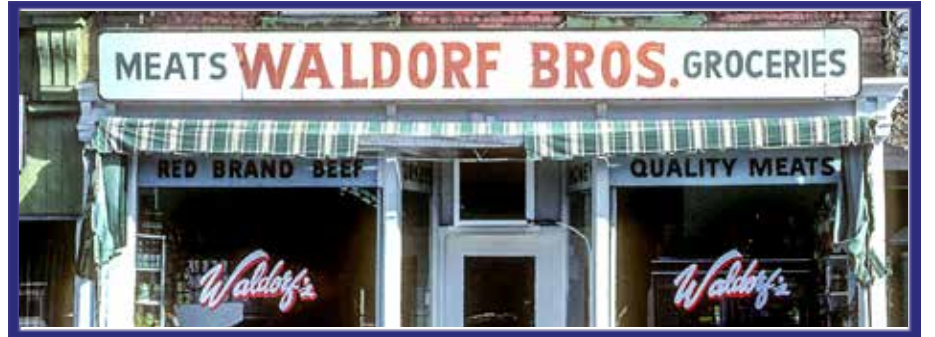




Community holiday lunch returns, 8



Gone from Bank Street but not forgotten, 7

Your community newspaper

THE CENTRETOWN BUZZ



The Ottawa Water Works in LeBreton Flats might remind you of Narnia, if it weren't currently fenced off for repairs to Pooley's Bridge. This month, city staff are updating the heritage status of the Water Works and the bridge, and recommending heritage status for two other Centretown landmarks, the Bible House and 290 City Centre. More on page 8. *ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ*

Create a new park in L'Esplanade Laurier, task force recommends



Task force members display the report summary at its release January 11.

Alayne McGregor
Ottawa's downtown needs to transform from a car-centric, 9-to-5 commuter district to a greener, more residential, and less single-employer area, according to the Downtown Ottawa Task Force.

As an example of what could be done, it suggested turning the cor-

ner of Bank and Laurier into a park: replacing L'Esplanade Laurier's two-storey podium structure facing Bank Street and its western tower with a new municipal park, which would green the full block facing Gloucester, Bank, and O'Connor.

L'Esplanade's east tower would be converted into low-cost and family housing, and stacked town-

houses would be added.

The task force, which included developers, community groups, BIAs, the Board of Trade, and Ottawa Tourism, plus city and federal politicians, released its final report January 11. It made a passionate case for the importance of downtown to all of Ottawa, and proposed a major reconstruction.

Downtown Ottawa is experiencing multiple crises at once, it said, including a housing crisis, a mental health crisis, a drug consumption crisis, an economic crisis, and an environmental crisis. It needs to become "a place that is people-centric, with mixed-use buildings, increasing residential buildings, around-the-clock amenities/entertainment, public assets, and public spaces."

It argued for both more residents downtown, living in repurposed office buildings, and for strategies to make downtown an attractive destination for both tourists and residents.

The 117-page report, prepared for the task force by EVOQ Strat-

egies, defined downtown as from Bronson to the Rideau Canal and from Wellington to Somerset West, plus Bank Street as far south as Gladstone. At the report launch, EVOQ Director of Strategies Christophe Rivet said that "it was time to be bold – to transform

New 1010 Somerset plan delayed

Alayne McGregor

The revised concept plan for the 1010 Somerset project, which had been expected in December, has now been delayed.

Dan Chenier, the city's general manager of Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services, told *The BUZZ* last week that he expected the revised plan would be released "later this quarter." It will provide the basic outline of the redevelopment of the northern half of the land near Preston and Somerset, which the city bought from the federal government.

The 1,260 comments received on [the project's Engage Ottawa](#)

something that is at the heart of our identity as a city."

The report admitted the transformation would not be quick because of underlying complex issues and diverse viewpoints. The task force itself took longer than expected:

continued on page 8 "Bold"

[page](#) "revealed several concerns with the concept plan," he said, and "the project team is currently reviewing how these are addressed in the updated plans." The comments will be summarized in a What We Learned report, also to be released this quarter.

When the revised plan is released, the team will hold a virtual public engagement session over Zoom, he said. No date for that was available. Residents can be notified of the plan release and the meeting by signing up for email updates on [the project page](#).

The initial concept plan, released last summer, was rejected *continued on page 3 "New 1010"*

January 19, 2024 — Vol. 29, No. 1

THE CENTRETOWN BUZZ

AT THE HEART OF OTTAWA SINCE 1995.

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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 February 16, 2024. Deadline for ads and submissions: February 5.
ISSN 1204-1604

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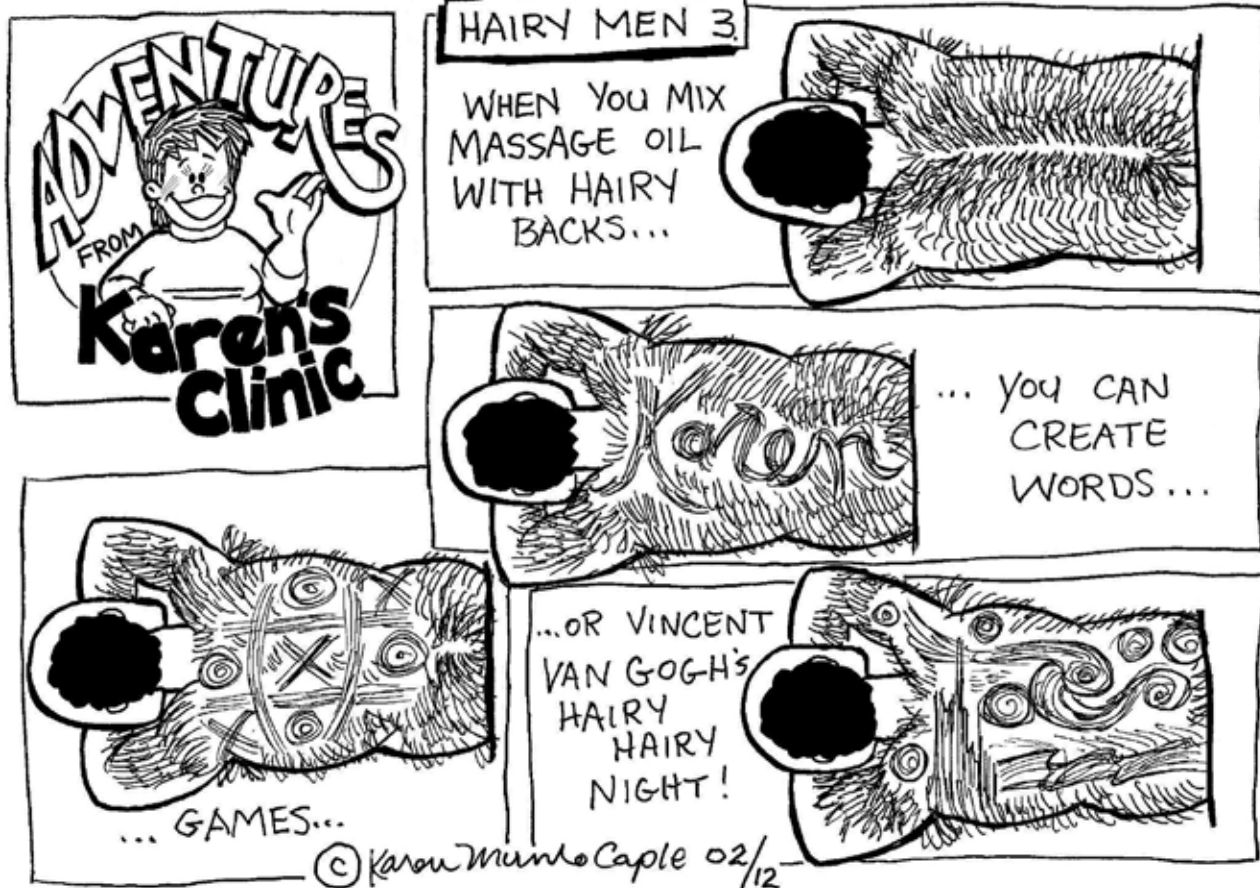
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The Centretown BUZZ is published by The Centretown BUZZ Board of Directors, a group consisting of community members representing all residents of Centretown.

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Adventures from Karen's Clinic, by Karen Munro-Caple



An Emergency in Ottawa devalues residents' experiences

An Emergency in Ottawa

by Paul Wells

Sutherland House (Toronto), 2023

reviewed by Alayne McGregor

The convoy occupation of downtown Ottawa almost two years ago was traumatic and unprecedented in this city and this country – and yet it's been almost exclusively chronicled in either commission reports or daily newspaper accounts.

Paul Wells' short (77-page) book is the first I've seen that takes a more reflective, independent look at the events, albeit through the lens of the Public Order Emergency Commission under the aegis of Mr. Justice Paul Rouleau. Wells, a long-time Parliamentary journalist, was a regular at the commission hearings in October and November, 2022. In this book, he regularly adds small details and background to bring the commission participants and events alive.

His comment that the hearing room was a "petri dish of low-grade infection" made me very glad I watched the hearings on livestream instead.

The book is divided into sections on "the testimony and experiences of the capital, the police, the protesters, and Team Trudeau" as a "study in decision-making." He notes the background of civil unrest against the lockdown across the globe and particularly in the U.S. where there were earlier trucker protests, but also that there had been trucker protests in Ottawa as early as 2019.

Wells argues that Rouleau was correct in minimizing the testimony of Ottawa residents affected by the convoy because it wasn't their experience that was germane. It was whether the occupiers were dispersed correctly, using the correct legal instruments, he says; it was about how things went wildly wrong, and whether there were better ways of correcting them.

I'd disagree, simply because the occupiers (and this is the term that Wells uses for them) have repeatedly contended, in these hearings and elsewhere, that they did nothing wrong in blocking downtown roads, blaring horns, running engines 24 hours/day, building outdoor fires, and threatening residents for weeks on end – that it was simply their Charter right to speak and protest.

But the residents' testimony showed that these were not normal protests and

went far beyond free speech into continuing and uncontrolled illegal behaviour. That was an important issue in whether an emergency should have been called.

