

February 2021

NEW EDINBURGH NEWS

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Let's keep the conversation going about policing

By Samantha McAleese and Marc d'Orgeville

Like most community newspapers, the New Edinburgh News provides space to share thoughts, concerns, ideas, and resources that might spark meaningful conversations and connections with neighbours. This article is the result of that particular power of the press.

In the *NEN* October edition, Samantha McAleese wrote an article about people experiencing homelessness and living in encampments along the Rideau River. She asked neighbours to connect with community-based services and to advocate for affordable

housing instead of relying on the police to respond to poverty and homelessness.

In the December edition, Marc d'Orgeville (chair of the New Edinburgh Community Alliance's traffic and safety committee) summarized a conversation he had with a community police officer to remind New Edinburgh residents of the process for filing police reports. Advice received from the officer on dealing with issues like break-ins or speeding drivers was to call the police and call them more often, as police rely on community members to be

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The skating season at New Edinburgh Park has been in full swing since early January. Read more in the CCC's report on p. 21.
Photo by Rachel Leadlay

10 years since the Beechwood fire

By Christina Leadlay

This year marks 10 years since fire gutted a section of Beechwood Avenue between MacKay and Crichton Streets. On Mar. 16, 2011, fire started in the basement of the Home Hardware store. Over 100 firefighters worked to knock down the six-alarm blaze that sent toxic smoke into the air. Four businesses were lost that day, over two dozen people were left homeless, and many others had to be evacuated. In all, 12 shops had to be demolished. Fortunately, no one was hurt, and many of the businesses have since relocated within the community.

We reached out to people who were affected by the fire or who witnessed that day, asking:

What is your lasting memory from the Beechwood fire of 2011, and what did you learn about the community

in the aftermath?

Below are their answers, which have been edited for length and content.

Heather Matthews, owner of Sconewitch (35 Beechwood Ave.)

"Around 10 o'clock that morning I noticed a lone police car parked across Beechwood Avenue at MacKay. The officer was standing in the middle of the street facing the hardware store. He was soon joined by a single firetruck. I couldn't see anything happening from outside my shop until moments later when the smoke poofed out of the second floor [of the hardware store] and emergency vehicles began to arrive from all directions.

At 10 p.m. I stood in the Metro parking lot with neighbours and watched as the fire fighters poured water on the dying embers of some of my

earliest childhood memories. [The fire] had a devastating impact on local business. Sales at the SconeWitch took seven years to recover to pre-fire levels."

Eric Passmore, store manager at Nature's Buzz (relocated to 55 Beechwood Ave.)

"It was a surreal day losing our shop to the fire. It took us nine months to reopen and there was a ton of risk involved with that effort. However, when we did finally open our doors again, we were met with nothing but support and kindness from this incredible Beechwood community!"

Tracey Black, owner of Epicuria (relocated to 357 St Laurent Blvd.)

"My lasting memory of the Beechwood fire was watching a traffic webcam of the scene until the early morning hours and seeking information the following day as many of us tried to understand the impact of what had happened. I recall the real loss felt by the neighbourhood, and customers continuing to call months later to see how we were doing. The value our community places on its small businesses really hit home when we reopened a year later, and struggled during the first few days to keep the shelves stocked!"

Kellyann Riley, barber at Lester's Barbershop (now owner of Kelly's Barber & Beauty and KBB Boutique, 30 Marier Ave.)

"My lasting memory of the Beechwood fire is just being there and watching your life change in front of you and not

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Photo by Richard Guy Briggs

Over 100 firefighters worked for hours to quell the blaze on Beechwood Avenue on Mar. 16, 2011.

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What's the New Edinburgh Community Alliance?

NECA is the umbrella organization for all residents and community organizations in our neighbourhood. Every resident of New Edinburgh is automatically a member of NECA.

Its mandate is to develop and foster a sense of community among the residents; to research, develop positions and make representations to various levels of government on matters affecting the community; and to coordinate activities between organizations.

NECA's committees include Traffic and Safety, Heritage and Development, Beechwood Development, Park Vision and Environment and Climate Change. It also publishes this newspaper.

The NECA board meets nine times a year, normally on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. (no meetings in July, August or December). Its annual general meeting takes place in October.

Meetings are open to all New Edinburgh residents. Anyone wishing to make a presentation to the board should please contact Cindy Parkanyi in advance at newedinburgh@outlook.com.

Our next meetings will take place **Tuesday, Feb. 16, 7:30 p.m.** and **Tuesday Mar. 16, 7:30 p.m.** Meetings are held virtually on Zoom. Contact newedinburgh@outlook.com for details.

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Learn more at
www.newedinburgh.ca

Tell the City what you think about its Official Plan



Cindy Parkanyi
NECA President

Goodbye 2020, hello 2021! We can only hope that this year will be less traumatic than last year and that we can move beyond a world where COVID-19 rules our everyday lives. That said, we still do need to stick with the strict measures for quite a while longer. Courage!

Meanwhile, at City Hall...

The City of Ottawa is currently updating its **Official Plan**, which is a document that will set the stage for upcoming zoning bylaw updates and guide development for many years to come. The New Edinburgh Community Alliance (NECA) has struck a special working group to review the 280-plus page document with a focus on areas that may directly impact our community, as well as looking at the broader effects of what is being proposed. We are also collaborating with the Community Collective of neighbouring community associations as well as the Federation of Citizens' Associations to leverage collective reviews and support consolidated inputs to the City from the broader community. NECA will also participate in a discussion on the Official Plan with City Councillor Rawlson King

and other Ward 13 community groups at a Ward Council meeting in early February.

The language has changed significantly from previous official plans, but at least there is a nod to encouraging 15-minute neighbourhoods and maintaining greenspace and the city's tree canopy. That said, the devil is in the details; thus the working group. At first blush, it appears that the greatest impact will be to the areas of New Edinburgh that lie outside the Heritage Conservation District (south of Dufferin Road). These areas have been designated under the "Transforming Transect" and are targeted for more densification, with obvious implications for infill and new developments. The other area of concern is along Beechwood Avenue, which has been designated as a "major corridor" similar to St. Laurent Boulevard. This is of particular concern since we are already facing developments with inappropriate building heights that will inexorably lead to a dark, wind-tunnel like main street with little of the charm and vibrancy that attracted many of us to this area.

While NECA intends to provide input from

a New Edinburgh-wide perspective, and will feed into the submissions by larger community groups, we would also urge concerned residents to submit their own comments directly to the City via their website engage.ottawa.ca/the-new-official-plan. Since the draft New Official Plan is a complex document, the City has created a series of one-pagers on the key topics, 21 in all. You can select the topics of interest to you or go through them all.

It should be noted that residents and community organizations have not been given much time to review the massive document and annexes, as **the formal consultation period ends on Feb. 17**. At its next meeting on Feb. 16, the NECA Board will be reviewing its proposed inputs to the City on the Official Plan. We would encourage you to attend the virtual meeting to provide your feedback, or send us an email with your thoughts in advance.

To receive the monthly NECA e-updates, please send an email to newedinburgh@outlook.com or sign up through the community website at newedinburgh.ca. You can also join the Google Group "New Edinburgh Discussions" (new-ed-talk@googlegroups.com). You can also follow us on Twitter @ **New Edinburgh**. If you would like to know more about NECA's committees and working groups, don't hesitate to send an email to newedinburgh@outlook.com.



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Letter to the Editor

Is the next generation of businesses being priced out of Beechwood?

I read with interest the articles in the December 2020 issue of the *New Edinburgh News*, in particular the coverage of commercial developments on Beechwood Avenue. *NEN* is doing a great job of finding out what plans exist for new commercial space in the area, but it's the Burgh Business Brief about Verve Moderns that caught my attention.

The article noted that VM first set up in the basement of St. Charles church, and I'm

wondering how many other businesses in the neighbourhood got started with cheap rent in overlooked spaces.

I can't help but wonder if Minto and ModBox aren't pricing out potential small businesses with the updated commercial rent rates so that there's no hope for another VM to establish itself.

It's true that the Beechwood area is much more desirable than it was 30 years ago, so rents are higher, but I'd

be curious to know what the difference is between the rental rates per square foot for St. Charles Market or The Kavanaugh compared to the low-rise buildings on Beechwood Avenue.

If only established companies like banks or the LCBO can afford rents in these new buildings, then it may well be that an obituary is required for the Beechwood "Village."

—*S. Mukerji, Crichton Street*

This year let's act towards social change

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"the eyes on the ground."

Samantha received comments about the December article from local advocates, which included: "It sounds like your neighbours are setting up a snitch line," and "They won't be happy until there is a cop car on every corner." These comments were not meant to dismiss the consequences of any violence, conflict, loss, or harm experienced by individuals, but rather to temper the impulse to call the police for every little thing.

These two articles highlight the need for ongoing conversations about policing and community safety in New Edinburgh and Ottawa. In a neighbourhood as privileged and resourced as New Edinburgh, we should be actively engaged in discussions about the cycle of ever-increasing police funding that does not address root causes of harm, such as poverty.

One conversation started at the December meeting of NECA's Traffic and Safety Committee, chaired by Marc. Samantha attended the meeting to address concerns and to ask questions about the purpose and intent of Marc's article. Marc had not imagined that a reminder for residents to report local incidents to the police would elicit such a strong reaction, but he welcomed the opportunity for this more critical discussion around policing.

As a reactive service, the police rely on calls and reporting to respond to inci-

dents and decide how to allocate resources. Unfortunately, calling the police does not always resolve the problem or make us feel safer. Furthermore, over-reporting maintains the impression that increasing police resources in our community is a viable solution to preventing harm. The need for alternatives to the police is clear and requires strong advocacy.

Marc and Samantha's conversation illuminated not conflict but rather commonalities in how we think about police and community safety. For example, we both support City Councillor Rawlson King's decision to vote against a budget increase for the Ottawa Police Service. Like Rawlson, we both agree with de-tasking the Ottawa Police Service. Armed police officers are not a suitable response to mental health crises, nor do police play a role in preventing or ending homelessness. Additionally, we (along with others in New Edinburgh) appreciate the councillor's ongoing advocacy for additional funding for social services, supports, and resources that prioritize community care. Finally, we look forward to supporting Rawlson's work on the poverty reduction strategy for Rideau-Rockcliffe.

The initial meeting ended with an agreement to keep the conversation going between NECA and all neighbours in the Burgh. Together, we can continue to advocate for programs, resources, supports, and responses that keep care at the forefront. This

advocacy is vital for Black, Indigenous, racialized, and unhoused neighbours who are at an increased risk of experiencing police violence and being criminalized.

One way to advocate is to participate in public consultations. The City of Ottawa has begun Phase 2 of their consultation process for the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan, and we encourage Burgh residents to participate online: engage.ottawa.ca/Community-Safety-Well-Being-Plan.

For a lot of people (especially white people), 2020 was a year of listening and learning more intently about the desperate need for alternatives to policing from BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour) communities. Affordable housing, mental health supports, safe consumption sites, additional public health resources, youth leadership programs, and community-led conflict resolution and restorative justice options are just a few examples. Let 2021 be the year of acting on these calls for transformation.

NECA's Traffic and Safety committee meetings take place at 7 p.m. every fourth Monday of the month – the next meeting is Feb. 22. Anyone interested in attending should contact marc.dorgeville@utoronto.ca.

Samantha McAleese is a researcher and advocate who lives in New Edinburgh. Marc d'Orgeville is the chair of NECA's Traffic and Safety committee.

NEW EDINBURGH NEWS

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A common disaster: Memories from the 2011 fire

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really realizing that's what was happening. Lester's shop was fine for most of the day, and then it wasn't. I kept thinking 'We'll be back in a little bit,' but of course that wasn't the case.

I learned two things when it was all said and done: that block really was a hub and represented what Beechwood was known for: communi-

ty. The support from everyone before, during and after the fire has never ceased to amaze me, even after all this time. People live and breathe Beechwood and I think that is a very special thing you don't see very much anymore."

Paul Williams, owner of the New Edinburgh Pub (now owner of Whispers Pub, 249 Richmond Rd. in Westboro) "My lasting memory of that



Four businesses were lost in the fire, over two dozen people left homeless. In all, 12 shops had to be demolished.

Photo by Dave Rostenne

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THANK YOU

Caldwell and Associates has the pleasure of serving the New Edinburgh and area community for 36 plus years. There have been many changes and challenges over the years but none quite as unique as 2020. A heartfelt thank you to all who have worked tirelessly from front line workers, health workers, essential workers, shop keepers, to those that wear their masks and wash their hands to make the difference in our lives and keep our community safe. Thank you ALL!

day was the fear that the wind would change direction and take out the Pub. I'll never forget the number of emergency vehicles and the acrid smell in the air.

Now your question regarding what I learned about our community: 'Generosity' comes to mind. It was a pleasure for [my wife] Tracy and myself to operate a business in New Edinburgh for 26 years. It always felt like we were in a small village. The village came together for our fundraiser, helping to raise over \$20,000 for the victims of the fire. It's a very close knit community where everyone looks to help out others. We have many examples of the charitable acts from this amazing community."

Leesa Sereda, tenant at 409 MacKay (now living near the Central Experimental Farm)

"One of my lasting memories is the week-long physical exertion and trauma of working alongside a professional restoration team to remove all my belongings from my soot-

contaminated apartment. The community was very generous in donating over \$30,000.

The board of the Crichton Cultural Community Centre [now NECTAR] was very thoughtful in their distribution of these monies amongst the affected tenants, considering individual situations. The annual Lumière Festival on Aug. 20, 2011 offered an opportunity to show appreciation to the community, so I installed solar-powered lanterns in the trees spelling out 'thank you' on behalf of myself and the other affected tenants. It was comforting for me to see people stop by and I hoped that they appreciated its significance."

Joan Mason, then-president of the New Edinburgh Community Alliance (NECA)

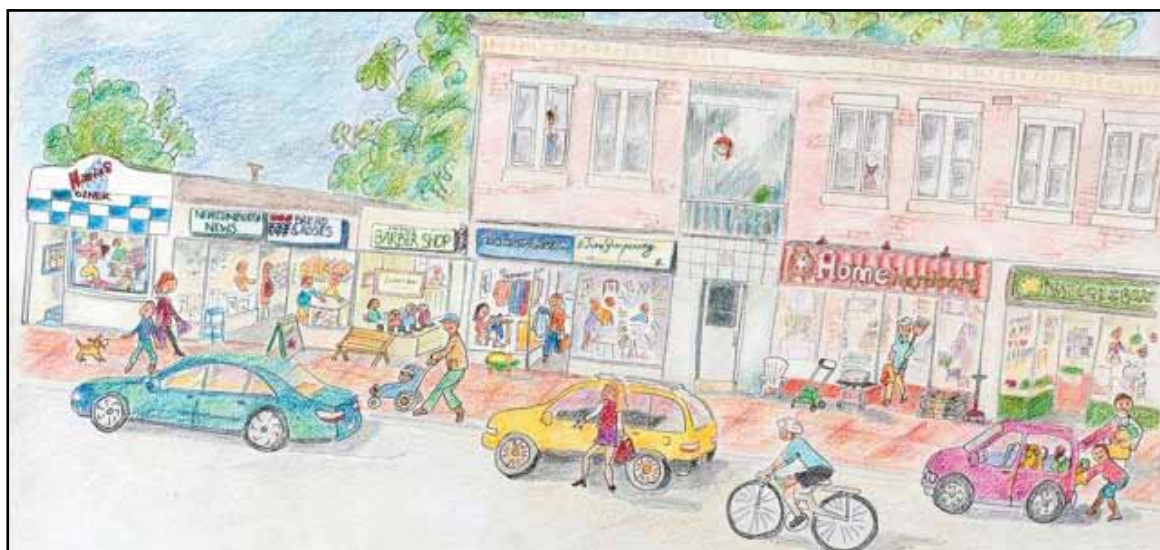
"That day, we lost one small block of shops that met most of the community's needs. It was a fun place and we all cared for each other. Like New Edinburgh, it was a rare survival! The smoke was toxic, but so were the

months of broken promises and insincere consultations, until we ended up with just another concrete canyon. We can only hope that the huge changes that the world is experiencing will right many wrongs. New Edinburgh was a superb template of a walkable, workable community."

