

FEBRUARY 2026

# NEW EDINBURGH NEWS

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Photo by Philippe Marchand

Kids in the 'hood enjoying a game of hockey thanks to the CCC volunteers who manage the ice rink.

## NCC CEO says there is no timeline yet for Sussex Blocks project

By Sarah Anson-Cartwright

The National Capital Commission (NCC) has many current projects, but the Sussex Blocks is not one of them at this time, as explained during a meeting with Tobi Nussbaum, CEO of the NCC. The meeting last month with board members of the New Edinburgh Community Alliance (NECA) was held at NECA's request.

The NCC does not yet have a timeline for the proposal to develop the three blocks along Sussex Drive from Stanley Ave. to MacKay St..

The NCC has many land-holdings where it can build

across the Capital. In the next year or two, the organization may know more regarding plans for the Sussex Blocks proposal.

The CEO was joined at the meeting by two NCC colleagues, Véronique de Passillé and Émilie Girard-Ruel; NECA was represented by president Ray Boomgaardt and board members Sarah Anson-Cartwright, Kostyantyn Frolov, and Karen Squires.

At the opening of the meeting, NECA's Boomgaardt mentioned the long history of co-operation between the NCC and NECA. He closed the meeting by presenting

Nussbaum with a copy (purchased by NECA) of *The Villagers – A History of the People and Life of New Edinburgh*, by Janet Uren. The heritage and other special features of the location were noted by board members through the discussion.

### Procurement process has not yet been decided

NECA board members asked the NCC to commit to community engagement before moving to the request for proposal (RFP) stage.

NCC officials clarified that they do not yet have a procurement process in mind for the

project.

NCC follows a good neighbour approach with municipalities and any successful applicant to develop the project would go through a City review process, though NCC officials could not say categorically that would happen.

NCC officials also suggested that the process may include the City's pre-consultation phase, whereby certain community association members (having signed non-disclosure agreements) would be consulted on the project before it moves to public consultation. (Note that this pre-consultation phase is available currently for a few

members of NECA's Heritage and Development Committee.)

The fact that about one-third of the Sussex Blocks site is on a flood plain is top of mind for NCC officials. They would need to study and address it as part of a future development.

Nussbaum referred to last year's changes in the Core Area Plan (whereby the zoning for Sussex Blocks changed from embassies to mixed commercial and residential) as akin to municipal rezoning. He added that the NCC prefers to be flexible on the future of

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## Meet the first editor of the *New Edinburgh News*

By Eleanor Dunn

Fifty years ago, in 1976, I was 38 years old, and teaching first-year Journalism students in the Media Studies program at Algonquin College. I'd had a lot of experience in the profession, having worked in newspaper, radio, and television newsrooms.

I was born in Halifax, but I grew up in the 'Burgh. My dad was one of Liberal cabinet minister C.D. Howe's "bright boys," lured away from life as a professor of economics at Dalhousie University to take up a wartime position in Ottawa with the Ministry of Munitions and Supply. We returned to Halifax at the end of the war, but we didn't stay. Dad was brought back to Ottawa, this time with the Ministry of Reconstruction and Supply. We were in Ottawa

permanently as he went on to other senior positions with the government.

My parents bought the house at 209 MacKay St., and I went to Crichton School from kindergarten to grade six; to York for grades seven and eight; then to Lisgar up to grade 13; and then to the Journalism program at Carleton, which I completed in 1958. In August that year, I married the Ottawa Citizen's night police reporter.

We started a family immediately, and scraped up enough money for the down payment of a 950 square-foot "starter home" in Hawthorne Meadows, one of the new suburbs in the southeast corner of the city. During this period, I became influenced by the writings of Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem and decided

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## The perils of being a pedestrian

By Belinda Dodson

One of the best things about living in New Edinburgh is being able to be a pedestrian, whether for leisure and light exercise, or running errands in the neighbourhood. My husband and I go for a walk each day when he gets home from work, varying our route according to weather and whim. A particular favourite is to walk along MacKay and Sussex to Rideau Falls, past the NRC and GAC buildings, then across the Minto Bridges and back home along Union St.

We were heading out on this route at around 5:30 pm on Nov. 26. It was already dark, and also rainy. We walked towards MacKay, got to the three-way stop at the intersection, and checked for cars before turning left to head towards Sussex. As we reached about halfway across the intersection, a car pulled up to our right and another

to our left, both on MacKay, stopping at the respective stop signs. The driver of the car to our right, which had got there slightly before the other car, proceeded to execute a sharp left turn onto Union – seemingly oblivious to the possibility that there might be pedestrians walking across the intersection. She ploughed straight into us at some speed. My husband suffered no more than a crushed umbrella, but I was half a pace ahead with my right leg raised to take a step. I took the full impact of the car, hit by the front left bumper, and fell to the ground.

Fortunately, the driver stopped rather than driving away. She and a kind passer-by helped me up, as I was unable to stand on what turned out to be a broken leg. My husband dashed home to get his phone and call 911. I was in extreme pain and my instinctive, adrenaline-fuelled reaction

was some colourful language directed at the driver. Her response? "Well, I'm rather shaken up, too." Cue more sailor-like cursing from me.

The fire truck arrived within minutes, followed by a police car and an ambulance. The police questioned me and some of the witnesses, concluding that there was absolutely no doubt that the driver was entirely at fault. After talking to the police officer about what had happened and being checked over by a paramedic, I was soon on my way to the emergency at Montfort Hospital. I spent over 12 hours in an uncomfortable chair, thankfully slightly numbed by shock and a generous dose of pain medication. They took X-rays and I eventually saw a doctor at around 7 am the following morning. The X-ray showed a fracture of the tibial

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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, Friends of the Park; 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 pm (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 [info@newedinburgh.ca](mailto:info@newedinburgh.ca).

Our next meetings will take place on **Tuesday, February 17, 7 pm** and **Tuesday, March 17, 7 pm**. Meetings are held in person at the New Edinburgh Park Fieldhouse (203 Stanley Ave) and may be hybrid at times so please contact [info@newedinburgh.ca](mailto:info@newedinburgh.ca) for details.

**Your NECA Representatives 2025-2026**

**Contact anyone below through [info@newedinburgh.ca](mailto:info@newedinburgh.ca)**

Sarah Anson-Cartwright

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Ray Boomgaardt	President
Sean Flynn	Co-Treasurer
Kostyantyn Frolov	
Katherine Lloyd	Friends of the Park
Karen Squires	Friends of the Park
Gail McEachern	Heritage & Development
Jason Tavoularis	Traffic & Safety
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Chris Straka	President, CCC
Sharon Nyangweso	Editor, <i>New Edinburgh News</i> <a href="mailto:sharon@newedinburgh.ca">sharon@newedinburgh.ca</a>

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# NECA President's Report



**Ray Boomgaardt**  
**NECA President**

As you will be reading elsewhere, several NECA Board members, including myself, met with the NCC in early January to discuss the Sussex Blocks. In introducing ourselves, I told CEO Tobi Nussbaum and his colleagues that the purpose of NECA is to maintain and build a strong community in New Edinburgh, and that our vision for our community is based on Jane Jacobs' view of what makes a livable city: that it prioritizes making its streets and public spaces places where people can meet and mingle.

Mr. Nussbaum responded that the NCC thinking in

respect of the Sussex Blocks was based on a similar vision: to bring more people into New Edinburgh by providing for the Blocks to be developed as a residential area with shops and places for people to meet and mingle. He thought that rezoning the blocks to residential and commercial would permit a development more in keeping with New Edinburgh than a series of walled Embassy compounds. He said there had been a lively internal debate over whether to commission renderings of what a residential development of the Blocks might look like. He and his staff were somewhat

nonplussed with the response: they had thought that the renderings showed that a development could be designed that would be consistent with New Edinburgh's heritage buildings, and its existing residential character.

So, why am I telling you this story?

The Sussex Blocks were largely flattened by the NCC in the 1950s, in pursuit of a "green city" agenda, which, by the time it was implemented, was increasingly seen as being anti-urban. But how should the NCC deal with the Blocks now? The New Edinburgh community clearly wanted a say, and was not happy with many aspects of the NCC's renderings. Somehow the NCC, and the New Edinburgh community have come to differing assessments of how to realize their common vision. Will we do better in our next round of engagement?

## Spare our air: New idling regulations for Ottawa

As of Jan. 1, a new Idling Control By-law for Ottawa comes into force

Be idle aware! Help reduce unnecessary idling and promote clean air by following the City of Ottawa's new

regulations. Idling is only permitted for a maximum of 10 minutes in temperatures above 27 Celsius or under 0 Celsius, and a maximum of 3 minutes for all other

temperatures.

Some exemptions apply, visit the Idling Control By-law website for more information. Report excessive idling by calling 3-1-1.

## Protégeons notre air : Nouvelle réglementation relative aux moteurs qui tournent au ralenti

Le 1er janvier, le nouveau Règlement sur la marche au ralenti entrera en vigueur à Ottawa

Pensez à couper votre moteur! Aidez-nous à protéger notre air et à éviter que les véhicules ne tournent au ralenti inutilement en respectant la nouvelle réglementation de

la Ville d'Ottawa. La marche au ralenti n'est autorisée que 10 minutes au maximum lorsque la température est supérieure à 27 °C ou inférieure à 0 °C, et trois minutes au maximum en dehors de ces températures.

Temps maximal pendant lequel on peut laisser tourner

son moteur au ralenti, en fonction des températures :

Certaines exemptions peuvent s'appliquer; consultez le règlement sur la marche au ralenti pour en savoir plus. Signalez la marche au ralenti excessive au 3-1-1.



Photo courtesy City of Ottawa



# Letter from the Managing Editor



**Sharon Nyangweso**  
Managing Editor

February is a month that asks us to hold many things at once. There is celebration, even in winter: Winterlude animating the canal and the riverbanks, Black History Month offering moments of learning and recognition, Valentine’s Day reminding us (sometimes quietly, sometimes awkwardly) that care and connection still matter. There is also the weight of a world that feels, for many, confusing and unsteady. Global events, national politics, and local decisions seem to move faster than our ability to fully process them, let alone respond with certainty.

In moments like this, neighbourhoods matter.

This issue of the *New Edinburgh News* continues a conversation that has been unfolding in our pages over

the past several months about proposed development along Sussex Drive. What feels different in this edition is not the topic itself, but the texture of the discussion. Sarah Anson-Cartwright’s reporting on NECA’s meeting with the NCC offers readers a clearer view into process and dialogue, while letters to the editor responding to my December op-ed bring forward new voices, questions, and perspectives. Together, they reflect something essential about this community: a willingness to engage, to disagree thoughtfully, and to keep talking.

Elsewhere in the paper, there are signs of change that feel energizing rather than unsettling. Beechwood continues to evolve, with new businesses,

new restaurants, and proposals that point to a street still very much alive and becoming. Councillor King’s update speaks to this moment of transition, and there is reason for optimism about what these changes might bring to the neighbourhood.

Looking ahead, it’s hard not to notice the milestones on the horizon. In 2026, Ottawa will mark 200 years since its founding, and the *New Edinburgh News* will mark 50 years of telling neighbourhood stories. Anniversaries like these invite reflection, not only on what has endured, but on how communities adapt, argue, care, and renew themselves over time.

