catherine Street in Centretown.

On October 30, Swinimer will give a talk on Zoom about the symbols found in domestic textiles, featuring the ancient Slavic goddess Makosh, and the manifestations of these symbols in her exhibit. More info at <https://g101.ca/>

Gladstone Theatre

The Gladstone (325 Gladstone Avenue) is not scheduled to present any of its own shows until January. However, it did donate its

space and host six live performances of Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* on September 19 to 20.

The pop-up performances moved to the Gladstone after Ottawa bylaw enforcement notified The Company of Adventurers that their performances in a residential backyard violated the city's noise bylaw.



The Company of Adventurers

The event raised \$3,294 for the Ottawa Food Bank. The cast, 13 talented students from Ottawa South, were co-organized by two professors of English: Paul

Keen (Carleton University) and Cynthia Sugars (University of Ottawa).

Out of Town

Artists in Thunder Bay cooperated during the pandemic to mount an online exhibition through to October 25. Culture Days is part of an online visual arts exhibition across Ontario at <https://culturedays.ca/en/events/2fdd18ff-3547-432b-adbe-99cf01b7faf0>.

Jensen-Bode is one of the artists, originally from Ottawa who studied art at the Ontario College of Art and the University of Ottawa.

Tony Wohlfarth is an Ottawa-based freelance film, arts and entertainment writer. He supported *The Comedy of Errors* show and is a friend of the Thunder Bay artist.

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