Cindy Parkanyi, editor of the New Edinburgh News (now president of NECA)

"After the initial shock of this devastating event, what struck me most was how quickly the community was able to mobilize to provide help to those directly affected. The Crichton Cultural Community Centre (precursor to NECTAR) quickly sprang into action to be a central point for gathering information from those in need of help and those offering help. The New Edinburgh Pub, and specifically Paul and Tracy Williams, put together a fundraising event, which was extremely well-attended.

At the time, we had no idea how long and how deep the effects to our main street



Sketch by Catherine Willis-O'Connor

Artist Catherine Willis-O'Connor captured what that block of Beechwood was like pre-fire.

would be, particularly in what was once a vibrant and community-centre shopping area – now a veritable retail dead zone, with more like it coming (the Claridge project comes to mind) if we don’t shake some sense into the City’s planning department and committee. It is odd that the lasting effects of a devastating fire would resemble so closely the current pervasive transformation of our 15-minute neighbourhoods.”

Due to concerns about the smoke’s toxicity, residents from the nearby New Edinburgh Square (NES) retirement residence had to be evacuated overnight. Some residents shared their memories of that experience:

Archie Bowen and his wife were having her birthday meal at Fraser Café. Archie recalls a police cruiser and a fire truck pulling up in front of the restaurant. Officers came in. Was the retirement home threatened, they wondered? “We had seen a lot of smoke on our way to the restaurant,” he remembers. “It was a very exciting dinner. We hadn’t counted on the entertainment.” Shortly afterward, the Bowens moved

into NES where their apartment afforded a sad view of the devastation just across the street.

“It happened so quickly,” recalls NES resident **Deborah Sparks** of Mar. 16, 2011. She remembers feeling a sense of concern when the amount of heavy and thick smoke continued to drift into the NES building. She was so appreciative of all the people who helped with the evacuation including all the NES staff, the fire department and The Good Companions. Miss Sparks still very much misses all the village-like stores, including the hardware, bakery, and ice cream shop. The eyesore of the building’s remains that remained for so long was always a sad reminder of what was lost.

“We sure miss the convenience of those friendly little shops,” says **Bob McLachlan**, who in 2011 had been living for just over a year at NES with his wife **Marg**. Bob was at the dentist when Marg phoned with news of the fire. When the order came for all NES residents to be evacuated due to the fire’s toxic smoke, Bob, Marg and the little retirement community were soon being



Residents displaced by the fire expressed their thanks to the community, which had raised over \$30,000 to support those who were uninsured.

Photo courtesy Leesa Sereda

smoothly evacuated by bus to the safety of a staging facility nearby.

From there, they were quickly despatched to stay a few days with family, friends or at a local hotel. Bob recalls people scurrying in and out of the gallery at the corner of Beechwood and MacKay, carrying paintings to a waiting van. And there was a certain NES staff member, a server whom everyone called

Big Sam, who greeted every arriving evacuee at the staging centre with a most enthusiastic hug. “Maybe it’s the sense of collective vulnerability, but people do seem to close ranks when they are threatened like that,” Bob recalls.

The day after the evacuation, resident **Joyce Lowe** returned a bit too early in the day only to discover NES had not been cleared

by the Fire Chief for the residents to return. Happily, she found The Clocktower Pub was open! Joyce was deeply saddened by the loss of so many valuable small businesses in our community, but she continues to make a point to buy local and support our community.

—with files from Keith Newton and Catherine Scrivens-Bourque



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While a vaccine represents hope, the pandemic isn't over



Lucille Collard
MPP Ottawa-Vanier

Happy New Year! I hope you and your loved ones had the chance to take time for yourself over the holidays. I want to take this opportunity to reflect on the past year and look ahead towards 2021.

When the pandemic forced us to declare a state of emergency in the province, I had just been elected. As the spirit of collaboration with the government at Queen's Park was wearing out, it became necessary to demand more sup-

port in areas that needed it. Long-term care homes, people on the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), local businesses, education, and the environment have been suffering from the lack of investments by the government.

The lessons learned from the many challenges of 2020 should inform the solutions we and the government need to implement in 2021. Moreover, the pandemic is

not over. While the vaccine represents the hope we are all counting on, the months ahead will continue to require us to count on each other more than ever.

Together with the city councillors and our member of Parliament in Ottawa-Vanier, we are committed to working on the issues that matter to Ottawa-Vanier.

As always, thank you for doing your part in fighting COVID-19. My team remains available to help. Please feel free to give us a call at **613-744-4484** or send us an email at lcollard.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org.

Bonne année! J'espère que vous et vos proches avez eu la chance de prendre du temps pour vous-même pendant les

fêtes. Je veux profiter de cette occasion pour réfléchir sur l'année et regarder vers 2021!

Lorsque la pandémie nous a obligés à déclarer l'état d'urgence dans la province, je venais d'être élue. Alors que l'esprit de collaboration avec le gouvernement de Queen's Park s'épuisait, il est devenu nécessaire d'exiger davantage de soutien dans les domaines qui en avaient besoin. Les foyers de soins de longue durée, les bénéficiaires du Programme ontarien de soutien aux personnes handicapées (POSPH), les entreprises locales, l'éducation, et l'environnement ont souffert du manque d'investissements du gouvernement.

Les leçons tirées des nombreux défis de 2020 devraient éclairer les solutions que

nous et le gouvernement devons mettre en oeuvre en 2021. De plus, la pandémie n'est pas terminée. Si le vaccin représente l'espoir sur lequel nous comptons tous, les mois à venir continueront de nous obliger à compter les uns sur les autres plus que jamais.

Ensemble avec les conseillers municipaux et notre députée fédérale d'Ottawa-Vanier, nous nous engageons à travailler sur les enjeux qui comptent pour Ottawa-Vanier.

Comme toujours, merci de faire votre part dans la lutte contre le COVID-19. Mon équipe demeure disponible pour vous aider. N'hésitez pas à nous appeler au **613-744-4484** ou à nous envoyer un courriel à lcollard.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org.

City's budget does not support increased social needs



Rawlson King
City Councillor, Ward 13

Happy New Year, New Edinburgh!

I hope you had an enjoyable holiday season, despite the unprecedented times in which we find ourselves with COVID-19. It's back to work as usual for my office, and we are more committed than ever to addressing your concerns in the year

ahead. Unfortunately, we are not where we need to be in terms of reducing and limiting the spread of COVID-19. We urge everyone to continue following the provincial and City guidelines so that we protect those who are vulnerable and emerge from the pandemic as soon as possible.

These guidelines include

keeping a distance of two metres from others who are outside your household when going out; avoiding large gatherings; working from home if possible; avoiding visiting elderly friends or relatives; conducting meetings or visits virtually; and limiting contacts to household members. More than ever, it is important that we continue to practice social distancing in order to reduce transmission as the City moves closer towards an in-depth COVID-19 vaccination plan, in conjunction with senior levels of government.

As you may have heard, in December I voted against the City budget because

the \$3.94-billion operating budget and \$781-million capital budget that were presented were more suited to "status quo" conditions and did not reflect the fact that social needs have increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As we know, specific neighbourhoods in our ward suffer from high rates of poverty. For these reasons, I could not in good conscience vote for this budget.

With our ward having some of the highest rates of food bank usage in Ontario, I will be releasing a poverty reduction strategy proposal in early 2021 which will call for the creation of a food security co-ordinator. I am also working with all other elected officials in our area through a new task force to tackle affordable housing challenges, which includes identifying funding sources and locations for supportive housing.

Last year in New Edinburgh, the completion of the Combined Sewage Storage Tunnel project

led to the restoration of greenspace in Stanley Park. I was happy to be able to address the pre-existing gap in the Rideau River Eastern Pathway with the addition of a new segment of multi-use pathway between the south limit of Stanley Avenue and the north side of the New Edinburgh Park playground, where the pathway transitions to and from mixed traffic. I am also gratified that roads in the neighbourhood continue to be rebuilt and restored.

Also, after listening to residents' concerns, I began to reduce speed limits across New Edinburgh with the introduction of residential gateway zones which has brought down maximum speeds to 40 km/h on residential streets. I will be examining the feasibility of lowering speed limits even further in these new gateway zones over the course of this Council term.

As always, you can reach out to my office at rideaurockcliffeward@ottawa.ca, or by calling **613-580-2483**.

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Deadline

for the next issue of the
New Edinburgh News

March 10

newednews@hotmail.com

City taking concrete action against racism



Jim Watson
Mayor of Ottawa

In the past year, we have not only been challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic, but we have also seen the issues of racism and the disproportionate impacts of systemic inequity come into sharp focus, both at home and abroad.

The existence and complexity of systemic discrimination must be acknowledged by our institutions as well as by us as individuals if we are going to effectively address

these issues head on. It starts with stating uncomfortable truths. Indigenous Peoples, Black, Asian and other racialized populations in Ottawa have disproportionately been, and continue to be, the victims of violence, racist graffiti, racial slurs, excluded from activities and employment opportunities and discriminated against in the workplace.

This can end only with

sustained, concrete action. Municipalities have a role to play and that is why I supported the creation of the Anti-Racism Secretariat. Under the leadership of Councillor Rawlson King, who has become the first Council Liaison for Anti-Racism and Ethnocultural Relations Initiatives, we are listening and acknowledging issues.

I am also pleased that Yusra Osman was hired as the City's first Anti-Racism Specialist to advance this work from within and across departments. I have every confidence that Ms. Osman will advance the important work needed, including work that has been underway through the Somali Community Table since 2016.

The secretariat will help

ensure that an anti-racist lens is applied to City policies, with an emphasis on six priority areas: employment equity, equity in governance, housing, economic development, health outcomes, and youth development.

Since the establishment of the Secretariat in 2020, some of the progress made by the City includes:

- initiating the creation of an Anti-Racism Advisory Table;
- launching a public awareness social media campaign to condemn anti-Asian racism
- launching the gender and race equity data baseline study together with the Women and Gender Equity Specialist; and
- creating the "Coping with Racial Stress" pilot

project for youth with the Neighbourhood Ambassador Program.

As the Mayor of Ottawa, I remain committed to making our city a better place to live for all residents. Change is necessary in all our public service institutions. If we remain steadfast in our resolve, we can create a more inclusive and responsive community that is welcoming for all residents. Only together can we build a more equitable community for all residents of Ottawa.

For more information about the Anti-Racism Secretariat, please visit: engage.ottawa.ca/anti-racism-and-ethnocultural-relations-initiatives.

Priority for 2021: keeping our community safe from COVID-19



Mona Fortier
Ottawa-Vanier MP

Dear residents, Happy New Year 2021!

As we start a new year, I want to offer you my best wishes for happiness, peace, and prosperity. As we enter 2021, our top priority remains keeping our community healthy and safe from COVID-19.

As our province continues to implement new stay-at-home measures, I want to emphasize that these measures are necessary to save lives in our community, and I am convinced that together we will get through this.

So, I encourage you to download the COVID19 Alert app and continue to practice physical distancing to protect yourself, and those around you. You can download the COVID19 Alert app from the Apple App Store, or Google Play Store.

We will keep doing whatever it takes, for as long as it takes, to support all Canadians, our communities, and our businesses through this crisis. This includes

ensuring all Canadians have access to a safe, effective, and free vaccine. We expect in the first months of 2021, millions of Canadians will receive a vaccine. The availability of the vaccine will increase throughout the year, ultimately providing every Canadian with the opportunity to be immunized.

Rest assured that my constituency office is always there to support you with all aspects of federal services. Give us a call at **613-998-1860** or email us at mona.fortier@parl.gc.ca.

Cher(ères) résidentes et résidents,

En ce début d'année, je veux vous offrir mes meilleurs vœux de bonheur, de paix et de prospérité, alors que nous amorçons 2021, notre priorité absolue doit demeurer le maintien de la santé et de la sécurité de notre communauté face à la COVID-19.

Alors que notre province continue de mettre en place des nouvelles mesures de con-

finement, je tiens à souligner que ces mesures sont nécessaires pour sauver des vies dans notre communauté, et je suis convaincue qu'ensemble nous allons nous en sortir.

Je vous encourage donc à télécharger l'application Alerte COVID et continuez de pratiquer la distanciation physique afin de vous protéger, et de protéger également ceux qui vous entourent. Vous pouvez télécharger l'application Alerte COVID-19 à partir de l'Apple App Store ou de la boutique Google Play.

Notre gouvernement continuera à faire tout ce qu'il faut, aussi longtemps qu'il le faudra, pour que tous les

Canadiennes et Canadiens, ainsi que nos communautés et nos entreprises, soient soutenus pendant cette crise. Nous allons notamment veiller à ce que tous les Canadiennes et Canadiens aient accès à un vaccin sûr, efficace et gratuit. Nous prévoyons qu'au cours des premiers mois de 2021, des millions de Canadiennes et Canadiens recevront un vaccin. La disponibilité du

vaccin augmentera tout au long de l'année, ce qui permettra à tous les Canadiens de se faire vacciner.

Soyez assurés que mon bureau de circonscription est toujours là pour vous appuyer avec tous les aspects des services fédéraux. Communiquez avec nous au **613-998-1860** ou envoyez un courriel à mona.fortier@parl.gc.ca.

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Snow Moles' winter walkability audit more important than ever

By Anne Moore

Have you been walking more since the start of the pandemic? It is obvious when I walk on the streets of New Edinburgh that more people are walking as a form of exercise than ever before. The physical and mental benefits of walking are widely known, but walking has not always been as popular as it is right now.

I love to walk. Walking has always been one of my favourite forms of exercise, and New Edinburgh is an ideal place to walk. Sidewalks or

roadways are rarely busy, and the area is full of interesting historical houses, new modern buildings, and green spaces. During the pandemic, many people have found that a simple walk can be calming. It also helps us to feel connected with those around us.

Most of us would like to continue to reap the benefits of walking throughout the winter. Walking in the spring, summer, and fall on clear roads and sidewalks is easy. Walking in winter can be more challenging and, as a senior, I am often nervous about walking when the sidewalks are snow-covered and icy.

While the City of Ottawa does a good job of clearing snow and ice from most of the pedestrian areas in the city, there is always room for improvement and our feedback to the City of Ottawa is vital. Snow Moles can do that!

Snow Moles are volunteers who report on what it's like to



The Council on Aging's Snow Moles are volunteers who report on what it's like to walk outside on a winter day in Ottawa.

walk outside on a winter day in Ottawa. Anyone can be a Snow Mole, but we are particularly looking for seniors and children to participate, as well as people who use mobility devices, like canes, walkers, and wheelchairs.