If there is a quiet theme running through this February issue, it is that even in uncertain times, the work of paying attention to where we live, to its history, its debates, its small joys, and its shared responsibilities remains both grounding and necessary.

Thank you, as always, for reading, contributing, and being part of this ongoing conversation.

# Letter from the Co-Editor



**Karen Squires**  
Co-Editor

As we lead into our 50th anniversary of *New Edinburgh News*, we really have a lot to be thankful for in our little village, designated as a heritage district. Having just read Janet Uren’s book *The Villagers: History of the People and Life in New Edinburgh*, I’ve learned about many trail blazers before us who protected and safe guarded our natural environment as well as our built heritage. In fact the reason *NEN* exists today was to communicate information from community organizers and City officials around the proposed Vanier Parkway Extension. Imagine what might have happened if our community did not work together (for thirty years), starting with the formation in

1970 of NECA, our community association, and then the paper in 1976, to ensure our views were heard. To start, we would not have had this extensive green park today along the river or the Fieldhouse hosting many events. We would not have had a skating rink or a huge field to play sports and attend events. We would not have had tennis courts or places for people to work out or to walk their dogs. We may not have met some of the people we know today so for this, I’m extremely grateful.

We continue to work with both the City and the NCC on such initiatives as planting more trees in the park, to provide a canopy and allow more people to be outside in hot weather comfortably. We

will continue to share more news on upcoming topics in the ‘hood such as proposed changes to our main street, Beechwood Ave., which I’m sure businesses and residents alike will be interested to read about in this edition.

Finally I’ll add that as a community, we have an abundance of talented people who make time to share their views, time and expertise. We have many talented writers who continue to provide great content on emerging topics which affect our lives and our communities. And leading into our big anniversary, we have increased our distribution by over 40%, reaching further into Lindenlea, Rockcliffe and Vanier. Many thanks to our advertisers who continue to support our paper and to the long list of volunteers who ensure our paper gets into the hands of our readers. We will continue to keep you informed and we look forward to hearing from you as well. Best wishes, see you in the ‘hood and here’s to another 50 years of collaboration!

## NEW EDINBURGH NEWS

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**newedinburgh.ca**

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# Letters to the Editors

Congratulations on a stellar December 2025 issue of *New Edinburgh News*. This edition was replete with interesting, relevant content. I particularly liked the rich variety of articles, from carless living, through squirrels, coyotes and tourism sustainability, to books and by-laws. Also, much discussion of the proposed Sussex apartments.

I was especially interested to read Sharon Nyangweso's op ed article, for I believe strongly that good community development involves careful consideration, even if aspects of proposed changes have drawbacks. It was courageous of Sharon to include this piece, knowing many in the village would not agree with her conclusion that the NCC Sussex residential development should be built, for that would increase population density which, in turn, would make Beechwood into a thriving main street.

Like all good provocative articles, this one elicits more questions. Might there be other reasons beyond population density for the state of commerce along Beechwood? Beechwood seems to have

been a successful commercial strip before the 2011 fire. What has changed? In fact, the population density has increased considerably as three large apartment buildings have opened. Perhaps the cost: Sharon acknowledges this is high. The size of spaces and the type of business requested are determining restraints? Perhaps the reality is that the area for commerce has been extended a number of blocks? The NCC Sussex proposal will not change these. Process also needs to be considered. We can only advise and recommend if we have accurate, timely information on which to do so. New Edinburgh residents remember we were not consulted on the Combined Sewage Storage Tunnel in Stanley Park. May the two-way communication be much better this time around.

—Ann Davis (Resident of New Edinburgh)

Dear Editors:

I read with interest the account of an owl attack in the December *NEN*. I had a similar experience this fall near the Ottawa New Edinburgh Club during a bike ride. My helmet

was subject to an extended buffeting as if a tree limb had dropped onto it and rebounded numerous times. When I stopped my bike and turned to look back, a large owl (barred, I believe) settled in a tree by the path, eyes focused on yours truly. I watched for a few seconds but started to wonder if it was contemplating a second round. Fortunately, it rose gracefully and flew in the direction of the Rockeries, presumably in search of more attractive prey.

—Roger Lewis (former 'Burgh resident and frequent visitor)

Dear Editors:

Thank you for publishing Sharon Nyangweso's interesting perspective on the proposed NCC residential development on Sussex Road in your December edition. It is suggestive of yet another all-too-common "not in my backyard" reaction. If so, let us ensure that this reaction does not get in the way of a constructive debate.

—Paul Barrette

Dear Editors:

I'm writing in response to Sharon Nyangweso's op-ed piece in the last edition of the *NEN*. As a member of the "Friends of Sussex Drive" group of New Edinburgh residents, I'd like to address some misunderstandings about our issues with the proposed Sussex Blocks development

by focusing on the facts.

Ms. Nyangweso makes a number of valid points regarding the life of New Edinburgh and Beechwood, and the potential future. We share the same interests. But when it became clear the NCC was proposing this development primarily because, they said, they "need the money," residents became very concerned about the integrity of the project.

We're anxious to see the NCC do its due diligence: exactly how many units are proposed; how many of these would be for genuinely affordable housing; whether there have been feasibility studies for building on a flood plain and in an earthquake zone; whether there will be a competition for the design and construction of such a complex; whether traffic and parking studies have been done for an area already experiencing serious congestion problems; what about security for the Prime Minister's residence, the Governor General's residence and the various embassies. There has been no transparency on any of these issues, and they're a crucial part of the constructive dialogue that has to take place before this or any other development becomes more than a concept.

And at the same time, we are distressed by what appears to be a total disregard for the ceremonial and historic nature of this section of Sussex Drive. We think it's hard to deny the moral obligation to preserve

what we can of that heritage. The NCC has many, many pieces of vacant land all over the city available for housing, some of it very close to New Edinburgh along the Sir George-Etienne Cartier Parkway.

Twenty years ago, the NCC's mandate was different: at that time, they agreed with the New Edinburgh Community Alliance that the Sussex green spaces should be protected as they were. But times change, and even the Friends of Sussex Drive aren't suggesting these blocks remain eternally empty. We are asking the NCC to consider a more creative and imaginative use for the land so its important history can be respected; to invite residents to share ideas – ideas such as a contemporary sculpture garden, or a museum of the neighbourhood's history, as detailed in Janet Uren's excellent new chronicle about New Edinburgh (*The Villagers*).

A housing development on the scale described and illustrated by the NCC could increase the population of New Edinburgh by as much as 25 per cent in one swoop. And all of that squeezed into three small blocks – about 5 per cent of the total area. The neighbourhood hasn't been designed for that sort of density, to fit that many people in that small a space. The parkland along our border with Sussex Drive is suited to the sort of use that has already been made of the other blocks of Sussex – to public or diplomatic ceremonial use. It is not capable of meeting the needs of a large new residential population.

At the time of writing, a total of 1,468 concerned citizens have signed an online petition in opposition to the NCC's plans for apartment buildings on the Sussex Blocks, and more people are adding their names every day. This is a measure of the widespread and deeply felt public opposition to this misguided plan. We call on the NCC to set it aside and, instead, propose imaginative options that would serve both the public good and the unique character of the national capital.

—Dilshad Macklem

Letter to the Editor

Quite apart from the ideological cant on colonialism that Canadians have grown weary



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of in the last ten years (“the impulse to protect land from people rather than for people has deep colonial roots”) and that would take us too far off topic, there are a number of statements contained in the Managing Editor’s op ed on “Sussex, Beechwood and Who Gets to Belong” that call for a response.

In the first place, the Editor claims that what has retarded development along Beechwood is insufficient population density. But I would argue that the real reason Beechwood “doesn’t get enough foot traffic” is that City Council beginning in the 1980s has allowed nine-storey high-rises to be dumped all along the street – buildings that are monstrous or all out of proportion to the width of Beechwood and to the modest family houses that can be found just behind Beechwood on both sides of the street. Unpleasant wind tunnels are just one of the negative environmental impacts of buildings that have no place on what everyone agrees should be a village Main Street.

But, according to the Editor, not only have residents been wrong to resist these developments, their motives for doing so are impugned: it is out of a fear of change – physical, psychological, and social change – that its residents want to see New Edinburgh “remain largely frozen in time.” This ignores the many tasteful additions and infill that has occurred over the

years and perhaps even more importantly the recent return of young families to the neighbourhood.

The Editor then goes on to propose for our consideration the ridiculous concept of “aesthetic moralism.” It is one thing to discuss aesthetic matters: for example, at what point does a proposed new development no longer fit in with an existing streetscape; but this has nothing to do with morality or an individual’s intentions in acting, a difficult exercise to discern in the simplest of circumstances and one that should be left to judges hearing criminal cases. What makes the Editor’s assertion even more ridiculous is that she defines morality with “social need.” The needs of a particular society is an ethical question that can and should be debated in terms of policy responses at one or other of our three levels of government here in Canada, not conflated into the black hole of “aesthetic moralism.”

If people from all over the world flock to European cities, it is precisely because they have been more successful than cities elsewhere at preserving their historical core (which is not the same as “freezing development to preserve an imagined past”), while allowing for the revitalization of once industrial sites. Successful cities are always an agglomeration of villages, each with their own distinct character, not one built-up

blob trying to address all of society’s needs.

The Editor then goes on to attack the concept of “green space.” To her, the stretch of Sussex in question is nothing but “a vacant piece of land – an empty plot that contributes little to the environment or to daily life.” One would think that in 2026 every bit of green grass with trees in the city would be treasured and especially as relief from the embassy mausoleums that the NCC has allowed to deaden Sussex. Far from being “a vacant piece of land,” that green space also serves as the front door and vestibule through which one gains access to the Village. It sets the tone and stance of what is to be found inside the Village.

Finally, not until we have a City Council and staff capable of taming real estate developers and the financial

institutions backing them – instead of capitulating before them – will we ever get “a lively Beechwood and a fairer Ottawa.” Unfortunately, their experience over the last couple of decades has led many city residents to doubt whether their Councillors are up to the task.

–Paul Benoit

Hi NEN,

My wife and I want to congratulate you on your op ed in the latest edition of the NEN. Your article makes a lot of sense and we agree with most of what you say. We commend you for the courage it took to publish this, given your role as co-editor of the paper and the fact that, as you write: “The NCC’s Sussex proposal has become a flashpoint.”

From the signage we see in the neighbourhood, the overwhelming opinion seems to

be to oppose the proposal outright, even though nothing concrete has actually been proposed. You must be receiving a lot of critical messages about the article, so my wife and I wanted to ensure that you heard from people who actually agree with you.

Thank you and keep up the great work!

–John and Lorie

Hi NEN,

What an absolute delight to have just read your brilliantly written insights on ... beauty loses meaning, when excluding human life...

Thank YOU!


–Scott

Thank you for writing and printing the article about the proposed NCC development on Sussex. There is visible opposition to any project for that big empty space so it

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was nice to read a common-sense approach to the possible proposal. There is a need for housing of all types and there is plenty of green space to go around. I think we all need to realize that communities need to evolve over time, hopefully changing for the better.

