



From The Wizard of Oz to vampires, 4



How we can increase climate resilience, 5

# THE CENTRETOWN BUZZ



Over 100 people with concerns ranging from the climate crisis to affordable housing filled the Prov. Courthouse forecourt on Dec. 7 to protest the just-passed Bill 23. ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ

## City will lose millions from Bill 23

Alayne McGregor

**B**anging pots and chanting, a 100+ crowd from nine community organizations raised a kerfuffle about the provincial *More Homes Built Faster Act* (Bill 23) on December 7.

They objected to the bill's negative effects on heritage protection, parkland, wetland and greenbelt protection, green building standards, community appearance, support for tenants, and affordable housing. Speaker after speaker called for the bill's repeal.

But their noise made no difference to the provincial government, which had passed the bill the previous week after minimal consultation, over the strong objections of the NDP, Greens, and Liberals, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and local conservation authorities and environmental groups.

The province then followed up with the even more

controversial *Better Municipal Governance Act* (Bill 39) which will allow the mayors of Toronto and Ottawa to pass a bylaw with the support of only one-third of city council if the "bylaw could potentially advance a prescribed provincial priority."

The Ontario Legislature passed Bill 39 last week. Ottawa City Council told the province it opposed the bill, and wished to retain passing bylaws by majority vote. Mayor Mark Sutcliffe said he is not interested in using this power.

Bill 23 will have major effects on city planning operations, while at the same time cutting millions from the development charge (DC) funds used to pay for services for new developments. A preliminary financial analysis by city staff released Nov. 25 estimated the changes could cost the city well over \$60 million annually or about 25 percent of DC revenues starting in 2025.

"The Bill 23 amendments designed to increase housing

supply will disproportionately impact the increase in revenue required to service land in advance of future residential development."

**continued on page 3 "Bill 23"**

## Counter-protests pushed gov't to invoke Emergencies Act, PM testifies

Alayne McGregor

**O**ttawa resident counter-demonstrations against the convoy occupation were one of several factors that led the federal government to invoke the Emergencies Act in February, according to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

Testifying at the Public Order Emergencies Commission (POEC) on Nov. 25, Trudeau said that the federal cabinet group responding to the occupation and border blockades was increasingly worried about threats of serious violence, including those that could be inspired by residents pushing back because of weeks of police inaction.

"We saw increasingly counter protests of people who were trying to take back their city. For example, we all saw images of grandmothers standing in residential streets against massive trucks heading their way to try and prevent them from coming to join the convoy.

"The situation was already pretty inflamed. My concern was, if we continued to not do anything, are enough citizens going to start counter-protesting and taking things into their own hands at various places across the country that we do get into dangerous, violent situations?"

Trudeau said he had heard how residents were

threatened during the occupation: being harassed for wearing masks, the constant noise, and people not feeling safe in their own streets.

Throughout the occupation, some residents individually placarded the occupiers. From the second weekend onward, residents organized larger non-violent counter-protests. On February 13, at "The Battle of Billings Bridge", a large group of residents peacefully prevented trucks from getting to the downtown core.

Trudeau expressed concerns about that confrontation: "having civilians having to do things that would be more appropriate for trained police officers to be doing, I think we can both agree is not an ideal situation."

When asked if the government was worried that the event's success might mean the counter-protests would become more frequent if there was no government action, he agreed.

In earlier testimony to the commission, former Ottawa Police Board chair Diane Deans confirmed that the police had been concerned about the risks of counter-protests. She agreed Ottawa residents were tired, angry, and frustrated, and said the board was concerned that citizens could start to take matters into their own hands. **continued on page 2 Occupation**



Former OC Transpo general manager John Manconi (l) was rigorously questioned by Ottawa Light Rail Transit Commission Co-Lead Counsel John Adair (r). (OLRT video screenshot)

## Scathing LRT report blames city leaders

Alayne McGregor

**O**ttawa Transit Riders (OTR) board member Kari Glynes Elliott wasn't surprised at the major findings of the Ottawa Light Rail Transit Public Inquiry.

"I felt vindicated in that somebody else saw what I saw. This was precisely and exactly what we had been talking about – transparency and accountability – for the whole four years of this term. There seemed to be this cult of secrecy where they didn't think that they needed to tell us and we didn't need to know. Definitely in the later stages, particularly when the train was launched and having problems,

some councillors were kept out of the loop."

In his report released Nov. 30, Justice William Hourigan did not mince his words: the conduct of Mayor Jim Watson, Transit Commission Chair Allan Huble, city manager Steve Kanelakos, and OC Transpo head John Manconi in managing Ottawa's LRT was "egregious."

"It frustrates me enormously that they launched a train that really wasn't ready. They lied about the testing. And so people were riding not knowing that it hadn't met testing, basically being guinea pigs. I think that's a pretty appalling thing to do," Glynes Elliott said.

Read the full story on [centretownbuzz.com](http://centretownbuzz.com)

December 16, 2022 — Vol. 27, No. 11

# THE CENTRETOWN BUZZ

AT THE HEART OF OTTAWA SINCE 1995.

101-210 Gloucester St.  
Ottawa, ON  
K2P 2K4  
Phone: 613-565-6012

[centretownbuzz.com](http://centretownbuzz.com)  
[twitter.com/centretownbuzz](https://twitter.com/centretownbuzz)  
[facebook.com/centretownbuzz](https://facebook.com/centretownbuzz)

## BUZZ Staff

Managing editor: Alayne McGregor  
[editor@centretownbuzz.com](mailto:editor@centretownbuzz.com)

Associate editor: Eleanor Sawyer

City Editor: Robert Smythe  
[cityskyline@centretownbuzz.com](mailto:cityskyline@centretownbuzz.com)

Distribution manager: Archie Campbell  
[circulation@centretownbuzz.com](mailto:circulation@centretownbuzz.com)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Centretown BUZZ is created and distributed in Centretown, Ottawa, located on traditional and unceded Algonquin land.

## NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of *The BUZZ* will be published January 20, 2023. Deadline for ads and submissions: January 9, 2023.  
ISSN 1204-1604

## ADVERTISING

The BUZZ is proud to offer an effective advertising medium that reaches 10,000 Centretown homes and businesses each month. Our competitive advertising rates are as low as \$31 per issue.

View our rate card and publishing dates at [centretownbuzz.com/advertising](http://centretownbuzz.com/advertising).

For more information, email [ads@centretownbuzz.com](mailto:ads@centretownbuzz.com) or call 613-565-6012 x1.

## Thank you to our volunteer carriers

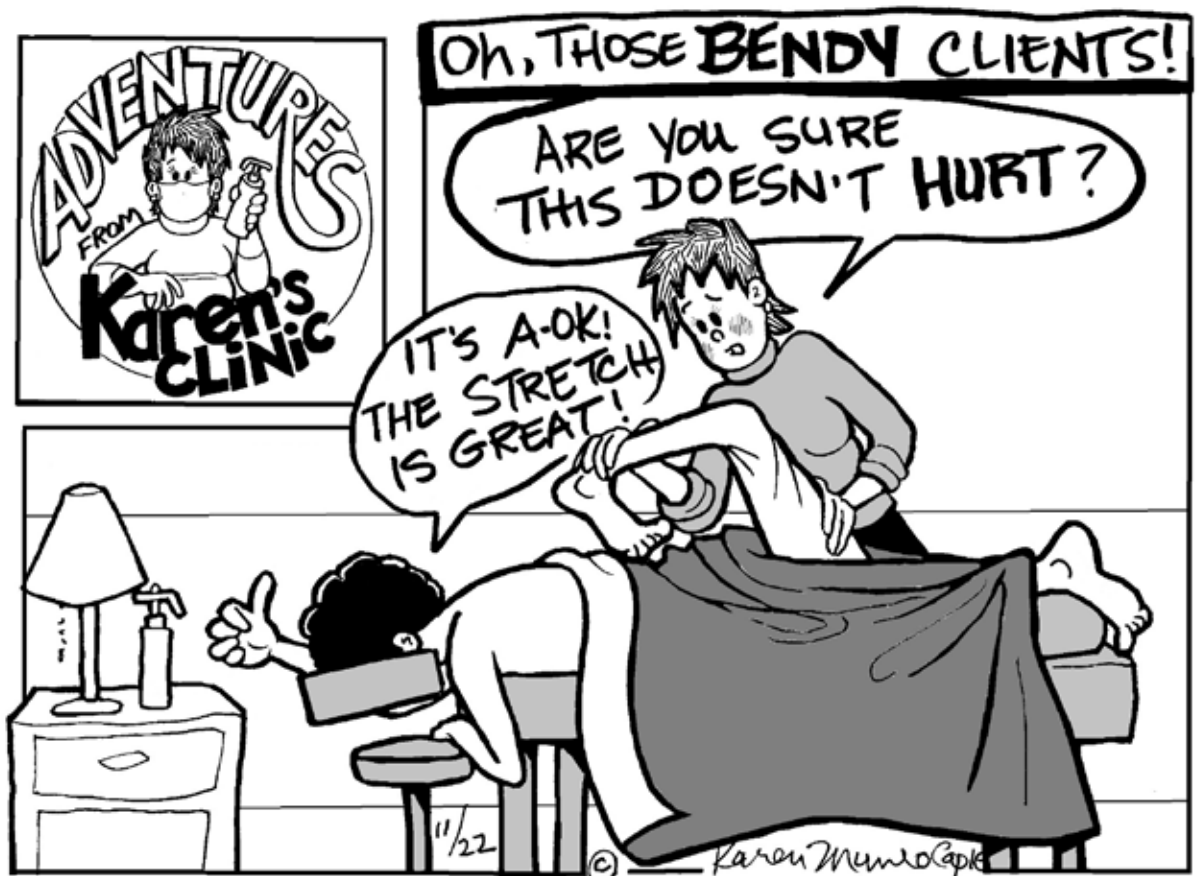
Ahmed Shalabi, Amanda Asquith, Anne O'Connor, Archie Campbell, Arwyn Holmes, Bayne Pearen, Betty Gregory, Brendan Hennigan, Carol Sissons, Cassidy Beers, Catharine Vandelinde, Catherine Boucher, Charles Akben-Marchand, Chris Edwards, Craig Layng, Colleen McGuire, David Seaborn, Debbie Barton, Diane Holmes, Don Smith, Drina Wethey, Eleanor Sawyer, Emma Chamberlain, Glynda Newton, Hunter McGill, Jennifer Bedwell, Kathleen Oliver, Kenney Vandelinde, Kim Malcolm, Maria Bedoya, Martha Scott, Michael Hatfield, Michael Powell, Michelle Kirkman, Mike Gregory, Mindy Sichel, Neil Parkinson-Dow, Pam Gahan, Pat Shaulis, Patricia Marsden-Dole, Paul Bennett, Regan Meloche, Robert Smythe, Shelley Pearen, Sophie McCarrell, Sue Domina, Suzanne Nash, Venita Warren, Wendy Bennett, Wendy Hunter, Wendy Sewell, Zeng Xin, Zsafia Orosz