You are invited to ensure healthy, accessible, and safe winter walking conditions in Ottawa, by becoming

a Snow Mole and completing a Winter Walkability and Pedestrian Safety Audit. Your answers will be part of a 2021 Winter Walking in Ottawa – Snow Mole Report shared with the City of Ottawa for their Winter Maintenance Quality Standards Review.

Completing an audit is easy. Pick a time of day when you need to go out (best after some

winter weather has occurred, such as a snowfall or freezing rain), and a destination (for example, a bus stop, grocery store, school, bank, senior's centre or library). If you take a walk with a family member or friend, follow the public health COVID-19 guidelines for safe distancing.

Once you have completed your walk, please complete the online questionnaire at surveymonkey.com/r/SnowMoles2021. Photos are welcome and can be sent to snowmoles@coaottawa.ca. If you prefer you can download a paper questionnaire at coaottawa.ca/snowmoles. Please encourage others to complete the questionnaire as well: anyone in the city can complete a Winter Walkability and Pedestrian Safety Audit.

The Snow Moles campaign takes place from January to March and is an initiative of The Council on Aging of Ottawa. If you have any questions, please contact me at pannemoore@gmail.com.



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Real Estate Immune to Pandemic



JUDY FAULKNER
Broker of Record/Owner

What a fascinating year it's been for the residential real estate market, where a hot sellers market led to quick sales and record-high prices across the country, from coast to coast.

The availability of five-year mortgages under two percent fueled buyer demand while the fear of COVID-19 kept the supply of listings low in the spring, normally the season that brings the highest number of listings to the market.

In late March of last year the Province of Ontario deemed real estate an essential service. By May, the number of listings started to gain momentum as the public gained confidence that COVID-19 safety precautions were in place and effective. However, buyer demand continued to outweigh supply for the balance of the year. Ottawa realtors worked hard to make up for the early spring pause and, by year end, the total sales volume set a record-breaking \$10 billion compared to \$8.2 billion in 2019. The average sale price of residential properties in the entire Ottawa region increased by a whopping 19.7 percent.

Unlike many other neighbourhoods in the Ottawa region and nation-wide, homeowners in Ottawa's 'walkable' communities have been enjoying robust seller market conditions for the better part of two decades. They are accustomed to aggressive buyers and nail-biting bidding wars.



New Edinburgh, tucked between the Rideau River, the Ottawa River and Rideau Hall is a hot spot for out-of town buyers. The historic Minto bridges provide an impressive approach to its Heritage Conservation district.

At the end of 2020, the average house price in New Edinburgh was \$931,041, whereas the average house price in the region was \$582,267.

Many out-of-town buyers, particularly those coming from higher-valued markets, favour 'walkable' communities in uniquely picturesque settings and are not shy to compete with local buyers or to set record prices. Faulkner Real Estate's marketing effectively reaches buyers all over the globe at the same time as local buyers. These far away buyers often need to rely on virtual viewings, as there isn't time for them to get here.

What will happen in 2021? I don't know, there are so many variables. It comes down to the basic economic principle of supply and demand and affordability.

What can cause an increase in the number of homes listed this spring?

- Homeowners who planned to go to market last spring but were deterred by COVID-19 might go this spring.
- New construction projects underway may provide the alternate housing many have been waiting for.
- Some homeowners may want to cash out rather than risk the uncertainty of what the future may bring.
- Buyers may not be ready, willing and able to pay the prices that sellers want.

If you would like to keep abreast of listing and sales activity, or you are seeking representation, please do not hesitate to contact me at 613-231-4663 or Judy@HomesInOttawa.com.

Despite more funds for school upgrades, don't expect a quick fix



Chris Ellis
Public School Trustee, Zone 6

Both the provincial and federal governments are providing more money to school boards this year for building renewal and maintenance in response to the pandemic. This good news will enable boards to address a backlog of deferred renewal projects, including upgrading heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. Balancing this good news are two realities: the size of the backlogs and the limits on how much work can be done annually based on the availability of contractors and the short summer window for carrying out larger projects.

The Ottawa Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) has a large portfolio of buildings and properties encompassing

more than 12 million square feet. Building replacement value is in the \$2.5 to \$3 billion range. More than 80 per cent of the spaces are more than 20 years old. The backlog of deferred renewal projects is estimated to be \$876 million.

The OCDSB's total budget for the 2020–2021 year for the Facilities Renewal Program and School Condition Improvement is more than \$111 million, which is significantly more than usual. In collaboration with the federal government, the Ontario Ministry of Education has also announced a new funding source through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program to provide up to \$700 million in combined

federal-provincial funding for education-related infrastructure projects. The program is application-based and could inject up to \$45 million more into the OCDSB's project plans.

Unfortunately, it is challenging to find the trades to carry out so much work, especially when all school boards are competing for contractors and, as a result, driving prices up. Historical metrics indicate that, realistically, the OCDSB can undertake \$40–\$50 million of construction work annually. It can therefore be expected that it will take up to three years to get all the work done that this amount of funding allows. With enough funding, it would take 10 to 15 years to address the full backlog, even as more maintenance came due.

Governments need to take this societal infrastructure deficit seriously. In not addressing the issue there will continue to be higher operating costs due to inefficient windows and old HVAC systems. Air quality has always been a high priority, but the

pandemic has highlighted the need. However, in older buildings it is a challenge to do piecemeal upgrades and the OCDSB has been limited in how much can be dealt

with on a short-term basis.

Chris Ellis is the OCDSB Trustee for Zone 6 (Rideau-Rockcliffe and Alta Vista). Contact him at chris.ellis@ocdsb.ca or 613-818-7350.

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613-446-2280 ANGELA ZORN



Photo courtesy John Jarecsni

On Dec. 19, about 40 neighbours safely distanced on Noel Street to admire everyone's Christmas lights, which helped bring a bit of cheer to a challenging holiday.

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BURGH BUSINESS BRIEFS

By Andre R. Gagne, Jane Heintzman and Christina Leadlay

Farewell to Epic Fitness

On Dec. 4, 2020, **Epic Fitness** closed its doors at 230 Beechwood Ave. for the last time, lamenting on its Facebook page: “We have surrendered.” Epic Fitness was the brainchild of **Stephanie Karlovits**, an energetic young entrepreneur who launched the business eight years ago, offering a “full service” fitness and wellness operation focused on personal training, holistic nutrition, and outdoor community events.

In her farewell message to clients, Stephanie concedes that as a small boutique business in a highly competitive industry, “we stood no chance against the pandemic.” Despite efforts to pivot during the lockdowns by offering live-streamed classes and virtual personal-training sessions, the costs of maintaining Epic’s extensive space were burdensome. When the business failed to qualify for government rent support, it was all over. “Epic was a dream come true,” says Stephanie, “but like all dreams, this one

had to come to an end.”

Since the closure, many of Epic’s personal trainers have remained independently active on the virtual training circuit, including **Justin Thiboutot, Kathleen Holt, Brett Patterson, Krysta Andovic** and **Rami Gallego**: find them on Instagram or LinkedIn. Our thanks to Stephanie and her team for the lively business they brought to Beechwood for the past three years. We wish them well in their future endeavours, and a safe passage through the pandemic.

Building owner **Domicile** reports that the former Epic Fitness space at 230 Beechwood Ave. has now been leased to another business but declined to offer any details about the new business or its anticipated time of arrival. Stay tuned! —JH

South America comes close to home

Do you have a craving for a scrumptious, authentic arepas, but just can’t get to Venezuela to snag one? Are you now wondering: what

is an arepas, anyway? Both craving and question can be answered at the new home of South American cuisine: **Toasty Arepas**.

Sharing space with **Goodies Fine Catering** at 51 Marier Ave. (goodiescatering.com), the new restaurant was born when the owners – proud Colombian **Luisa García**, and Goodies’ owner **Pierre Mineault** – realized Ottawa had nowhere for Latinos to go for something quick to eat, that little taste of tradition that reminded them of home.

“To come up with the name, we brainstormed a bunch of words and sayings, and we also asked my family members what would be a good name,” explains Luisa. “Eventually, by elimination, we decided on ‘**Toasty Arepas**,’ which is half English and half Spanish.”

“Arepas are corn pancakes – a staple food of South American cuisine,” she says.

With the arepas mystery solved, we asked what else was on the menu:

“Our menu is 100 per cent



Photo by Alexander McKenzie

Goodies’ owner Pierre Mineault and Toasty Arepas’s Luisa García.

gluten-free, and we have vegan and vegetarian options for most items, so of course we would recommend everything on our menu. But our most popular items are the empanadas, the arepas sandwich, chicharron, the envuellos, and definitely the yucca fries and paisa bowl. They have been hits since day one!”

Toasty Arepas’s Instagram account shows mouth-watering images of arepas stuffed with all manner of ingredients, from ham and olives to sausage, black beans and cheese.

Luisa knew that restaurants are a very high-risk business with one out of five closing in the first five years (and that’s not during a global pandemic). Dipping a foot in the water instead of diving headlong into the pool seemed best. Luisa and Pierre decided to open Toasty Arepas for take-out only, with plans to eventually become a full, eat-in restaurant in the future.

“Having a take-out restaurant also allowed us to test the [concept], to see if there really was a market for our business idea,” said Luisa.

Opening as they have, in unprecedented times, their top priority was safety. To comply with provincial restric-

tions, they allow only two clients at a time inside the store, and they have joined Uber Eats to provide delivery.

With social media as their main marketing outlet, Luisa and Pierre were elated when customers began stopping by to discover what so many have always known: South American cuisine is amazing!

“We are honoured and grateful to say that the community has been very welcoming and supportive to us since we opened,” said Luisa. “It is thanks to them that the word about our restaurant spread to a lot of people.”

Toasty Arepas is open Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays from 12–8 p.m. and on Fridays and Saturdays from 12–9 p.m. Contact them at toastyarepas.com or 613-262-5238. —AG

An essential service for pet owners

Since last March, countless housebound families have reached out to acquire companion animals for comfort, distraction and a built-in incentive to exercise while the pandemic runs its course. In our own neighbourhood, numerous new furry faces have joined the (already robust) local canine population in recent months.

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Two eager Labradors all ready for doggy camp.

Photo by Place for Paws

For first-time dog owners, the stay-at-home environment has afforded an ideal opportunity to bond with their new family member and master the basics of care, feeding and (for the brave and wise!) training. When working from home is the norm, social activities are restricted, and travel is out of the question, it's easy to overlook one crucial resource. A dependable caregiver will be a must when holiday and business travel start up again – as they will with a vengeance, post-pandemic!

Pet boarding facilities have been an unnoticed casualty of the stay-at-home existence imposed during the pandemic. These small operators have suffered an almost total loss of business in recent months, and many have not survived.

In our community, **Place for Paws Boarding Camp for Cats and Dogs** has been a go-to pet sitter for many families, my own included. Throughout its two decades in business in Clarence Creek, Ont., Place for Paws has been a safe and reliable second home for furry family members. Despite the punishing blow to her business, owner **Angela Zorn** has soldiered on, but with only a trickle of canine and feline clients to occupy her spacious, climate-controlled kennel facility.

Angela hopes to weather the storm until life returns to normal, and she greatly appreciates interim support from regular, or prospective, clients. It's worth considering the purchase of a Place for Paws gift certificate as a prepayment for future visits when normalcy is restored. To learn more about Place for Paws or to lend a hand with a gift certificate purchase,

call Angela at **613-446-2280**, visit **placeforpaws.com** or on Facebook: **@placeforpawsboardingcamp** –JH

Bring a bit of the Caribbean home

This time of year, some of us like to escape (or dream of escaping) Ottawa's cold and snow for warmer locales. But with international travel another victim of the pandemic, we need to find other ways to broaden our horizons. Let your tastebuds do the travelling with nearby **Baccanalle** restaurant (595 Montreal Rd.) as your passport to new, Caribbean-inspired flavours.

Baccanalle chef and owner **Resa Solomon-St. Lewis** was born in Winnipeg, Man. but has called Ottawa home since 1980. Resa has a background in chemical engineering and trained as a chef at Algonquin College. According to her website, Chef Resa has twice represented the High Commission for Trinidad and Tobago in Ottawa's Embassy Chef Challenge, and has numerous awards to her credit.

"Baccanalle" is a play on the word "bacchanal," meaning scandal or wild celebration in the Caribbean, where Resa's family has roots. "I first experimented with Baccanalle in 2012," Resa tells the *New Edinburgh News* in an email interview. Many readers will be familiar with Resa's Baccanalle products from her many years at the Beechwood Market – she has been a supplier since its first days. "We love the sense of community they create [at the market]," she says.

Resa explains that when the pandemic meant her office catering business Capital Fare Café "virtually disappeared,"

she turned her attention to Baccanalle. "We pivoted and brought Baccanalle from the side to the forefront, essentially building a Caribbean-inspired menu for people to enjoy and experiment with at home," she says.

Baccanalle specializes in contemporary and traditional Caribbean and Soul food with vegan, vegetarian, gluten-free, diabetic-sensitive, and low-sodium options, according to the website. All items are available on a pre-order pick-up basis.

"Our most popular items are our Ocho Jerk Chicken Feasts," Resa says. "Our patties are made from scratch and our NOLA Jazz dinner comes complete with our cornbread, Cajun beans and a spicy maple butter." We asked the chef what item people should try. "Our Chef's Pick Fam Packs," says Resa, noting the family packs come with stock-the-freezer staples like pulled jerk chicken, vegan curry, and coconut rice and peas. "Perfect to pull together a great nutritious meal, quickly!" she says.

Baccanalle even has special menus available for Valentine's Day (look for V-Day on their website), featuring special "Lockdown Love" meals kits for couples looking for a COVID-friendly way to spice things up. Order by Feb. 8 for pick-up on Feb. 12 and 13.

Resa and her Baccanalle team have also kept busy supporting the community during COVID times. "This year more than ever we have worked to support some amazing community groups like Carefor Health and Community Services, Meals for Hope and JakuKonbit," she tells *NEN*. "These groups



Photo by Alexander McKenzie

Baccanalle's chef/owner Resa Solomon-St. Lewis offers a Caribbean-inspired take-home menu.

provided meals to vulnerable communities and frontline workers and we, along with other restaurants, were proud to provide meals at or near cost," Resa says.

Resa has big plans for 2021: "The pandemic has ignited a fight-not-flight spark for me," she says. "Inspired by my ethnic community as well as my years with farmers' markets and artisan shows,

my sister and I have created a new venture: **Afrotechture**. It's a unique and exciting space to shop and discover Black Canadian artisans." Afrotechture's first pop-up shop will take place Feb. 7 in the ByWard Market Mall heritage building, as well as some online events. Learn more at **afrotechture.com**.

Baccanalle is open for pre-
Continued on page 12

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Continued from page 11

ordered pick-up on Thursdays and Fridays from 4–8 p.m. and Saturdays from 3–8 p.m. at 595 Montreal Rd. Find Baccanalle's full take-out and delivery menu at **baccanalle.com** or call **613-859-6297** to place your order. Gift cards are also available. —CL

It's full-on busy at Full Cycle

Amid the small businesses struggling to stay afloat as the pandemic unfolds, **Full Cycle** at 401 St. Laurent Blvd. stands out as an unexpected beneficiary of the restrictive, stay-at-home existence. Cycling has proven an ideal outlet for those needing distraction, exercise and relief from claustrophobic COVID-related restrictions, not to mention an environmentally-friendly transportation option year-round.