I live on Stanley, two blocks down from the empty lots.  
—Kathleen Ford

Congratulations on your op ed in the *NEN* in the December 2025 issue. Calm, considered and correct!  
—Andrew  
John Street

Dear *NEN*,  
As a fairly new resident of this area of Ottawa, I just want to say a heartfelt THANK

YOU for your incredibly poignant and frankly bang-on op ed "Sussex, Beechwood and who gets to belong". You succinctly and correctly mirrored what my husband and I felt seeing all of the "Save Sussex" signs. The negative attitude towards much needed new builds and perceived veto power of who gets to live where is so confusing since many of us in these neighbourhoods enjoy a beautiful place to live. We left our suburban home of 25 years to embrace a more "close neighbourhood feel" and reduce our exposure to NIMBY approaches to housing. We have been welcomed warmly by our new neighbours and love the sense of community here. Why would others be denied that option?

"Aesthetic moralism" is such a fascinating term-so glad to better understand it thanks to your excellent writing. I have read many perspectives on this issue and I struggle to see the negatives of a beautiful new project on an unused lot. More people to support local businesses, participate in social events and add to the diversity of this neighbourhood should be welcomed, not discouraged, in our view. We could put more energy into addressing the needs of our community and forging new relationships. As they say, build a longer table, not a higher wall. Congratulations on an op ed that is a vital piece of this clearly divisive conversation.  
—Mer G



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**March 10**  
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# Budget update includes plans for Beechwood Ave.



**Rawlson King**  
City Councillor, Ward 13

As we welcome a new year, I would like to extend my warm wishes to New Edinburgh residents for a healthy and successful 2026.

The start of a new year also offers an opportunity to recognize the progress we have made together in Ward 13 and to acknowledge the important role residents play in our community. Your involvement in local meetings, consultations, and neighbourhood events continues to inform decisions at City Hall and strengthens our collective work. I am particularly appreciative of the commitment shown by our community organizations, including the New Edinburgh Community Alliance and the Crichton Community Council, whose leadership and volunteer efforts contribute greatly to the vitality of

Rideau-Rockcliffe.

The past year has been a transformative one for our ward, marked by significant investments in infrastructure, parks, housing, health care, and community safety. Major infrastructure projects are underway or planned, including continued progress on the St. Patrick Street Bridge renewal, important facility upgrades at the St. Laurent Complex and the rehabilitation of the Ottawa River storm sewer outfall at John St.. New bicycle parking racks were installed in front of the Union Street Kitchen Café in December, providing permanent year-round parking for patrons. Funding in the 2026 City budget has also been secured for the New Edinburgh Park Fieldhouse to undergo a building condition audit. These are typically scheduled every 10 years to

assess interior and exterior facilities and their immediate surroundings.

Work is also progressing on the Beechwood Ave. Public Realm Plan. An online public engagement initiative will launch this month (February). The project, beginning with a functional design study, will transform Beechwood Ave. into a complete street, enhancing the public realm by integrating transportation improvements, green infrastructure, and placemaking to create a unified and accessible corridor. Areas of consideration include burying hydro, cohesive lighting, street furniture, on-street parking, and bus stop integration.

The project will fit within the existing right-of-way and planned road widenings through future development applications. The functional design study is scheduled for completion in late summer 2026. The City secured \$1.5 million in the 2026 municipal budget to advance the detailed design. Updates will be shared with residents throughout the process.

We have also made meaningful progress on health care access. The new Ottawa Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic at 214

Montreal Rd. opened in 2025 and is now accepting patients. It will serve up to 4,000 residents from Wards 12 and 13, improving access to primary care close to home.

Neighbourhood safety remains a priority. I took part in several safety-focused meetings and tours in 2025, including a tour of Ward 13 with Ottawa Police Chief Eric Stubbs, which included stops at Beechwood Ave. businesses. Safety remains a key priority and I am pleased with the progress the Ottawa Police Service is making with the establishment of a new District Deployment Model. As part of this four-district model, New Edinburgh will be served by the full-service Central District, led by its own Superintendent. This model is designed to bring policing services closer to communities by embedding key roles directly within neighbourhoods. Each District will be supported by integrated teams that include Community Police Officers, Youth Officers, Neighbourhood Resource Teams, Traffic Teams, Crime and Research Analysts, and Community Intake Relationship Specialists. They will focus on prevention, early intervention, and proactive problem-solving tailored to the specific needs of each area, while strengthening relationships with residents.

Emergency response will continue to be delivered through centralized District frontline patrols, ensuring timely and consistent service citywide. Investigative units will also remain centralized, but with enhanced expectations to collaborate closely with District teams to address local concerns such as break and enters, street-level crime, and drug-related activity. This approach balances centralized expertise with neighbourhood-based engagement to improve safety outcomes and

community trust.

Many residents will have recently received my annual report in the mail, which provides an overview of the City of Ottawa's 2026 budget investments for Rideau-Rockcliffe Ward. An electronic version is available at [rideau-rockcliffe.ca/ward\\_reports](http://rideau-rockcliffe.ca/ward_reports).

Strong relationships are central to building healthy, resilient communities. I value the perspectives residents bring, whether we are working through issues or marking shared successes, and I look forward to continuing to work together in the year ahead.

As always, residents are welcome to contact my office at [rideaurockcliffeward@ottawa.ca](mailto:rideaurockcliffeward@ottawa.ca) or 613-580-2483, and are invited to subscribe to my weekly e-newsletter at [rideau-rockcliffe.ca](http://rideau-rockcliffe.ca).

//

Alors que s'amorce cette nouvelle année, j'offre mes meilleurs vœux aux résidentes et résidents de New Edinburgh; je vous souhaite à toutes et tous santé et succès en 2026.

C'est aussi l'occasion de célébrer tout ce que nous avons accompli ensemble dans le quartier 13 et de souligner l'importante contribution des résidentes et résidents à notre communauté. Votre participation aux assemblées locales, aux consultations et aux activités du quartier continue d'orienter les décisions à l'Hôtel de Ville et soutient nos efforts collectifs. Je suis particulièrement reconnaissant du dévouement de nos organismes communautaires, comme l'Alliance communautaire de New Edinburgh et le Conseil communautaire de Crichton, dont le leadership et le travail bénévole contribuent grandement à la vitalité de Rideau-Rockcliffe.

Ce fut une année de profonds changements pour notre quartier, marquée par des investissements majeurs dans les infrastructures, les parcs, le



ARTIST  
Marlene Munroe de Montigny

"Peacock"

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I found inspiration for this painting just around the corner on Rideau Terrace. A beautiful Peacock Christmas decoration graces this entrance.

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logement, les soins de santé et la sécurité. De grands projets d'infrastructures sont prévus ou sont en cours. Citons la réfection du pont de la rue Saint-Patrick qui se poursuit, les grands travaux de rénovation au Complexe St-Laurent, et la remise en état de l'égout de décharge d'eaux pluviales de la rivière des Outaouais de la rue John. En décembre, de nouveaux supports pour vélos ont été installés devant le café Union Street Kitchen, offrant à la clientèle du stationnement à longueur d'année. Du financement a aussi été prévu dans le budget 2026 de la Ville pour la vérification de l'état du pavillon du parc New Edinburgh. Ces vérifications ont habituellement lieu tous les 10 ans; elles consistent à évaluer les installations intérieures et extérieures ainsi que l'environnement immédiat.

Les travaux progressent également dans l'espace public de l'avenue Beechwood. Une initiative d'engagement public en ligne sera lancée ce mois-ci, en février. Ce projet, qui débutera par une étude de conception fonctionnelle, transformera l'avenue Beechwood

en une rue complète. Il enrichira l'espace public en y intégrant des améliorations dans les transports, des infrastructures vertes et des lieux de rencontre, afin de créer un corridor unifié et accessible. Les domaines à considérer incluent l'enfouissement des réseaux électriques, un éclairage cohérent, le mobilier urbain, le stationnement sur rue et l'intégration des arrêts d'autobus.

Le projet s'inscrira dans le cadre des emprises existantes et des élargissements prévus des routes lors de futures demandes de développement. L'étude de conception fonctionnelle devrait être finalisée à la fin de l'été 2026. La Ville a alloué 1,5 million de dollars dans le budget municipal de 2026 pour financer la conception détaillée. Des mises à jour seront partagées avec les résidents tout au long du processus.

Enfin, notons les belles avancées dans l'accès aux soins de santé. La nouvelle Clinique dirigée par du personnel infirmier praticien d'Ottawa, située au 214, chemin de Montréal, a ouvert

ses portes en 2025 et accepte maintenant des patients. À terme, elle pourra accueillir 4 000 résidentes et résidents des quartiers 12 et 13. Voilà une belle amélioration de l'accès aux soins primaires près de chez nous.

En matière de sécurité dans le quartier, la question demeure une priorité. J'ai participé en 2025 à plusieurs rencontres et visites axées sur la sécurité, dont une tournée du quartier 13 avec le chef du Service de police d'Ottawa Eric Stubbs, pendant laquelle nous nous sommes arrêtés dans quelques entreprises de l'avenue Beechwood. La sécurité étant une grande priorité, je suis heureux des progrès accomplis par le Service de police d'Ottawa, avec la mise en place de son nouveau modèle de déploiement par district. Selon ce modèle à quatre districts, New Edinburgh fera partie du district du Centre, un district à services complets qui aura son propre surintendant. Ce modèle rapprochera les services policiers de la communauté, grâce à des équipes directement intégrées dans chaque district : agentes et

agents de police communautaire, agentes et agents de l'Unité de la jeunesse communautaire, équipes de ressources de quartier, équipes de circulation, analystes des renseignements sur le crime et de recherche, et spécialistes des relations avec la communauté. Tous se concentreront sur la prévention, l'intervention précoce et la résolution de problèmes proactive, d'après les besoins de chaque secteur, tout en renforçant les relations avec les résidentes et les résidents.

Les interventions d'urgence demeureront centralisées : elles seront confiées à des patrouilles de district de première ligne afin d'assurer un service rapide et uniforme dans toute la ville. Les unités d'enquête demeureront elles aussi centralisées, mais devront collaborer étroitement avec les équipes des districts pour travailler sur des problématiques locales comme les introductions par effraction, les crimes de rue et les infractions liées aux drogues. Il s'agit ici d'équilibrer expertise centralisée et travail localisé pour améliorer la sécurité et

la confiance du public.

Nombre d'entre vous ont peut-être déjà reçu par la poste mon rapport annuel, qui présente un aperçu des investissements prévus par le budget municipal de 2026 dans le quartier Rideau-Rockcliffe. Vous pouvez aussi consulter la version électronique au [fr.rideau-rockcliffe.ca/rapports](http://fr.rideau-rockcliffe.ca/rapports).

Il est essentiel d'entretenir des relations fortes pour bâtir des communautés résilientes et en santé. Les différents points de vue des résidentes et résidents sont importants pour moi, que ce soit pour travailler sur des enjeux ou pour célébrer nos succès. J'ai hâte de continuer à travailler avec vous cette année.