The most interesting part of the book for me was the chapter on the police response, which clearly outlined the disarray within the Ottawa Police Service. Wells describes the difference in approach between those who wanted to use straight force with Public Order Units (POUs), and those who argued for the negotiated approach of the Police Liaison Team (PLT).

His book is the best explanation I've seen of why the Ontario Provincial Police had in general switched to using PLTs after the deadly Ipperwash raid in 1995. The idea is that these teams build relationships and trust with protesters to ensure protests are lawful, peaceful, and safe. There are still potential consequences like arrest for the protesters, but the PLTs try to reduce the level of emotion, reduce the number of protesters, and defuse tension. The idea is to reach the 80 percent of a crowd which is law-abiding, and the 15 percent on the fence, through appeals to reason, rather than swelling the ranks of the "incorrigible 5 percent." That could explain, for example, some of the police actions during the convoy where they were seen apparently helping the occupiers.

According to the testimony, some senior OPS commanders knew nothing about how PLTs worked – even though PLTs were successful in clearing the encampment from Confederation Park.

Which leads to another failure – that of the Ottawa Police Services Board.

Convoy protester trial to drag on into spring

The trial of Tamara Lich and Chris Barber for their roles in organizing the 2022 Freedom Convoy that occupied downtown Ottawa will resume from March 13 to 15 to hear another defence motion.

On March 7, presiding Justice Heather Perkins-McVey will also release her ruling on the Crown's contention that Lich and Barber acted together in a "conspiracy or common design." If the judge rules in favour, evidence against one accused will be deemed to apply to both.

The Crown has finished its case, and the two defence teams said they would require another five days to call evi-

If there was ever a time for the board to exercise strong guidance, surely this was it. It couldn't direct police day-to-day actions, but it could, and should, have been dealing with the OPS's overall plan of attack including deciding which approach – PLTs or POUs – would be paramount. Instead, the police response was a mishmash.

Wells says that one challenge facing Rouleau was "to remember how angry and exhausted everyone was when the convoy happened. To remember how poorly any of the protagonists understood the others' motives or intent. The hardest thing, when you know how the story ends, is to remember what it felt like not to know how it would end."

His description of the debate within the federal and provincial governments, as revealed in testimony to the commission, is enlightening and confirms again how many of the decisions were made on incomplete knowledge in fear of a much worse outcome that luckily didn't happen. In his description of the occupiers themselves, he also points out how fragmented they were, and how the event attracted some "strange people" that probably could not have been easily persuaded.

So, could the occupation have ended earlier with better communication? Or were the occupiers dug in by their own rhetoric? Wells doesn't have an answer, but he does end with a quote from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau from just after the occupation was cleared, calling for healing and asking everyone to start talking to others even if you disagree on vaccination.

"Not every single conversation has to be about winning an argument."

dence and witnesses and to make closing arguments. However, those dates have not yet been scheduled. The trial has now run into problems with finding courtroom space and scheduling time in the judge's busy calendar.

On Jan. 2, trucking company president Harold Jonker withdrew his application to have his trial on convoy-related charges moved out of Ottawa, given that similar applications by Pat King and Randy Hillier were unsuccessful. Jonker, who is also named in the Zexi Li class action, is charged with mischief, counselling mischief, and intimidation via parking a vehicle.

“We’ve waited long enough”: École Louise Arbour parents speak

Alayne McGregor

The most contentious issue in designing the 1010 Somerset project has been the new location of École Louise Arbour.

The French-language public elementary school (K-Grade 6) has been housed in temporary quarters on Beech Street since 2017. The City of Ottawa has worked with the French-language public school board (CEPEO) for the past few years to include a new building for the school in the project.

The school’s catchment area covers the western half of Somerset Ward and the eastern half of Kitchissippi. Designed for 285 students, the current building accommodates about 310 in 11 classrooms and five portables. The CEPEO projects that 449 students will attend the school’s new building.

The BUZZ interviewed two executive members of the Louise Arbour parents’ council, Valérie Levert-Gagnon and André Poulin-Denis, about their concerns with the school’s current location and what they’re looking for in a new school. The email interview was lightly edited for space and style.

How many children do you have who currently attend École Louise Arbour?

Levert-Gagnon: I have two children currently attending Louise-Arbour in Junior Kindergarten and Grade 1. It’s both their first year at L-A. My third child will start JK in 2025.

Poulin-Denis: I have a daughter who is in Grade 1 and has been attending Louise-

Arbour since 2021. I also have a second child who will be beginning JK in 2025.

Have you considered moving any of your children to another school: for example, in the French Catholic School Board or in French immersion in the OCDSB?

Levert-Gagnon: My oldest went to the neighbourhood’s French Catholic school in junior and senior kindergarten, solely based on walkability from where we lived. Even though our family values and beliefs are better aligned with the public school system, we have considered switching back in order to access better infrastructures and resources if the infrastructures and overcrowding keep worsening at Louise-Arbour.

For now, we decided to stay at L-A, where we feel like we belong. The teaching and non-teaching staff are welcoming, highly qualified, and extremely resourceful despite the school’s physical environment. Our children are truly at home at Louise-Arbour.

There is no back-up option for many families at the school – Louise-Arbour is the only French public school in the area. Not everyone wishes to send their children to a religion-based school board. French immersion in an English school is not an equivalent option and a non-starter for our family.

Poulin-Denis: There are families who have left our school for other school boards. It is hard to know why, but through whispers in the community, we understand that some of them have left because the construction of the new school is lagging and current facili-

ties are poor. We also know of many parents with children in the French Catholic system who do not hold religious values, but chose that system because the facilities at the neighbourhood school are adequate.

We have and continue to consider moving our child to the French Catholic system because we don’t think the education being provided at l’École Louise-Arbour is equivalent to that provided at other neighbourhood schools because of the quality of facilities. These are heartbreaking decisions because they require us to choose between our belief in French secular education and the quality of our children’s educational experience. This is not a choice that many of our neighbours are required to make.

Why is it important to you for your children to be able to attend a Franco-phone public school?

Levert-Gagnon: It is my children’s legal right to attend school in their first language. While we hope for them to be fully bilingual growing up in Ottawa, their first language is French. To preserve their spoken and written French in a minority setting and their sense of belonging in the Francophone community, they should be able to learn in French, build a network of Francophone friends and trusted adults and access French-first resources.

As options for recreational activities in French in the city are extremely limited, especially in the west end, a French school is often the only public space where they can speak and be understood in their first language.

Poulin-Denis: I grew up in Saskatchewan, in a Francophone family established there for over 120 years. My spouse grew up in a Francophone family in British Columbia. French is part of our identity and our culture, it is not simply a language of instruction. We do not practise Catholicism and so other school boards are not an option for us, unless we are prepared to set aside these fundamental values.

The current school has been described as overcrowded – please give examples.

The five portables in the school yard speak for themselves. Hallways and staircases are crowded with photocopiers/printers, a staff refrigerator, and cabinets due to an overall lack of space. Only three toilet stalls are available on the second floor for 200 children, and one of them was out of order for weeks this fall.

There is a lack of appropriate specialized and individualized learning spaces. Specialists such as social workers and speech therapists use a supply room (which is not much bigger than a closet) or open hallways to meet students who need one-on-one support. This is inadequate and compromises students’ privacy and dignity. Teaching and non-teaching staff do not have access to an adequate staff and lunch room.

What are the problems with the current school location in terms of lack of school facilities: gyms, libraries, playgrounds, etc.?

The inadequate gym we use is located in the neighbouring Heritage Academy. Children must wear their outdoor gear to cross the yard and access the gym – a long and frustrating process for the youngest kids that results in less time actually spent in gym class. Music classes are held in a portable that is not attached to the main building, which also means that children need to gear up to cross the school yard to attend music class.

There is no space for a library room. Children whose classrooms are in a portable must cross the yard (usually alone, unmonitored during instruction time) to access a bathroom in the main building.

Apart from a lone regulation-height basketball hoop, there are no outdoor play structures for the children and a large part of the school yard is used for portables. Part of the remaining space is paved. The two-storey school and gym space is also not accessible.

continued on page 4



On September 2, parents of students at École Louise Arbour met with supporters of Plouffe Park at a back-to-school event in the park. CHARLES ARBEN-MARCHAND/THE BUZZ

New 1010 Somerset plan delayed

continued from page 1

by many residents and Councillor Ariel Troster because it placed the new building for École Louise Arbour in the current location of Plouffe Park, and the park would not be replaced for several years.

Troster told a public meeting in December that the new, unreleased, draft of the plan had moved the school to Somerset Street and left Plouffe Park untouched.

The city urgently wants to build the new school and the affordable housing, Troster told *The BUZZ* last week. She expected the next revision of the concept plan would be the last and the city would move quickly to site plan approval at Planning Committee this spring. That approval would include the general zoning for the site and selling the land for the school to the Conseil des écoles publiques de l’Est de l’Ontario (CEPEO).

She emphasized, however, that there would continue to be consultation on the detailed plans for the different buildings, greenspace, and site access. “This is just the first step of many – we just need to get through the zoning and site plan. At this point it’s really just the configuration of the Tetris pieces and once we agree this is the general look of things, then we get into the details.”

Troster said she met last week with parents of students now attending Louise Arbour, and


the local CEPEO trustee, Joël Beddows. She assured the parents that her priority, once the site plan is approved, is to ensure there are as few barriers as possible to starting construction on the school right away.

“There was definitely some concern from parents about security, and potentially the need for a fence to ensure the kids can’t wander on to the bike path.” She expected these concerns could be addressed in the detailed design phase.

The new school will be innovative in that it’s “nested in a really urban space” and the older children will share a public park as their play field, she said, as is done in Hintonburg Park. The school will also be directly attached to new city arts and recreation facilities.

“We have to understand that when we have an urban site that has so many demands on it, and we have 7,000 to 10,000 people moving into the neighbourhood and the need for greenspace and amenities for the whole community, we need to find a way to share the space. This is a known urban school design approach: a partnership between the city and the school board. We just have to work out the details together.

“Living downtown in a time of intensification requires a lot more sharing of space and of resources. I think what’s really crucial is for us to work together to make that happen.”



Annual General Meeting

TUESDAY, JAN. 30, 2024 | 7-9 PM

Do you live, work or own property or a business in Centretown? Join us at the CCA's 2024 Annual Meeting.