For many years, Full Cycle has been our community's full-service resource for all things cycling-related, from the sale of bikes and equipment to repairs and regular tune-ups. During the winter months, it also offers a cross-country ski waxing service, primarily for local families as



Photo by Dave Rostenne

Full Cycle has increased their online resources to cope with a business boom in the pandemic.

opposed to competitive skiers.

Full Cycle staffer **Matti Pihlainen** reports that despite the economic meltdown of 2020, the bicycle business has been booming. "Our phone didn't stop ringing from April through August," says Matti, adding that when staff couldn't keep up with calls, clients had to be redi-

rected online. The store has now beefed up its online resources, adding a LiveChat function to handle questions and requests from clients.



To Matti's surprise, new bike purchases are already on an upswing as cyclists move swiftly to "to get ahead of the curve" and secure their wheels before spring. At the same time, the popularity of "fat

bikes" has soared this winter, to the point that they've become virtually unattainable across Canada. With super-sized tires designed to conquer packed snow, fat bikes are the go-to option for winter conditions, and now a ubiquitous presence on trails and roads throughout the region.

And speaking of trails, Matti and his team are delighted by

the recent east-end extension of the multi-use ski-, walking-, snowshoeing and fat-biking trail along the Ottawa River. Ski Heritage East now extends from the Aviation Museum all the way to Trim Road. Visit **skiheritageeast.ca/wpshe** for details and up to date trail conditions.


Full Cycle has been diligent about COVID-19 protocols

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Like us on Facebook at: Rhodesbarker luxury real estate.



Photo by Alexander McKenzie

The Bellefleur Physiotherapy team: (from left) Dave Bellefleur, Natasha Eddie, Michele Carbonneau and Kellie Westwell.

in all its operations, including curbside drop-off and pick-up. While the lockdown lasts, only the service door will be open for bike repair clients: you'll need to call in advance (613-741-2443) to arrange a drop-off or pick-up. And of course, you'll need to be masked for any interaction with staff. Visit fulcycle.ca for details.

When *NEN* asked whether Full Cycle would welcome any form of community support during the pandemic, Matti generously declined, suggesting that residents instead reach out to their favourite coffee shops and eateries who have not fared so well! —JH

Relief for pandemic pains

Throughout the pandemic, **Bellefleur Physiotherapy** has remained open for in-person service at 2 Beechwood Ave. (corner of Beechwood and the Vanier Parkway).

"Since we're regulated healthcare professionals, we're considered an essential service," explains **Jason Bellefleur**, president of the operation he co-owns with his brother **Dave Bellefleur**. However, Jason adds: "we realized that some people may be uncomfortable going out in the current environment, so we've been offering virtual services since last April, and continue to do so." Visit bellefleurphysio.com to learn more about or to schedule virtual consultations.

Bellefleur physiotherapists treat a broad spectrum of painful and disabling conditions: arthritis, repetitive

strain injuries, sports injuries, concussion, tendonitis, neck, shoulder- and lower-back pain, vertigo, chronic pain syndrome, and more.

Few would dispute that the pandemic has been a pain in the neck; in fact, that is literally true. "The biggest problems we've encountered during the pandemic are posture-related symptoms that people are suffering as a result of working from home," says Jason. Cases of neck, shoulder and low-back pain have surged as a consequence of the sedentary routine.

Apart from the stresses of long hours of screen-time, "the work space, if there is a specific work space at all, may not be properly set up to minimize prolonged strains on muscles and joints," says Jason, "and since people aren't commuting to work, they aren't moving around as often, which compounds the effects."

Jason has simple advice for staying healthy and pain-free through the pandemic: "Keep moving!" And if you do develop aches and pains, don't let symptoms linger before reaching out for professional assistance. "We can help, whether it's in-person or virtually, and the quicker we get started, the quicker we can get over the problem at hand."

There are currently two physiotherapists working at Bellefleur's Beechwood location, with a third expected to come on board very soon. **Natasha Eddie** has specialized training in techniques to handle the issues most

prevalent in the pandemic. She is experienced in the use of the McKenzie method for treating neck- and lower-back conditions and offers acupuncture for pain control.

Jason's brother **Dave Bellefleur**, company co-owner and clinical director for Beechwood, is a specialist in dry needling, a highly effective (if not always comfortable!) technique for releasing tight muscles. Dave also has extensive experience working with seniors, and in the treatment of golf and running injuries. **Sophie Drouin**, a recent University of Ottawa graduate, is expected to join the team in the next few weeks.

The Bellefleur Physiotherapy clinic is open from 12–8 p.m. Monday and Wednesday, and from 8 a.m.– 4 p.m. Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Visit bellefleurphysio.com or call 613-695-7852 for more information or to schedule an appointment. —JH

New year, new businesses

Despite the ongoing challenges of the pandemic, 2021 promises the anticipated arrival of **Mr. Luko: The Gourmandise and Coffee Place**. Mr. Luko will occupy the former quarters of long-running **Second Cup**, which closed its doors at 1 Springfield Rd. late last fall. We understand that the new café is a spinoff from a Montreal-based operation, and will feature a variety of specialty foods, including gelato. Stay tuned for more details once Mr. Luko is up and running!



Photo by Andre R. Gagne

Montreal-based Mr. Luko's is set to take over the former Second Cup site at 1 Springfield Rd.

Beer lovers will be happy to hear that **Good Prospects Brewing Company** has officially opened at 411 St Laurent Blvd. (goodprospects.ca 613-315-3757). Curb-side pick-up launched on Jan. 29. *NEN* hopes to bring more details about this new business in our April edition!

Meanwhile, Minto's **Kevin Harper** confirms that the LCBO is on track to complete its new outlet in Minto Beechwood by the end of March 2021 and expects to open its doors in early April.

And of note, ModBox's **André Cloutier** reports that owing to the continuing uncertainties associated with the pandemic, "timelines for the commercial spaces [at St. Charles Market] have been shelved for the time being." —JH

Patio heaters pilfered


According to a recent *Ottawa Citizen* article, three outdoor patio heaters were stolen from **Ola Cocina** on Barrette

Street in the course of just a few weeks, inflicting yet another cruel blow to **Donna Chevrier's** local business. Nearby **Jasper Restaurant** at Beechwood and Charlevoix reportedly met the same fate, losing a trio of heaters from its outdoor patio.

As Donna's taqueria is dependent on take-out orders to stay afloat during the lockdown, the heaters had been installed for the benefit of clients lining up to collect their orders. But not only did the thefts foil her attempt to go the extra mile for customers, the chances of securing a replacement may be slim, as patio heaters have been such a "hot commodity" during the pandemic.

As a community, let's do what we can to compensate for these mean-spirited acts by making a special effort to support **Ola Cocina**, **Jasper** and all our other struggling local businesses, and to help them through this long ordeal to the return of brighter days. —JH

Chris Ellis



Public School Trustee
Rideau-Rockcliffe/Alta Vista
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Single alliance candidates could prevent vote-splitting in next election

By Real Lavergne

As concerned citizens who care deeply about electoral reform and climate change, we are calling on the New Democratic Party of Canada, the federal Green Party, and like-minded candidates to join forces by running a single alliance candidate in key ridings in the next federal election, backed by a joint platform based on democratic reform, vigorous climate action, and social justice.

Despite the historic rivalry of the NDP and the Green Party and some differences in their platforms, there are significant affinities between the two parties. Among their supporters are hundreds of thousands of Canadians who have supported one or both parties at some time. A major thrust of our vision is the need for a proportional voting system. This One Time Alliance for Democratic Reform is intended to do something about that by helping to elect pro-electoral reform candidates in

sufficient numbers to hold the balance of power.

Canada's first-past-the-post system disempowers citizens of all partisan persuasions, depending on where they live and whom they vote for. This includes Liberal voters in Saskatchewan and Alberta, Conservative voters in the Atlantic provinces and the greater Toronto area, and NDP or Green voters across the country. In 2019, the Conservatives won the popular vote and it is only the large seat-bonus accorded to the Liberals by our voting system (46 per cent of the seats with 33 per cent of the vote) that allowed them to form a relatively comfortable minority government.

As usual, the NDP and the Greens were heavily penalized: with a combined share of 22.4 per cent of the vote, the two parties won only 8.0 per cent of the seats. Compared to the 27 seats they won under the current system, the NDP and Greens would have won 57 and 22

seats respectively for a total of 79 seats under a proportional system. The political landscape would have been very different.

An alliance for change

Canadians want change. An Angus Reid poll taken after the 2019 election showed 68 per cent support for proportional representation country-wide, including 55 per cent among Liberal voters and 69 per cent among Conservative voters. Among NDP and Green voters, the numbers were 86 per cent and 83 per cent, respectively.

Add to this that we are running out of time on climate change. We can no longer afford to dilly-dally, hoping that someday a strong climate action government will be elected and miraculously pull us back from the brink. The time has come for the NDP, the Greens, and other progressive candidates to set aside their differences and find a common solution.

What will it take? The

next federal election offers the NDP, Greens, and other progressive candidates an opportunity to collaborate and win substantially more seats, based on a joint policy agenda including the reform of our electoral system.

The best way — probably the only way — to break through on some of the major policy issues of our time would be for the NDP, the Greens, and other progressive candidates to join forces in strategic ridings. The two parties need to become a more credible force capable of winning seats in line with their share of voter preferences. It is time for progressives to stop splitting the vote in winnable ridings.

We already have a model for how to do this. In the 2019 UK election, the Liberal Democrats, the Green Party, and Plaid Cymru formed the Unite to Remain Alliance, agreeing to run only one candidate among them in 60 ridings (43 Liberal Democrats, 10 Greens and seven Plaid

Cymru).

This is not a call for any existing political parties to merge. Our country needs a diversity of voices. We envisage that the parties would jointly nominate a single progressive candidate in ridings where this could make a significant difference. Once elected, those candidates will represent the party under whose banner they ran, while respecting the joint priorities established under the alliance. Considering that the next election could come at any time, it is important for alliance discussions to begin as soon as possible.

It's time to set partisan differences aside and do what is right for Canada!

A founding member of the One Time Alliance for Democratic Reform, Real Lavergne is a retired public servant and is also president of Fair Vote Canada. Learn more about the One Time Alliance for Democratic Reform at onetimealliance.ca.

Our memories are what makes us who we are! Ensure your family and friends can cherish who you are by making your plans in advance.

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Grieving in pandemic times

By Susan Groundwater

It is nearly a year since every aspect of our lives started being affected by COVID-19. Although the restrictions have varied from season to season, large gatherings have consistently been forbidden. Many people have had to reimagine, postpone, or cancel such important celebrations as graduations, baptisms, and weddings. Unfortunately, more sombre gatherings such as funerals have also been significantly affected.

Like every other industry, funeral service businesses have had to adapt to COVID-19 swiftly and significantly. Although funeral services are considered essential and have therefore remained open throughout the pandemic, every aspect of these services had to be modified almost literally overnight. There was also an urgency for pre-planning at the beginning of the pandemic, particularly in April 2020 when Ontario mandated the speed at which arrangements had to be made following a death in the province: what the Bereavement Authority of Ontario labelled “an expedited death response plan.”

Although the response times originally announced last spring were lengthened as of Jan. 12, 2021, there are still many restrictions in place for funeral services themselves. Currently, only 10 people may attend, clergy included. Attendees must pre-register and wear masks indoors, and of course, all attendees must adhere to social distancing protocols and refrain from physical contact between members of separate households: no hugs or handshakes are permitted.

In the face of these realities, funeral directors have had to get more creative. “New funeral formats started appearing, such as drive-through visitations and drive-in services shown on large outdoor screens,” says **Lisa L. Wilson**, managing funeral director at the Funeral Co-operative of Ottawa. Services also moved online in an attempt to include as many people as possible in the events. “This technology had been available in a growing number of funeral homes,” she explains, “but it wasn’t until the COVID-19

pandemic hit that it became invaluable.”

Although these solutions are welcome, they can have their drawbacks. “Online services tend to be more sombre and can feel like a poor substitute for gathering together to share stories and laughter, as well as tears, with those who are left behind,” explains **Nicolas McCarthy**, director of marketing, communications and community outreach at Beechwood Funeral, Cemetery and Cremation Services. The result can be an inherent sense of being unable to process a loss mentally, physically or socially. “There is an entire group of people who haven’t been able to have their moment of reflection and who have been forced to grieve alone or with small groups only,” says Nicolas, calling the result a “missed emotional generation.”

One option: to postpone some grief rituals until circumstances improve. In fact, many people are choosing to delay holding funerals or celebrations of life until after the restrictions lift, says Nicolas. Although waiting can be difficult, it does provide mourners with time to consider how to honour their departed loved one, and to anticipate an event that will help them grieve as a family in whatever social format feels best. “A funeral service offers a moment of healing, when mourners gather as part of a wider community to show respect, love and admiration for the person who has died, and to share their grief,” he says.

With vaccines beginning to roll out in Ontario, we all hope that the end of the severe restrictions is in sight and that life will soon return to some version of normal. Until then, Lisa suggests that we take the opportunity to broach the difficult topic of our own final wishes with our families and friends. Nicolas agrees, noting that although many people are reluctant to discuss such matters, “knowing what someone wanted allows you to avoid a knee-jerk reaction in a moment of shock and grief.”

There are many resources online to help start that conversation, including several helpful documents on the



Photo by Beechwood Cemetery Foundation

The pandemic has affected how people mourn, creating a “missed emotional generation” of those who haven’t been able to reflect, or who have been forced to grieve alone.

Beechwood Cemetery website: beechwoodottawa.ca.

Alternatively, you can reach out to a licensed funeral direc-

tor, including those locally at Funeral Co-operative of Ottawa, to discuss ideas and make advance preparations. Doing so can bring peace of mind to you and to your family. Hopefully your arrangements won’t be required for many years to come, but if the pandemic has showed us anything, it is that we cannot know the future. Doing our best to prepare in advance is a caring gesture we can offer to our loved ones right now.

Of note, the Funeral Co-operative of Ottawa will be holding one-hour, online presentations on funeral planning in Ontario, hosted by retired social worker and FCO vice-president Beverlee McIntosh on Feb. 9, Feb. 17 and Mar. 18. Learn more at fco-cfo.coop or email info@fco-cfo.coop or call 613-288-2689.

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For the Birds

By Jane Heintzman



White-breasted nuthatch.

Photo by Frank Martin

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck last March, Ottawa's first lockdown happily coincided with the arrival of waves of migratory bird species, returning to their breeding grounds to get on with the annual ritual of finding a mate and producing offspring. At that point, many homebound residents discovered the delights of birdwatching, both in their own backyards and in rambles through the community.

The timing of this current second lockdown is a little

less ideal. There are fewer bird species in our environs than there were last March (the bright breeding plumage and full-throated song are largely absent from this wintry landscape); nor are the conditions for outdoor birding excursions very hospitable, particularly in and around the forested areas that are prime bird habitat.

But all is not lost: such hardy year-round species as **Northern cardinals**, **black-capped chickadees**, **white-breasted nuthatches**, **European house sparrows**, **downy**-, **hairy**- and **pileated woodpeckers**, large flocks of **American crows**, and **common ravens** are still around in abundance, many of them

taking advantage of backyard feeders throughout the neighbourhood.