To join our distribution team, please call 613-565-6012 x3 or email [circulation@centretownbuzz.com](mailto:circulation@centretownbuzz.com)

The Centretown BUZZ is published by The Centretown BUZZ Board of Directors, a group consisting of community members representing all residents of Centretown.

The Centretown BUZZ operates under the guidelines of the Canadian Copyright Act.  
© 2022 The Centretown BUZZ

## The Lighter Side of the Pandemic, by Karen Munro-Caple



## Don't let a virus be your holiday gift!

I still haven't forgotten that Christmas. A friend from out west dropped in to see my husband and me; we had a lovely time chatting, and he left us with a gift – a nasty dose of the flu virus he didn't realize he was spreading.

We were supposed to be hosting the family feast that year, and had bought the turkey and trimmings and decorated the house. Instead we spent the next five days on our backs, barely able to croak our apologies over the phone for cancelling. One day I was in such a misery of semi-hallucinations from fever that I wasn't even able to read.

We've never had a repeat (thank-

fully) because we've got our flu shots annually every since.

This month, the situation is worse: Ottawa Public Health (OPH) says levels of RSV and influenza are very high and continuing to rise. COVID-19 levels are increasing as well. Protecting yourself and others is even more important.

You can book a flu shot at your local pharmacy (or [through OPH](https://www.ontario.ca/through-op) for children 6 months to 5 years old and their household members, or for those without an OHIP card.) You can get your COVID-19 vaccination (or bivalent booster if your last shot was more than six months ago) through many pharmacies or by booking at [www.ontario.ca/](http://www.ontario.ca/)

[book-vaccine/](https://www.ontario.ca/book-vaccine/)

And they're free!

Getting vaccinated means you're less likely to spread infection. Get your shots for all the overworked healthcare workers at CHEO who are fighting the worst respiratory viral outbreak they've ever seen. The kid you save from hospital might be your neighbour's, or your own.

And please wear a mask indoors and on the LRT and buses – which will further reduce your risk of catching a virus or of spreading it to anyone else.

Consider it your gift to everyone else these holidays.

- Alayne McGregor

## Letter: City snowplows shouldn't interrupt my sleep

I read the *Sleepless in Ottawa* article in the November, 2022, edition of *The Centretown BUZZ* and would like to add my voice to the nighttime noise issue.

As winter is underway the snowplows are going to wake me up at 3 a.m., 4 a.m., and 5 a.m. whenever it snows. I'm near the McNabb Community Centre parking lot, so there is a lot of snowplowing at night that happens there and wakes me. It's absolutely horrible.

Then I'm all cranky at work and have to take vacation days or sick days to catch up after a few consecutive

nights of limited sleep. This has happened the past few winters and I anticipate it will continue consistently into this winter.

The noise sounds like an alarm clock going "Beep, beep, beep!" It's unreasonably loud. I could probably hear it from blocks away. The point of the backing-up beeping noise is to alert anyone who may be walking by, not entire city blocks!

What's more, the snowplows are hired by the City of Ottawa and McNabb is a city facility, so when I call bylaw services, they can't really do

anything. How contradictory that the city doesn't enforce its own noise bylaw when plowing their own property.

Recommendations:

1. Turn the beeping volume down.
2. Plow in long continuous strokes without backing up wherever possible, instead of forwards-backwards, forwards-backwards.

3. If plows must operate after 11 p.m. and before 7 a.m., the closer to either of these start and end times the better.

Sleep is, after all, a huge part of health.

Marielle Gervais

## Occupation was "a very dangerous and volatile situation"

continued from page 1

The Emergencies Act was invoked on February 14. Police forces ended the occupation the following weekend.

Paul Champ was one of three Ottawa lawyers representing the Ottawa Coalition of Residents and Businesses at the commission. He said that testimony made it clear that "everyone knew that the Ottawa police were completely overwhelmed, that they did not have the capacity to control that event in any way, and that it was an occupation. They simply did not have the capacity or resources to manage the situation."

"And from then onwards all the Ottawa police was trying to do was just maintain the most basic level of presence because they could not do any enforcement."

Champ described the situation on the streets as "a very dangerous and volatile situation, not only for the resi-

dents of Ottawa, but for those convoy protesters themselves. They were very fortunate that they did not cause serious injury or death to themselves.

"We're very fortunate that there were no riots or explosions. I think it was a miracle from the evidence that I saw and those thousands of reports that I reviewed. We were all very lucky and it wasn't because of the good work of any police service. We were just damn lucky."

He was particularly upset that convoy organizers tried to portray themselves as victims in their commission testimony. At one point, when his fellow lawyer Emilie Taman was cross-examining a convoy organizer, she instead played a 10-minute compilation video of truck horns and fireworks and people looking visibly distressed in the streets to emphasize the actual effect of the occupation.

Champ said that emotions were very

high during the occupation and there were many volatile people. He said he supported "everything that the people in Ottawa did. I've never been so proud to live in a city." The actions that residents took to show the occupiers they were unwelcome were "really inspiring and amazing, but it was also dangerous."

Trudeau was the final witness at the commission, which was established to determine if the invocation of the act was justified. The testimony and documents revealed in 7½ weeks of hearings were an unprecedented view into internal police and government deliberations. They exposed how the Ottawa police misunderstood the convoy protest and its aims and didn't pay enough attention to pre-event intelligence briefings, which allowed the convoy to take over downtown Ottawa.

Mr. Justice Paul Rouleau will table his report in Parliament on February 20.

# Convoy organizers fail to get class action funds

Alayne McGregor

An attempt by convoy organizers to get \$200,000 of the funds being held for a class action to compensate Centretowners for what they suffered in the convoy occupation was rejected last week.

Justice Calum MacLeod rejected the motion from Benjamin Dichter and Chris Garrah to release the funds in order to fund their defense against the class action. In his ruling, MacLeod noted that these funds were not their own, but were rather held in trust for convoy participants: “there is no evidence that the funds were intended for the personal use of the convoy organizers or the fundraisers themselves.”

MacLeod also concluded that the defendants had not shown that they had no other means by which they could retain counsel or defend themselves: “Neither of the moving parties have made the kind of frank financial disclosure that might be necessary to make a finding of impecuniosity.”

He also noted that, even

if the defendants said they did not honk horns or block streets themselves, as organizers they could still be liable for the actions of others in the occupation. The province of Ontario is seeking forfeiture of any escrowed funds beyond those for the class action as it contends the occupation was a criminal activity, the ruling noted.

The money in escrow – about \$5.3 million – was donated to support the convoy occupation. It was frozen last spring as part of the class action lawsuit against the convoy occupation and its organizers and major participants, pending the result of the lawsuit.