Comme toujours, n'hésitez pas à communiquer avec mon bureau par courriel à l'adresse [rideaurockcliffeward@ottawa.ca](mailto:rideaurockcliffeward@ottawa.ca), ou par téléphone au 613-580-2483. Je vous invite aussi à vous abonner à mon bulletin électronique hebdomadaire, au [rideau-rockcliffe.ca](http://rideau-rockcliffe.ca).

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# Beechwood Metro leads Ontario stores in food bank support

By Jane Heintzman

It seems safe to say that no household in Ottawa is untouched by – let alone oblivious to – the high and rising price of food. This is a particularly sad state of things considering we are living in a time of food abundance, with no serious supply shortages to drive up prices. In this context, the food bank situation in our city has become critical, and the statistics are sobering:

Demand for Ottawa Food Bank (OFB) resources is at record levels, with over 588,000 visits to the OFB network in 2024: a doubling of usage since 2019.

Twenty-five per cent of households in Ottawa are now food insecure.

Food bank usage by seniors is up a shocking 90 per cent since 2019, with significant increases among newcomers, two-parent families and working individuals.

Because the OFB receives only minimal government support (1.4 per cent from the City), its resources are

stretched thin: in 2025, it was obliged to make “heart-breaking” cuts of up to 25 per cent in its food shipments to its 98 partner agencies.

The sources of the crisis are complex, but relate largely to stagnant wages; inadequate social supports; shortages of affordable housing and insufficient resources for newcomers – all in a context of rising inflation.

During the holiday season, the pressures on families can become especially acute. The team at Beechwood Metro is very much aware that many are struggling, and has stepped up with programs to reinforce its ongoing partnership with the Ottawa Food Bank.

Metro Store Manager Nate Huntjens is happy to report that his store’s special Christmas Out of Reach Fundraiser raised a total of \$22,803. This contribution followed on the heels of a similar fundraiser at Thanksgiving, when an additional \$15,455 was collected in support of the OFB.

The store also teamed up with the Ottawa Police Service



Photo by Karen Squires

**Metro Team Nate Huntjens (Manager), Caryl Crichton (Cashier) and Lora Suthons (Service Manager) led the OFB project yielding amazing results!**

to take part in a Christmas Cram the Cruiser fundraiser

to collect non-perishable food, collecting a total of \$1,188 plus

334 Food Bank bags for a total value of \$3,000 in a single day. In addition to these special appeals, Metro Beechwood has a longstanding partnership with the OFB, including regular weekly donations of surplus produce and meat. As Nate is pleased and proud to report, “Our store is number one in donations among all Metro stores in Ontario!”

Congratulations and thanks to the whole Beechwood Metro team! Not only does our neighbourhood have access to consistently abundant, high quality foods and household supplies at our local store, we can be proud of, and grateful for, the good hearted, generous and kind Beechwood Metro staff team.

*Jane is a long-time contributor to NEN, well known for her pieces about local businesses and her dedication to the ‘For the birds’ column.*

## NCC CEO says there is no timeline yet for Sussex Blocks project

Continued from page 1  
the site.

Since at least 2005, it was intended for a future institutional use. The new approach outlined in the Core Area Plan will allow for more flexibility in the uses.

Just because it was open space, doesn’t mean it was going to be like that forever, as future uses had been identified, according to the NCC.

The NCC had hoped that the sample renderings of the proposal would be better received in the community than the previous scenario of allowing the site to become another embassy compound at some future point.

The NCC is not selling the land that comprises the Sussex Blocks.

Nussbaum said they have a high opinion of their approach to design, under the federal land use, design and transaction approval (FLUDTA) process. Once a procurement



Rendering and Caption statement by NCC

**This image is illustrative of intent with respect to: the symbolic importance and prominence of these blocks along Confederation Blvd and next to Rideau Hall; proactive integration with the heritage character of the surrounding context; the introduction of mixed uses including housing; the creation of a new park and the level of quality envisioned for this park; the height and volumetric attributes of the buildings. There is no timeline for this to become a project and there may be other designs that can be considered, along the lines of the intent illustrated and as articulated in the proposed policy language.**

process is identified, community input will be an important consideration, it was explained, including with respect to the Heritage

Conservation District Plan.

### Housing options and affordability

The NCC is looking to add

some gentle density to the neighbourhood with the Sussex Blocks. Adding housing options, even market-priced housing, contributes

positively to the housing issue since the more options, the better.

Regarding affordability, the NCC has not made a decision on whether they would require a percentage of the units to be affordable, and if so, what that percentage would be.

### Traffic congestion and parking

Decisions have not been made yet either regarding parking – including whether the development would include on-site or underground parking – and if the NCC would be open to a pre-development traffic assessment study.

The NCC agreed with the NECA board regarding ongoing dialogue with regard to the plans for the Sussex Blocks. Ms. de Passillé and Ms. Girard-Ruel will be the points of contact for that purpose, moving forward.

*Sarah Anson-Cartwright lives in New Edinburgh and works in public affairs.*



# Reflections from Queen's Park and our community



**Lucille Collard**  
MPP Ottawa-Vanier

The start of a new year is a valuable moment to pause, reflect, and look ahead. In New Edinburgh, I continue to be inspired by a community that is engaged, supportive, and forward-looking. That's the kind of spirit that can lead us in a better future.

## A challenging session at Queen's Park

The most recent session at Queen's Park was marked by significant turbulence, particularly surrounding the Skills Development Fund scandal. Revelations that public funds may have been misused by our government to benefit private interests are deeply troubling. Ontarians rightly expect transparency, accountability, and integrity in how public money is managed. I remain committed to demanding clear answers and ensuring that government programs serve workers, families, and communities, not insiders.

## Rushed legislation, real concerns

The government also pushed through a record number of bills with limited debate and inadequate consultation. While some measures may have merit, several raise serious concerns.

Bill 33 concentrates power with the Minister of Education, reducing local voices in education decisions.

Bill 56 eliminates speed cameras; despite evidence they improve road safety and protect children and pedestrians.

Bill 46 makes it easier for companies to let loyalty points expire, undermining a tool many people rely on to cope with rising costs.

Bill 60 makes it easier to evict tenants, offering insufficient protection for vulnerable renters.

## A positive step forward

Despite these challenges, there was encouraging progress. I

was proud to see the unanimous adoption of my bill proclaiming October as the Month of Online Safety and Privacy Protection for Children, an important step in promoting safer online spaces. Many thanks to Stephen Blais for co-sponsoring the bill.

## Looking ahead – together

As we move into 2026, I wish everyone in New Edinburgh good health and energy to accomplish your goals. I look forward to continuing our work together and to seeing you around the neighbourhood.

//

Le début d'une nouvelle année est un moment précieux pour faire une pause, réfléchir et se tourner vers l'avenir. À New Edinburgh, je continue d'être inspirée par une communauté engagée et solidaire. C'est ce genre d'esprit qui peut nous mener vers un avenir meilleur.

## Une session difficile à Queen's Park

La dernière session a été marquée par d'importantes turbulences, notamment autour du scandale du Fonds de développement des compétences. Les révélations sur l'utilisation de fonds publics au profit d'intérêts privés par notre gouvernement sont profondément troublantes. Les Ontariens sont

en droit d'exiger transparence, responsabilité et intégrité. Je demeure déterminée à obtenir des réponses claires et à faire en sorte que les programmes gouvernementaux servent les travailleurs, les familles et les communautés.

## Des lois adoptées à la hâte

Le gouvernement a fait adopter un nombre record de projets de loi avec peu de débats et de consultations. Plusieurs soulèvent de sérieuses préoccupations :

Le projet de loi 33 concentre le pouvoir entre les mains du ministre de l'Éducation, réduisant ainsi l'influence des acteurs locaux dans les décisions relatives à l'éducation ;

Le projet de loi 56 élimine les radars de vitesse malgré leur efficacité ;

Le projet de loi 46 facilite l'expiration des points de fidélité ;


Le projet de loi 60 fragilise les protections des locataires vulnérables.

## Un pas en avant positif

Malgré tout, l'adoption unanime de mon projet de loi proclamant octobre « Mois de la sécurité en ligne et de la protection de la vie privée des enfants » représente une avancée importante. Merci au député Stephen Blais pour son appui.

## Regardons vers l'avenir, ensemble

À l'approche de 2026, je souhaite à toutes et tous la santé, et l'énergie nécessaire pour accomplir vos projets. J'ai hâte de continuer à travailler avec vous et de vous croiser dans le quartier.


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# 'BURGH BUSINESS BRIEFS

By Daniel Hébert, Randy Mar, John Leefe, Karen Squires



Photo by Karen Squires

**Miracle Cafe's owner Ozlem Aslan with Bianka Rodriguez Pepin celebrating their new menu.**



Photo by Daniel Hébert

**The flames tell the story: High heat and fearless cooking bring deep warmth and spice to every dish.**

## Café Miracle brewing more than just coffee

The bustling little café, which opened in June 2025 on the corner of Beechwood and Acacia Avenues, is now brewing more than just coffee! Café Miracle, adorned with colourful original paintings, has launched "Miracle After Dark" – evening hours with an evolving menu that includes curated wines, cocktails, and sharable plates.

Owner **Oslem Aslam** is excited about these additions for the winter season, saying "we've begun serving our Anatolian-style red lentil soup which is a comforting, seasonal favourite."

Connoisseurs of European wines should be pleased with the selection: red wines include a Muga Reserva from Spain and Zenato Ripassa and Chianti Classico from Italy. White selections include a Skouras Wild Ferment Assyrtika from Greece, a Latour Chardonnay from France, and Paco & Lola

Albarino from Spain.

To complement your wine or cocktail, choose from delightful menu items like a comte and brie cheese trio, and a variety of salads, like Lemon Dill Potato Charm, Silk Chickpea, and Penne Pasta.

Café Miracle | 141 Beechwood Ave. | 613.663-2233 | Instagram: @BeechwoodMiracle | New hours: Sun. through Tue. 8 am–5:30 pm; Wed. and Thu. 7 am–5:30 pm; Fri. and Sat. 7 am–8:30 pm  
–JL

## Altay Flame Uyghur Cuisine

Our neighbourhood is pleased to welcome Altay Flame Uyghur Cuisine, which recently opened in the former Sushime space, becoming the first and only Uyghur restaurant in Ottawa. Owner **Baykal Deli** decided to name the restaurant after the Altai Mountains, a mountain range in Central Asia, where Russia, China, Mongolia, and Kazakhstan converge. The

pronunciation of the word "Uyghur" is a matter of some debate; however, widely cited sources state that it is pronounced "WEE-goor."

Baykal visited Hong Kong in his youth, and moved to China at 17. He took the time to learn the language before earning a university degree, then spent 20 years working as an accountant and raising a family in China. Ultimately, he realized that his love of food was stronger, and in 2017 he moved to Canada to pursue his restaurant dream.

Baykal describes the Uyghur cuisine as "an aromatic, hearty, spice-forward cuisine rooted in Central Asian Silk Road traditions, with clear influences from Turkic, Middle Eastern, and Chinese cooking, yet it is still very much its own distinctive style."