Get an overview of the CCA goals and projects for the year. Members will vote for the new Board Members and President and will vote on updated CCA bylaws.

OPENING REMARKS:
COUNCILOR ARIEL TROSTER

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:
ALAIN MIGUELEZ, VICE-PRESIDENT OF
CAPITAL PLANNING, CHIEF PLANNER
NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION

Become a member by noon on Jan. 27
to vote at the AGM.
Visit CentretownCitizens.ca

Don't squeeze École Louise Arbour between high rises: parents

continued from page 3

There are no elevators which cause great hardship for students with mobility issues.

Are there problems with ventilation, air conditioning, heating, lack of HEPA filtration to prevent virus spread?

There is no ventilation system leading to poor overall air quality. The school rates the lowest in the CEPEO in terms of air quality. Since COVID-19, the school has introduced portable HEPA machines in the classroom, but they are noisy and need to be turned down during instruction. At the height of the pandemic, staff was required to open windows to ensure adequate airflow during lunchtime, including during the winter.

Are there problems with the water supply?

The school's building, like many old buildings, uses old lead pipes that need to be flushed for 15-30 minutes every morning to make the water suitable for use. This procedure happens every morning, but it raises concerns about what would happen if it ever got missed.

Somewhat related, the children are also using sinks in the washrooms that are not age-appropriate (too high) and portable sinks in the hallway to wash their hands. There would not be sufficient sinks and space to wash their hands in the bathrooms.

What was your reaction to the announcement on April 29 of a provincial grant of \$14.5M for a new building?

Levert-Gagnon: When the long-overdue funding was announced for the new school, I was both relieved and excited that the project could finally get underway. What followed was repeated disappointment in how the city and the CEPEO have handled the planning and consultation process. There have been many unexplained delays and a lack of acknowledgement of the urgency for a new school.

Were you satisfied with the initial city proposal for the concept plan for 1010 Somerset and the placement of the new school in the current location of Plouffe Park? Did you have any concerns with the design?

The current location of Plouffe Park would have been great for a school, but there are other options that can allow both a school and the park. However, this requires the city to prioritize those two important needs in its design for the site.

In terms of the design, many parents were surprised with the very small footprint that was proposed for the school, as well as the lack of designated playground/yard for the kids. With such limited space, the school is proposed to be built up to six storeys high, which is unprecedented for Ottawa and, based on our research, does not support an appropriate educational

experience for students. Our biggest priority is ensuring the design of the new school is equivalent to other schools in the city and surrounding area. Based on what was proposed by the city, I don't think we are there yet and I know that many other parents in our community would agree.

What was your reaction to the community opposition to that proposal?

Levert-Gagnon: I wasn't surprised by the community opposition. I understand that some members of the community are very attached to this particular park. The school's parents weren't involved in the design of the first plan, or any plan for that matter. We are very much on the outside of this process and our children are suffering the consequences of the city's poor planning and management of this project.

I wish the community members opposing the construction of the school understood that we're not vying for the park or any greenspace – all we need is an adequate education environment, equivalent to what is provided to the linguistic majority.

In the revised concept plan (not yet released), the location of the new school has reportedly been moved to Somerset Street West. Would that location work for the school?

We understand that the new school will be placed on Somerset, which is a viable option, provided that there is sufficient space for the school amid the other structures contemplated in the plan. Wherever the building is located, we want to ensure the school has adequate space and natural light, as well as access to an enclosed yard where the kids can safely play.

What we hope to avoid is a scenario where the school is tightly enclosed between high-rise towers, without its own dedicated outdoor space. You don't see this type of design in any other Ottawa schools because it is not appropriate and it is certainly not the type of educational experience we want for our children. As a minority community, we do not hold the balance of political power, but that should not mean that our children are afforded a school which offers a lesser educational experience.

What are the most important facilities you think need to be provided in the new school? Any important design aspects (i.e., one vs. two storeys, access to greenspace?) What input has the parents' council had into this project?

We would love to see a larger footprint for the school, so that it could be built between two to three storeys high, as are the other schools in this area. Unfortunately, based on the initial plan, we sense that this is unlikely. Assuming the city maintains the current, tiny footprint for the school, it seems as though the school board will have no other option but to build vertically – up to six storeys high, which is something

our parent community is still struggling with.

The new school should also have a green, dedicated school yard only accessible by the school children during school hours, with the possibility of play structures. Children should not have to cross a roadway to reach their school yard.

It should have all the standard features you would expect in an elementary school: its own full-sized gym, library, music class space, staff room and special resource rooms, and necessary closed offices. Where required, the city should guarantee exclusive or priority access to other shared facilities that are needed to replace or complement school facilities that cannot be accommodated within the small footprint.

It goes without saying that the school should be accessible to all students. If the school remains six storeys tall, it will need well-maintained elevators. These design details will, naturally, fall to the CEPEO to coordinate; however, we really feel the city has a responsibility in the first instance to ensure the school has enough space to support accessibility. This means granting the school a larger footprint so we don't have to build so high.

The school should be easily accessible for student drop off by school buses, cyclists, drivers, and walkers.

The school should be built without further delays. The new school project was first announced about seven years ago. We've waited long enough.

How do you think the school should fit into the larger design for the community hub at 1010 Somerset in terms of sharing facilities?

I think most of the parents in our community are excited about the prospect of sharing facilities on the site, notably with the rec centre. But it's important to note that these facilities, as well as the proposed greenspace, aren't expected to be constructed for seven to 10 years (Phase 2 of the plan), whereas the school is aiming to be constructed in a three-year timeline. This will leave the children with a significant number of years where they are in the midst of heavy construction, without access to any additional space or facilities.

This is partially why we feel so strongly that the school must be granted space that is large enough to accommodate facilities of its own – including its own yard and outdoor space – on a plot of land that will minimize the impact of construction on children's learning.

We do not want this to be a repeat of what the students at Devonshire have had to live through. We hope the city will have learned from that example and will make appropriate choices for our school.

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www.swchc.on.ca/community



MP report: Happy New Year!

Yasir Naqvi

I hope you have had a chance to spend quality time with family, friends, and loved ones over the holidays. I would like to take this opportunity to provide an update on the various accomplishments we have made to better support you and your family.

Canada Dental Plan

Canadians deserve access to quality dental care. But for far too many without insurance, the high cost of dental keeps that care out of reach.

Once the Canada Dental Plan is fully implemented, it will make dental care accessible for up to nine million uninsured Canadians with an adjusted family net income of less than \$90,000.

That means supports for seniors, for young Canadians, and for those most vulnerable. The plan will cover a wide range of health services including cleaning, X-rays, and preventative care.

To ensure a smooth rollout, the plan will become available in phases. Seniors started being eligible this past December. Soon it will extend to disabled Canadians and children, and in 2025, to all eligible Canadians. We are also working with dental health professionals, ensuring patients know of the supports and how to get them. Learn more about this at Canada.ca/dental

Supporting businesses

Last month, our government announced that our agreement with Visa and Mastercard to cut credit card fees for small businesses has been finalized. With these new agreements in place, our government is following through on our commitment to support small businesses

that are facing higher costs due to inflation and increased interest rates.

Reducing costs on small businesses will enable them to further invest in their business and its growth, all while helping support their success now and into the future.

Housing

To help make housing more affordable across Canada, the 2023 Fall Economic Statement introduces new funding that will help support thousands of new homes.

The Apartment Construction Loan Program, the Affordable Housing Fund, and the top-up of the Co-operative Housing Development Program provide billions of dollars in support for rentals, co-operative, and affordable housing.

Action on climate change

Our government presented the next step in our plan for cleaner air and a secure future – a cap on pollution from Canada's oil and gas sector.

Developed after significant engagement with stakeholders, provinces, and territories, this framework is an ambitious and achievable

path to lower pollution from Canada's largest emitting sector – the oil and gas industry – while driving the investments needed to protect jobs and competitiveness.

This is about keeping our air clean and protecting our kids' futures, along with building a sector that is strong and competitive – with good jobs workers can count on.

Implementing 9-8-8

We're taking an important step to provide suicide prevention support for people who need it, when they need it most.

9-8-8, Canada's new three-digit suicide crisis helpline is now available to call or text, in English and French, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, across Canada. When someone reaches out to 9-8-8, wherever possible, they will be connected to the responder that is closest to them, based on their area code.

This is in addition to many other strong measures designed to make life more affordable for Ottawa Centre residents and all Canadians.

Please don't hesitate to contact my office for further information, or for assistance. We are here to help.

Transit review reconsiders some bus route changes

Alayne McGregor

Draft OC Transpo maps for the route review/cuts show that some changes affecting routes running through Centretown have been reconsidered.

City Transit Commission Chair Glen Gower posted the [maps on his website](#) on January 3. They reflect OC Transpo staff plans as of December 22. The route changes will go into effect this spring.

The changes, which were received (not approved) by the commission in November, are the result of a large-scale bus route review that was also designed to save \$10M in operational “efficiencies.” The initial plans said that more than 74,000 annual hours or 3.5 percent of service would be cut.

The most notable change from November is that Route 11 will not be doubled in length and will still end at Parliament/Laurier. In November, Councillor Jeff Leiper had spoken out against extending the route to Blair Station, saying it would make Route 11’s already-dreadful on-time performance even worse.

The other change to Route 11, to have it serve Bayview Station, has been retained, which means that Route 11 bus stops in front of the Plant Recreation Centre will move to Preston Street, and buses will be slowed by making additional turns.

In the new draft, Route 12 has now been extended westward to Tunney’s Pasture Station to cover the sections of Dalhousie and Hintonburg previously served by Route 16. The initial plan completely dropped that service. Route 16 will be deleted.

Routes 6, 7, and 14 do not appear to have been changed. Route 114 will be deleted.

Other changes remain as in the initial plan:

- Preston Street will now be served by a new Route 8 travelling from Dow’s Lake Station to Gatineau.
- Route 85 will now run from Bayshore all the way down Carling to Chamberlain and then to Lees Station, replacing Route 55, which is being discontinued.
- The other half of Route 55 is being taken over by Route 5, which is being extended to serve the General Hospital and Elmvale. The current southern section of Route 5 is being replaced by Route 18.
- Route 56, which runs from Tunney’s Pasture to King Edward via Dow’s Lake and Lees stations, will be increased to operate all day, seven days a week, over the full route.