The class action was filed on behalf of Zexi Li and others by Ottawa lawyer Paul Champ. It seeks damages for those residents and businesses most affected by the incessant honking and engine noise, air pollution, and other effects of the trucks which blocked downtown streets for more than three weeks this winter.

Champ opposed the release of funds to Dichter and Garrah. “They didn’t have

any solid claim to access the money. We’re going to do everything we can to ensure those funds are preserved until the end of this action. If we’re successful, the funds should go towards compensating the people of downtown Ottawa.”

He said that a previous attempt to release funds to pay for convoy organizers’ appearance before the Public Order Emergency Commission had been abandoned.

In November, Champ applied to amend the class action to replace the “John Doe” placeholders with five specific names: the GiveSendGo fundraising platform and its president Jacob Wells; New Brunswicker Brad Howland, who donated \$75,000 to the convoy; and Jonker Trucking and its president Harold Jonker.

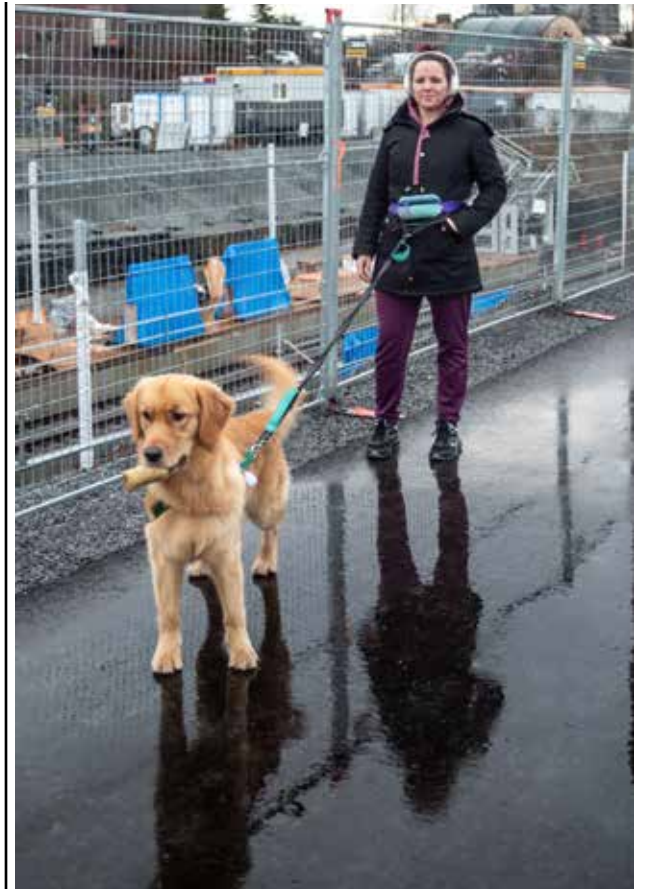
Champ said Howland and Jonker were representative of the “donor” and “trucker” class of defendants respectively. He said Jonker gave numerous interviews expressing his support for the convoy cause, while Howland is a “sophisticated businessman” who made

comments on social media supporting the tactics of the trucker protest and even flew to Ottawa for a couple of days to take part.

GiveSendGo not only “took up the torch” to keep money flowing to those truckers who were engaged in illegal activities, Champ said, but when the convoy protesters were having difficulty opening bank accounts for the donations, Wells signed a guarantee and an agreement with the protesters that he would personally hold some of the funds in trust separate from GiveSendGo.

“That company and its president were really going out of their way to try to provide material support to those trucker protests. We think they provided signal substantial assistance to the illegal trucker activities and therefore should also be liable.”

The amendment also slightly expands the zone covered by the class action to include another 2-3,000 residents, for a total of 15,000, he said, as well as adding people working within the zone. The zone would now



After 2½ years, the Trillium Pathway north of Gladstone Ave. is finally straight again. The detour to allow construction of the Corso Italia LRT station was recently removed. Here Kim and her dog enjoy a walk on the restored path by the station.

ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ

include Parliament Hill and the construction workers restoring the Centre Block who were laid off for weeks because of the occupation.

The hearing for the

amendment will be held in late January. Champ hoped for a decision on that within two months, and then a hearing on certifying the class action in late 2023.

## Make your voice heard at the City of Ottawa

Jack Hanna

The city is seeking volunteers to sit on more than a dozen committees and boards.

Some of these committees have heavy-duty powers, such as the Ottawa Board of Health (public health programs, services, and measures), the Ottawa Police Services Board (overseeing the police service), or the Committee of Adjustment (deciding requested exemptions to zoning bylaws and severing properties).

The Ottawa Public Library Board, which oversees library operations and new buildings, actually has more citizen trustees than councillors – and as a trustee you

might even get your name on a plaque in the new central library if it opens before your term is up.

One committee which hugely influences development in Centretown, the Built Heritage Sub-Committee, also has positions open.

For those affected by disabilities, the Para Transpo eligibility appeals panel and the Accessibility Advisory Committee might be of interest.

You can also apply to consider appeals of property standards orders and city license suspensions; serve on the board of directors of the Shaw Centre or the boards of several conservation authorities; and more.

Most positions are volunteer, with expenses paid; the

police board, the board of health, the committee of adjustment, the property standards committee, and some conservation authorities pay an honorarium.

There is a Zoom information session on Monday, December 19 at 6 p.m. and an in-person session December 12 from 6 to 8 p.m. at Ben Franklin Place, 101 Centrepoin Drive.

The library board and conservation authority application deadlines are January 3; for all other entities, it’s January 23. City Council is expected to approve most appointments between February and March 2023.

To find out more, search for “[Join a committee or board](#)” on ottawa.ca.

## Bill 23 will gut the city’s ability to fund services

continued from page 1

This means “conclusively that growth will not pay for growth,” the analysis said.

Somerset Ward Councillor Ariel Troster told the protest that “this terrible bill” will “strip the city of the revenue we need to build community, not just homes.” She said city staff told her that the tax increase required to compensate for the bill would be over 3.5 percent. She was worried the city was entering a period of austerity “and yet this is the time when we need services more than ever. This bill guts the city’s ability to fund those services.”

Councillor Theresa Kavanagh said the bill would not help the current crisis in

affordable housing in Ottawa. The province’s introduction of the bill was “pretty sneaky,” she said. “If they really wanted to work with municipalities, why did they put a bill out the day after the [city] election when we couldn’t even talk about it?”

An ACORN representative said the bill guts a recent

city policy calling for 10 percent affordable housing near transit, by only allowing five percent and only for 25 years.

Pointing to recent wins by education workers, Councillor Shawn Menard told the crowd not to back down.

“We know that people power can overpower this government. So do not stop.”

For all your real estate needs in Centretown

**Linda McQuarrie**  
Sales Representative

Direct: 613.219.5996  
lindamcquarrie@royallepage.ca

ROYAL LEPAGE  
Team Realty

## People’s commission concludes hearings, interim report out in January

The Ottawa People’s Commission (OPC)

The OPC held its final public hearing on December 10, marking Human Rights Day. It was the last of 13 public hearings that took place both in-person and online.

The commission has heard from over 200 residents who have bravely shared the impact of huge trucks blocking streets, spewing exhaust fumes, unremitting honking, and harassment and intimidation during the convoy occupation.

Alex Neve, one of the four commissioners of the OPC and former secretary general of the Canadian branch of Amnesty International, said: “So much of the testimony we’ve been hearing focuses on how slogans, flags, symbols and chants,

and racism and hate – literally terrorizing people – were some of the key factors keeping a lot of people trapped in their homes.”

At the final hearing, the OPC heard testimony from former Somerset Ward councillor Catherine McKenney, who many residents said played a key role in organizing safety walks, delivering groceries, and advocating for the safety of residents.

The OPC continues to invite written statements from the community. People can share their experience of the occupation as well as their recommendations for action at [info@opc-cpo.ca](mailto:info@opc-cpo.ca)

In order to build a timeline of the occupation from the community’s perspective, the OPC is also crowdsourcing photos, videos, and social media posts. Folks can

see what their neighbours have posted to date and learn more about making a submission by visiting OPC’s website at [opc-cpo.ca](http://opc-cpo.ca)

The commission will release an interim report early next year to mark the first anniversary of the convoy. A final report including recommendations will follow in the spring.

The OPC is also pleased to announce generous funding from the Ottawa Community Foundation. These funds are vital to support our work and ensure the voice of the community is heard.

The commission is funded by donations from the public, foundations, businesses, unions, and local agencies committed to rebuilding and renewing our community. You are encouraged to donate through the [commission’s website](http://commission’s website).

**GET SOCIAL**

**Modern Square Dancing - Fun for all ages!**

**Have a partner? Great! No Partner? No problem!**

Join us at a FREE Kick-Off Dance:

Tuesday, Jan. 10, 2023 at 7:00 pm  
J.A. Dulude Arena, 941 Clyde Ave.