Uyghur cuisine is predominantly wheat-based rather than rice-based, offering dishes ranging from hand-pulled noodles (laghman), baked naan and dumplings (mantu), often paired with lamb, beef,

or chicken and an array of vegetables. The Uyghurs are a Turkic ethnic group originating in Central Asia and East Asia. They are one of China's 55 officially recognized ethnic minorities and live primarily in northwestern China. There are more than 11 million Uyghurs living in China and nearly half a million in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan.

Altay Flame's menu – a mix of Uyghur, Turkish, and Russian influence – comes to life at the hands of Baykal's partner, **Suleyman Ic** who comes from a family of restaurateurs in Turkey. After a career as a university professor of finance, Suleyman decided to come to Canada and pursue his passion for food. Add to the mix two Uyghur chefs: one specializing in wok techniques, the other in hand-rolled and pulled noodles. Baykal also comes from a family with food industry experience, including bakeries, restaurants, and delis in

Turkey.

The Altay Flame food is comforting, rustic, aromatic, and textured with chewy noodles, smoky grilled meats, and gently spiced broths and stir-fries. It also has soul: shaped by centuries at cultural crossroads. Signature dishes include the Uyghur Special Noodles (chewy, hand-pulled noodles topped with stir-fried beef and vegetables), Uyghur Rice Pilav (a fragrant rice pilaf cooked with lamb, carrots, and raisins), and the Big Plate Chicken for Two (a spicy chicken and vegetable stew served over wide noodles). For now, the only dessert on the menu is Rice Pudding, a Turkish recipe of creamy milk pudding topped with roasted hazelnuts. However, this is not your mother's rice pudding; this is luxurious, deliciously smooth, and reminiscent of custard. Turkey is responsible for roughly 70 per cent of the world's hazelnut production, so it is no surprise that hazelnuts feature prominently in





Photo by Karen Squires

**Linden Pizza's chef Mackenzie Coombes with owner Tracey Clark and manager Camille Hopper-Naud.**

Turkish cuisine.

Baykal and Suleyman also have experience operating a Turkish restaurant in Kanata. When they saw the opportunity to open a spot in our neighbourhood, they realized that most Turkish restaurants in Ottawa offer very similar menu options. With the nearest Uyghur restaurant located in the Montreal area, they recognized an opportunity to introduce Uyghur cuisine to Ottawa. Chinese-language social media in the city quickly took note of the opening and generated considerable buzz; as a result, Baykal says word of mouth has been so strong that he doesn't see a need to advertise at this time. What was intended as a soft opening on Dec. 2 ultimately became a bigger splash than expected. From the very first, the restaurant has been packed most evenings. To keep up with demand, the owners plan to add another wok station and complete other kitchen renovations. This new addition is sure to make New Edinburgh an even greater culinary destination, so making a reservation is highly recommended.

Altay Flame Uyghur Cuisine | 8 Beechwood Ave. | 613.617.8688 | altayflame.ca |

Tue. through Sun. 11:30 am–9 pm; Mon. closed.

–DH

#### **Linden Pizza expands take-out and delivery options**

New for take-out and delivery in 2026: the 16-inch pizza, salads such as the Chicory Caesar and Field Beet Salad, as well as desserts, including Chocolate Tiramisu and Currant Rhubarb Pannacotta – an intriguing combination. These new at-home options present another great way to support our main street restaurants in addition to dining out. The deliciously varied pizza selection includes red and white variations such as the Margherita or the Gorgeous Gorg. So when you simply want to put your feet up and invite some friends in, you can enjoy an exceptional dining experience without stepping out your front door.

Linden Pizza | 119 Beechwood Ave. | 613.913.7997 | lindenpizza.ca

–KS

#### **Saslove Design**

Since working with a local interior design firm as a co-op student 19 years ago, **Jessie Saslove** has been growing her passion and experience in interior decorating

and interior design. **Saslove Design** offers a wide variety of interior design, interior decorating, and project management services for residential design projects for kitchens and bathrooms, as well as bedrooms, living rooms, home offices, dining rooms, and more. Saslove Design can also provide smaller consultations, such as paint colour selection, and kitchen or living room layout plans. For many projects, Jessie designs custom pieces for her clients: cabinetry, vanities, shelving, bookcases, entertainment centres, and more. Clients can turn to Jessie not just for design, but for selecting installers and contractors she knows and trusts. This allows for better collaboration, removing some burden from clients of finding the right people to get the job done.

In terms of style and philosophy, Jessie describes Saslove Design's aesthetic as fresh – something new and out of the ordinary, personalized to the client's unique needs. Timeless designs do not have to be neutral and "safe." They can be extremely colourful, detailed, and eccentric to reflect personality and lifestyle – they should make you truly excited



Photo by Daniel Hébert

**Jessie Saslove stands in a kitchen transformed from basic and uninspired into a space that's appealing, personal, and functional.**

to see it every day. Operating as a one-person design company allows for a level of focus, consistency, and care often difficult to achieve in larger firms. With every project personally overseen from concept through completion, the result is design work that is cohesive, intentional, and distinctly human.

Jessie focuses on incorporating the highest possible quality finishes that the budget will allow; this results in fewer maintenance issues down the line, and long-lasting value. Jessie prides herself on avoiding "boring designs" – she is known for her creative solutions to design problems and her colour expertise. Online reviews praise Jessie's responsiveness, flexibility, and communication, noting that she's generous with her time, transparent with invoicing, and quick to respond to changes in project scope.

Since she's based in New Edinburgh and works in nearby neighbourhoods, Jessie has a good knowledge of local contractors, material availability, and building norms. In an industry often defined by scale, Saslove Design stands apart by valuing intention over size. Each project is shaped by a hands-on approach,

where experience, creativity, and attention to detail come together to create spaces that feel both refined and lived in. For Jessie, no project is too big or too small.

Saslove Design | Instagram: @saslovedesign | Facebook: Saslove Design | 819.319.3042 | Email: designedbysaslove@gmail.com

–DH

#### **WOW Sip Kitchen + Bar**

If you miss Dhruvees, there's a great option nearby for a nice, sit-down dining experience packed with flavour. Just east of the Vanier Parkway and Montreal Road is the newly reinvented **WOW Sip Kitchen + Bar**, the first word being stylized with all capital letters. At its heart is Chef **Boopathi Venkatesan** (aka Chef B), a culinary visionary with over two decades of global experience.

Chef B is a Worldchefs Certified Master Chef™, bringing expertise and passion to every plate. With a career that spans continents and cuisines, Chef B's cooking philosophy is rooted in bold creativity, meticulous technique, and a deep respect for global culinary traditions. Under the WOW banner, Chef B has led multiple



award-winning culinary ventures.

In the post-COVID, early 2020s the restaurant business was as risky as it gets. Despite this, Chef B opened WOW India in Cornwall in April 2021. It was so successful that in October 2023, he decided to open a sister restaurant in Ottawa where the Vanier Grill once operated.

He found some success in the Ottawa location, specializing in dosas (thin filled pancakes), chaats (savory, crispy street snacks) and fusion dishes like Indo-Chinese and Indo-Italian. Chef B then decided to grow his menu by incorporating more global fusion. In 2025, Chef B began soft-launching WOW Sip and by the year's end, new signage went up, replacing the bright yellow with elegant gold, white, and black.

There is little evidence of the old Vanier Grill: already the table settings and décor are elevated. Chef B plans more renovations in the spring, reinventing the patio and adding a BBQ to create live outdoor cooking experiences.

The revamped menu at WOW Sip is now a journey of dishes crafted to surprise,



*Photo courtesy WOW Sip Kitchen + Bar*  
**Chef Boopathi Venkatesan (aka Chef B), owner of the revamped WOW Sip Kitchen + Bar, holds several worldwide credentials, including Worldchefs Certified Master Chef™.**

delight, and connect cultures – all using spice mixes ground onsite. Whether it's a

twist on classic Mexican tacos or an Italian pasta or a Naan-Nizza (a naan-based flatbread

pizza), Chef B ensures that every bite tells a story. Also on offer: burgers and fries, and interesting dishes like the crusted Atlantic salmon with toasted spices and cream sauce. They also have a kid's menu and gluten-free, dairy-free dishes. Chef B's menu features flavours, so "spice" does not mean "spicy" – you can order anything to your preferred spice level. Although the famous dosas and chaat dishes are no longer, the menu continues to offer delightful curries. The Chicken 65 is a crispy South Indian starter that hits with bold, spicy flavour. The Chettinad is a fiery South Indian curry with 16 spices. There is also an extensive North American-style breakfast served starting 6 am weekdays, with dishes starting at \$6.95; on weekends brunch is served from 8 am to 2 pm.

WOW Sip Kitchen + Bar aims to establish itself as one of Ottawa's bold and vibrant fusion restaurants. The "+ Bar" part of the restaurant will soon feature wine pairings on Thursdays. The renovations will add more taps at the bar for a better beer selection. Chef B has worked with local suppliers to offer house wines

that pair well with the menu. WOW Sip also offers catering services for private events and can provide previous menu items, like those dosas.

WOW Sip + Bar | 159 Montreal Rd. | 613.740.0600 | wowsip.ca | order@wowsip.ca  
–DH

### Jacob Lipson Rare Coins has all that glitters

Tucked away at the end of a short stretch of Daly Ave., is a fine old Victorian house converted into offices, along with Jacob Lipson Rare Coins (JLRC). You'll be greeted with a warm, friendly handshake and guided into Jacob's inner sanctum where he'll consult on your rare coins and metals needs, whether buying, selling, or just looking for some advice.

Jacob's passion started after a high-school friend introduced him to a new world: one that involved history, metals, and enthusiastic and interesting collectors. After this initial exposure, Jacob worked part-time in a local coin shop and was mentored by the owner.

He learned his profession as a highly qualified and sought-after numismatist over more than 15 years and is now President of the Ottawa

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Numismatic Society and helps to promote and educate the public on this often-hidden world.

JLRC's motto *Numorum Veterum Vivificabuntur* is Latin for "coins and metals brought to life." Rarity and condition are the watchwords, for even coins in excellent condition dating back over 100 years may have been part of large production runs, and therefore not truly rare.

Among Jacob's most rarefied experiences: handling the test pattern trial of the first silver dollar (1794) struck. Featured in Jacob's current inventory is a 1759 silver Quebec Taken Medal commemorating the Battle of the Plains of Abraham; an 1838 Bank of Montreal Sideview Penny; and an 1897 US Indian Head cent – among scores of other rare and interesting items.

Today's gold and silver markets are in constant flux given evolving geopolitical conditions and are at the highest levels in many decades. The resulting interest in valuations and sales of metals (whether coins or jewellery, often from estates) means Jacob keeps current on market conditions and fluctuations through ongoing research, visiting coin shows, and maintaining membership in local and North American trade organizations and associations.

Jacob often consults on large coin collections and helps advise and catalogue for auctions, which also gives him



Photo by Randy Mar

Jacob Lipson holds a 1oz gold maple leaf struck by the Royal Canadian Mint, a standard unit for buying and selling gold.

additional insights into current trends and conditions.

Given market conditions, Jacob offers a private, secure setting for one-on-one, pressure-free consultation on valuations of coins, metals, and collectibles. In reaching a valuation, Jacob relies on an XRF machine, a high-end metal analysis unit used by

assayers to accurately provide metal and gold content.