OC Transpo has said the changes will allow it to offer more frequent service on some routes. But which and by how much has not been specified. The maps also do not show which routes are peak-only and which are regular, which makes it hard to determine how much actual service will be available.

Lynne Browne: a tireless advocate for the homeless

Tony Wohlfarth

On October 29, 2023, Ottawa lost a piece of this community’s heart. Lynne Browne died unexpectedly at the age of 76.

Lynne was instrumental in helping to establish the [Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa](#). She led the organization until she retired in 2014, when she and her partner moved back to Toronto.

Born on her grandmother’s farm in Weston, Ontario, her family moved to Toronto when she was very young.

Educated at the University of Toronto, Lynne was a passionate and outspoken advocate for the rights of those less fortunate in our society. In 1974, she married Jim Turk, who came to Ottawa in 2004 as executive director of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT).

Lynne’s early advocacy was with the NDP where she became an effective political organizer. In Ottawa, she was best known for meeting with the former mayor, Jim Watson, and raising the challenges facing Ottawa’s homeless.

Dedicated and passionate

Kaite Burkholder Harris, the current executive director of the alliance, contributed the following:

“Lynne’s dedication and passion for her work were truly inspiring. Throughout her tenure, she achieved significant milestones, including

the incorporation of the alliance as a non-profit organization. Her efforts in organizing the annual Community Forum, as well as publishing the annual report card on housing and homelessness in Ottawa, have left a lasting impact on our community.

“Not only was Lynne a tireless advocate for political change, but she also demonstrated an unwavering commitment to her role. Her dedication to the cause of ending homelessness was evident in her work, and her legacy will continue to inspire us all.”

Schooling the mayor

Tim Aubrey from the University of Ottawa added this insightful anecdote:

“I remember her inviting me to a meeting with the mayor (Jim Watson) because he wasn’t happy with the alliance putting out an annual report card that made the city look bad. I marveled sitting in on the meeting and watching Lynne school the mayor. He said, initially, he only had 20 minutes to give but the meeting ended up lasting almost one hour!

“In those days, people thought the alliance had a paid staff because Lynne was so productive, effective and efficient. It was actually only her, some volunteers and students.

“Her legacy of her time



Lynne Browne was a tireless advocate with Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa. *JIM TURK/THE BUZZ*

as executive director is very much alive today as the alliance is now an incorporated not-for-profit (that she brought in), has several staff members and is very influential politically in how the city responds to homelessness.”

Paddy Fuller, a volunteer at that time added, “I worked closely with Lynne at the Ottawa Alliance to End Homelessness where she worked tirelessly to energize the community to meet the challenge of homelessness.”

Back in Toronto, Lynne and Jim settled in The Beaches. She visited friends and family and was a regular

visitor at their local library. Her Celebration of Life (December 2) was held in Beeton Hall in the central branch of the library. Friends and family paid tribute to her as a mother, an organizer and her lifelong activism.

Ottawa and Canada lost a passionate advocate for the homeless in 2023. Those who want to know more, or pay tribute to her memory, can do so at: www.aftercare.org.

Tony Wohlfarth is a friend of Jim Turk and was fortunate to be able to attend the Celebration of Life for Lynne on December 2.

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Finding new art and new artists in smaller spaces: the Wall Space Gallery

Stephen Thirlwall

Large public galleries aren't the only place to see art in Ottawa. Small private galleries can often expose you to new art and artists, many of them local – for example, the Wall Space Gallery.

I recently visited this gallery after it moved to Ottawa South after a long stay in Westboro. Its new location at 1090 Bank Street (at Sunnyside) makes it a bit more accessible to the Centretown public.

The gallery carries work from a wide stable of artists, both local and beyond. Works on the walls range from fanciful to realistic to abstract, from painting and multimedia to prints, photographs, sculpture, dioramas, pottery and jewellery.

The gallery's space is clean and fresh with a lot of light coming through the large front and side windows. The building used to be a dollar store and before that a pharmacy.

David Lidbetter

The main exhibit for November was paintings by David Lidbetter, who currently lives in Aylmer, Quebec. He is one of my top five local artists. From the large number of paintings he has sold, he is obviously highly regarded by many others.

Lidbetter presents Canadian landscapes that have elements of mystery with patches of bold colour. The objects within scenes, particularly trees or blocks of forest, are in part stripped down to a minimalism. But the edges are detailed and small elaborations of features or colours can be discovered in various places.

He loves large patches of snow contrasted with stark trees, broken up here and there by rows of dried-up grasses. Icy streams have elliptical openings exposing water surfaces that reflect pictures of everything around. Backgrounds often have walls of forest breaking in places to let through the glowing light of sunrises or sunsets. His rock surfaces are multicoloured patchworks. Some paintings are shaded in a romantic mist.

Seeking inspiring views, Lidbetter goes out walking in many locations, mostly local. He captures photos and makes sketches on paper and in his mind. When he was young tak-



David Lidbetter displays several of his paintings at his exhibit in the new Ottawa South location of the Wall Space Gallery.

STEPHEN THIRLWALL/THE BUZZ

ing drawing classes, he found it tedious; but these classes are now paying off by giving him a strong foundation for his paintings. As he paints, his mind and fingers edit from the full landscape view to what will be included and what will be removed. He is excellent at just presenting what is necessary to convey strong emotions.

He can now support himself through his art. When he's not outside exploring, he paints for about eight hours a day, seven days a week, producing about 200 paintings a year. At any one time, he has several paintings on the go, and he moves back and forth between them. Each larger one takes a couple of months to complete. He can produce smaller paintings in about 20 minutes, plus drying time.

Most of his paintings are created using water-based oils on canvas that he finds gives him a lot more control in creating the works and applying details with fine brushes. From time to time, he also produces watercolours.

The gallery's main December exhibition will be Nicole Allen's *Beyond the Garden Gate*: flower gardens and bouquets bursting with every colour and type of bloom.

Other artists featured at the gallery

Peter Colbert, Erica Hawkes, Tanya Kirouac, Peter Rotter, Lori Richards paint imaginative natural landscapes, some slipping towards the abstract. Crystal Beshara does this as well but also moves into rural farm settings.

Vanessa McKernan offers imagined spaces connecting our inner selves with the outside world. Amy Shackleton's *Imagined Futures* brings urban development into new hybrid relations with nature, while Eryn O'Neill produces unusual architectural views of urban infrastructure and transformation.

Richard Ahnert and Drew Mosley paint fantastical creatures. Drew, as well as Dauma Stirbyte and Stefan Thompson, also build them from clay or other materials. Sharon Kelly and Laura Culic go fully into abstract landscapes and Patti Normand into otherworldly situations.

Artists, whether exhibiting in large or small galleries, open our minds to new perspectives, experiences and ways of thinking.

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Gone but not forgotten: Slices of Bank Street's history



Above: Barrymore's former festooned facade. Below: the Rialto theatre (later transformed into the Phoenix) was the last of the movie theatres on Bank. Right: The origin of the name of the Dunluce Chambers is unknown.

Robert Smythe

This issue of Skyline looks back at iconic Bank Street places that have disappeared.

Barrymore's Discotheque

Clad in its lurid livery, this lipstick red wall treatment is now a feverish memory. Of course, that highly festooned facade was designed for the

very elaborate Imperial Theatre of 1914. From its opening on the eve of World War I, it was all downhill for this ill-fated venture.

Expensive, segregated, widely spaced first-class seating in the middle of the theatre floor bit into ticket sales and it finally closed as a third-rank house in the mid-1950s.

The building has served as a furniture store, pinball

arcade, and hot dog joint. In 1971, it was turned into a strip club. To the delight of its owners, Pandora's Box was notorious for its full-frontal nudity and in a constant and well-publicized battle with Ottawa's Morality Squad.

Serial obscenity charges were laid but, in the end, the courts ruled in the club's favour. It then had

to contend with changing attitudes making stripping less appealing, and the City of Ottawa passing bylaws that restricted the location of adult entertainment parlours to industrial parks at the edge of the city.

In the late 1970s it was remodelled into what was meant to be Ottawa's swankiest disco, with five bar zones for well-heeled swingers. Barrymore's backers even compared it to New York's Studio 54. That disco promptly died.

It then became a rock music venue – also known as Barrymore's – which brought in many well-known acts, but eventually closed.

Now, save for a sexual paraphernalia shop and a burger spot, this once grand building is empty and, as a final indignity, most of its plaster wreaths, swags, garlands, lyres, and lions' heads (which were falling off, threatening pedestrians walking below) have been clumsily stripped away.

The Rialto Theatre

Often referred to during its final years as the "Rat-Hole," and home of the 50-cent double-bill Saturday matinee, the Rialto theatre opened on December 30, 1931 as a respectable 600-seat neighbourhood movie house.

It replaced an earlier theatre on this site that had been built during the silent era.

This new building, which featured a primitive form of Frigidaire cooling, was unique for Ottawa in that it contained multiple residential units above.

To accomplish this the auditorium (whose rake



was sunk below grade to make room for those upper floor suites) had to be heavily sound-proofed to prevent movie soundtracks from penetrating the apartments.

The Rialto ended its days under that name running cheesy soft-core porn. Under new management in September 1980, the theatre was transformed into an art house cinema aptly known as The Phoenix. Despite a makeover installing a smaller number of newer, wider seats, the interior still retained many of its grottier aspects.

Surprisingly, this modest theatre was absorbed in the mighty Cineplex chain a few years later, but its rise from the ashes proved to be brief.

In 1988, a dubious Fire Marshal's Order condemned the building to an immediate demolition. In its report on the rarely issued order, inspectors stated their reason as "graffiti found on the bathroom walls" in some of the upstairs apartments.

The Centretown stretch of Bank Street once boasted multiple movie houses. With the passing of this theatre with its chequered reputation, they had all vanished.

Waldorf Bros. Butchers

There had been a butcher's shop with grocery at 399 Bank Street since 1901, originally opening as the Centretown branch of then ubiquitous provisioners George Matthews Co.