14-week dance program begins on  
Tuesday, Jan. 17

[www.merisquares.ca](http://www.merisquares.ca)  
[lamarmason4@gmail.com](mailto:lamarmason4@gmail.com)

(Proof of vaccination and masks required)

## From Elgin Street School to *Reginald the Vampire*

Jack Hanna

Actor Marguerite Hanna, who grew up in Centretown, has a supporting role in the just-released TV series *Reginald the Vampire*, which is streaming across the English-speaking world. (In Canada, it is on Amazon Prime.)

The 26-year-old, who now lives in Vancouver, got their start on the stage in grade 5 at Elgin Street Public School. They were Dorothy in the school's production of the *The Wizard of Oz*.

This introduction to the stage led to the Drama Program at Canterbury High School and then the esteemed theatre school Studio 58 in Vancouver.

The 10 episodes of *Reginald the Vampire* were filmed last winter in Victoria, B.C.

Hanna was recently interviewed for *The BUZZ* – by their father, Jack Hanna.

### J: What is the premise of *Reginald the Vampire*?

M: It is something of an adult coming-of-age story. Reginald is a man who doesn't feel confident about himself. His life is not what he wants it to be, and that's got him down in the dumps. Then a big shift happens. (He is transformed into a vampire). He is forced to decide if he is going to keep doing what he has always done, or rise to the new challenge of being the person he has always wanted to be.

J: Before you landed this role, you were working for minimum wage in a clothing store. Then you were plunged into the Hollywood life – luxury hotel suites, cars with drivers, a trailer on set with your name on it. How weird was that?

M: I was ecstatic, star-struck. I was really giddy. I was sending videos to all my friends saying, "Look at this hotel suite I'm in!" But now that I understand a bit of the business, I know that my trailer was one of the lowest-tier trailers you can get.

J: Did you have a canvas chair with your name on it?

M: Yes!

J: Your character is Ashley, Reginald's co-worker in a fast-food joint. Tell me about Ashley.

M: Ashley is a human (not a vampire). They love strange folk lore and conspiracy theories, and are a walking encyclopedia; they know about everything. Bit of an outcast. Ashley is one of the first people to realize vampires exist, and is trying to tell people they exist and prove they do.

J: In personality, are you anything like Ashley?

M: Ashley is not a people-pleaser. They don't care what you think. They won't play by your rules. I find that about Ashley inspiring. I am a bit of a people-pleaser, so I differ from Ashley in that regard. But we both love good gossip. And we both are dissatisfied with the status quo, searching for what else life has to offer.

J: You identify as gender non-binary. You said when the writers learned that about you, they changed Ashley to make them non-binary.

M: Yes, they switched the pronouns referring to Ashley to they/them throughout the script. At first I thought it was a typo. But then I learned it was done for me. It was a profound thing for me.

J: Which was harder, being Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* at Elgin Street School, or being Ashley on a TV show?

M: It was harder to play Dorothy. I was a child. I was so worried about what everyone thought of me, and I wanted so badly for people to like me and like what I was doing.

But it did make me a bit of an Elgin Street School celebrity. I've run into my old teachers on the street. I walk up and say, "Hi, I was your student. I'm Marguerite." No reaction. Then I say, "Dorothy" and they exclaim, "Oh, Dorothy!"

J: Acting looks easy. You get up there and say a few lines.

M: Oh my God, it is extremely hard. The sheer level of competition is incredible. I auditioned close to 200 times for TV and film, and landed three roles. Actors constantly have to apply themselves to get better and better, so that you stand a chance against all the competition.



SYFY poster for Marguerite Hanna as Ashley in *Reginald the Vampire*.

When on set, you are working a 14-hour day. Then you go home to memorize lines, analyze the script and make acting choices for the next day. Then the next day, it's another 14-hour day.

It takes your whole body to act. It is physically and emotionally draining.

J: You are a Vancouverite now, but you are coming back to Ottawa for Christmas. Think you will be able to handle a real Canadian winter?

M: I'm looking out the window right now, in Vancouver, and I see snow on the ground. Have you got snow? No, you haven't. Isn't this the pot calling the kettle soft?

## What's on in Ottawa and beyond

Tony Wohlfarth

### All the Beauty and the Bloodshed

Nan Goldin is a 69-year-old American artist. In 1964, she lost her sister Barbara to opioid addiction. Goldin founded a grassroots organization Prescription Addiction Intervention Now (PAIN).

The documentary film *All the Beauty and the Bloodshed* (2022) interweaves two narratives – Goldin's art, and the campaign she led for compensation from the Sackler Family for the pain and suffering opioid addiction inflicted on Oxycontin's 400,000 American victims and their families. The film takes audiences inside the campaign, recording their meetings and audacious events. Goldin's painful personal journey is told from the moment she learned of Barbara's death to the discovery of how she died.



Laura Poitras at IDFA. PHOTO COURTESY IDFA

I found the film deeply moving. How can a struggling artist take on Purdue Pharma and its founders, the Sackler family?

The Sackler Family earned millions when OxyContin became the painkiller proscribed by physicians and they turned their fortunes into named gifts to the world's major art galleries. Goldin's campaign resulted in positive change, including galleries removing the Sackler name from their institutions.

The film had its world premiere in August at the Venice Film Festival, where it won the coveted Golden Lion Award. It is screening at the ByTowne Cinema (325 Rideau) for

four showings beginning December 16. The running time is 1h57m. See [www.bytowne.ca](http://www.bytowne.ca)

### Laura Poitras

*All the Beauty and the Bloodshed* was directed by Laura Poitras. Her 2014 film *Citizenfour*, about Edward Snowden, won the Academy Award in 2015 for best documentary feature.

The 2022 International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) screened a retrospective of her films including *Risk* (about Julian Assange), *Terror Contagion*, *Flag Wars*, and *My Country, My Country*. Poitras was interviewed on stage about her films and how she became a filmmaker. She also spoke about what it was like to be on the US terrorist watch list, and the threat the list poses to artistic freedom.

### The War in Ukraine

On February 24, Russia began a war of aggression, targeting the civilian population of Ukraine. In Amsterdam, I met with the head of the Organization of Ukrainian Producers (OUP), a group of filmmakers from Kiev and vicinity. Igor is one of many Ukrainians living in exile. They continue to produce and distribute high-quality films about the war and I am honoured to share these stories with Canadian audiences in the hope they receive widespread distribution.

Mariupol is a city of 400,000 residents in Ukraine. The aerial bombardment by Russian forces destroyed a large part of the city, scattering its residents. The film *Mariupol: Unlost Hope* is based on the diary of Nadia Sukhorukova, one of its residents. It can be seen here: [youtu.be/CuCtcAnu0AQ](https://youtu.be/CuCtcAnu0AQ) The running time is 52m. Directed by Max Lytvynov, the film is in Ukrainian with English subtitles.

### National Arts Centre (1 Elgin)

This month, the NAC stages are alive with an abundance of festive music:

December 16: **The Good Lovelies**;

December 17: **The Barenaked Ladies**: Hometown Holidays;

December 17: **Molly Johnson**;



*Mariupol: Unlost Hope* chronicles the destruction by Russia of this Ukrainian city.

December 18: **The Tenors**;

December 21-22: **Natalie MacMaster & Donnell Leahy** with the NAC Orchestra: A Celtic Family Christmas;

December 22: **Kellylee Evans: Winter Song**  
Tickets and event information: [nac-cna.ca](http://nac-cna.ca)

### Holiday Lights

A free multimedia show with music opened on December 8 on Parliament Hill. It tells "the nocturnal odyssey of luminous sparks that awaken during the Canadian winter solstice" and which travel across Canada's many landscapes.

The show runs on a continuous loop from 5:30 to 11 p.m. until January 8, 2023 (all days except Tuesdays and Wednesdays).

### Come From Away

From December 27 to January 8, the NAC welcomes Broadway Across Canada's production of *Come From Away*. The musical captures the warmth and hospitality when the residents of Gander, Newfoundland, welcomed thousands of visitors when commercial aviation was grounded by 9/11.

Tickets and showtimes: [ottawa.broadway.com/shows/come-from-away/](http://ottawa.broadway.com/shows/come-from-away/)

### What's New from the NFB

The National Film Board of Canada (NFB) adds new films – both documentaries and animation – to its website on a regular basis. This month, I discovered a 2021 documentary directed by Michelle Shephard, *A Perfect Story*, about her relationship reporting on a Somali refugee. It's available at: [www.nfb.ca/film/perfect-story/](http://www.nfb.ca/film/perfect-story/)

### The Gladstone Theatre (910 Gladstone)

The music of ABBA comes to The Gladstone on December 17-18. To get on the waiting list for the sold-out shows: [www.thegladstone.ca/sos-the-abba-experience/](http://www.thegladstone.ca/sos-the-abba-experience/)

### Great Canadian Theatre Company (1227 Wellington West)

Tickets are now on sale for GCTC's next play, *As You Like It* (January 17-29). It's a "Radical Retelling" of Shakespeare's play by playwright Cliff Cardinal, creator of *Huff*, *Stitch*, and *CBC Special*. See: [www.gctc.ca/shows/ayli](http://www.gctc.ca/shows/ayli)

### Queen Street Fare

Ottawa's own Peter Woods brings his jazz saxophone sounds to QSF on December 21. On (almost) New Year's Eve (actually Friday, December 30), you can dance all night to a salsa party with **Fiesta Cubana**. The band, led by Cuban pianist Miguel de Armas, is renowned for its fiery and authentic Salsa, Merengue, and Cha cha cha music. See [queenstfare.ca/happening](http://queenstfare.ca/happening).