In our own dog-walking excursions, we've also encountered mid-sized flocks of wintering **American robins** along the Ottawa River Parkway (off Sussex Drive close to the Rockcliffe Pavilion). The winter (so far) has been reasonably mild and storm-free, so the stay-at-home robins have been able to find sufficient food and water supplies to stick around rather than migrate south. **Wild turkeys** are also in evidence in Rockcliffe Park, including a family of seven very large birds often found on Manor Road.

Super flight of winter finches

The birding story of this winter is a "super flight" of boreal finch species from Canada's northern forest regions to more southerly areas in Canada and parts of the United States. The exodus is thought to be the largest irruption (southward movement) of northern boreal finches in recent history. Learn more at audubon.org/news.

Virtually all the boreal finch species are reported to be on the move south, in some cases heading deep into the central and southern U.S. This mobile group includes **common and hoary redpolls**; **red- and white-winged crossbills**; **evening grosbeaks**; **pine grosbeaks**; **purple finches** and **pine siskins**, along with three other irruptive species: **Bohemian waxwings**; **blue jays** and **red-breasted nuthatches**.

According to the **Finch Research Network** which prepares the annual winter finch forecast (finchnetwork.org), this year's extraordinary influx was fueled by a "perfect storm of feast and



Canada jay.

Photo by David Howe

famine" in boreal regions. An abundance of summertime food supplies afforded by bumper spruce crops, combined with significant outbreaks of spruce budworm (a protein-rich addition to the finches' diet), led to a finch population explosion in the north. The resurgence of the budworm infestation is thought to have been an indirect result of the pandemic, which limited Quebec's ability to fully treat its forested areas.

When boreal spruce crops failed later in the year, waves of hungry finches took flight in search of more abundant food sources in southern regions, our own area among them. Local Ottawa Christmas bird counts (ofnc.ca) recorded sightings of almost all the winter finch species, with **Bohemian waxwings** topping the list at 6,500 sightings. The only no-show in the December bird counts was the dazzling **purple finch**, but at least one individual has since been spotted close to home on Lisgar Road in Rockcliffe Park.

Bohemian waxwings are hard to miss: they're striking, crested birds with black masks, peach-coloured faces, rusty-coloured undertail feathers and bold white wing stripes. They're slightly longer and more robust than their sleeker cedar waxwing cousins (6–7.5 inches vs. 5.5–6.5 inches) and have beige-brown bellies as opposed to the lemon-yellow undersides

of the **cedar waxwings**. As their epic numbers this winter attest, Bohemians (so named for their nomadic habits) form extraordinarily large flocks in the non-breeding season to scour the landscape for berries and fruit to tide them over through the winter. They're annual visitors to our own garden in late February or early March, when they descend in a massive wave to polish off the mountain ash berries and crabapples remaining in our garden.



House finch. Photo by David Howe

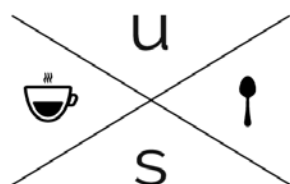
Regional birding highlights

While our stay-at-home directive currently limits our ability to visit some of the prime bird-watching spots around the region like Britannia Conservation Area, Andrew Haydon Park, Jack Pine Trail, Mer Bleue and Shirley's Bay, the **Ottawa Field**



Northern Cardinal.

Photo by David Howe



union street
kitchen café

42 crichton street
at union street
onunionstreet.ca

contactless
take-out

mon 8 - 1
tue to fri 8 - 3
sat + sun 9 - 3



Boreal Chickadee.

Photo by David Howe

Naturalists' Club provides a weekly roundup of bird sightings from neighbourhoods throughout Ottawa and the National Capital Region. The OFNC reports are not only a helpful indicator of what species to watch out for locally but can also provide useful clues to the identity of a "mystery bird" you might be struggling to identify.

The OFNC reports are a highlight list of notable or rare species, as opposed to our regular cast of characters such as cardinals and chickadees. Recent reports from early January have recorded several interesting sightings, among them a **Canada jay** in Lanark; **Eastern bluebirds** in several locations in both Gatineau and Ottawa; **Carolina wrens** in Navan and Ottawa; an "invasion" of **red-bellied woodpeckers** on both sides of the Ottawa River; a wildly out-of-season **ovenbird** (member of the **warbler** family) at the Britannia Conservation Area; and a boreal chickadee on Fernbank Road.

The **boreal chickadee** is a rarity in these parts, but more common in northern and western Canada. Unlike our familiar **black-capped chickadee** with its black cap and throat, and contrasting white face patch, its boreal cousin has a brown cap and collar, along with cinnamon-coloured flanks.

Reports from our readers

Philip MacAdam's avian bistro at Alexander and Thomas Streets has been quieter than usual recently, though a couple of **Northern cardinal** pairs remain regulars at the feeders, and a pair of **house finches** dropped in for a "power breakfast" of sunflower seeds. The **white-breasted nuthatches** and **black-capped chickadees** which normally frequent the bistro are no-shows at the moment, but chances are, they'll be back as winter unfolds. One possible explanation for the bistro's declining clientele is the recent brush-clearing exercise carried out by the National Capital Commission on the

green space opposite Philip's house. A patch of dense lilac bushes, which have afforded an ideal habitat for countless birds in all seasons, has been radically slashed back, no doubt displacing many of Philip's customary visitors.

Not far away at the **Macoun Marsh** (in the Beechwood Cemetery just off St. Laurent Boulevard south of Hemlock), St. Laurent Academy science teacher **Mike Leveille** has had firsthand evidence of this winter's "super flight" of irruptive species. Mike recently spotted an immense flock of about 500 **Bohemian waxwings**, along with a smattering of **pine grosbeaks** mixed in. If past irruptive years are any guide, Mike and his students will likely encounter an equally large influx of **common redpolls** at the Marsh later this winter.

West coast birding reporter and former Burgh resident **Vicki Metcalfe** logged an impressive 428 birds in the course of a three-hour stint at Victoria, B.C.'s Christmas bird count – much of it in the pouring rain! Among the species on Vicki's list were **common- and hooded mergansers**; a **Eurasian collared dove**; **Anna's hummingbirds**; a **bald eagle**; a **Northern flicker**; **common ravens**; **chestnut-backed chickadees**; a **ruby-crowned kinglet**; a **Bewick's wren**; **pine siskins**; **golden-crowned sparrows**; **white-crowned sparrows**; **house finches**; **American robins** and **dark-eyed juncos**.

Hope on the horizon

While there are months to go before winter is on its way out, birders have much to look forward to (apart from the COVID-19 vaccine) in the coming weeks. If you're able to keep your backyard feeders well stocked with black oil sunflower seed and nyjer seed (for smaller finches), chances are you'll have regular visitors from the **Northern cardinal**, **black-capped chickadee** and **white-breasted nuthatch** families, along with rosy **house finches**, **common redpolls** and, if you're lucky, a smattering of flashy winter finches such as **evening- and pine grosbeaks**. And in the weeks ahead, the steady drumming of **pileated woodpeckers** throughout the area, and the familiar mating calls of the **cardinal** and **chickadee**, will mark the first, spirit-



Photo by Mike Leveille

Bohemian Waxwing Flock at Macoun Marsh.

boosting signs of spring.

Correction: In our December edition, we mistakenly identified one of our new bird photographers as David

Dawson. In fact, Dave's full name is David Howe. We regret the error and thank David for his contributions to this column.



Common Redpoll.

Photo by David Howe



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Powerful pandemic leaves only modest mark on City's budget and official plan

By Sarah Anson-Cartwright

The pandemic's impacts on people and businesses are dramatic and well documented. Beyond the sad loss of lives, in Ottawa the most vulnerable, racialized, and low-income citizens have been disproportionately and adversely affected. And the City's self-declared housing and homelessness emergency has only worsened with COVID-19-related public health measures.

Almost one year on, it is worth asking if the pandemic's impacts on our lives and work have shaped city council's policies or decisions. More specifically, is the city adapting to the pandemic beyond temporary, necessary measures, and is it striving to

become a more resilient and inclusive place to live?

Two sources offer a view into how the powers that be at City Hall see Ottawa in a post-pandemic era. These two sources – the 2021 budget and the draft new Official Plan – give some clues as to whether Mayor Jim Watson and senior City staff are taking the lessons of the past year into account. The signals to date are mixed and modest.

Budget priorities, not pivots

The budget for 2021 was passed in early December 2020 and reflects the short-term set of priorities. In line with the mayor's dictum, property-tax increases were limited to three per cent amid a large, expected deficit.

Pre-pandemic, Ottawa had a housing and homelessness crisis. It has grown worse since the pandemic's start, with an average of 150 homeless people sleeping outdoors rather than in shelters, up from 90 people typically, according to a report to the Community and Protective Services Committee of Council last October.

While the budget included the City's highest investment in affordable housing as a result of federal government funding (\$32 million

of a total \$47 million), there was an additional \$25 million for roads in an envelope for roads and other infrastructure totaling \$171 million.

Roads received a higher budget, yet council refused to freeze OTranspo fares during a period when the existing riders are facing hardships.

A previously scheduled \$13.2 million increase to the budget of the Ottawa Police Services Board was approved in a year when there were strong calls for changes to policing, including how they answer mental-health calls and deal with people of colour in our city. "The conversation has shifted with the Ottawa Policy Services Board," a resident said, despite the budget decision.

Planning for growth

In late November, the City shared the draft new Official Plan which will guide Ottawa's growth over the next 25 years and be voted on by council later this year.

The plan's goal is for Ottawa to be the most liveable mid-sized city in North America. The word "liveable" has taken on new significance during the pandemic. Many have spent more time staying close to home and exploring their local neighbourhoods, as well as seeking outdoor exercise and physical distancing opportunities in greenspaces.

In line with this experience, the Official Plan includes a policy intention to "encour-

age the development of healthy, walkable, 15-minute neighbourhoods," cited as helping to "create the conditions for future pandemic resiliency."

There are dozens of references to 15-minute neighbourhoods which the City describes as "places where,

colour maps and secondary plans. The City did not make printed copies available to the public, except for initially seven copies (now 11 copies in total) on loan via the Ottawa Public Library.

"It is felt that communities have not been given enough time to review a massive doc-

February 17 deadline for Official Plan feedback

The new Official Plan is huge; however, the City is offering a simplified form of feedback. For each of 21 topics within the plan, there is a one-pager and a related feedback form. Feedback forms are due Feb. 17. Visit engage.ottawa.ca/the-new-official-plan

no matter your age or ability, you can meet most of your daily needs within a 15-minute walk and can choose to live car-light or car-free."

While there are aspirations in the Official Plan, there is also a wealth of complex technical detail. This plan changes some terminology (e.g. mainstreets are renamed corridors) and the policy areas (the plan will comprise six "transect areas" rather than the current two: urban and rural).

As one resident observed: "It feels like an exercise in obfuscation."

The City posted the draft new Official Plan online, but citizens have expressed frustration with difficulties accessing the large and varied documents, including detailed

ument," said one resident.

While the Official Plan and the 2021 budget offer modest nods to the challenges arising from the pandemic, city council continues to hew to the mayor's agenda and decisions. Council's Planning Committee often overturns the City's own rules, allowing for exceptions. It is a committee where six of the nine members have received 63–99 per cent of their campaign donations from developers, according to grassroots organization Horizon Ottawa.

Citizens' input into the new Official Plan is still necessary despite these issues. This current council will face the electorate in 2022, whereas the Official Plan will be the City's planning bible until 2046.



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Complexity of plants and nature inspires botanical artist

By **Tamara Sorger, NECA Environment committee chair**

This is the first in a series of articles showcasing our local environmental heroes, neighbours and friends who, through their love for the planet, are making the world a better place.

The series starts with celebrated artist **Sengmany Phommachakr** a long-time New Edinburgh resident whose work focuses on botanical art, showcasing the beauty, mystery and complexity of plants and nature. In addition to being captivating and visually stunning, her work reminds us to take the time to appreciate the natural beauty in all living things, including the vegetables you may grow in your garden in the summer or have on your dinner menu tonight.

Sengmany has received many awards including, most recently, as a winner of the 23rd Annual International American Society of Botanical Artists, which has some of her work on display as part of the current exhibit "Abundant Future, Cultivating Diversity in Garden, Farm and Field,"



Artwork by Sengmany Phommachakr

New Edinburgh's Sengmany Phommachakr always paints from live specimens.

part of the Fourth New York Botanical Garden Triennial, on until March 26, 2021 at asba-art.org.

Q: Your art focuses on vegetables and flora. What inspires you most?

A: I have always been drawn to plants: their incredible complexity and resilience, the beauty of the fine patterns and textures that become apparent if you stop and take the time to look closely. By the same token, there is an incredible fragility and ephemeral quality in the leaves and flowers that I paint. I always paint from live specimens. The challenge of reproducing all this richness as accurately as possible in watercolour, of translating volume and shadows and colours on a blank sheet of paper, is very stimulating.

Of course, exotic and unusual plant specimens from the tropics are always fascinating to look at and paint, but I find browsing our local farmers markets to be an endless source of inspiration. Vividly coloured tomatoes, a funny-shaped tuber, decadently flourishing kale leaves, the

coarse skin of russet potatoes all leave me wishing I had more time and sunlight to paint them all.

Q: How do you incorporate your love for nature and the planet into your daily life?

A: My husband and I are concerned about the health of the planet and what environmental conditions we will leave for our children and future generations. As I work from home, we have been able to scale down to a single vehicle: an electric vehicle we have owned for more than two years. We have installed solar panels on our garage roof and any of this clean, renewable energy that we do not consume is fed back into the grid (resulting in a monthly credit on our electricity bill). We are also mindful of the impact of our choices as consumers and try to eat local and limit consumption of meat; we strive to fly only once per year. We have also divested all of our investments away from fossil fuels.

See *Sengmany Phommachakr's beautiful art on her website: sengmany.ca.*

Sanctimony

They come every Sunday.

Tiny contrition

Struggling vainly, as usual, against

Giant smugness.

The vicar waits.

They arrive two minutes fashionably late.

Companionable whispers of other worshippers

Silenced.

Heads turn to watch the ritual.

Haughty bearing,

Measured tread.

Expensive leather on the marble chessboard aisle.

They file into their appointed (anointed?) places.

They are the front-pew people.

Ample bums on polished seats.

-Keith Newton

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Spatulas out, sticks drawn: It's time to defeat the gypsy moth

By Sharron Edwards

They arrived three years ago, lurking in our yards, amongst us as we walk. We can find them hidden in plain sight around rocks, under benches, decks, and barbecue covers, on house walls and windowsills, on stumps, logs, utility poles, and of course, at the bases of our trees, under the boughs and between loose pieces of bark.

I'm talking about gypsy moth egg masses.

Gypsy moths are an invasive species, a result of climate change. We are no longer getting the number of -25°C days we need to kill some of them off anymore. Egg mass becomes caterpillar, becomes pupa, becomes moth. The egg masses we see today are from last year's moths, which were still seen flying about in October. In cottage country, folks saw thousands of caterpillars crawling around. In Rockcliffe Park they saw thousands eating away at



Photos by Sharron Edwards

Gypsy moth egg masses are everywhere. Unless we scrape them off now, our trees will be devastated by these future hungry caterpillars.

trees. The caterpillars come out at night, eat the leaves, come down the tree in the daytime, and repeat. They will hang from a silk for the wind to take them to the next tree.

Defoliation caused by gypsy moths in Ontario increased from 47,203 hectares in 2019 to 586,385 hectares in 2020.