The Waldorf Brothers located here in 1950, moving from previous premises directly across the street.

You can see from the change in brickwork and slightly different upper storey window styles that, before being converted into a commercial storefront, the building had started out decades earlier as a modest two-storey gable-fronted house. Once the very quaint butcher's shop closed, a multitude of restaurants cycled through this location.

Waldorf Bros. was perhaps part of the last flowering of rather genteel neighbourhood shops on Bank. While we are not entirely without food stores, today cheque-cashing, payday loans, vape and cannabis shops, empty derelict units, and dollar stores abound.

Colonial Furniture

It began as an industrial wood planing and turning mill at Bank and Waverley Streets in the mid-1890s. But it was elevated shortly thereafter into a furniture store designed to fill Centretown's burgeoning supply of new houses.

In 1933 the store became Colonial Furniture which grew to be Ottawa's biggest furniture chain. Colonial was famous for its exhibition sales, timed to coincide with the Ottawa Ex, set up in giant circus tents in the rear parking lot. After expanding to all corners of the city's suburbs, the business closed this flagship store in 1999.

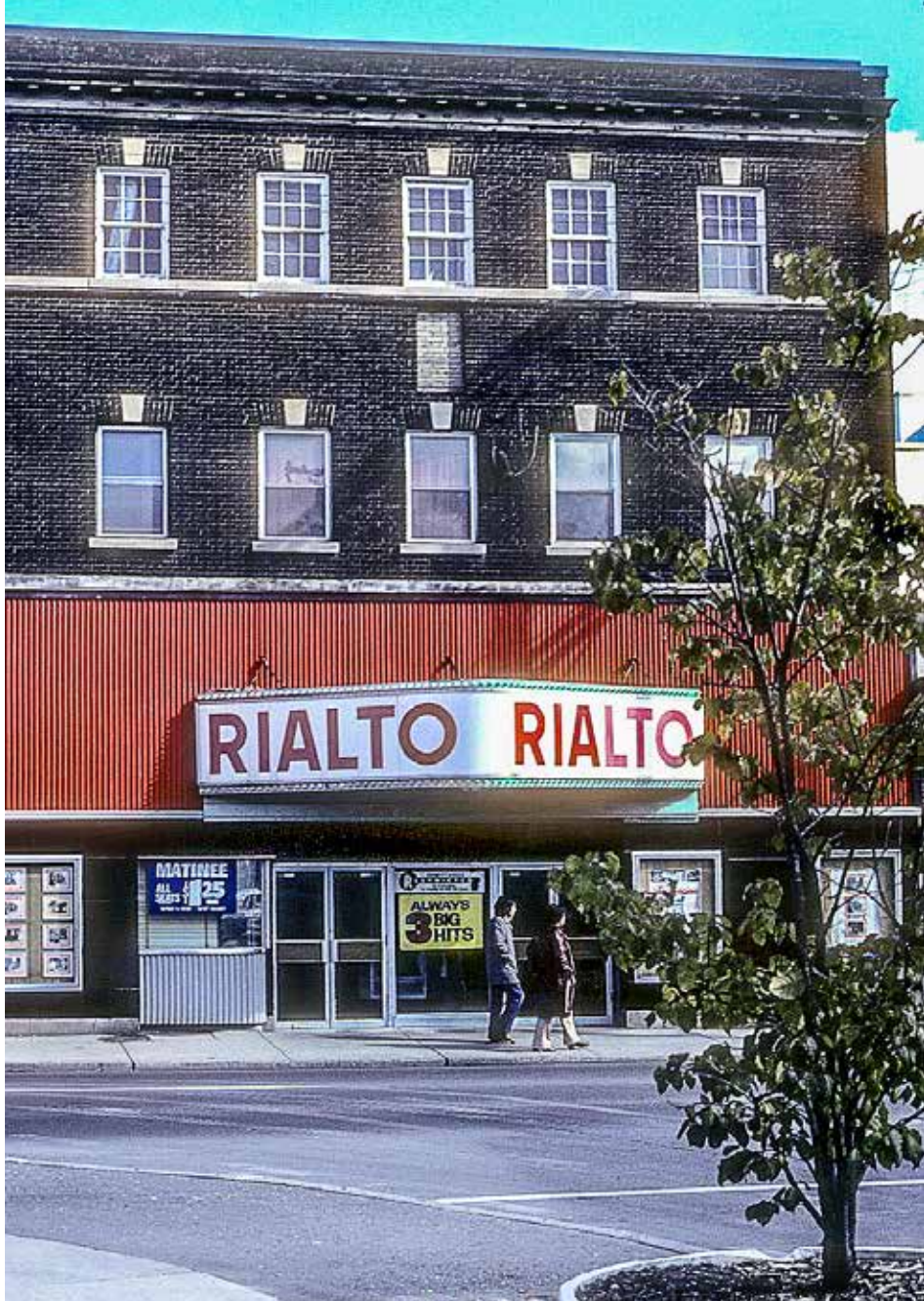
Colonial's large overhanging blade sign remained in place, and when Staples located here they were able to take advantage by getting it grandfathered and painted red, breathing life into a remnant of the old store.

Dunluce Chambers

Squeezed into the recessed entrance alcove that bisects Foster's Sports Centre, this delicate gold lettering once announced the name and address of the rooms above, which were likely used as offices.

The building itself dates to about 1908. The reason for the naming, which is from the time of construction, is unknown.

It may have been for an association with militant Protestant Orangemen as Dunluce Castle is a medieval ruin situated in Northern Ireland. Years ago the sign disappeared.



Bold initiatives needed for downtown: task force

continued from page 1 almost 18 months. As well as talking to experts, it also asked for ideas from the public, with more than 1,000 people contributing.

The task force called on all three levels of government to work together to “incentivize change, address the social issues and spur economic growth” using measures such as office conversions, marquee events, supporting businesses, mental health programs and shelters, and public spaces.

However, although Ottawa Centre MP Yasir Naqvi and local city councillors were strongly involved in the task force, the provincial government was nowhere to be seen at the launch. The report said the province’s help was needed in repurposing educational assets, incentivizing housing options, funding cultural and tourism entities, training workers, and funding community health initiatives.

In particular, the task force called on the federal government, as a major asset owner and employer, to become a “purposeful partner in city building” in areas like housing and tourism industry.

“Savings from a reduced federal footprint should be reinvested in Downtown. The disposal of federal assets, such as the Jackson Building and L’Esplanade Laurier, should be accelerated to transfer directly to municipal, not-for-profit, or private entities as a means to address the impact of federal decisions on Downtown’s economy.”

Naqvi said he would be working to expedite the federal government releasing those properties.

The report suggested the Jackson Building be turned into a multi-functional building focusing on residential uses and operated as a co-op. It also envisioned repurposing the current Ottawa Public Library main branch after it moves to its new building, with the building at Laurier and Metcalfe becoming a cultural destination. That building, however, has already been

sold to a private developer.

The report called for a greater emphasis on transit, cycling, and walking for transportation to and in downtown. When asked if the federal government would increase its support for transit operations given current city cuts to OC Transpo service, Naqvi pointed to federal funding for the capital costs of the LRT. He said he was not aware of any “conversation” about federal funding for operating costs.

The report includes a list and short, medium, and long-term strategies to revitalize downtown, such as developing a science and technology innovation hub downtown, adding incentives to create family-sized residential units, and building individual modular dwellings for immediate temporary housing on public land.

The heavy lifting to get this vision implemented is expected to come from the Ottawa Board of Trade, (OBT) which last summer issued a call to action for all levels of government to make downtown their top priority. The OBT is working with the Canadian Urban Institute, the city, and Ottawa Tourism on an action plan for this.

At the announcement, OBT President Sueling Ching said that the report’s strategies – plus economic development reports and the Economic Summit the OBT held last fall – would feed into this action plan. It’s expected to be released this spring.

The announcement was held at the new Kichesippi Beer Co. store on the Sparks Street Mall. Owner Paul Meek said the 14-year-old brewery realized it needed to be in downtown as well as Bells Corners in order to be part of “civic pride” and what people wanted to do on a weekend. It will be opening a full bar and bottle shop later this spring.

He said the report made him feel good for the long term in its support for businesses downtown.

The full report is available at yasirnaqvi.libparl.ca



The Jack Purcell Recreation Association hosted a free holiday lunch for the community on December 15. The lunch, a tradition at the community centre, had been cancelled for the last three years because of the pandemic. A large crowd lined up to chat and enjoy sandwiches and appetizers from local restaurants and brightly-decorated desserts. Mayor Mark Sutcliffe, MPP Joel Harden, and Councillor Ariel Troster circulated; a Grade 2 class from Elgin Street Public School excitedly sang carols and holiday songs in unison; and Ottawa singer-songwriter Miss McLeod (above right) cheerfully performed seasonal tunes.

ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ

Heritage status sought for Centretown buildings

Alayne McGregor

City staff have recommended that two Centretown buildings be given the extra protection of provincial heritage status: the Bible House at 315 Lisgar near Bank, and the W.C. Edwards Building (the former home of the Orange Art Gallery) at 290 City Centre.

And, in order to meet current legislative requirements, they recommend that “heritage attributes” be added for the city Water Works complex in LeBreton Flats.

The heritage designations, under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, will be considered by the Built Heritage Committee on January 16 and by City Council on January 24. Designation under the Ontario Heritage Act makes it more difficult to demolish a building.

The buildings had to be evaluated under the new regulations for the provincial More Homes Built Faster Act (2022) aka Bill 23. That act has forced the city to expedite heritage applications: if City Council does not indicate its intention to designate these buildings by the end of 2024, they would be removed from the city’s Heritage Register, and would not be able to be re-listed in the register for another five years. Being on the register slows down the process of getting approval to demolish a building.

290 City Centre: According to the

staff report, the W.C. Edwards building is “a representative example of a vernacular interpretation of the Spanish Colonial Revival style.” The building is historically linked to its surroundings as “it is one of the last remaining buildings in the area that is directly connected to the area’s railway era.” It is also “a rare example of architecture associated with the historic industrial character of the area. Its design is reflective of the importance of the lumber industry and the prominence of W.C. Edwards and Company at the time.”

The building is a “highly visible” landmark, and “informally marks the transition from West Centretown to Hintonburg, both of which historically straddled the former railways.”