### Out of Town

Diane Arbus was a celebrated American photographer whose black and white photographs revolutionized portraiture. A retrospective of her work is on display at the Museum of Fine Arts, 1380 Sherbrooke Street in Montreal until January 29: [www.mbam.qc.ca/en/exhibitions/diane-arbus-photographs-1956-1971-1/](http://www.mbam.qc.ca/en/exhibitions/diane-arbus-photographs-1956-1971-1/)

Tony Wohlfarth is an Ottawa-based freelance film and entertainment writer. He screened *All the Beauty and the Bloodshed* in Amsterdam, where Laura Poitras gave a masterclass on the art of film making.

# How can we increase climate resilience for us and our community?

Darlene Pearson

In the next eight years, the number of extreme heat days (over 30 degrees) in Ottawa is predicted to more than double. The City of Ottawa has identified increased heat as a critical risk in its recent Climate Vulnerability and Risk Assessment.

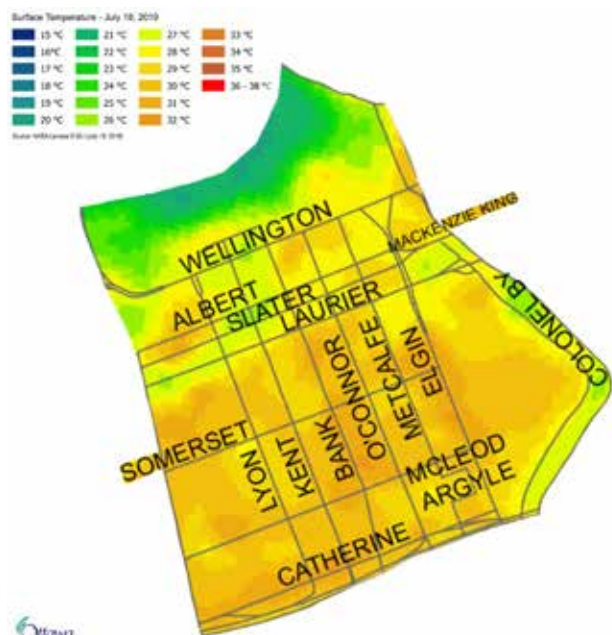
Centretown is especially vulnerable as shown by the predominance of yellow and orange on the city's heat island map.

What can we do to make our homes and our community more climate resilient? This was the topic of a virtual panel discussion jointly hosted by the Centretown (CCA) and Glebe Community Associations on November 17.

The four panelists provided numerous practical coping strategies. While individually these may appear minor, collectively they will have a major, in some cases, life-saving impact.

## Immediate fixes

Martha Robinson and Birgit Isernhagen from Ot-



Map 2: City of Ottawa Urban Heat Island Map (inside the Greenbelt)  
This map shows the surface temperature for a hot day (July 18, 2016) within the Greenbelt of the City of Ottawa calculated by using satellite imagery.

This City of Ottawa heat island map shows that hot spots in Centretown.

tawa Public Health suggested measures to combat indoor heat, such as blackout curtains, cool showers and baths, soaking hands and feet in cold water, and fans and air conditioners.

When outdoors, they advised wearing light, cool clothing and a hat. Ottawa

Public Health has developed a helpful map of places to cool off, [accessible online](#).

## Trees for shade

Andy Kenney, a senior lecturer emeritus of forestry from the University of Toronto, spoke about what is needed for a resilient urban

forest, which will be critical for heat attenuation. This includes species and age diversity, maintenance through pruning, and long-term stewardship for ongoing planting and monitoring.

Key to healthy trees is ongoing maintenance, including using the services of a reputable tree care company in much the same way that you use a plumber or electrician for your house.

Finding the space to accommodate more trees poses a particular challenge in a densely populated area such as Centretown. Since over 60 percent of our trees are on private land, it is crucial to work together as a community and to recognize that trees on private property are also a community resource.

## Variety needed

Landscape designer Mary Stewart highlighted the importance of planting a variety of trees, shrubs, and perennials for climate resilience. She invited residents to experiment with various plants to find out what thrives in their gardens or container plantings.

She stressed the importance of rechanneling rainwater so that it is available on properties in times of drought. One very simple measure is to redirect rain-

spouts to drain into a garden rather than down driveways into stormwater sewers. Other actions could include having permeable pavement, installing a rain barrel, planting a rain garden, and using groundcovers of plants or mulch.

## Design matters

Ottawa architect Toon Dreesen emphasized that design matters in all things. Too often cities design poorly, spend cheaply, and maintain inadequately. We need to be bold and courageous in facing climate change challenges to move towards the Ottawa of the future we want to live in.

With buildings accounting for 44 percent of greenhouse gas emissions, he said, we must apply the 3 "Rs" to the built environment: Reducing energy needs by making buildings more efficient with better insulation, lighting, and building envelope; Reusing by adapting rather than demolish-

ing buildings; and Recycling by using renewable building materials as well as renewable energy sources.

Individuals need to take local action and advocate for sustainable government financing to help residents pay for climate resiliency upgrades, he argued.

All presenters stressed that climate resiliency is everyone's business. As a community, we have to push our new mayor and city council to take bold action on climate resilience.

If you wish to help address these issues, consider joining the Centretown Climate Change Working Group by contacting [climatechange@centretowncitizens.ca](mailto:climatechange@centretowncitizens.ca).

A recording of the Climate Resilience Panel Discussion, as well as the power point presentations and list of resources are available on the [CCA website](#).

(Page 1 shade photo collage by Mary Stewart.)

**CENTRETOWN**  
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

**Support your community**  
**Sign up or donate today**

[www.centretowncitizens.ca](http://www.centretowncitizens.ca)

## The Climatarian: Planetically delicious

Cathy Woodgold

"I do eat animal products," says Centretown resident Maia Foster-Sanchez. Eating for the planet doesn't have to mean giving up meat.

"I think about climate all the time," says Maia, who works in emergency management. For many of us, though, the climate emergency is overwhelming and often gets pushed into a back closet of our minds.

Food choices give an opportunity to make a real difference for the climate with relatively easy changes. This is empowering, as pointed out in the book *We Are The Weather: Saving the Planet Begins at Breakfast* by Jonathan Safran Foer.

Maia used to be vegetarian, and now "I'll do a day or two a week with no animal protein." Getting protein from plants can involve a fraction

of the carbon emissions produced by animal products. It's not necessary for everyone to modify their habits, but if enough people do, this is one piece of the puzzle of addressing climate change.

Steps towards climatarianism can include developing habits of eating meat less often, or smaller portions of meat along with a greater balance of other satisfying foods in a meal. You can also eat chicken instead of beef, or look into how the food has been produced and transported.

Carol, another Centretown resident, says "we try to walk to as many of [Centretown's] abundant food outlets as possible. We do have a car, but it'll sit there."

But how to make eating less meat work in practice? One key is to include a little vegetable oil in each meal. Animal products often contain fat as well as protein. Fats and oils provide energy lasting for

hours and contribute to that satisfying feeling of "Ah, that was a good meal." It might be some oil sprinkled on a salad; margarine spread on a piece of bread; some nuts or seeds, such as sunflower or sesame, which contain oil as well as protein; or coconut oil used in cooking.

It turns out that making choices for the planet has other benefits, too.

"I do actually prefer the plant-based hamburgers," says Maia, and "it's supposed to be healthy."

Indeed. Research published in February 2022\* found that for certain populations, life expectancy can increase by about 8 to 10 years by eating less red meat or processed meat and more legumes, nuts and whole grains.

Not bad as a bonus for helping the planet.