To find out more about this fascinating world or to contact Jacob, please arrange a visit!

Jacob Lipson Rare Coins  
| 451 Daly Ave., Ste. 104 |  
613.777.2115 | jacoblipson-rarecoins.com | jacoblipson-rarecoins@gmail.com

—RM

## NEN Delivery Volunteers Wanted

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**A journey of self-discovery starts here**



# CCC celebrates winter with activities in and out of doors



**By Alain-Rémi Lajeunesse,  
Crichton Community  
Council (CCC), Park  
Director**

Winter is well underway, and the CCC welcomes another great season of winter activities.

We have once again greeted the colder weather with a visit from Santa to New Edinburgh, with the streets lit in red and green to usher in the holiday season. Santa and his elves provided wagon rides around the neighbourhood to all the good girls and boys. Neighbours gathered by the fire at the Fieldhouse, sipping hot chocolate and mulled wine, listening to Christmas carols thanks to the Boys and Girls Choirs of

Christ Church Cathedral and the New Edinburgh Choir. A wonderful tradition we hope will continue for years to come!

We have been fortunate to have an early start to the outdoor skating season with this very wintry weather. We would like to thank our devoted team of volunteer hosers who make it happen every year! Special thanks to Aubrey, Sean, Christian, Justin, Adam, Adrian, Crystal, Alexandra, Greg, Ian, Jason, Jeff, Kasper, Kathleen, Loïc, Lucas, Max, Rob, Sarah, Steve, Chris, and everyone who has come out to lend a



*Photo courtesy Alain-Rémi Lajeunesse*

## Winter Events with horse drawn carriage on River Lane.

hand.

We have a devoted team of rink attendants this year that will open the Fieldhouse weekdays from 5 to 7 pm and weekends 9 am to 8 pm. Please feel free to help Tom, Alexander, Kathleen, Adam, Everleigh, Arniko, and Eli as

shows to come. Stay tuned.

## Upcoming events

- Feb. 16: Family Day Rink Fest (TBC): Get ready for a fun-filled afternoon of skating, curling, and exciting international hockey action at the CCC Family Day Rink Fest. Hot chocolate and treats

information.

Opportunities to get involved  
The CCC is always looking for volunteers! Unfortunately, our New Year's Brunch did not occur this year due to lack of volunteers. If you would like to take the lead on bringing this tradition back for 2027,



*Photo by Alain-Rémi Lajeunesse*

CCC team gearing up for the holiday celebrations.



*Photo by Christopher Straka*

## Check out family events ongoing at the Fieldhouse.

they work hard to keep the ice clear and safe.

The community was fortunate to host Craig Cardiff and his familiar Ottawa folk sound for two shows on Dec. 27. His music enchanted the crowd as we danced to the sweet sounds. We hope to continue our concert series with more

on offer. Bring the whole family!

- Feb. 21: Open Mic Night
- March (TBD): Comedy at the Fieldhouse
- Mar. 28: Flamenco for Food
- Apr. 11: Open Mic Night

Please consult [newedinburgh.ca/events](http://newedinburgh.ca/events) for up-to-date

or if you have another idea for a neighbourhood event, please contact us at [CrichtonCommunityCouncil@gmail.com](mailto:CrichtonCommunityCouncil@gmail.com)

See you at the park!

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# More can go into the Blue Box now – with caveats

By Sarah Anson-Cartwright

As of Jan. 1, 2026, your Blue Box can now accept more materials and items than previously permitted. Let's start with the changes, then shift to the caveats, and close with a few tips and warnings.

Coffee cups, black plastic containers, plastic wrap and foam packaging are among the many items now allowed in the Blue Box. Except for alcohol containers and packaging, most other packaging can now go in the recycling bin.

and uncertainty.

## Limits to what actually gets recycled

Yes, your Blue Box accepts many materials, but keep in mind that not all of them will actually be recycled in the near term.

Up to 15 per cent of “flexible plastic packaging” may be incinerated, for example, under the current EPR regulation in Ontario. This is reportedly due to a lack of technology or end-market to deal with so much plastic wrapping and bags.

finalized the EPR model in Ontario last fall.

## “Incineration” can be part of producers’ recycling, says current provincial government

EnviroCentre – an Ottawa-based not-for-profit focused on practical solutions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions – called out the province’s plan to allow incineration as part of recycling, because it contradicts EPR and circular economy principles. It noted: “The CSA standard (R117:24)

already investing resources in improving source separation in public spaces, and removing this requirement is undermining their efforts.”

## Deposit return is a winner

“The best way to ensure packaging is reused or recycled is deposit return,” notes Environmental Defence. Ontario’s Beer Stores, for example, have realized 80 per cent return, recycling, and refill rates.

That’s why Environmental Defence is calling for “an

## Blue Box expansion tips

- Rinse before you recycle. Making sure your containers are empty and rinsed ensures more materials get recycled. Keep food out of the Blue Box. A quick rinse will do.

- Make sure recyclables are set out clean, dry, and loose.

- No bagging. (One exception: shredded paper in the Black Box.)

- Remove caps and lids from glass containers. But leave them on most other containers after emptying or rinsing.

- Separate soft plastics – Environmental Defence recommends putting plastic film, bags, and pouches together in one bundle that can be separated easily from the more valuable paper and metals to help avoid contaminating the truly recyclable materials.

**Below are some of the accepted materials for curbside recycling:**  
Voici quelques-uns des matériaux acceptés pour la collecte sélective :

**Paper and fibre / papier et fibre**

- Paper/papier
- Cardboard and boxboard / Boîtes en carton et Carton pour boîtes
- Paper laminate packaging / emballages en papier laminé

**Containers / contenants**

- Metal/métal
- Cartons
- Plastic containers / contenants en plastique
- Glass containers / contenants en verre
- Flexible plastics/emballages en plastique flexible
- Foam packaging / emballages en mousse

**Not accepted / pas accepté**

- Organics / organiques
- Toys / jouets
- Diapers / couches
- Ceramics / céramiques
- Books / livres
- Pots and pans/chaudrons et poêlons

**2026 recycling guide / guide de recyclage**  
City of Ottawa

**Coming in January 2026:** Download our free app to learn more about what's recyclable, your collection schedule and more.  
**Disponible en janvier 2026 :** Téléchargez notre application gratuite pour en savoir plus sur les matières recyclables, votre calendrier de collecte et plus encore.

**Questions?**  
Miller Waste  
1-888-852-2374  
area2@millerwaste.ca  
circularmaterials.ca/ottawa

## Blue Box recycle guide.

This is part of a large expansion of the recycling program with the transfer of responsibility from the municipal to the provincial government – and then to a non-profit, Circular Materials, on behalf of producers of packaging and paper products, as part of the extended producer responsibility (EPR) model instituted through provincial regulation.

Yet the expansion of the Blue Box program raises questions

Another disappointment is that the new EPR program does not extend to public spaces like parks and city facilities.

## Rinse and empty recyclables to keep them out of the garbage

Additionally, the enhanced recycling program reminds residents to rinse and empty their recyclables to avoid contaminating and thereby spoiling materials that otherwise could and should be recycled.

Many technical red flags are buried in the amended Blue Box regulation which

clearly excludes waste-to-energy from its definition of recycling.”

Environmental Defence said that allowing companies to burn some of the materials and call it recycling is among the “backward steps that will need to be reversed by a future government that cares about the environment and our health.”

Eliminating the obligation for producers to collect packaging waste from public spaces was also criticized by EnviroCentre, which noted: “Waste in public spaces is a key contributor to environmental pollution. Cities are

expansion of the deposit-return program to all beverages – including pop, water, and juice – with increased locations to return your empties.”

Personally, I am going to continue to bring home less plastic in all its forms. (Reusable produce bags, and shopping bags are in hand when going to the grocery store.)

Reduce, reuse, and recycle – in that order – continue to be great watchwords.

*Sarah Anson-Cartwright lives in New Edinburgh and works in public affairs.*

## Black Box expansion tips

- Flatten boxes and all cardboard. Bundle and tie cardboard to save space.

- For details with visuals on What You Can Recycle, check the Circular Materials website for Ottawa at: [circularmaterials.ca/resident-communities/ottawa](http://circularmaterials.ca/resident-communities/ottawa)

- NOTE: Miller Waste (not the City of Ottawa) is now responsible on behalf of Circular Materials for collection of Blue and Black Boxes in Ottawa.

- The City of Ottawa continues to collect and manage the Green Bins and garbage.

Sources of tips: Circular Materials; Environmental Defence

## Not sure where it goes?

The best way to check on how to dispose of any item – whether it is recyclable or not – is to use the City’s Waste Explorer search tool at: [ottawa.ca/en/garbage-and-recycling/waste-explorer](http://ottawa.ca/en/garbage-and-recycling/waste-explorer)

Image courtesy Sarah Anson-Cartwright





# For the Birds

By Jane Heintzman

## Where have all the birds gone?

In the waning days of 2025 and the first week of the new year, the local birding landscape was strongly reminiscent of the haunting Huron Carol: “T’was in the moon of wintertime, when all the birds had fled.” The neighbourhood was eerily quiet, with not even the familiar cheep of the **black-capped chickadee** or the nagging caw of **American crows** to break the silence. Nor did we spot any signs of bird life in our rambles on the Rockcliffe Parkway, where **common ravens**, **chickadees**, overwintering **American robins**, **pileated woodpeckers** and **Northern cardinals** are normally found. While the explanation for this uncomfortably bird-less interlude is unclear, it’s possible that the intense cold during this period spurred a temporary

“hibernation.”

## Miracles of adaptation

Despite their diminutive size, most overwintering birds do survive the rigours of the season, with both behavioural and physiological adaptations. They shelter in dense shrubs, bushes, and tree cavities, and huddle in groups to share body heat; they fluff up their feathers to trap air and create a layer of insulation; and they load up on oil-rich foods to build up their fat reserves. (Reminder: keep your feeders stocked with black-oil sunflower seed and suet!) These birds’ ingenious metabolisms also allow them to enter a state of torpor at night to conserve energy.

**Black-capped chickadees** have a well-deserved reputation as one of the hardiest avian “winter warriors,” thanks to their remarkable capacity for adaptation. Beginning in the early fall, they begin caching



Lapland longspur

Photo by David Howe

(collecting and hiding) food in preparation for winter, when resources in the wild are scanty and their energy needs are high to survive the cold. They stash thousands of seeds, nuts, insects, and mealworms throughout their territory, focusing on protected locations in bark crevices, clusters of pine needles, or under leaves and other forest debris.

Miraculously, chickadees can remember the locations of these caches, each one of which has been found to be associated with a unique neural pattern akin to a barcode – a sobering thought when one considers how often we humans lose our keys, phones and other personal possessions! Still more miraculous is the way in which the chickadee’s brain adapts to facilitate this survival strategy. Beginning in autumn when caching starts, the chickadee’s hippocampus – the portion of the brain associated with memory and spatial organization – enlarges by about 30 per cent as it generates new brain cells in the course of its intensifying caching activity.