The Orange Art Gallery occupied 290 City Centre for the last decade and had said it would stay open until the end of its lease on December 31. Its landlord had refused to renew.

315 Lisgar Street: This 1922 building is “a representative example of an early 20th commercial building in Ottawa. ... The building exhibits unique ecclesiastical influences in its leaded and stained-glass windows, stone window surrounds and decorative stone details. Its original design as a Bible House is evident in the transom window with ‘Bible House’ written in stained

glass and the projecting decorative sign in the shape of a book that also says ‘Bible House.’” Originally owned and operated by the Ottawa Auxiliary Bible Society, the building’s purpose centred around printing and distributing religious books and pamphlets.

The Ottawa Water Works: This complex consists of the Water Works Building at 10 Fleet Street, the covered aqueduct, the open aqueduct to the west including the headworks, the channeled tailrace to the north of the pumping station, and five stone bridges that cross the aqueduct. The bridges include four single-span bridges; the Canada Central Railway, Broad Street, Booth Street, and the combined Lloyd/Lett/Grand Trunk Railway bridge, and the triple-span Pooley’s Bridge.

The complex originally received heritage designation in 1982 and 1995. Staff note that it has cultural heritage value for its role in the early development of municipal water works systems in Canada, its association with local engineer Thomas Coltrin Keefer, its design and physical value and its contextual value as a cultural heritage landscape and the only remaining historic structures on LeBreton Flats. Pooley’s Bridge is the oldest bridge in Ottawa and it is considered the second oldest stone arch bridge in Ontario, the report says.

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Inside a model co-living suite in the new Common at Zibi building. The rooms have dramatic views of the Chaudière Falls and local architecture, but not much space. ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ

Common at Zibi offers housing alternatives

Alayne McGregor

A new 25-story apartment building by the Ottawa River is offering a unique combination of rentals: regular apartments, affordable apartments, and co-living spaces.

The Common at Zibi building, on Chaudière Island just off Booth Street, will begin accepting tenants this month. The 140 regular apartments will be run by Dream Unlimited, the building's developer; the 19 affordable one and two-bedroom units by Ottawa Community Housing at rents starting at \$1300/month; and the 48 co-living suites by Common, an American company making its first venture into Canada.

All tenants will have access to a rooftop terrace, state-of-the-art fitness centre, secure bike storage, co-working spaces, theatre room, and a fully equipped party room and lounge.

The co-living suites consist of two to five bedrooms plus a shared kitchen and living room. Depending on the suite design, some bathrooms are private and some shared.

Each co-living tenant has a separate lease with Common, so one wouldn't be responsible for rent if another leaves. On the other hand, one couldn't choose whom one shared the suite with or specify only male or only female co-tenants. Matthew Micksin, Common's vice-president of real estate, told *The BUZZ* that in-house staff will work to resolve conflicts among tenants, and will move tenants if necessary, but

Common's experience is that this does not happen very often. About 50 percent move out of co-living after one year, he said.

Everything in the suite is provided: furniture, a washer and dryer, dishes, bed clothes, draperies. Common also arranges for cleaners every second week and provides staples like toilet paper to reduce roommate friction.

"One of the attractions of co-living is that you can just show up with a suitcase and you're ready to go."

Micksin said that tenants could add their own furniture and customize decorations. A couple could share a larger ensuite bedroom, allowing up to six people in a suite.

Common has been running co-living arrangements for eight years, and currently operates 11 spaces across the U.S. Depending on bedroom size and en-suite bathroom, its Zibi units range from \$1,280 to \$1,650/month.

On December 11, media were given a tour of a model five bedroom/three bathroom co-living suite in the mostly-completed building. It was clear this was not a place for people with many possessions, who liked to cook, or who had friends over. The shared spaces, while well-appointed, weren't even large enough for all five residents to eat together, and the refrigerator wasn't sized for five. It would be a squeeze to fit a desk, a bookcase, or a reading chair into a bedroom, although these are allowed. It might be difficult to work from home.

Two ways to support community-based care

Rachel Carmichael Campbell
Centretown Community Health Centre

A lot has changed since 2011. Astronomers took the first photo of a black hole, Marvel has released over 30 films, and inflation in Canada has risen by 31 percent.

Community health centres' base operating budgets? They've stayed the same.

What has changed in our working landscape? We have a growing health and human resources (HHR) crisis across all sectors of health and social services. For years, health care providers and administrative staff in community-based non-profit primary, community, mental health and addiction, and long-term care have faced lower pay grades than other parts of the health care sector.

The Alliance for Healthier Communities has joined with nine other provincial associations representing primary and community care providers to prepare a report to the provincial government: the Ontario Community Health Market Salary Review.

The report shows that, despite the rising cost of living and a competitive health care job market, community health sector staff experienced an aver-

age salary increase of only 1.53 percent in 2023. This pales in comparison to the 11 percent increase awarded to hospital nurses and the 8 percent increase for emergency medical services. The Ministry of Health sets the rates they will pay for these jobs.

We all know that costs have continued to rise – utilities, insurance, property maintenance, rent, cyber security, etc. – alongside the mounting pressures of the HHR crisis. Now we are in the unfortunate position of having to make cuts to service delivery in order to pay our bills.

The lack of investment in community-based health care and our workers is short-sighted. Community-governed comprehensive primary health care organizations help alleviate pressures on the rest of the health system by managing clients in the community and close to home with services rooted in the determinants of health, anti-oppression, and cultural safety.

By providing our clients with low-barrier, accessible health care we save the province money. Clients in our model use the emergency room less despite being more medically and socially complex, resulting in over \$27 million saved every year.

It all makes sense: investing in people, in staff, in community-based

care helps people and saves the system money and strain.

Two final comments. First, while we shouldn't have to do this, we are fundraising for our Urban Outreach program. We may not meet our goal of \$10,000 but any little amount helps. Learn more at www.centretownchc.org/donate-winter-2023-urban-outreach and share it with your network.

Second, an ask for help. The provincial government will be deciding on their budget priorities for the next fiscal year in the coming months. We ask you to echo our asks for Budget 2024. We are joining with more than 100 other community health organizations across Ontario to request:

1. Approximately \$165 million (12.3 percent) increase over five years to help retain existing staff in the community health sector, and to recruit new staff where gaps exist and needs are growing.

2. A base budget increase of \$33.7 million (5 percent) for community-governed comprehensive primary health care organizations so they can maintain and improve service levels.

We need your help and your support, so we can be here, serving you and improving health and well-being for folks in Centretown for years to come.

Somerset Ward: Updates from City Hall

Ariel Troster

Happy New Year! I hope you were able to get some downtime and the ability to connect with friends and loved ones over the last couple of weeks.

I am back from a family trip and gearing up for a busy few weeks at City Hall and in the community. While things have been relatively quiet since I last wrote to you, I wanted to update you on a few key issues.

Alternative response pilot

At the end of December, it was announced that the Centretown and Somerset West Community Health Centres were chosen to lead the upcoming safer alternative response pilot that will soon be coming to Centretown. When the program launches, Centretown residents will be able to call 211 if we find a neighbour in distress, who may be experiencing an overdose or suffering from a mental health episode. The new service will be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and will provide quick response times within the Centretown catchment.

I will provide more updates as the program comes together, but I am absolutely thrilled that CCHC and SWCHC were chosen. Both organizations have deep connections in the community and a strong background in harm reduction, and are part of a network of clinics providing primary care in Ottawa. Thanks to the Ottawa Guiding Council on Mental Health and Addictions for all of the hard work that is going in to envisioning and launching this crucial new service.

The right to protest

On another topic, I have received hundreds of emails from residents concerned about by-law tickets that were handed out to protesters at recent anti-war demonstrations for using a megaphone on city streets. I have attended many other authorized and unauthorized rallies in Ottawa over the last 20 years, virtually all of which used megaphones.

I unequivocally support the right to protest and reject any comparison to the convoy in the winter of 2022. Equating peaceful, recurring, local protests on humanitarian issues with the invasive, destructive, incessant behaviour of the convoy minimizes the real and lasting harm done to downtown communities two years ago, as well as diminishing the work of the organizers of the current protests.

Many in Ottawa are grieving the loss of loved ones in Israel and Palestine and the emotion and distress of these events should be approached with empathy and flexibility. Neither I nor council have the authority to direct past or future enforcement activity, but I sincerely hope they will reconsider this approach. You can read my full statement on this issue on my website at arieltroster.com

Thanks to all of you for your patience as city crews clean up after our first winter storms of the year. As always, please email us at ariel.troster@ottawa.ca if you spot any locations that remain troublesome or need assistance reaching city staff.

Ariel Troster is the city councillor for Somerset Ward, which includes Centretown.

MPP report: building community in 2024

Joel Harden

I hope you've had a chance to catch up with family, friends, and neighbours.

If you worked through the holiday season – as a first responder, or in essential services like shelters, home care, long-term care, health care, municipal services, or in business – please accept my heartfelt thanks. Ottawa

is a great place because of you, and we appreciate you.

At 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, January 20, let us offer you our appreciation in person.

We are hosting a New Year's Levee in the ground floor boardroom of Beaver Barracks at 464 Metcalfe Street (at Catherine). You can RSVP for the event at www.joelhardenmpp.ca/levee. It's a chance for us to meet over snacks and think about the community we want to build together in 2024.

You can take the #55 OC Transpo bus to our levee and places to park can be found nearby at the Canadian Museum of Nature, or the downtown YMCA-YWCA. We hope to see you there!

Our New Year's Levee also aims to be a celebration of the community groups across Ottawa whose work uplifts our beautiful city. To operate, these groups often rely on our support and funding from all levels of government.

We know the value that these community groups bring to neighbours across the city, but rarely do we have an opportunity to celebrate them, or advocate for their success.

Later this month, the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs will be in Ottawa, Brockville, and Cornwall, to hear from local stakeholders, residents, and community groups about what priorities should be included in the 2024 Ontario Budget.

This is the chance for neighbours to champion the

issues that matter most to them, and advocate for their government to invest seriously in the impactful, community-based solutions we know can make a difference.