\* Fadnes, L.T. et al. *PLOS Medicine*. Feb. 8, 2022. *Estimating impact of food choices on life expectancy: a modeling study.*

**Justine Bell**  
School Trustee  
Zone 10 Somerset/Kitchissippi

✉ [justine.bell@ocdsb.ca](mailto:justine.bell@ocdsb.ca)  
☎ 613-858-2275  
📍 @TrusteeBell  
📱 @justinebell

*It takes a community!*

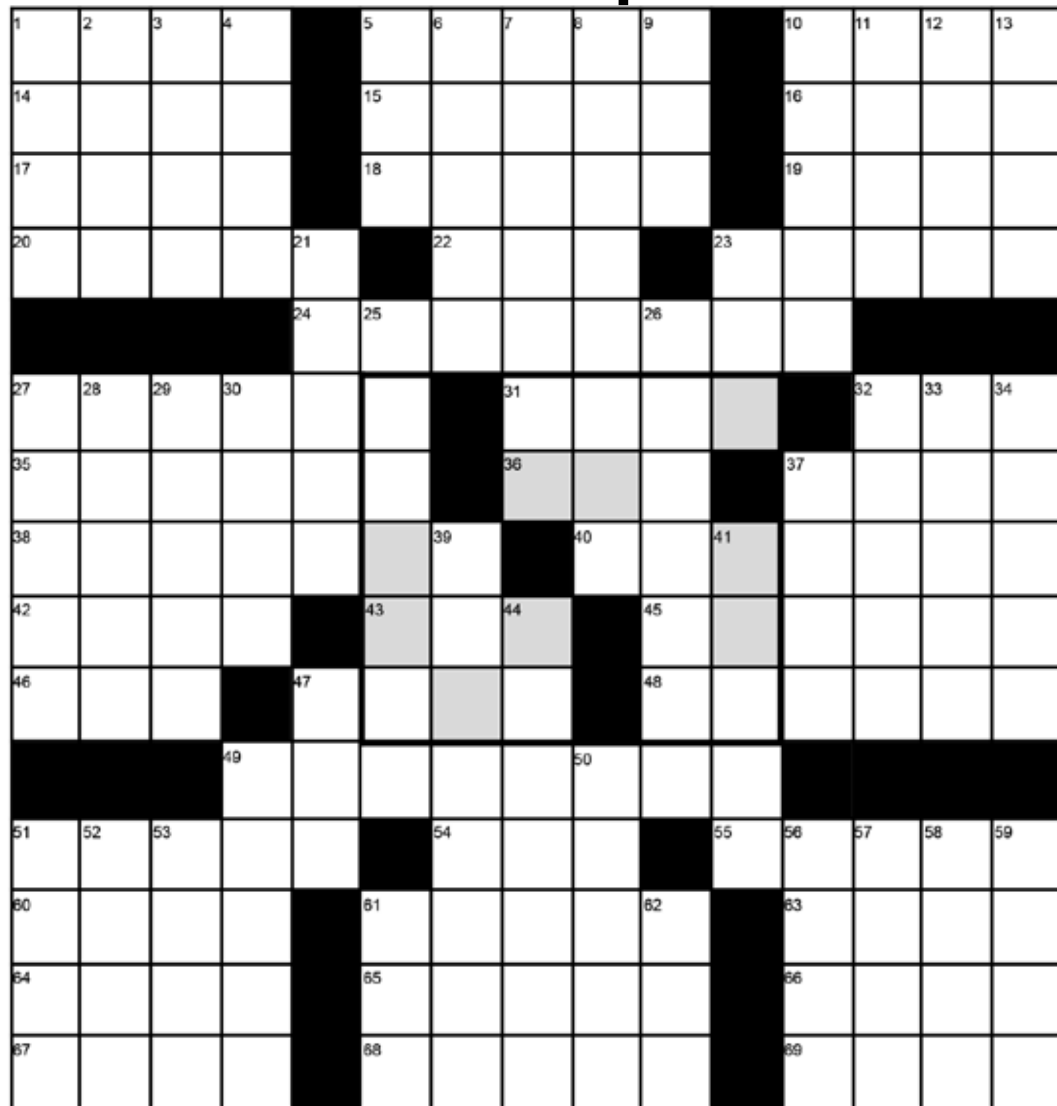
MP | député  
**YASIR NAQVI**  
Ottawa Centre | Ottawa-Centre

HERE TO HELP  
ICI POUR AIDER

**CONTACT**  
Phone | téléphone: 613 946 8682  
Email | courriel: [Yasir.Naqvi@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Yasir.Naqvi@parl.gc.ca)

**YasirNaqviMP.ca**  
404-1066 Somerset St. W. | 404-1066, rue Somerset O,  
Ottawa, ON K1Y 4T3

# BUZZ crossword: The park in our heart



19. The big one started it all  
 20. Bright-eyed and bushy-tailed  
 22. Rating system for chess players  
 23. A little song  
 24. Street that shares its name with an English county  
 27. It might be found in a sidecar  
 31. What we're born to be, according to Steppenwolf  
 32. CTG of psychiatric illnesses  
 35. Appeal  
 36. Pop singer, \_\_\_\_ Lipa  
 37. Actor and musician who won an Oscar for Dallas Buyers Club  
 38. Jetsam's partner  
 40. Usually July 2nd at noon  
 42. Doug Ford's Bill 23 limits these TLA's in trying to build faster  
 43. One with a habit  
 45. A tasty-sounding way to think something over  
 46. What precedes a tennis match?  
 47. Fluid produced by the liver that aids fat digestion  
 48. Glitter's Christmas cousin  
 49. Street that shares its name with an F1 racing team, almost  
 51. Lay out in an orderly fashion  
 54. Anger  
 55. Stop texting without notice  
 60. Raise, as one's spirits  
 61. Smith of The Matrix  
 63. Solemnly declare  
 64. Patron saint of sailors and abdominal pain  
 65. Farfalle, penne, etc.  
 66. Famed exotic vacation destination  
 67. Father to Goneril and Regan  
 68. Unable to sit still  
 69. A fruity kind of machine
- Down**  
 1. \_\_\_\_ Good Home, debut album by Owen Pallett  
 2. A single pomegranate seed  
 3. \_\_\_\_ of the Ancient Mariner
4. Poet of milk and honey  
 5. Surgeons' locations  
 6. Anglicization of doodem, the Anishinaabemowin word for clan  
 7. Potential response to Tom Green comedy  
 8. An extravagantly large store  
 9. Feed from the web  
 10. Not a credit  
 11. Indonesian fabric woven using resist-dyed yarn  
 12. Indigenous artist Monkman known for provocative history paintings  
 13. Like an icosahedron?  
 21. Russia's pre-revolutionary rulers  
 23. "Imao, I'm \_\_\_\_"  
 25. Vast and profound  
 26. What you might say before drinking in Dublin  
 27. Like Art House and Arlington 5  
 28. Elementary skateboarding trick  
 29. Lord it over someone  
 30. When prefixed with pea- or hazel- it becomes a specific variety of itself  
 32. Good ones are destined to be punished  
 33. Like day-old croissants  
 34. Forager's fabled fungus  
 37. Street that shares its name with a French city  
 39. Star of The Great Gatsby and An Education  
 41. Following Nike's advice?  
 44. As minimally separated as possible  
 47. Street that shares its name with a body of water  
 49. Sullivan, formerly Watson  
 50. Tears  
 51. First name of the singer, The Weeknd  
 52. Be a lord, once upon a time  
 53. Oblong tomato variety  
 56. Sens' rivals  
 57. Shape of a velodrome  
 58. Go at it alone?  
 59. Musk's new role, Chief \_\_\_\_  
 61. Citation style of the sciences  
 62. Single or doubled, nickname for Midnights' musician

Cassandra Morton

Unscramble the letters in the shaded squares to reveal the answer: \_\_\_\_\_  
 The answer key is posted at [centretownbuzz.com](http://centretownbuzz.com).

A Vagrant

5. Aquatic mammal that likes to hold hands  
 10. A piece of flood prevention infrastructure  
 14. Operatic version of 58 Down  
 15. Bed, bath, and beyond?  
 16. Barely managed  
 17. Canadian actor who plays MCU's Shang-Chi  
 18. Line 1's Pimisi, Lyon, and Parliament

**Clues**

**Across**

1. Now-defunct webcomic by Kate Beaton, \_\_\_\_!

## Career Opportunity: Executive Director Somerset West Community Health Centre

SWCHC started from humble beginnings on Rochester Street 50 years ago and has grown to be a well-respected multiservice, multisite organization. The Centre serves the residents of West Central Ottawa and supports regional programs for marginalized individuals at risk. With a budget of approximately 22 million, over 300 staff members and 375 volunteers SWCHC can offer a wide variety of programs and services designed to meet the needs of its clients and community.

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Executive Director (ED) is responsible for the overall operation and administration of SWCHC business. Working in an environment that is culturally diverse (community and staff), the Executive Director leads the organization with a strong vision.

This is an exciting opportunity for an exceptional senior leader who possesses a master's degree in health administration, Public Administration, Social Work or related field, or the equivalent combination of education and experience. The ideal candidate will demonstrate strong leadership skills, support and empower staff and a proven ability to take innovative and calculated risks. In addition, the candidate will have strong writing, presentation and verbal communication skills in English. Both French language skills and/or a language reflective of the diverse communities served by the Centre would be an asset.



SWCHC is committed to employment equity and encourages applications from all qualified candidates.

Remuneration commensurate with experience and qualifications

Full range of services and information on the position is available at [www.swchc.on.ca/executive-director](http://www.swchc.on.ca/executive-director).