This remarkable seasonal neurogenesis equips them with a “super-charged” spatial memory used to locate the far-flung and often well-hidden locations of winter food supplies. In the spring, when resources become abundant and accessible, the chickadees’ hippocampus shrinks back to normal size.

Thankfully, as I write in mid-January, local bird activity has noticeably picked up, as temperatures moderated and light levels slowly (very slowly!) started creeping up. The accustomed winter

characters are now back on the scene, including **black-capped chickadees**; **white-breasted nuthatches**; **house sparrows**; **house finches**; **American crows**; **common ravens** and **pileated wood-**

with multiple reports of these ungainly creatures from the Beechwood Cemetery area, as well as our own sightings of a very large flock (20 or more) in the grounds of Rideau Hall near the MacKay St. entrance.



Evening grosbeak

Photo by David Howe



Downy woodpecker

Photo by David Howe

**peckers**, beating time to our daily walks with their energetic drumming.

On Jan. 12, we heard the first, full-throated **Northern cardinal** song of 2026: a full month earlier than last year. The local **wild turkey** population seems especially robust this year,

Sightings from around the region on Ottawa e-Bird and the Ottawa Field Naturalists Club websites reported a variety of species beyond our neighbourhood borders, notably: **mallards**, **American black ducks**, and **common mergansers**



in nearby Strathcona Park; a predator collection including a **bald eagle**, a **barred owl** and a **merlin** close to the Rideau Tennis Club; and

**catbird**; **white-crowned sparrow**; **Carolina wren**; **hermit thrush**; and a **western meadowlark** – a rarity which attracted avid birders from



Redpoll

Photo by David Howe

an assortment of sightings from other Ottawa locations, including: **dark-eyed junco**; **tufted titmouse**; **northern cardinal**; **pine grosbeak**;

throughout the area.

Before heading south for the winter, the *NEN*'s industrious bird photographer **David Howe** sent a fulsome report on



Snow bunting

Photo by David Howe

**white-breasted nuthatch**; **blue jay**; **American goldfinch**; **fox sparrow**; **gray**

his early winter excursions in the region, noting that "lots of **winter finches** and **tundra**

**backed woodpeckers**."

In coming weeks, readers may want to venture to



Pine grosbrak

Photo by David Howe

**birds** are making their way down [from their northern habitat] in good numbers looking for food." Tundra bird species are specially adapted to live and breed in harsh Arctic and subarctic landscapes.

Around the region, David has spotted irruptive species such as **evening grosbeaks**; **pine grosbeaks**; **common redpolls**; and **pine siskins**, and recommends that "for a real Tundra birding experience, head out to some old cut cornfields in the East or West end ... where there are good numbers of **snow buntings**, **Horned larks** and **Lapland longspurs**." He also notes that "**snowy owls** are back in the same habitats as the tundra songbirds," along with **black-**

farther-flung birding locations in the region to spot the **winter finches** and other species which are reportedly on the scene this year. Recommended birding hotspots include Britannia Conservation Area (Mud Lake); Stony Swamp (Jack Pine Trail), a haven for woodpeckers; Mer Bleue Bog for winter finches and buntings; and Fletcher Wildlife Garden for feeder species.

And here's a hopeful thought for birders and winter-haters alike: by the time the next *NEN* edition arrives in early

April, the weather will be milder, the daylight hours longer, and many of our familiar bird species will be back in the neighbourhood. Keep an eye out for **red-winged blackbirds**, **song sparrows**, returning **American robins**, **tree swallows**, **common grackles**, **eastern phoebes** and a host of others as spring unfolds.

*Jane Heintzman is a long-time contributor to NEN, well known for her pieces about local businesses and her dedication to the 'For the birds' column.*



Pine grosbeak

Photo by David Howe



# A new year for New Edinburgh



**Mona Fortier**  
Ottawa-Vanier MP

As we step into 2026, we celebrate the strength, resilience, and unity that define Ottawa-Vanier-Gloucester. Each year brings its own set of challenges, and 2025 was no exception — but together, we faced them with optimism, dedication, and a shared vision of a brighter future for all. From the kindness extended to neighbours to the tireless efforts of local businesses and the passion to create lasting opportunities, Ottawa-Vanier-Gloucester continues to embody the very best of Canadian values.

February marks Black History Month, a time to honour the achievements, leadership, and cultural contributions of Black Canadians who have shaped our country and enriched our communities. Across Ottawa-Vanier-Gloucester, cultural centres

and community groups will be hosting events that highlight this important history and encourage meaningful reflection. It is an opportunity to celebrate, to learn, and to reaffirm our commitment to equity and inclusion.

Supporting families remains a central priority, and programs like the Canadian Dental Care Plan are already helping residents access essential dental services. This initiative is making a real difference for seniors, children, and families across our riding.

Budget 2025 continues to deliver progress on affordability, housing, and community well-being. Measures implemented by Prime Minister Mark Carney such as the middle-class tax cut—lowering the first income tax rate from 15% to 14% as of July 1, 2025 are expected to save

Canadians up to \$420 per year by 2026, helping families build greater stability for the future.

This year also marks Ottawa’s 200th anniversary. Throughout 2026, celebrations and community events across the city, from the Rideau Canal to the ByWard Market and neighborhoods like New Edinburgh, will highlight our shared history, local businesses, and the creativity and diversity that define our city.

As we begin this new year, let’s continue to uplift one another, support our local organizations, and celebrate the community that makes Ottawa-Vanier-Gloucester such a remarkable place. As always, should you need to contact our office, please do not hesitate to reach out at 613-998-1860 or [mona.fortier@parl.gc.ca](mailto:mona.fortier@parl.gc.ca).

//

Chères résidentes, chers résidents,

Alors que nous entamons l’année 2026, nous célébrons la force, la résilience et l’unité qui définissent Ottawa-Vanier-Gloucester. Chaque année apporte son lot de défis, et 2025 n’a pas fait exception — mais ensemble, nous les avons affrontés avec

optimisme, dévouement et une vision commune d’un avenir meilleur pour toutes et tous. De la gentillesse offerte à nos voisins, aux efforts de nos entreprises locales, en passant par les intentions de créer des occasions durables, Ottawa-Vanier-Gloucester continue de représenter ce que les valeurs canadiennes ont de meilleur.

Le mois de février marque le Mois de l’histoire des Noirs, un moment pour honorer les réalisations, le leadership et les contributions culturelles des Canadiennes et Canadiens noirs qui ont façonné notre pays et enrichi nos communautés. Partout dans Ottawa-Vanier-Gloucester, les centres culturels et les organismes communautaires organiseront des activités qui mettront en lumière cette histoire essentielle et encourageront une réflexion significative. C’est une occasion de célébrer, d’apprendre et de réaffirmer notre engagement envers l’équité et l’inclusion.

Soutenir les familles demeure une priorité centrale, et des programmes comme le Régime canadien de soins dentaires aident déjà les résidents à accéder à des services dentaires essentiels.

Cette initiative fait une réelle différence pour les aînés, les enfants et les familles de notre circonscription.

Le budget 2025 continue de faire progresser des mesures axées sur l’abordabilité, le logement et le bien-être communautaire. Des initiatives par le premier ministre Mark Carney comme la réduction d’impôt pour la classe moyenne — qui abaisse le taux de la première tranche d’imposition de 15 % à 14 % à compter du 1er juillet 2025 — pourraient permettre aux Canadiens d’économiser jusqu’à 420 \$ par année d’ici 2026, contribuant ainsi à une plus grande stabilité pour les familles.

L’année 2026 marque également le 200<sup>e</sup> anniversaire d’Ottawa. Des célébrations et activités communautaires organisées partout dans la ville, du canal Rideau au marché By et dans des quartiers comme New Edinburgh, mettront en valeur notre histoire commune, nos entreprises locales ainsi que la créativité et la diversité qui font la richesse de notre ville.

En ce début d’année, continuons de nous soutenir mutuellement, d’appuyer nos organismes communautaires et de célébrer la communauté qui fait d’Ottawa-Vanier-Gloucester un endroit remarquable. Si vous avez besoin de communiquer avec notre bureau, n’hésitez pas à nous joindre au 613-998-1860 ou à [mona.fortier@parl.gc.ca](mailto:mona.fortier@parl.gc.ca).

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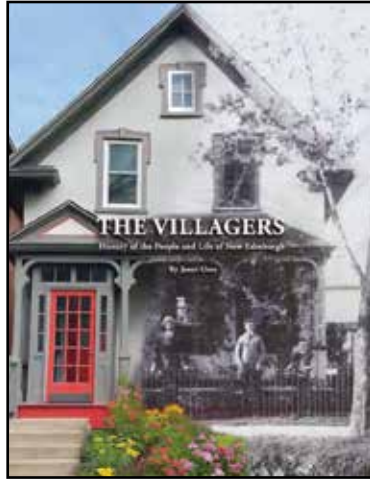
# The Villagers: New Edinburgh history goes for a first reprint

By Janet Uren

In November 2025, when I finally put down the figurative pen and sent *The Villagers* off to the printer, I ordered just 300 copies. I had to be cautious, because I had no idea what the response to the book would be, and I had to limit the risk. I was hopeful, however, that this might be too small a number. In fact, the first 300 copies sold in the first two weeks, and I immediately ordered a reprint of 100 books, which have also sold briskly. The books are priced at a breakeven point,

so I am not currently rolling around in a pile of money. Given that they are likely to sell more slowly as time goes on, I plan to reprint a mere 50 in the next round. However, my hope is that as long as there is demand, I can make sure that the book is available, and that Books on Beechwood has enough on hand to satisfy customers over the long term.

I want to thank everyone who has written or stopped to tell me that they are enjoying the work. It means so much to me. We live in an extraordinary place. Ever since I moved



here in 2001, I have wanted to know the human stories behind the doors of all these

old houses. I am happy that I could at least make a start in doing that. Frustratingly, I know that there is much more to discover. Over Christmas, a villager wrote to me about his house, and I found myself diving into the Internet once again, looking at ancestry.ca and at online street directories to discover what I could about his house.

That is when I realized I was insane.

There is a good point to make, however. History does not have an end; it keeps on going, and so does our

exploration of the endless stories in our past. I hope that the people fortunate enough to live here or to visit New Edinburgh will continue to be curious and to hunt out the stories of how this little community came to be and has survived.

*Janet Uren is a professional writer who has lived in New Edinburgh since 2001. She published a history of the village – The Villagers: History of the People and Life of New Edinburgh – in November 2025. Books are available for purchase at Books on Beechwood.*

## Meet the first editor of the New Edinburgh News

Continued from page 1

that it was time to get started on a career, if I ever was going to have one. I was lucky to get a job with a company that produced community-based weekly newspapers in Ottawa. I could work at home, using the phone to gather information for stories. The five Dunn offspring got used to the clatter of the old Remington typewriter!

In 1974, my kids were teens, I was working in the newsroom at CJOH-TV and we were in the market for a larger house, which we found on Dufferin Road. I was back in the 'Burgh, although it was a long commute out to the television station, which at that time was located at the corner of Baseline and Merivale Roads. It was an even longer commute out to the Algonquin College campus, where by 1976, I was teaching in the Media Studies program. Thirty-five students in first year – dreaming of becoming Woodward and Bernstein, the two Washington Post reporters whose Watergate reporting had forced U.S. President Richard Nixon out of office in disgrace. The students were a mixed bag: some straight out of Grade 12, some with university degrees, some who were my age and had careers but were looking for a change.