Solutions like more operational funding to our public transit systems, support for our amazing community health centres, and investment in deeply affordable public housing. Like action on our climate emergency, initiatives to address rising levels of hatred, and strategies to help struggling downtown small businesses and neighbours struggling with mental health challenges.

Ottawa Centre is full of strong advocates on these and many other issues. Now is the perfect time to raise our voices and let these advocates be heard. Ontario needs your help.

In-person hearings will take place in Brockville on January 23, Ottawa on January 24, and Cornwall on January 25. These hearings are open to individuals and organizations, with an option to participate remotely.

The deadline for requesting to appear before the Finance Committee in Brockville, Cornwall or Ottawa is January 15 at 12 p.m.

If you request to appear you can also submit written material; the deadline to do so is January 31.

For more information on how to engage in the Ontario budget consultation process, visit www.joelhardenmpp.ca/budget2024, or email us at joel@joelharden.ca

Dalhousie Community Association report: how we'll meet 2024's challenges

Ed McKenna

The Year Ahead

The Dalhousie Community Association doesn't convene a regular meeting in December. Instead, we gather for a holiday dinner, held again this year at the accommodating Vietnam Palace on Somerset Street West.

Our first regular meeting of 2024 will take place January 25, nearly two months after our last regular meeting in November. The break gives everyone a chance to reflect on the new year ahead.

The DCA bylaws tell us that we must "determine, reflect, and actively promote the concerns, aspirations and opinions" of those who live, work, or own property in the Dalhousie community – that is, in Somerset Ward, west of Bay Street, in Chinatown, Little Italy, and LeBreton Flats.

How will we meet this challenge in 2024?

Messaging Out

The DCA achieves its objectives through the work of its committees. For the Messaging Out Committee, that work is communications.

The DCA website, ottawadalhousie.ca, recently upgraded, proved its worth in the #saveplouffepark campaign. More improvements to the website are on the way, including an updated DCA logo!

Committee members also support the important work of this newspaper and sit on its editorial board.

Mobility

Streets, sidewalks and pathways. Transit riders, pedestrians, cyclists, car and truck drivers. The Mobility Committee advocates for measures that will allow all these forms of transportation to co-exist in Dalhousie safely.

Our community is where passage on the Ottawa River is interrupted by the Chaudière Falls. And so the Dalhousie area has been a transportation hub since prehistoric times. This legacy persists today in the form of two light rail lines (including four stations), three interprovincial bridges, the Queensway, and one of Ottawa's two interprovincial routes for heavy trucks.

Some of the largest developments in the city are occurring in Dalhousie, from the Ottawa Hospital on our southern edge, to the 34-acre Zibi development on the Ottawa River. Between them are the NCC's Building LeBreton project, the Gladstone Village subdivision, Rochester Heights, and the Canada Lands Company's Booth Street redevelopment.

Motor vehicle traffic is intensifying. At the same time, local residents need to move in and out of our neighbourhoods conveniently and safely.

Several new developments are expected to release transportation impact assessments this year, and the committee will participate in the upcoming planning process to decide whether Preston Street should be extended north to Wellington.

Peaceable Neighbourhoods

The Peaceable Neighbourhoods Committee "focuses on what brings us all together and how we can support each other." Everyone should feel safe in our neighbourhoods.

The committee supports the work of the Somerset West Community Health Centre, which in 2024 will include the new "Safe Alternative Response" program.

And watch for the Eccles Street Block Party again this summer.

Plan Our Neighbourhood

Planning and development in our neighbourhoods are the concerns of this committee. Members work with developers and the city to ensure the community voice is heard in the complex development approval process.

In addition to rebuilding entire neighbourhoods, developers in Dalhousie are advancing other major projects in 2024, including Ādisōke and Dream LeBreton on Albert, and Claridge Homes' East Flats on Lett Street.

Virtually all infill development in Dalhousie involves applications from developers for "relief" from city zoning by-laws limiting massing and height on traditional main streets and in established residential areas. The committee provides the city a community perspective on these applications.

At last count (September 2023), more than 10,000 new residential units were in the planning stages for Dalhousie! How many will provide some of the building-blocks for community, be "affordable," and accommodate families?

And in 2024, according to recent provincial legislative changes, hundreds of properties in Dalhousie listed on the city's heritage register must be formally designated, or be removed altogether. The committee is supporting the city's effort to designate heritage properties in Dalhousie this year.

Public Realm

A "healthy environment and safe places to play for all ages" – these are the goals of DCA's Public Realm Committee.

The public realm is our public space. It includes our streets, sidewalks, and parks. The committee works for a sustainable and healthy public realm in Dalhousie, on which the livability of our neighbourhoods depends.

And has the committee saved Plouffe Park? In 2024 we'll have the answer and hopefully have a say in its design as part of the city's re-development of 1010 Somerset Street West.

The push continues for the implementation of plans for the new Norman/Rochester and Aqueduct parks.

Many new developments in Dalhousie do not meet the requirement for parkland. Developers pay cash to the city instead. These funds are accumulating, while the need for parks and greenspace grows.

The Public Realm Committee will be advocating for the immediate use of "cash-in-lieu of parkland funds" in Dalhousie in 2024.

The search for a new community garden, and the "Walk the Block for Trees," and "Adopt a Public Planter" programs, continue this year.

Become a DCA member!

If you've read this far you should be a DCA member! Be informed and get involved in all that's happening in Dalhousie in 2024! Contact us and get on the members' mailing list.

And join us at our next regular meeting on Thursday, January 25, at 7:30 p.m.

Contact: president@ottawadalhousie.ca, and check out our website: ottawadalhousie.ca

CCA report: AGM, affordable housing, library, trees



Jack Hanna

Top executive speaks of NCC's plans in Centretown

Hear all about what the NCC has in store for its Centretown holdings, such as roadways, parks, and the canal.

Alain Miguelez, the NCC's vice-president of capital planning and its chief planner, is the keynote speaker at the CCA's AGM on Tuesday, January 30. He will speak of the NCC's plans for the heart of Ottawa and especially Centretown.

To obtain a Zoom link for the AGM, email: jack.2014@icloud.com. All are welcome.

CCA seeks new board members with communications savvy

CCA members will elect new directors at their AGM on Tuesday, January 30.

This year, the CCA is seeking candidates with communications expertise to assist with the community association's social media, email, and newsletter.

A candidate interested in running for president or joining the board of directors should give notice by Monday, January 22, by emailing: cca@centretowncitizens.ca. A candidate is asked to provide a resume and tell why they wish to serve on the Board and what skills they will contribute.

Mary Huang will stand for re-election as CCA President

At the AGM, Mary Huang will stand for election to a third year as president. Huang is a consultant in planning and forecasting, and an advocate for affordable and accessible housing.

Any CCA member is eligible to stand for election as president.

Time to renew CCA membership

CCA members are asked to renew their annual memberships before noon, Friday, January 27, so they can vote at the AGM. To renew, or become a new member, visit the CCA website and hit the "Get Involved" button.

Affordable housing that works for everyone

Housing activist Cheryll Case is conducting a Zoom workshop for the CCA's housing affordability working group on Monday, January 22, at 6:30 p.m.

Case is the executive director of CP Planning, which works to ensure urban planning aligns with human rights, for example, by providing housing that meets everyone's needs.



The first of two new residential towers at 301 Lett Street on LeBreton Flats recently has been topped off by the builder, Claridge Homes. The towers will add 600 new residences on Lett. In the foreground is the site for Aqueduct Park. Claridge paid the city \$2M cash-in-lieu of parkland, which will be used to fund the park's development.

Ed McKenna/THE BUZZ

For information or to obtain the link, email antiracism@centretowncitizens.ca

Library's future in Centretown

A team from the Ottawa Public Library will speak to the CCA's Planning Committee on Tuesday, February 6, at 7 p.m.

The OPL is moving its main branch out of Centretown to LeBreton Flats. After that move, how will the OPL serve residents of Centretown?

For the Zoom link, email: jack.2014@icloud.com

City needs to be keen for new trees

The CCA wants the city to become keen about new trees. Specifically, the CCA says the city should be aggressive in planting new trees on the city-owned boulevards along residential streets.

The CCA's NeighbourWoods project has identified close to 500 sites in Centretown for new trees.

In a letter to the city, the CCA proposes the city take the initiative in speaking to property owners about putting a tree on city-owned land in front a house. As well, the city could offer tax incentives to property owners who agree to such plantings. Centretown has "the lowest canopy coverage in Ottawa, and it is worsening," the association points out.

Lifting height limits on Centretown streets

The city has raised height limits for "minor corridors" – including a half dozen Centretown streets – from six to nine storeys.

In a letter to the city, the CCA argues there should have been public consultation before such a big change. The CCA strongly supports greater density, but argues it must be accompanied by measures to ensure Ottawa's core is livable.

"We emphasize minor corridors being 'complete streets' that prioritize walkability, pedestrian and cyclist safety, greenery and trees," the CCA said. "Higher density should not pave the way for further focus on vehicular traffic."

The minor corridors in Centretown are: Somerset, Gladstone, Catherine, Metcalfe, Kent, and Lyon.

\$\$\$ donated to university food bank

The CCA worked with history students at Carleton University to research Centretown's history.

As a thank-you to the students for all their work, the CCA has made a \$250 donation to the university's food bank, the Emergency Essentials Assistance Program Support Fund.

The students, as part of their course work, conducted four research projects in support of new heritage districts in Centretown and the development of new Centretown history walking tours.

Read more about this research in the February issue of *The BUZZ*.

What's on this month, in Ottawa and beyond

Tony Wohlfarth

The 2024 Golden Globes were awarded on January 9. This summer's epic *Oppenheimer* received five Golden Globes including best picture.

This month, I review *The Teachers Lounge* nominated by Germany for an Academy Award in the best foreign language category and highlight two recent documentaries on homelessness. I also highlight some great live events this month.

The Teachers Lounge

Carla Nowak (Leonie Benesch) is a sports and math teacher in her first position in a local high school. When a series of thefts of cell phones and other valuables occur at the school, Nowak tries to get to the bottom of the crime. The idealistic teacher is immersed in a war of words between outraged parents and strongly opinionated colleagues. The conflict which ensues threatens to subsume the young teacher.