Applications are to be submitted electronically at [hring@swchc.on.ca](mailto:hring@swchc.on.ca) no later than end of day January 6, 2023.

## MP report: 'tis the season

Yasir Naqvi

We've come to the end of a busy year with lots to celebrate. I've enjoyed spending time across Ottawa Centre speaking with residents and businesses.

Thank you for sharing your views on how we can increase affordable and social housing, protect greenspaces, and ensure our community is more inclusive.

This past month I was pleased to share updates on the National Capital Commission's upcoming upgrades to street lighting along the Canal as part of the Rideau Canal Lighting Rehabilitation Project. The project's goals are to repair or replace all outdated and broken pathway and parkway lights. This includes light heads, arms and bases.

I was also pleased to hear your thoughts on how we

can plant more trees along Colonel By Drive. I also attended the Debra Dynes Family House Annual General Meeting where the focus of discussion was on how we can continue to combat food insecurity amid the rising cost of living, and ensure residents have access to the resources they need.

Affordability continues to be top of mind for many Ottawa residents. In the Fall Economic Statement, the federal government outlined ways we are continuing to support Ottawa Centre residents through targeted measures aimed at making life more affordable.

Notably, helping people buy their first home through the new Tax-Free First Home Savings Account, which will allow prospective first-time home buyers to save up to \$40,000 tax-free toward their first home. Like an RRSP, contributions would be tax-

deductible, and withdrawals to purchase a first home – including investment income – would be non-taxable. Our government expects that Canadians will be able to open and begin contributing to an account in mid-2023.

We are also eliminating all interest on Federal Student Loans and Canada Apprentice Loans to reduce the burden of student loans on young people. Among other initiatives, we intend to lower credit card transaction fees for small businesses in a manner that does not adversely affect other businesses and protects existing reward points for consumers.

As always, please don't hesitate to reach out to my office.

As we head into the holiday season, I hope you get a chance to attend one of the many community events taking place across Ottawa Centre like the Lansdowne Ottawa Christmas Market, or a concert playing at the National Arts Centre.

If you can, consider donating to our local food bank or our charitable community organizations who serving our most vulnerable.

I wish you a very happy holiday season and hope you get a chance to spend time with family, friends and loved ones.

LOOKING FOR A GOOD HOME?

[ccochoosing.org](http://ccochoosing.org) | 613.234.4065



This three-year-old enjoys helping deliver *The BUZZ*.

CHARLES AKBEN-MARCHAND/THE BUZZ

## You're never too young to deliver *The BUZZ*!

**T**he *BUZZ* is delivered by volunteers to houses, apartment buildings, businesses, and public places across Centretown, with each person having a few blocks to do.

Our team attracts everyone from 70+-year-olds to this three-year-old, who enjoys helping

her parents drop off *The BUZZ* in their neighbourhood.

Need an excuse to get out for exercise? Or want to explore the 'hood? We always need more delivery people – even for a few months! Email Archie at [circulation@centretownbuzz.com](mailto:circulation@centretownbuzz.com) to learn more.

## DCA report: Plant Pool, trees, and Booth St.

Ed McKenna

### Plant Pool Recreation Association (PPRA)

**T**he PPRA annual general meeting took place at Plant Recreation Centre (PRC) on November 30. Our new Somerset Ward councillor, Ariel Troster, was guest speaker.

The councillor spoke to some of the current issues for the development of recreation and greenspace in Dalhousie. She's aware we don't have enough! The PRC is at capacity. Current park space per capita in Dalhousie is just 25 percent of the city's target.

AGM participants discussed greenspace planned for the Gladstone Village development. Meetings with the city, led by the neighbourhood P4X group, will resume in the spring of 2023.

Immediate concerns include the condition of the soccer pitches at Plouffe Park. They are located on a city-built "flood basin" – the park is situated at the lowest point in the City of Ottawa! The well-used pitches are often closed for rehabilitation, which frustrates the scheduling of PPRA's soccer programs. And the location of this flood basin may be a hindrance for any southerly expansion of the PRC.

Councillor Troster said she has met with the city engineering department to learn about this flood basin and will follow up on the installation of sports turf.

And then there is Bill 23, which received Royal Assent November 28. AGM participants discussed concerns that the new act may limit community access to public funds acquired from development-related charges and used for the improvement of greenspace in Dalhousie.

The PPRA added four new volunteer members to the board to help with program operations and advocacy. For more infor-

mation: [plantpool.org](http://plantpool.org), or [plantpoolrecreationassociation@gmail.com](mailto:plantpoolrecreationassociation@gmail.com)

### The Loss of Mature Trees

We can't say we weren't warned. Five years ago the city told us they were going to clear-cut Albert. But it's still a shock to see the 28 stumps of mature trees along the north side of the street between Commissioner and Brickhill.

The DCA Planning Our Neighbourhood committee regularly points to the loss of mature trees as a troubling outcome of new development. A hundred trees will take the place of those destroyed during its construction, the planners of *Ādisōke* tell us.

But can a tree flourish when planted atop the concrete roof of an underground parking garage? Or amongst the infrastructure for city services that line our roadways? Too often, the newly planted trees simply don't make it.

Our ward has a mere 22 percent of tree canopy. The target for the city is 40 percent!

### 245-267 Rochester

The loss of mature trees was a concern raised by the DCA in its comments on a proposal to build a nine-storey residential building at the corner of Balsam and Rochester. There are 10 mature trees on the site. Seven will be destroyed. The developer, 3N Group Holdings Inc., plans to plant three in their place.

New development at this location is to be welcomed, but following a meeting of our planning committee, DCA can't support the application. It "constitutes an overdevelopment of the site."

To construct a nine-storey building on Balsam, which will tower over the newly built townhouses across the street, several changes to the zoning bylaw must be approved.

If permitted, the development will introduce a new

mid-rise building in an established low-rise residential area, and will serve as a precedent for future proposals to overbuild in Dalhousie.

The DCA has asked that a public meeting be organized by the city to discuss the proposal with the developer.

### The Booth Street Corridor

The DCA's mobility committee met November 29 to discuss two major development applications for LeBreton Flats: the towers proposed for 665 Albert at Booth, and the deletion of the Preston extension from the Official Plan.

The DCA supports both proposals, but the mobility committee has written to the city to underline its concerns about the impact of these developments on LeBreton Flats on traffic in the neighbourhood, particularly on Booth, south of Albert.

Because of construction at the Chaudière Crossing, southbound traffic on Booth now is prohibited from crossing Albert into the local residential area.

Residents have noted (with relief) that traffic on Booth has lessened.

At the same time, the left turn from the Parkway to Booth is now permitted, removing a major irritant for the residents who live north of Albert.

It's a win-win for traffic management in Dalhousie, but the changes are temporary.

The DCA has called on the city to make both measures permanent, even when the Chaudière Crossing is restored to regular vehicular traffic.

### Get involved

The DCA will not hold a regular meeting in December, but we're gathering again on Wednesday, January 4, 2023. Join us!

Check out our website: [ottawadalhousie.ca](http://ottawadalhousie.ca), or contact [president@ottawadalhousie.ca](mailto:president@ottawadalhousie.ca)

## CCA report

Jack Hanna

### Deck the park

**T**he CCA's annual tree-decorating party will cheer up Dundonald Park on Sunday, December 18 from 1 to 3 p.m.

Bring items to hang on the trees, especially goodies for birds such as popcorn strings, dried oranges, or suet balls with birdseed. Look online for loads of suggestions.

Homemade ornaments or simple decorations of wood or straw are great. But please: nothing fragile or plastic.

And if you are feeling the urge to bake, treats for people such as cookies are appreciated.

### Centretown will lose its Y

The Centretown YMCA-YWCA, across Argyle Street from the Museum of Nature, has announced it is closing its doors and selling the property. It expects the selling process to take up to two years.

The CCA wants to explore possibilities for the future of the site. It hopes the location will continue to be used to provide community services, as the Y does now.

## MPP report: For Ottawa's light rail system, sunlight is the best disinfectant

Joel Harden

**A**t 11 a.m. on November 30, a loud thud was heard across Ontario. The final report of the Ottawa Light Rail Transit Public Commission dropped, and it hit the table hard.

The massive 664-page document detailed the problems and issues with Stage 1 of our LRT system. Justice William Hourigan (who led the report) was scathing. He noted a pattern of "deliberate malfeasance" by city officials, and "egregious violations of public trust."

This was the transparency I pursued for two years, working with residents and local leaders.

Premier Ford says he's outraged, and has patted himself on the back for calling the judicial inquiry. But, at first, his government deflected this issue.

Two years ago, when I called for a public inquiry of our LRT, I was told this "was a municipal project", but Ontario officials "were paying attention."

That made no sense then, and it makes no sense now. The province invested \$600 million into Stage 1 of Ottawa's LRT system. So we kept the pressure on.

A year later, after major derailments and much public pressure, we got a big win.