But these insects can be stopped before they start!

Armed with spatulas at the ready and with sticks for a good reach, those in New Edinburgh, Rockcliffe Park and Manor Park are on the hunt for gypsy moth egg masses. These tan coloured egg masses that we are passing by in spades, hidden in plain sight, each has up to 1,500 eggs- caterpillars ready to eat our trees alive. They will be hatching soon, working their way up the trees: oak, birch, elm, and pine.

Track them down, scrape them off, put them in dish soap and water. Then seal them up for a few days and

throw them away. They can survive on the ground, so have dog poop bags at the ready.

Every tree on Hemlock Road has them. The poor trees in Beechwood cemetery along St. Laurent Boulevard are not going to cope. The gorgeous trees along Stanley Avenue, the small trees on King Edward Avenue, and the splendid oak tree at the Rockeries park are all under threat unless we get our spatulas out and sticks drawn.

If gypsy moths eggs are left unchecked, the resulting caterpillars can defoliate a gorgeous tree in days. Birds need leaves to make nests under cover and in shade. Squirrels, insects, and we humans appreciate the beauty of the trees in our neighbourhood, in our cemetery, along our rivers, and in our parks.

So have your spatulas at the ready, sticks poised to be drawn: let's find the gypsy moth egg masses and scrape them away.

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Photo by Sylvain Bélanger

A CCC rink attendant clears the ice at the New Edinburgh fieldhouse during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ice rink team deserves kudos during difficult season



By Denise Bélanger, CCC Secretary

The skating season at New Edinburgh Park has been in full swing since early January. With no indoor skating permitted due to the latest pandemic precautions, outdoor rinks are an important alternative during these trying times. Please be patient, kind, and mindful of others when the rinks are at maximum capacity: we are all trying our best.

The Crichton Community Council (CCC) rinks at 203 Stanley Ave. are open for supervised skating Monday to Friday 4–8 p.m., Saturdays 10 a.m.–9 p.m. and Sundays 10 a.m.–6 p.m. At the time of writing, the City and provincial rules for the rinks are as follow:

- Maximum 12 skaters per rink
- Masks are highly recommended for all skaters
- Skaters must maintain physical distance of two metres between each other unless they are members of the same household

- Skaters are not permitted to play sports or games, or use sports equipment

- Anyone within a 15-metre radius of the rinks must wear a mask

Users are permitted to use the fieldhouse washrooms, but must provide contact tracing details and follow masking orders. Should a medical emergency occur, the fieldhouse will also be used to shelter those affected. We are not permitted to let users use the fieldhouse as a change room. Our rink attendants will educate users about the rules as required.

We appreciate your cooperation and understanding while we carry out these duties so that we can offer a safe environment for all. Should any of these rules change, please make sure to respect the directives that are posted onsite. Our objective is to keep the rinks open as long as possible, even if the maximum number of skaters permitted is reduced to as few as five at a time.

We would like to offer a big thank-you to our vol-

unteer rink builders **Bruce McLaurin, Sam Grabner** and **Steve Grabner** for getting the base ice built during December, despite the weather challenges. We very much appreciate their dedication and long hours. We are also very encouraged by the large number of hosers who volunteered this year. In past years, shortages of hosers affected our ability to hose the rinks on a nightly basis. This year we have enough volunteers to hose every night and still have a list of spares. We are delighted that the community has responded to fill this need. We also appreciate the “shovel elves” that help clear the rinks after a snowfall. Any high-school students that volunteer for the CCC can apply those hours against their volunteer requirement for graduation. Let us know if you can help.

The CCC uses City of Ottawa rink operation grants to employ student rink attendants. Typically, the grants cover 75 per cent of our operating costs and the CCC fundraises to cover the rest. We provide part-time employment to 10 high-school students from the neighbourhood. Typically, they are responsible for supervising the rink, scraping the ice, and training new rink attendants. This year we have added contact tracing and disinfection efforts to their duties – some new skills to add to their resumé! The rink manager has also implemented the use of the 7shifts Employee Scheduling app to simplify

shift scheduling.

Has this been an easy rink season? Not at all. Our rink manager has had to deal with constantly changing regulations and interpret conflicting pieces of advice from the City of Ottawa, which in turn is trying to conform to and clarify provincial orders. It has been difficult to keep up. We were hoping to introduce curling on the rinks, but the current rules prevent us from doing so. The rink manager's wife would like to remind everyone that he likes gin. If you are interested in taking on a bigger role in running the rinks in the future, please contact the CCC Rink Manager, **Sylvain Bélanger** at **CCCRinkManager@gmail.com**.

Due to new stay-at-home orders, the fieldhouse is not available for rentals. We are unsure at this time when the City will once again permit rentals.

Have you heard of the Rideau Winter Trail (**RideauWinterTrail.ca**)? It's a free, multi-use trail for classic cross-country skiing, skate-skiing, snowshoeing, fat biking and walking along

the Rideau River. The trail begins at 1 Donald St. by the Rideau Sports Centre and extends out past Hurdman Station. This not-for-profit group is just shy of its fundraising goal of \$12,000 so if you can, please contribute to their GoFundMe page to help pay for trail grooming. A trail such as this provides opportunities for exercise close to home, which we are all being encouraged to do right now.

This year and last year will be infamous – it has been difficult to coordinate and implement our normal activities due to COVID-19. These challenges strain our volunteer base. In 2021, please take the time to thank volunteers in our community or offer up a few hours to volunteer yourself. Every little bit helps. Be safe and see you in the park!

Follow the CCC on Facebook: @CrichtonCommunityCouncil, Instagram: @CrichtonCommunityCouncil and Twitter: @NEFieldHouse. Learn more at CrichtonCommunityCouncil.ca and newedinburgh.ca/CCC.



We're always looking for new volunteers to join us!

Local library branch reopens for returns and hold pick-ups

By Martha Hodgson

Greetings from the Rockcliffe Park Library branch!

You might have heard that the Rockcliffe Park branch (380 Springfield Rd.) reopened in January for curbside pick-up. If you have a hold to collect, or library materials to return, you can now do so during opening hours.

Appointments are not required to pick up holds or return items. When you arrive at the branch, you will line up outside the branch to pick up your holds. Please bring your library card and wear your mask when picking up your holds.

Signage at the branch will show you where to go to return items and pick up your holds, and employees will be there – at a safe distance – to provide additional instructions and to welcome you back!

Meanwhile, library staff

continue to work behind the scenes to bring you wonderful online programs for all ages.

February is Canadian Black History month and we are excited to announce a wide variety of free virtual programs through the month for a variety of age groups and interests. Learn about the history of Black communities in Canada that have disappeared; attend a vegan Creole cooking class; visit with Black authors; hear members of today's local Black community; learn how to breakdance; and more!

We continue to offer our popular online story times in both English and French for ages 6 and under, as well as online coding, writing, science, and Dungeons and Dragons programs for school-aged children. Learn more at bibliootawalibrary.ca/en.

Wishing you a happy, healthy 2021.

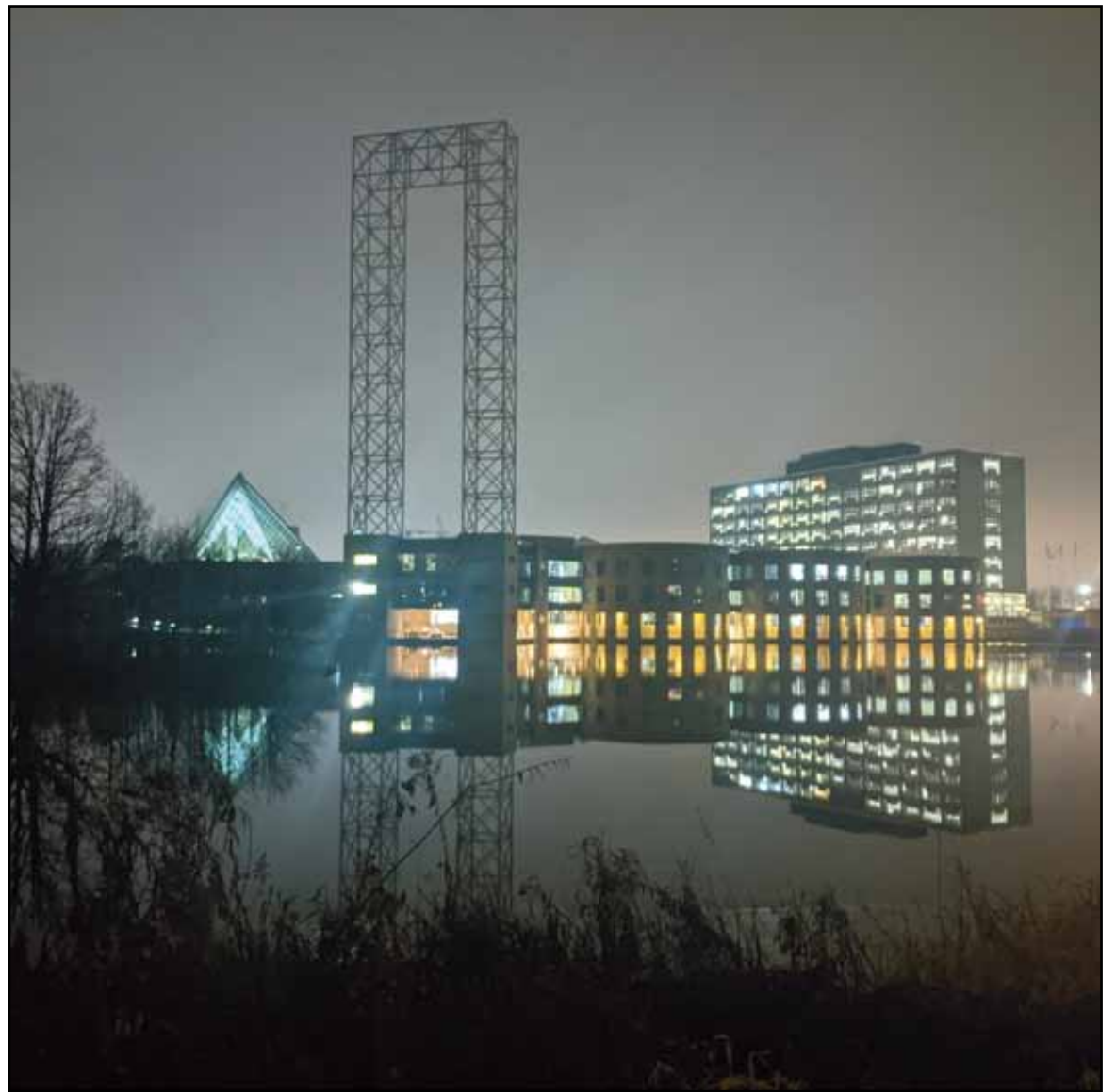


Photo by Kelley Oliver

The John G. Diefenbaker Building (old city hall) captured in the very early morning on Dec 13, 2020.

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What can LA Group do for you?

Amid lockdown rules, NECTAR offers fun programs online

By Carmel Whittle and Patsea Griffin, NECTAR

Back in early 2020, the sale of 255 MacKay St. was completed and the New Edinburgh Community and Arts Centre (NECTAR) retained use of the building under agreement with the new owners. Since that time, the current owners have put the house back up for sale and NECTAR continues to operate out of the building. Regarding COVID-19, NECTAR has certainly had to navigate the public health regulations and rapidly adjust its model to the new realities of extended shutdowns and restrictions. It was out of this that its partnership with Lineage Arts (lineagearts.ca) took shape.

The former Community Room (previously available for community events, programs, and general rentals) is the current home of Lineage Arts, showcasing an incredible collection of traditional and contemporary artwork from Canadian and international Indigenous artists. To date, there has been considerable interest from the community about the artwork and Lineage Arts has been a welcome addition to the NECTAR family.

We also have received Red Cross COVID Emergency Project funds to support NECTAR in continuing programming – which would originally have taken place onsite – completely online during this second wave of pandemic restrictions.

NECTAR's porch and front lawn became a hub for numer-



Photo courtesy NECTAR

NECTAR's most recent events included a holiday livestream gathering, thanks to Red Cross COVID Emergency Project funding.

ous outdoor activities from late spring to early fall. These included hosting the fundraising series of Porchlight Concerts. A warm thank-you to **Isobel Bisby**, former co-chair of the NECTAR board, who coordinated the event. Thanks also to the musicians who shared their talent and time, and to our generous audiences.

We hosted the Mural Expressive Arts day, the Research In Arts (RIA) Environmental Salon, and the No Borders Art Festival online zoom and livestream, which opened on the lawn with traditional drummers and hoop dancers. NECTAR also host-

ed the World Multicultural Festival. All these activities occurred when we could safely distance 25 audience members on the lawn. These events provided a welcome break for many in the community, and we are hoping for fewer restrictions and more gatherings in 2021.

Our current online programming includes the Beading with Patsea! Workshop which is open to everyone. It started up shortly after the No Borders Art Festival in May 2019 and has been ongoing every Monday from 4–6 p.m.. Before COVID-19, the event was held in the NECTAR kitchen,

but for now we are hosting it online via Zoom. Beading with Patsea! offers more than a place to bead, it's a place for discussion – and no topic is off the table. We are a safe space and a kind place for all. We are also a creative space: not all participants bead, and we sometimes have musicians, painters, and poets drop by to entertain us and to share their work. Many new and creative projects have come to life in the beading circle – you can find a number of these on Facebook [@beadingwithpatsea](https://www.facebook.com/beadingwithpatsea). For more details, send your email address to beadingwithpatsea@gmail.com.

If you are interested in becoming more involved at NECTAR, contact nectarboard@gmail.com and visit nectarcentre.ca.

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Even cherished traditions seemed bleak in a COVID Christmas

By Janet Ruddock

"In the bleak midwinter" pretty much described Ottawa this past Christmas. I opened the drapes to welcome the day and regretted the effort. The weather did nothing to make that morning merry. Dark, raining, and miserable. Talk about dampening one's spirits. Seriously, could it possibly have been any worse?

The tree in the living room shone dimly. The pseudo-candle Christmas lights we purchased a lifetime ago on a posting to Belgium cast their usual muted touch. I generally love the rather soft, romantic, continental feel they add to the season. This year they seemed...well, rather somber and sad.

"Merry Christmas," a voice called from somewhere in the shadows of the darkened room. Thank heaven for my husband Frank, a freshly

brewed coffee, and the cranberry-orange nut loaf we baked the previous afternoon to wrap in foil overnight. We don't know why we wrap it in foil, except the recipe in my falling-to-bits Betty Crocker cookbook says to. So we did, as we do every year.

Tradition. Like shepherd's pie. Or shepherds' pie. Must be the latter. I suppose there had to have been more than one shepherd out in that field. In any case, that meat-and-potato pie is also a must for us on Christmas Eve. What else would the shepherds be eating that night? Roast beef?

That's what we said to convince our two sons when they were very young. Shepherd's pie was the only thing to have that night. The recipe calls for "minced meats of your choice." If way back when, one of our choices of meat was lamb, we simply didn't tell the boys and hoped they

didn't ask about the shepherd missing his poor lamb. All grown up now, they make their own shepherd's pie. I don't know what they tell their children.

On this particular bleak Christmas morning, a coffee lifts my spirits. Duly inspired, I set to lighting the three-tiered, wooden Christmas carousel we picked up in a small town outside Heidelberg, Germany long ago. One street with one pub. I wonder if it still serves that excellent ragout and heavy bread? And beer...and cider for the boys. One hopes some things never change.