The Teachers Lounge is directed by Iger Catak. Filmed in Bavaria, the camera work by Judith Kaufmann is electrifying. The emotions are raw and the tensions palpable. I loved this film when I saw it in Berlin and highly recommend it.

The film is screening at the ByTowne Cinema (325 Rideau Street) beginning on January 26. In German with English subtitles. Running time: 1h35m.

Hotel Mokum

Take Back Amsterdam is the name of a group of housing activists in Holland's largest and most expensive city. In 2021, the group occupied a vacant hotel and renamed it Hotel Mokum to underscore the need for affordable housing.

Directed by Yannesh Meijman, *Hotel Mokum* reveals both the complexity of social organizing and its challenges. I found the question it poses, Does Amsterdam need another hotel? compelling. Running time: 30m.

Squats are all too common. You can see others across Europe at en.squat.net/2021/10/16/amsterdam-take-back-mokum-hotel-marnix-squatted/

Someone Lives Here

At the 2023 Hot Docs Film Festival, *Someone Lives Here* won the Audience Choice Award for best picture. It tells the story of a socially conscious carpenter, Khaleel Seivwright, who builds boxes that can be used to house the unhoused.

He relied on a GoFundMe campaign to

raise \$100,000 for supplies. I loved the simplicity of his solution to the housing crisis in Toronto and was disturbed by civil officials' response. Running time: 1h15m.

National Arts Centre (1 Elgin St.)

The NAC stages offer a dazzling array of live performances this month:

- Jan. 19: Innu group Maten;
- Jan. 20: Classic Albums Live: The Eagles-*Hotel California*;
- Jan. 21: National Ballet of Ukraine;
- Feb. 3: Montreal-based Haitian musician Waahli;
- Feb. 8: Franco-Japanese singer Maia Barouh;
- Feb. 9: Manitoba's William Prince



William Prince (photo by Danny Shumov)

Bronson Centre (211 Bronson Ave.)

Bronson Centre is the place to be on January 20 for the Comotions Album Release Party. The Comotions are a 12-piece soul band featuring many well-known Ottawa musicians.

Tickets available at: www.ticketweb.ca

Live on Elgin (220 Elgin St.)

From January 17-20, Live on Elgin presents the play, "Danny and The Deep Blue Sea." For tickets and show-times, check out: www.liveonelgin.com

Montgomery Scotch Lounge (750 Gladstone)

On January 19, baritone saxophonist Richard Page and his Joyful Resonance Quartet will perform Richard's jazz originals blending New Orleans, calypso, and music that grooves from all over the world.

On January 20, hear modern Latin jazz from Pimienta; and on January 26, three



Leonie Benesch plays an idealistic teacher in *The Teachers Lounge* [If... Productions]

Ottawa jazz instrumentalists (bassist Marc Decho, pianist Deniz Lim-Sersan, and drummer Stephen Adubofuor) play together for the first time in an experimental jazz project.

Redbird Live (1165 Bank St.)

These sold-out shows are worth seeing online: January 19: Jim Bryson, and January 28: the Tom Wilson Trio.

Gladstone Theatre (910 Gladstone)

The musical "Just Say the Word" is playing from January 31-February 3. For tickets, contact: boxoffice@thegladstone.ca.

Out of Town

A new documentary about country singer June Carter Cash (author of the song "Ring of

Fire") will be available shortly for screening on Paramount+.

June premiered in Toronto this month at the Hot Docs Cinema. It features never-before-seen archival material that reveals her extraordinary lifework and includes interviews with her, as well as family, admirers and friends, including Dolly Parton, Reese Witherspoon and Willie Nelson.

Ron Sexsmith turns 60 next month. To mark the occasion, he performs a birthday celebration and concert at Massey Hall on February 29. Tickets are on sale now at: masseyhall.mhrth.com/tickets/ron-sexsmith/

Tony Wohlfarth is an Ottawa-based freelance film and entertainment writer.

News shorts

Alayne McGregor

New city recreation fee structure proposed

The City of Ottawa is proposing a new model for recreation fees which could affect local centres.

Under this proposal, the city says, fees will no longer be based on the type of facility and will be the same for class A and B facilities. The Plant Recreation Centre is in Class A; the Jack Purcell Community Centre is in Class B. [Class B fees are currently lower than Class A.](#)

The model places activities into three categories. These would apply to drop-in admissions, multi-visit passes, and membership passes. The highest-fee category includes group fitness, aquafitness, and wave swims. Both centres offer activities in all three categories.

The city says the change is not designed to boost revenues. Discounts would still be given to children, youth, seniors, and families. Financial assistance will continue to be available for lower-income individuals and families.

Until January 31, you can fill out a survey giving your reaction to the proposal, or

send in comments, at engage.ottawa.ca/my-rec-pass. Need more info? You can also send questions to activeottawaactif@ottawa.ca

Affordable housing ideas wanted

The City of Ottawa is starting a service review to improve services and save money at engage.ottawa.ca/yourideas.

If you think that's actually possible, you can contribute "innovative ideas" on how Ottawa can become a city with affordable housing that is more liveable for all.

See engage.ottawa.ca/liveableforall

Urbanism Book Club returns Jan. 29


The Ottawa Urbanism Book Club will discuss *Streetfight: Handbook for an Urban Revolution* by Janette Sadik-Khan on Monday, January 29, from 6:15 to 7:45 p.m. The club will meet in Room 1 at the Sunnyside branch of the Ottawa Public Library (1049 Bank).

In February, former city councillor Mathieu Fleury will moderate the discussion of *Paved Paradise* by Henry Grabar (and optionally *The High Cost of Free Parking* by Donald Shoup). The meeting will be held on February 21 at 6:15 p.m. Location TBD.

MP | député

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Can you see the signs?

Marit Quist-Corbett

The Beware of Dog sign is right beside another one, next door. This one promises. "You Are Enough." I read these signs and I wonder, why are they there?

The first one has little effect on me. If anything, I feel cynical about it. It's a sign we see too often.

There is no dog

If there is, it's probably a cuddly ball of fluff.

So why is it there? It doesn't make me fear the hypothetical dog. It doesn't make me laugh. This sign is there to keep me away.

The second one? After I read it, slowly, I exhale. I hadn't realized I was holding my breath, but now I know. So I breathe a sigh of relief. Things are all right. There's hope. It's amazing, isn't it, what a little sign can do to you?

Our Centretown neighbourhood is full of many signs, suggestions, and warnings. Some are on telephone poles, others affixed to windows and doors. Yet others are painted blatantly on walls.



I'm old-fashioned. While I make my way around the neighbourhood, I'm not talking into or looking at a phone. I read the signs. I look at the windows and think about the people behind them.

Signs can be powerful

I wonder if the people who put up the signs are aware of the impact they are having on the pedestrians walking by. To me, the effect

these signs have is surprising.

They can be powerful. They can make your morning light or heavy, bright or dark. Some of us may not see them. Some of us may not pay attention, or take in the message. Yet others, especially those who have recently moved here, may be affected more than we realize.

How would I feel if I were a newcomer in this neighbourhood? Would I feel welcome? Shy? Apprehensive? Included?

I continue my walk and see words scrawled on an electrical box.

"More Books!" it proclaims. I can't argue with that. More books are definitely always a good thing. This one is positive.

"Try to be a rainbow in someone's cloud," a billboard urges. A little campy – but still, positive.

A few blocks away, I spy a handwritten message on yet another grey metal box.

"Pick up your dog POOP!" this one demands. I chuckle when I see the notice on the other side of the box.

"No dumping," this one warns in bold, red letters.

There's humour here, I hope.

I keep walking and end up at the main branch of the Ottawa Public Library. There, in a basement room, a group of people from all over the world are having a conversation. They've come here from Algeria and China, from Syria or Japan to practice their English.

A musician from Burkina Faso discusses dance with a couple of Colombians. Ukrainian and Turkish women compare notes on food and drink. A Korean cook explains how he works in a Japanese restaurant here in Ottawa because that's where he could find work. No one minds whether he is actually Japanese.

"No" is very recognizable

I start thinking about



A welcoming sign in a Centretown window (above) and book-related graffiti (below) can cheer you up. MARIT QUIST-CORBETT/THE BUZZ

those newcomers who arrive here without much knowledge of English. Those who may not share our script. For them, short words are easy.

"No" is a very short word, and easily recognizable. It's one of the first words you would learn to spell as a foreigner.

As I walk back home from the library, I put myself into such a person's shoes and I'm shocked at how often that word appears.

- NO PARKING
- NO LOITERING
- NO ENTRANCE
- NO FLYERS
- NO DUMPING
- NO DOGS
- NO SITTING

Not a very welcoming neighbourhood then?

How do we live together?

I think about how many different humans make up this town and how we have to live together in this city, in this country, and in the world, on this planet. I reflect at how much the population of the world has increased during my lifetime. When I first became aware of such things, the world population was between two and three billion people. At the time I'm writing this, it's close to the eight billion mark. That's a shocking number of humans. It's like having a five-bedroom

house filled with 25 families.

"Be a Nice Human," a sign in my friend's kitchen says.

How does a nice human live in a world of eight billion people? How does a nice human share a house with 25 other families?

I don't have the answers. But I know this. Humans are the same everywhere.

Today and for as long as humans have been in the world, fearful individuals have pondered their lives and decided they wanted more.

"I don't have enough!" they worry.

So they invade. So they take. So they destroy and stomp all over their neighbours' lives. They send threatening messages to their neighbours. Yet their neighbours are humans too. They too want to live and see their children grow up. They want to breathe and eat and drink in peace. They want to sleep at night.

I'm brought back to reality when I pass a sign on Bank Street advertising a yoga class. "Next session's theme: Open Your Heart," it announces.

I promise myself I'll sign

up for that class. With a lighter heart, I continue my walk and stop at my local coffee shop.

The barista fixes me a mocha while moving fluidly to the music they're playing.

"I love this music," I tell them. "What is it?"

"World music," they answer. "South African beats mixed with Latin."

Maybe the signs are everywhere. Maybe the answer lies here. Maybe, if we are to survive, we must listen, look into each other's eyes and, free of fear, bend and blend and move with the music.



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OttawaPublicHealth.ca/RespVirus

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Questions? REACH OUT!

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