For two consecutive days, I rose in Question Period, demanding a judicial inquiry after it was refused at the Ottawa City Council by a vote of 13-10. I noted the revelations about consultants who lobbied against a judi-

The Centretown Y is much more than a fitness centre and pool. It has housing services, including a family emergency shelter, transitional housing for youth, and supportive housing. It also hosts a child-care centre.

Interested in helping explore the future of the Y site? Contact: [jack.2014@icloud.com](mailto:jack.2014@icloud.com)

### CCA's AGM in new year

The CCA is planning its AGM for January or February, although a firm date has yet to be set. Keep an eye on the CCA's social media for details.

The AGM affords an opportunity to run for the CCA's Board of Directors. Interested? Contact: [president@centretowncitizens.ca](mailto:president@centretowncitizens.ca)

It's a good idea to renew your CCA membership before the AGM. To renew, or become a new member, go to the [CCA's website](http://CCA's website).

### Help kids skate

The CCA is seeking volunteers to help maintain the outdoor ice rink in McNabb Park, near Gladstone and Bronson. The work consists of flooding, shovelling and snow-blowing, and usually is done in the evenings.

A core group of volunteers is leading the effort, but they need more hands. Want to get some fresh air and let kids skate in the great outdoors? Contact: [mcnabbrink@gmail.com](mailto:mcnabbrink@gmail.com) or [brian.beaven@sympatico.ca](mailto:brian.beaven@sympatico.ca)

This is an opportunity for high school students looking for volunteer hours.

cial inquiry, some of whom invoked colourful language.

This time, the province responded, declaring a public inquiry. And sunlight, as Justice Louis Brandeis once said, is the best disinfectant. At last, we have the truth.

And for some, the truth hurts. I'm still sifting through the evidence, but one thing is certain: our LRT is bad news for boosters of Public-Private-Partnerships (P3s).

Justice William Hourigan said "the P3 model caused or contributed to several of the ongoing difficulties on the project ... the city traditionally had a hands-on leading role in projects, given the lesser role it played under this mode, the city was left in a position where it had limited insight or control over the project."

The city set an absurdly low budget, and contractors withheld information about the LRT's viability to perform. City officials then misled city councillors about the LRT's capabilities, even going so far as to change LRT standards mid-stream.

But this isn't just a comedy of errors, intentional or not. P3s are an accident waiting to happen, they will not offer the transparency or accountability the public deserves.

That's the lesson from Ottawa's LRT. But where do we go from here?

Send your thoughts to [joel@joelharden.ca](mailto:joel@joelharden.ca) and we'll talk about how to get Ottawa's LRT back on track, both literally and figuratively. I look forward to hearing from you.

The BUZZ is funded by ads...  
...and YOU?

Contribute to your local paper at:  
[www.centretownbuzz.com/donate](http://www.centretownbuzz.com/donate)

Thank you to all of our readers who have  
donated a little or a lot, once or monthly!

# Streets need trees

Stephen Thirlwall

The City of Ottawa's plan for the foreseeable future is to greatly expand its suburbs and intensify the core with high-rise construction. The Ontario government's plan for Ottawa is to have as many new buildings built as possible. While this may spark the economy and create new jobs, how can we ensure this growth will be done intelligently and contribute to the well-being of the people and environment within Ottawa?

And what is the role of trees in assisting this?

Design details are important to development. These must consider not only the building architecture but also the site plan, how it fits into the neighbourhood, its shad-

the same and that any who have the will to do so can be flexible and rebalance what they consider in their design process. Increasingly, more see that nature, particularly trees, need to take a significant role in plans.

Historically, the Romans, who were master road builders, treelined their streets in aesthetically pleasing ways, using a variety of trees placed in various positions, spacings, and combinations along the roadways.

In both older and modern planning of new city extensions, streets are often considered the first and most important step in design. Streets establish the overall layout, structure, direction, movement and character of the community area. Introducing trees at this point in the planning process ensures

You have longer sightlines that make the views more interesting. It means that there is room for at least small lawns and gardens that further beautify the landscape.

If trees are neglected in the original plans, it is very difficult and more expensive to correct this later. The result is that a lot of trees get planted in confined spaces where they have little chance of survival, and many quickly die.

## Sterile streets without trees

Trees bring people outside. We get to see and know our neighbours and neighbourhood better and socialize more. I have been in some Ottawa suburban areas where trees are few or still too young. The result: streets are empty of people and the landscape sterile.

In the older parts of Ottawa – Centretown and other inner city communities – trees create a garden-like effect. As landmarks, they can also be as important as buildings. Some provide boundaries.

There are historic trees, extremely tall and stately: a few over 100 years old, and many over 60. Shouldn't our "elders" be treated with more respect? They form the core of the downtown urban forest, along streets and in backyards. They give us filtered light and shade in summer and let light reach us during winter months. Numerous maples provide a variety of leaf shapes and colours through the summer and fall. Flowers bloom on lilacs, magnolias, cherry and plum trees, and many others during the spring and summer.

Those who have been working on the Neighbourhoods Tree Survey in Centretown now personally "know" many of the individual neighbourhood trees. They each have their own distinct personality.

## I can tell where I am by the trees on the street

As I walk around Centretown, I can tell where I am just by the trees. One block has a line of crabapple or serviceberry trees, another a line of honey locusts and another lindens or ginkgos. There are locations with clumps of trees: cedars, pines, spruce. One property on Lisgar Street has a small grove of poplars. A few spots have unusual trees, for example, gnarly Siberian olives. The trees give definition yet diverse expression to the landscape.

The spiritual side of people and places is as important as their physical side, but much less considered in city planning. Indigenous people the world over see trees as equal beings to humans. We can use trees to an extent



Trees give us filtered light and shade in summer and let light reach us during winter months.

STEPHEN THIRLWALL/THE BUZZ



Trees are an important part of 15-minute neighbourhoods.

ow over the landscape, and support services around it in the community. Especially important is its footprint and the space for lawns, gardens, and trees around it.

Both downtown and in the suburbs, new construction usually involves leveling sites as much as possible, removing any existing buildings, trees, and dips and rises in the land. This is followed by digging foundations and constructing the buildings. Trees, anything else natural, and the social impact are only an afterthought.

I recently tuned in to a webinar from the Maryland Department of Planning and the Smart Growth Network on the importance of "street trees" in planning neighbourhood development or redevelopment. The two speakers discussed how street trees can bring beauty and order to streets, mitigate the potential for flooding and heat events, and support pedestrian activity.

It was helpful in showing that not all developers are

they are considered important.

Trees in lines, whether straight or curved, enhance all aspects of design. They further beautify and give order, definition and character to neighbourhoods, making people want to go out, walk around, and feel comfortable.

Trees add a layer of environmental awareness, reconnecting us with nature. Each tree with a sizable canopy absorbs a huge amount of carbon dioxide and breathes out volumes of oxygen. This filters our air. Their root systems capture lots of water, decreasing excessive runoff that can cause water control problems.

Having trees along streets means that there is extra space between roads and buildings. This is breathing room where you don't feel confined, like walking in a canyon. Extra space means extra light in areas with high rises because light enters there mostly down the street corridor and not from above.

as a resource but not abuse them. For people who relate to spirituality and religion, trees are not just physical entities; they are a living part of creation that have great spiritual meanings.

Trees can symbolically represent the Divine, the pathway to the Divine, our family and community relationships and our own personal spiritual identity. Trees, through analogy, display our human spiritual qualities, such as strength, beauty, and our need to bear fruit in our lives through children and deeds.

Our physical built environment shapes a lot of our thinking. If we build street rights-of-way that are too narrow, spacing between buildings is narrow, yards are small and condo sizes are small – and our thinking becomes narrowed. This kind of thinking is not conducive to "Complete Streets" and "15 Minute Neighbourhoods."

Similarly, we all know that when we rush something, we often make critical mistakes, because we left out some important detail. CBC radio host and author Terry O'Reilly (*Under the Influence*) has a good rule – if

someone contracts to do a job and they leave out one small but important step, it usually means they have also "cut corners" elsewhere.

The new planning regime being imposed by the Ontario government aims to have development plans ap-

proved as quickly as possible in order to reduce developers' overhead. But what details will be missed? If that includes trees, it could affect our neighbourhoods' livability in the long term.

Including trees early in our urban plans is essential.



**SPARK**  
BEER & PIZZA

702 Somerset Street West  
Chinatown, Ottawa  
<https://spark.beer>

Sign up for our weekly MPP email updates at [joelhardenmpp.ca](http://joelhardenmpp.ca)!

**Joel Harden**

MPP, Ottawa Centre  
[joelhardenmpp.ca](http://joelhardenmpp.ca)

109 Catherine St.  
Ottawa, ON. K2P 2M8

✉ [JHarden-CO@ndp.on.ca](mailto:JHarden-CO@ndp.on.ca)

☎ 613-722-6414