One also needs divine inspiration to set that carousel spinning. There's a trick to angling the persnickety little propeller blades on top and positioning the candles just right, but it's worth the effort. However, our tree has a unique feature. The characters go in the wrong direction.

Yup. Everyone, from the wise men and shepherds to the smallest sheep go backwards at breakneck speed. Could be why it was the only one left in that hardware store window back in Germany.

Every year we all have a go at angling those blades to make it spin the right direction. Doesn't matter. I get dizzy thinking about it. The expression on the camel's face is particularly off-putting. The sheep have their eyes shut and I don't blame them.

As the song goes, "So this is Christmas. And what have we done?" Frank and I didn't do much. Christmas came and went. My cousin got the gift of a knee replacement two days before. Now, a new knee

is a great gift, don't get me wrong. I've got one. I love it. But honestly, for Christmas?

Boxing Day found us sailing along Highway 7 on our way to brighten up that cousin's Happy New Year. Our bubble joined her bubble to bring out the bubbly. Not much of interest happens on a trip along Highway 7 at the best of times. Add dreary rain trying to be snow and the lengthy drive seemed a lot longer. Are we there yet? And we no longer have kids in the back seat.

One of those red lights that go on forever stopped us at some random intersection. Could have been Havelock. Could have been I was dozing off. Anyway, a sheep

appeared, dimly outlined with lights. Further distant, a similarly lit – sort of lit – stable scenario. Much further away, a shepherd, also rather short on lights. All were strangely separated and in imminent danger of fading away completely. If you didn't know the story, you'd be forgiven for thinking: "what an odd bunch hanging around that corner."

Odder still was something about that shepherd. It suddenly struck me. "Is it just me," I said to Frank, "or is that shepherd going the wrong way?" Yes, indeed. The shepherd, staff in hand, was heading away from the stable. Maybe he was looking for that wayward sheep. Or the other shepherds. After all, Christmas was over, so he simply up and left. Why hang around? On to a new and, perhaps more hopeful, new year....

"Let's hope it's a good one, without any fear." –John Lennon

Janet Ruddock and her husband Frank moved to New Edinburgh over a year ago after 10 years in Washington and Boston with Foreign Affairs Canada. Janet is a writer, traveler, lover of the arts and advocate for those living with chronic pain.



Image from thewoodenwagon.com

Janet's German wooden Christmas carousel has a unique feature: the characters go in the wrong direction.



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Turning hats and scarves into hope for homeless women

By Marta M. Reyes

For Dorothy Warnock, knitting started as a necessity, grew into a hobby, and most recently became a way to help others. The 95-year-old resident of Governor’s Walk on Stanley Avenue learned to knit as a young girl growing up in Ireland, at a time when money was tight and basic needs like clothes were mostly homemade.

“During the war period, nobody had money, so mothers got to knitting, and as soon as daughters were old enough, they started knitting, too,” Dorothy says. It’s a skill she has used all her life and has perfected over time.

After moving to Canada and having children, Dorothy has done more than her share of knitting. She says one of her biggest challenges came when her children started asking her to knit Aran sweaters for them: iconic Irish sweaters, featuring gorgeous and intricate designs, which are very difficult to knit. Dorothy remembers having to unravel the work and start all over, time after time, to get the design just right. She figures she must have knitted at least 15 of those sweaters for her children, including at least two for her daughter’s boy-friends.

Dorothy’s latest knitting project involves less intricate designs, but it’s destined to



Photo courtesy Governor’s Walk
Governor’s Walk has been helping resident Dorothy Warnock in selling her hand-knitted hats and scarves to raise funds for Cornerstone Housing for Women.

make a noteworthy impact. She recently finished knitting about 250 hats and scarves to raise money for Cornerstone Housing for Women, a charity that provides emergency shelter and housing for women.

cant feat because Dorothy’s vision has been failing her for a few years – but she was determined to do something to help women in need.

“I asked myself, ‘What can I do? My legs don’t work, my eyes don’t work, but my hands do,’” she says. She started the project three years ago, but finally had to give up as her vision deteriorated. “When I knitted my last hat and scarf, my eyes said: ‘No more.’”

Dorothy says Cornerstone is a cause near and dear to her heart. She went back to university and finished a master’s degree in Women’s Studies at the University of Ottawa in 1989. Why choose that among all the other subjects? “Because I’m a woman!” she says.

Dorothy says she was deeply interested in what women go through in their lives, and in their marriages, and the obstacles they encounter. Choosing Cornerstone as the beneficiary of her knitting made sense: many of the women who go there are in need of shelter and compassion.

“Even if it is something I didn’t experience, I can sym-

pathize and empathize with them,” she says.

Dorothy started raising funds for Cornerstone, selling her hats and scarves in early December. She’s since raised about \$650 and hopes to hit the \$1,000 mark. Governor’s Walk residence has helped her out with collecting donations and has covered her shipping costs. Dorothy said her project has been a joint effort and that she has been overwhelmed by the kindness people have shown her – from donations of yarn and needles to the many orders placed and the money people have donated.

“This wasn’t a lone job,” she says. “There were lots of helpers who came together as one voice that rose up to help.”

A few pieces remain for sale, and donations are still very welcome. Those interested in purchasing Dorothy’s pieces to help Cornerstone can email governorwalkfundraising@gmail.com.

Marta M. Reyes has been living in New Edinburgh for the past 15 years with her two children and a dog. She is a public servant by day and hockey mom most evenings.

This is a particularly signifi-



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Skating on McKay Lake: a welcome return to a peaceful past

By Doug Cornish

Nestled in between New Edinburgh and Manor Park sits the jewel of McKay Lake, next to the old stone bridge on Hillsdale Road. When I was a child, we used to have infrequent pickup hockey games at one end of McKay Lake. For decades now, McKay Lake in winter has mainly been frequented by dog-walkers around its edges, the odd cross-country skier, or someone ice fishing.

COVID-19 has changed all that. This winter there have been dozens and dozens of skaters on McKay Lake. Due to community outdoor skating rinks and the Rideau Canal getting a late start, and because the downtown Rink of Dreams is crowded, people wanted to get out – locally. They wanted and needed unstructured space. With more time on their hands because of longer school and Christmas breaks, they looked for other places. More people were out walking this New Year, more than they used to, because during a lockdown there's not a lot to do. Folks get stir crazy.

People took the initiative to clear skating lanes all over McKay Lake in various patterns. There are multitudes out with their kids or friends, enjoying this natural skating rink, especially on weekends. Off to the side there are small groups who've cleared a small rink for their younger children who don't have



Photo by Christina Leadlay

Morag Estabrooks (left) and Rachel Leadlay, grade 6 students at Rockcliffe Park Public School, enjoyed the skating on MacKay Lake in early January.

advanced skating ability. There are other small “time-out” places where families take a break from skating; they're having a quiet time with their children, with the odd glove lying on the snow, a water bottle and rucksack nearby. Almost a picnic situation, the entire scene is something out of a Cornelius Kreighoff painting. You must experience it to believe it.

All along Hillsdale Road are parked cars. Rockcliffe

Park neighbours might not like their quiet space invaded, but while walking the dog by the lake, I saw a man and his wife standing on Hillsdale Bridge looking out on this wonderful, spontaneous scene. The man was taking a photo with his phone as I walked by. I commented in jest: “Well, there goes the neighbourhood!” He smiled, chuckled, and said enthusiastically: “No, I think it's just great!”

And it is great. People are returning to what they used to do centuries ago: skating and playing hockey on local ponds and lakes. It was, is, and still should be, entirely natural. The pandemic has reconnected people with ancestral activities, particularly outdoors. Aside from someone on the bridge taking a photo, and others looking on, I don't think I noticed anyone on the lake with a phone in their hands. Technology

seemed to be momentarily put aside. People were just enjoying themselves in the idyllic, pastoral setting of this natural lake. It seemed miles – even years – away from modern, hectic life.

If McKay Lake skating catches on, it may be the winter version of visiting the Pond, which is beside McKay Lake. When I was young, the Pond was called the Sand Pits. It was man-made and became a swimming hole surrounded by forest. High-end homes and condos eventually replaced the forest; the new, gentrified name became The Pond. The downside: it's so popular in summer it's turned almost Miami Beach-like. The City had to step in, smothering it with regulations and shoring it up, preventing things from getting out of hand, particularly environmentally.

McKay Lake winter skating hopefully won't reach that point. Presently, it's a welcome return to an innocent and peaceful past. Once they start selling Beaver Tails from huts along its edges, though...then I'm afraid it's all over!



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Rockcliffe Park school prepares for centenary in 2022

By the RPPS 100th Anniversary Committee

What do Dutch princesses, a Hollywood actor, and our current prime minister have in common? They all went to Rockcliffe Park Public School. Next year our community will celebrate the centennial of Rockcliffe Park Public School and all those who have attended during its 100 years.

The school is one of the oldest public institutions in the nation’s capital and has been home to thousands of students who come from near and far, including local luminaries and foreign royalty. RPPS counts as alumni Princesses Beatrix and Irene of The Netherlands, who attended the school in Ottawa while the Dutch Royal Family was in exile during the Second World War. Friends star Matthew Perry passed through its halls at the same time as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who attended along with his siblings. The children of both former prime

ministers Stephen Harper and of the late John Turner attended RPPS as well. RPPS’s catchment area has grown from Rockcliffe Park proper to include New

Edinburgh, Lindenlea, and Lowertown. The school is a vital part of these neighbourhoods and has played a central role in community building through events and vol-

unteering. For 100 years, our community’s dedicated and hardworking volunteers have been Rockcliffe Park Public School’s strongest asset. As we get closer to our

100-year anniversary, RPPS School Council is planning celebrations fit for the occasion and has struck a 100th Anniversary Committee for the purpose. The committee is looking for volunteers interested in helping to coordinate events, direct communications and alumni engagement, conduct historical research, and lead fundraising efforts. Please send any inquiries to **RPPS100th@gmail.com**. We can’t wait to celebrate with you!



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Pop-up holiday market brought welcome musical gift

By Andre R. Gagne

On Dec. 8, the joyful sounds of the holidays were in the air, surprising New Edinburgh residents filing out of Sunday services or simply popping on by Union Street Café for java and a scone. What they discovered was sweeter than a bite from the café's famed Cookie Monster treat: local musician **Kristine St-Pierre** and her buddy from Winnipeg **Justin Lacroix** strumming some seasonal favourites alongside cuts from their album *Noël Avec Toi*. It may have been the first live music many had heard in months and, judging from the smiles, it was a much-needed early Christmas gift.

Unable to tour in 2020 and like many musicians, feeling a little stuck performing online only, the duo pondered a safe way to bring their music back to "real life." Taking a page from some fellow performers' playbooks, and a pinch of inspiration from wandering carollers of bygone days, Kristine and Justin brought their music to driveways, sidewalks, yards, and basically any place they could play, distanced, outdoors.

"It certainly felt good to see people's real, live reactions as opposed to comments or emojis!" says Kristine. "We've been so lucky to be able to perform online and have an audience there, but it's also been great to feel people's presence, and see them dance and enjoy themselves."

The two met 10 years ago during a gig in Thunder Bay, Ont., and have shared the



Photo by Andre R. Gagne

Local musician Kristine St-Pierre and her friend Justin Lacroix performed a pop-up concert at the Union Street Kitchen Café back in December.

stage on numerous occasions since. They both cite a mutual appreciation of each other's art that plays into their fantastic chemistry as a duo. That, and they each feel strongly about recording songs in both English and French.

"There is a sort of protectionist instinct that kicks in when it comes to French

since it is a smaller community in Manitoba that has fought, since its arrival on the prairies, to stay alive," explains Justin.

Their album, *Noël Avec Toi*, first germinated in the heat of summer, but that didn't stop the Christmastime feeling the pair brought to the later September sessions, each

having fond memories of the season. For Kristine, it's her uncle Yvan showing up dressed as Santa on a snowmobile at her grandparents' farm.

"Turns out you can write a Christmas song in summer," recalls Justin, calling himself a sort of minstrel-elf. "It was really effortless, not to say we didn't work at it. But I know both of us really like what we created."

Being unable to open for indoor socializing, **Christine Garand** and her crew at Union Street (including new puppy **Stella**) were more than happy to host the duo: the performance nicely coincided with the café's own pop-up markets. After a few grey

December days, the sun was also welcoming.

"It was such a beautiful December day, the sun was shining, and the weather was just perfect," says Kristine. "It was so heartwarming to see people enjoying themselves and dancing to the music. This is one of the things I love about our Christmas music: the opportunity to perform outside and bring joy and holiday magic to people!"

Andre R. Gagne is new to the Burgh. You can usually spy him roaming around with his camera, sipping copious amounts of coffee on Beechwood or sharing conversations with his friends at The Pond.

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In Memoriam: Jim Watson (1936–2020)

By Bob McKellar

On Dec. 18, 2020, **James Kay Graham (Jim) Watson**, aged 84, died at his home in New Edinburgh after a brief illness.

Beloved husband and friend for 40 years to Gemma Kerr, he also leaves siblings Tom, Jack (Joyce) and Marjorie Watson, and nieces and nephews in Scotland. New Edinburgh residents will remember Jim for his many years of service on the Board of the New Edinburgh Community Alliance (NECA), where he was treasurer from 2007–2014. The year 2007 was one of change for NECA, and this included setting up an Advisory Board for the *New Edinburgh News* to provide support for the editorial team. Jim signed up to the Advisory Board at the start, and continued to serve until the time of his passing.

Many residents of the Burgh may not be aware that Jim was also a renowned scientist. He began his scientific career in the early 1960s, receiving a Ph.D. in Chemistry from the University of Glasgow in Scotland. Following postdoc-

toral fellowships in England and Ottawa (National Research Council, 1963–1965), he held professorial appointments in the UK and USA before returning to Ottawa in 1982 to rejoin the Spectroscopy group of Nobel Laureate Gerhard Herzberg at the NRC.

Jim Watson was the world's leading authority on the theory of how molecules in the gas phase rotate and vibrate, and how these motions interact. So pervasive are his contributions that many researchers now refer to the basic quantum mechanical energy expression for polyatomic molecules as the "Watsonian." The results of spectroscopy have many applications in diverse fields of chemistry and physics, notably for atmospheric studies (detection of pollutants, climate change), chemical dynamics and reactions, and astrophysics.

Much of Jim's greatest work was done solo, since as one colleague noted, nobody else could keep up with him! At the same time, he was an outstanding collaborator,

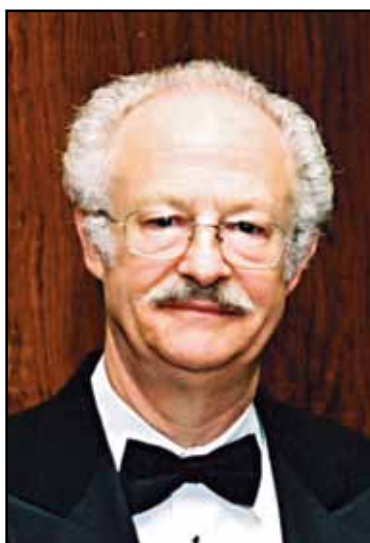


Photo courtesy Gemma Kerr
NRC scientist **Jim Watson** passed away in December. He was a member of this newspaper's Advisory Board, and previously served as NECA treasurer.

widely sought by other scientists, especially experimentalists looking for a theory to fit their data. When discussing a difficult new problem with Jim, it often happened that he had already thought deeply about it, and may even have had a solution sitting unpublished in his filing cabinet.

Jim's scientific contributions were widely recog-

nized. He received the Medal for Theoretical Chemistry and Spectroscopy of the UK Chemical Society (1974), the Earle K. Plyler Prize of the American Physical Society (1986), the Ioannes Marcus Marci Medal of the Spectroscopic Society of the Czech and Slovak Republics (1996), and the E. Bright Wilson Award of the American Chemical Society (2004). He was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada (1990), receiving their Henry Marshall Tory Medal in 1999. Most notably, in 1987 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of London, one of the world's oldest and most prestigious scientific associations.

In both his professional and personal life, Jim was uncompromisingly honest and had a keen sense of justice. But he was also a warm and convivial human being. A music lover since early childhood, he was a subscriber to concert series at the National Arts Centre with Gemma for many years, and also enjoyed attending summer music festivals. He and Gemma trav-

elled widely, with trips often structured around scientific conferences at which Jim spoke. At home he enjoyed cooking, especially Indian cuisine, and he and Gemma hosted a number of memorable parties at their cottage and on their back patio. He and Gemma were also longtime members of a local wine tasting group which offered interesting opportunities for sampling wines from both well-known and unexpected locations.

When one talked to Jim, he was thoughtful and modest, but what people remember most about him is his dry wit and quiet sense of humour.

Bob McKellar was a long-time colleague of Jim's and a friend of both Jim and his wife Gemma.

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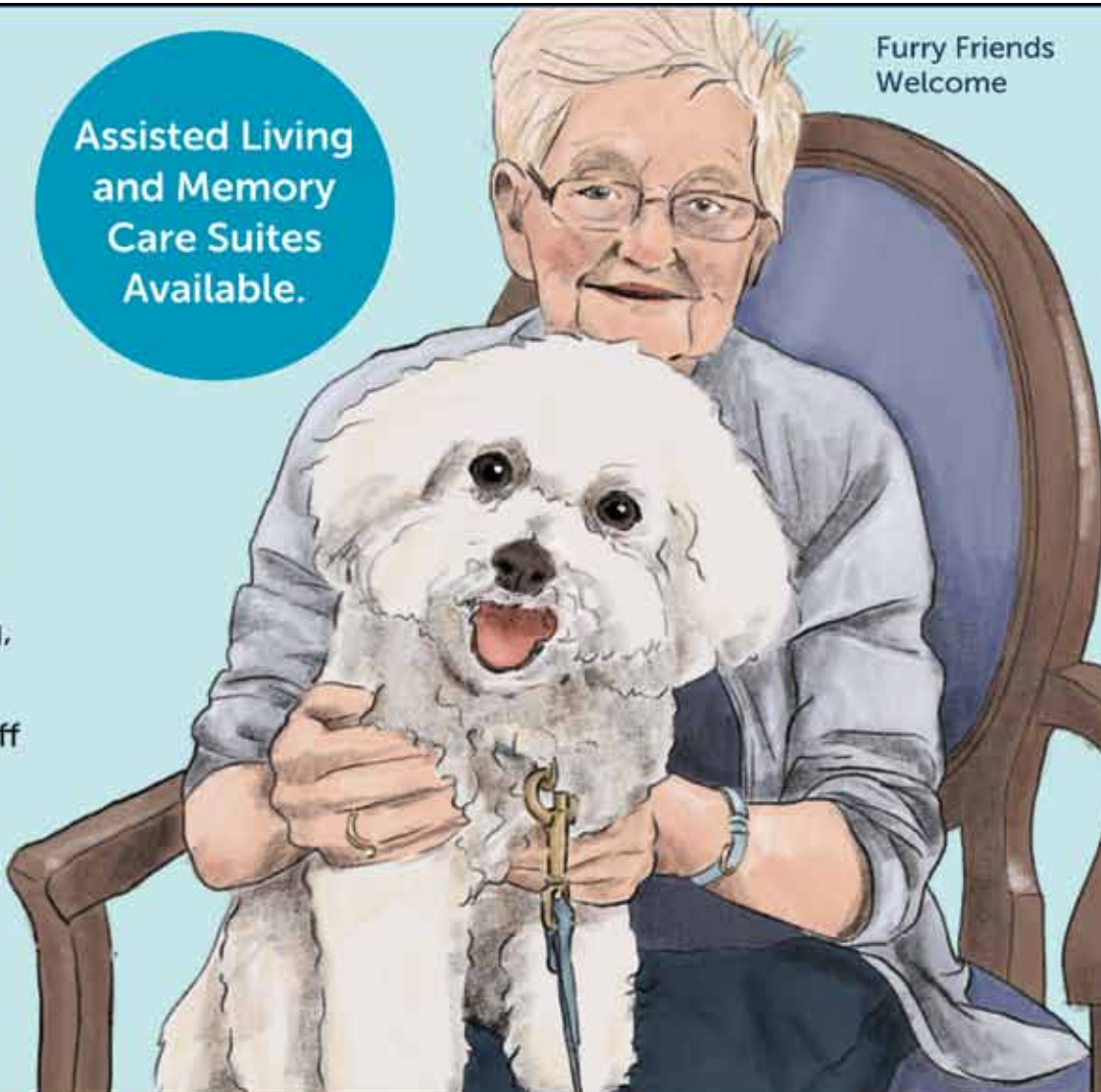
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EVENTS CALENDAR

Send event listing details to newednews@hotmail.com Visit newedinburgh.ca/events for the most up-to-date listings.

FEBRUARY

Feb. 7 – Afrotechture Black History Month events at afrotechture.com. Free. Afrotechture hosts two online events in celebration of Black History Month. At 10 a.m., budding artisans are invited to engage with some of Ottawa's leading Black makers and learn about their journey, inspiration, challenges, accomplishments and learnings in an interactive panel session. Then at 2 p.m., doll collector Chakou Noubactep will host the "African Princess Diaries," a fun and engaging way to teach young children born in the African Diaspora about the cultures and traditions of the Motherland. Register online.

Feb. 9 – CCC meeting at 7:30–9 p.m. Online. The Crichton Community Council holds its monthly board meeting. Please contact CrichtonCommunityCouncil@gmail.com for the meeting link.

Feb. 9 – Funeral planning info session at 11 a.m. fco-cfo.coop. Free. Retired social worker and Funeral Cooperative of Ottawa vice-president Beverlee McIntosh will host an hour-long presentation on "Consumer Information on Funeral Planning in Ontario."

Planning in Ontario."

Feb. 16 – NECA Board Meeting at 7:30 p.m. newedinburgh.ca. The New Edinburgh Community Alliance will hold its monthly board meeting virtually. All New Edinburgh residents are welcome to attend. Contact President Cindy Parkanyi for details: newedinburgh@outlook.com.

Feb. 16 – Heritage Day in Ottawa 11:30 a.m. capital-heritage.ca. Capital Heritage Connection hosts Heritage Day in Ottawa. This year's theme is "Resiliency: relying on our Heritage foundations to hold strong and help us pivot in a changing present for the well-being of our future generations." Register to take part in the online ceremony and the heritage-themed trivia event.

Feb. 17 – Funeral planning info session at 1 p.m. fco-cfo.coop. Free. Retired social worker and Funeral Cooperative of Ottawa vice-president Beverlee McIntosh will host an hour-long presentation on "Consumer Information on Funeral Planning in Ontario."

Feb. 22 – Traffic and Safety Committee meeting at 7 p.m. Online. Anyone interested in attending the New Edinburgh Community Alliance's

Traffic and Safety committee meeting should contact marc.dorgeville@utoronto.ca for details.

Feb. 24 – Bytown Museum Lecture 7p.m. bytownmuseum.com. The Bytown Museum presents "Beyond Bytown," a series of discussions with various members of our local community. Today's online lecture is on "History of Ottawa's Jewish Community," featuring Teigan Goldsmith and Mareike Friedrich. Register online.

MARCH

March 4 – Bytown Museum Lecture 3 p.m. bytownmuseum.com. The Bytown Museum presents "Beyond Bytown," a series of discussions with various members of our local community. Today's online lecture is a "Women in Museums Roundtable," moderated by the museum's executive director Robin Etherington. Register online.

March 9 – CCC meeting at 7:30–9 p.m. Online. The Crichton Community Council holds its monthly board meeting. Please contact CrichtonCommunityCouncil@gmail.com for the meeting link.

March 16 – NECA Board

Meeting at 7:30 p.m. newedinburgh.ca. The New Edinburgh Community Alliance will hold its monthly board meeting virtually. All New Edinburgh residents are welcome to attend. Contact President Cindy Parkanyi for details: newedinburgh@outlook.com

March 18 – Funeral planning info session at 3 p.m. fco-cfo.coop. Free. Retired social worker and Funeral Cooperative of Ottawa vice-president Beverlee McIntosh will host an hour-long presentation on "Consumer Information on Funeral Planning in Ontario."

March 22 – Traffic and Safety Committee meeting at 7 p.m. Online. Anyone interested in attending the New Edinburgh Community Alliance's Traffic and Safety committee meeting should contact marc.dorgeville@utoronto.ca for details.

March 24 – Bytown Museum Lecture 7 p.m. bytownmuseum.com. The Bytown Museum present "Beyond Bytown," a series of discussions with various members of our local community. Today's online lecture is on the "History of Ottawa's Black Community." Speaker to be announced. Register online.

APRIL

April 13 – CCC meeting at 7:30–9 p.m. Online. The Crichton Community Council holds its monthly board meeting. Please contact CrichtonCommunityCouncil@gmail.com for the meeting link.

April 20 – NECA Board Meeting at 7:30 p.m. newedinburgh.ca. The New Edinburgh Community Alliance will hold its monthly board meeting virtually. All New Edinburgh residents are welcome to attend. Contact President Cindy Parkanyi for details: newedinburgh@outlook.com.

April 22 – Bytown Museum Lecture 7p.m. bytownmuseum.com. The Bytown Museum presents "Beyond Bytown," a series of discussions with various members of our local community. Today's online lecture is on "Syrian Refugees in Canada." Speaker to be announced. Register online.

April 27 – Traffic and Safety Committee meeting at 7 p.m. Online. Anyone interested in attending the New Edinburgh Community Alliance's Traffic and Safety committee meeting should contact marc.dorgeville@utoronto.ca for details.

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Congratulations



Photo courtesy Richard Belliveau

Long-time New Edinburgh resident **Richard Belliveau** is proud to tell everyone that his niece, **Sue Belliveau**, has made good use of time during the COVID-19 restrictions to write and publish a children's book lauding the efficacy of washing frequently with soap. The book, called *Scrub: How a Simple Soap Saved the Day*, is about an ordinary but hardworking,

karate-chopping bar of soap who fights hard to defeat the evil Corona. Sue was interviewed on CTV Ottawa, and the book is available in both English and French at Books on Beechwood and at Coin du Livre. You can also order directly from the author: visit captuscreations.ca.

Congratulations to **Rebecca Sacks**, daughter of **Joan Monahan** and **David Sacks** of Thomas Street, on her first novel: *City of a Thousand Gates*. Set in modern Jerusalem, the tale follows several characters, Palestinians and Jews, striving to get on with their lives amid a climate of sectarian hatreds and one-sided power. This soon-to-be published book has already received a positive review in the L.A. Times. A recent Publishers Weekly feature refers to Rebecca as a "young writer to watch". Rebecca graduated from Colonel By Secondary School in 2004 and spent three years in Israel (2014-2016). Her novel will be published here by HarperCollins Canada. Watch for it!

Condolences

We send sincere condolences

to the family and friends of **Anita Szlazak**, who died at her MacKay Street home on Jan. 5, 2021. Anita began her long career in the federal public service as a Foreign Service Officer in the Department of External Affairs. She went on to work in a variety of senior public service roles, and was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Medal for her contributions to the Public Service of Canada. Following her retirement, she became the first Canadian elected Commissioner on the United Nations International Civil Service Commission. Family would appreciate donations to the Ottawa Regional Cancer Centre: ottawacancer.ca.

Wanted

Lorna Bernbaum, OCT and continual learner is training to become a barber. She is offering free haircuts, supervised by a professional barber. During the COVID lockdown, cuts will take place either on her back porch or yours. Small heads needed. Contact Lorna at l_bernbaum@icloud.com.

Langevin Avenue to be renamed Commanda Way

On Jan. 27, City Council approved the renaming of a street off Beechwood Avenue to honour a respected Algonquin elder. Thanks to a motion by Councillor **Rawlson King** and over two years of consultation, **Langevin Avenue** will soon be known as **Commanda Way**. The late **William Commanda** (1913-2011), from the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg reserve near Maniwaki, Que., was a respected elder, Indigenous rights advocate, and officer of the Order of Canada. According to the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN), Langevin Avenue is named after **Hector-Louis Langevin** (1826-1906), a father of confederation and an architect of the residential school system, which was a key part of the cultural genocide against First Nations peoples. The street's new name is part of the City's reconciliation strategy, a move that Commanda's granddaughter **Claudette Commanda** welcomed: "[Mayor **Jim Watson**] made it a point that it

was important to build reconciliation with Algonquin people because the city of Ottawa is on Algonquin land," she told APTN. This isn't the first time Commanda's name has been honoured, nor is it the first time Langevin's has been removed. William Commanda Hall (52 University Priv.) is

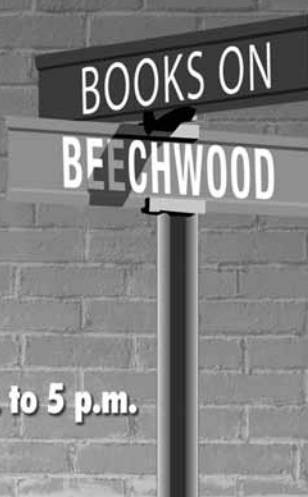
home to uOttawa's Institute of Indigenous Research and Studies. Meanwhile, in 2017, Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** dropped the name "Langevin Block" from the Prime Minister's Office block on the corner of Wellington and Elgin Streets.

—Christina Leadlay

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Snowmen of the Burg

Lockdown-weary residents eagerly embraced the 21 cm of snow Ottawa received on Jan. 16, creating all manner of snowmen, families and creatures across the city. Here is a collection of some of the frosty creations in New Edinburgh. Thanks to everyone for your submissions!



A team of snowmen greet neighbours on the corner of Stanley and Union Streets.



William M. and family of Maple Lane created a giant snow gnome.



Samuel's snowman on River Lane.



Marc D'Orgeville and family created a snowman to direct traffic at Crichton and Union Streets. It slowed down cars considerably! Unfortunately, a City of Ottawa supervisor and snow plow plowed it down... with a cheeky smile.



Evelyn Binkley with the snowman she made with help from her grandmother **Christine Cram**.



Keefer Street's **Chloe May** proudly displays her snowman.



Mother Nature transformed **Sean Flynn's** faux Canada geese into snow geese.



Mackay Street's **Nima and Ara** proudly display their snowmen.



A snow bird appeared at **Hope and Manon's** front door on Crichton Street.



Nancy Meyer's sons, **Robert** and **Paul Gaudreault**, built this snowper-son at 25 Noel St.



Crichton Street's **Lars and Ian** contributed this wintry postcard while currently living in Vilnius, Lithuania.