The Vanier Parkway extension was a major topic in the 'Burgh at that time. Gentrification was also beginning and preservation of one of Ottawa's oldest neighbourhoods was concerning: big issues for the New Edinburgh Community Alliance (NECA). While NECA tried to keep

residents informed with a newsletter, the organization was looking for something more substantial. Bruce Grant was NECA president at that time; he put together a meet-

which might put the college in a bad light, and it didn't cost any money.

The first issue of the New Edinburgh newspaper ran to four pages. I kept the title of



Photo by courtesy Eleanor Dunn

**Eleanor Dunn with her great grandson Stanley Paul Dunn who turned 2 years old on January 29th.**

ing at his home on Stanley Ave., during which a community newspaper was discussed. I had some experience in that métier and as I knew students in Carleton's journalism program were producing The Centretown News, I thought a similar project would benefit my students at Algonquin. I opened my big mouth and volunteered.

And so, the *New Edinburgh News* was born. The emblem which adorns the front page of the newspaper to this day was designed by a neighbour who was a commercial artist. My department head at Algonquin was supportive of the idea – as long as nothing was published

Editor for myself and assigned all the news stories and photography. I also chose what stories would go in and what would be left out or cut due to space limitations, with the support of my students. The Vanier Parkway extension was the lead story on the front page, above the fold, with a sidebar on how the extension would eat up Stanley Park. The front page also had a Vanier Parkway extension story in French and a story about why getting a historical designation for the oldest part of the 'Burgh was important.

Publication was sporadic in 1976–77 as it was a major effort. Students were given

other writing assignments to broaden their knowledge of what a general news reporter might expect — and perhaps to show them that Woodward and Bernstein had put in long hours and hard slogging. I also wanted these young writers to understand that upon graduation they were unlikely to be snapped up by major daily newspapers or television networks and immediately be assigned to the Parliamentary Press Gallery. The *New Edinburgh News* was a great training ground!

Gaye Applebaum succeeded me as editor of the *New Edinburgh News* in 1978. I had left teaching to go back

to newspapering as the City Editor of the new Ottawa morning newspaper, *Ottawa Today*. I started my career in community newspapers, and I'm ending it in a community newspaper — as a regular contributor to the *New Edinburgh News*.

*Eleanor Dunn is a retired journalist and broadcaster who has been an almost lifelong resident of the 'Burgh. She raised her family on Dufferin Road and now lives with her oldest son on The Mews. She is an active member of MacKay United Church.*

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# Reflecting on development, history, and place in New Edinburgh

By Janet Uren

The National Capital Commission (NCC) is planning to develop a grassy area bordering Confederation Boulevard in the heart of the old, urban village of New Edinburgh. Some neighbourhoods are beginning to marshal their resistance to a plan that they believe will threaten to change much of the character of one of the capital's oldest and best-preserved neighbourhoods.

The NCC has not yet decided on or been in a position to share its plans with the community about the scale and scope of the project. It seems, however, that the plan is based on the need to generate new revenues for the Commission, which is tasked with managing many expensive properties in the

capital. However, some community members point to conflicts with the NCC's mandate, which includes ensuring that "the distinctive streetscape elements of Confederation Boulevard are preserved and enhanced."

New Edinburgh is a special place by any measure, and it represents an extraordinary survival from the past. A one-time industrial village that was founded nearly 200 years ago, the neighbourhood lies tucked away at the confluence of the Rideau and Ottawa rivers. Thanks to the enclosing geography of river and parkland and the persistence of so much of the old 19th-century building stock, New Edinburgh has miraculously managed – despite depredations of the past in the name of



Photo by Janet Uren

A small area of the Sussex land causing much discussion.

"urban renewal" – to preserve a village atmosphere even at the heart of a large Canadian city.

That is not to say that New Edinburgh has not suffered from poor planning decisions in the past. In the early 1960s, an important part of the built legacy in New Edinburgh was obliterated. The National Capital Commission – founded in 1959 with a mission to turn a shabby little town into a grand capital – decided to tear down a row of old shops along Sussex St., along with the houses and outbuildings that lay behind. In doing so, it destroyed the oldest surviving part of this old community, with some elements dating back to the 1829 purchase of

Crown land by an enterprising Scot. The shops that once gave commercial life to the village were demolished. Some of the original settlers' houses disappeared. The humble car barns that were a monument to the capital's first transit system in 1870 were sacrificed to the vision of a grand boulevard.

Confederation Boulevard was eventually realized, incorporating what was once the main commercial artery of New Edinburgh. The plan in the 1990s was to continue to develop the boulevard as the site of embassies and international institutions in keeping with the presence of Rideau Hall and 24 Sussex. That vision has now been sacrificed to what appear to be financial

opportunities represented by new housing. Ignoring the fact that it is somewhat unclear how this housing will not help to solve the affordable housing shortage, the NCC is planning to cut down 125 mature trees to allow the building of several four-and-a-half storey residential blocks along Sussex Drive. There is a concern that these might be completely out of scale with other buildings in the community and certainly not in keeping with the guidelines of the Heritage Conservation District in which the property lies.

We have already seen a similar story unfold on LeBreton Flats. The planners' drawings there showed a well designed, state-of-the-art community. When tenders were let, however, the successful developer ignored the guidelines and is in the process of erecting a series of unattractive offices and residential towers, wasting one of the best potential sites for new, exciting development in the Capital. Some New Edinburgh residents want to avoid the same fate, and it is mobilizing to that end.

*Janet Uren is a professional writer who has lived in New Edinburgh since 2001. She published a history of the village – entitled The Villagers: History of the People and Life of New Edinburgh – in November 2025.*



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## The perils of being a pedestrian

Continued from page 1

plateau: the flat bit at the top of the shinbone that supports the body's weight during standing and walking. My leg was put in a brace and I was sent home with crutches and a prescription for pain medication and an anti-coagulant.

This might have been the end of our sorry saga, except: I was due to get on a flight across the Atlantic less than 12 hours later. This was a long-planned trip with twin purposes: a rowing regatta in Cambridge for my husband, with people he had rowed with in College in the late 1980s; and then to join my siblings in South Africa to scatter my late father's ashes

at the old family property in rural Kwazulu-Natal. If it had just been a vacation, I would have cancelled, but I decided to push ahead. Thanks to care and attention from airline and airport staff, and kindness and support from friends and family we stayed with in England and South Africa, the trip was a success, if not quite how I had imagined. Scattering ashes from a riverbank while on crutches took some concentration to avoid further indignity to the living or the dead!

Life has actually been harder since returning home to Ottawa. Snow and ice make it difficult for me to leave the house and get around

unassisted. My long-suffering husband is doing all the shopping, cooking, and housework, and helping me get dressed and bathed, in between doing his government job. I have received excellent follow-up care at the Montfort and will soon be starting physiotherapy at one of the clinics on Beechwood. I'm very much looking forward to resuming regular visits to Bridgehead, Books on Beechwood, and even Metro. We are indeed fortunate to live in such a pedestrian-friendly neighbourhood. Just look out for those careless "Autowa drivers."

*Belina Dodson lives with her husband in New Edinburgh.*



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# The art of wintering: The medicine of stillness and darkness

By Sophia Wood Massicotte

As the first flurries kiss the soil and bare branches trace the sky, Mother Nature comes back to remind us of a truth we often forget in our modern, fast-paced lives: everything moves in cycles. In a world that celebrates constant productivity, endless availability, and perpetual light, winter arrives like a soft, whispered invitation to slow down, come home and rest.

Wintering is an art: one that asks us to lean into the quiet and to trust the unseen. It is a time to pause, to reflect, and to allow the stillness to work its gentle magic. While summer calls us outward into bloom and expansion, winter guides us inward – into the hearth of our hearts – to tend the inner flame that sustains us through life's seasons.

## The wisdom of “wintering”

Wintering (both in nature and in our inner lives) invites us into a relationship with the unknown. In the colder, darker months, so much of life goes underground. Seeds rest beneath the soil, trees stand bare. On the surface, it can appear as though nothing

is happening. Yet beneath, there's quiet transformation, preparation, and renewal.

In our human experience, this mirrors those times when we can't see the outcome. When clarity hasn't yet arrived, or when we're being called to pause without knowing what

guide us.

## Nesting by the hearth

There is something profoundly healing about nesting – creating warmth, beauty, and comfort in our homes and within ourselves. Lighting a candle, sipping a cup of tea,



Photo by Alisa Anton

Nesting to nourish the soul with inner peace and serenity.

comes next. That uncertainty, that in-between phase, is the mystery. Mystery invites us to trust that even when things feel still or unclear, something essential is taking shape. It's safe to surrender the need to rush toward answers or outcomes, and instead allowing the unseen, the intuitive, and the natural timing of life to

taking a warm bath, curling up with a book or good company. These small, soulful acts of care become rituals of remembrance, inviting us to reorient from doing to being. To ask ourselves: what truly nourishes me?

## Practices for wintering

Wintering isn't a passive act: it's an intentional devotion to rest, renewal, and presence.

Here are a few gentle ways to prepare and enter this season with grace:

1. Create sacred space at home

Set up a cozy corner with blankets, a candle, or items that bring you a sense of peace. Let it become your daily sanctuary – a place to breathe, dream, and reconnect with yourself.

2. Establish slow rituals

Begin or end your day with small acts of stillness: a warm cup of tea, gentle stretching, a walk in nature, or a few mindful breaths before sleep. Let simplicity be your guide.

3. Nourish your body

Eat seasonally and intuitively: root vegetables, warm soups, herbal infusions, and hearty grains help ground the body and support the nervous system through colder, darker days.

4. Practice listening

Spend a few moments each day in silence – without your phone, without agenda. Notice what arises when you give yourself permission to simply be.

Journaling for the season

Winter is a natural time for reflection – a sacred pause

between chapters. Before the year closes, take time to sit with these questions: What am I most proud of from this past year? What challenges have shaped me, and what wisdom did they reveal? What am I ready to release before stepping into a new cycle? What new seeds or intentions are quietly forming within me? How do I wish to spend this winter? What rhythms, relationships, and rituals do I want to nourish?

As you move through the final days of the year, I invite you to honour your own rhythm. To find beauty in the slowness. To remember that winter is not the end of the story – it is the sacred pause that prepares the soil for what's to come. Beneath the surface, life is still stirring. Your next chapter is quietly taking root.

*Sophia Wood Massicotte is a certified Yoga Teacher, Women Empowerment Coach and Ayurveda Practitioner. She is the founder of The Art of Being Well, a holistic health hub that offers transformative programs, workshops, and women's circles.*

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# A neighbourhood that moves together

By Barbara Young

One afternoon soon after moving to Ottawa in 2001, I reconnected with a high-school friend who lives in New Edinburgh: Ellen Goodman. Ellen knew I taught yoga, and as we shared tea in her sunny kitchen overlooking the garden, she was adamant about me teaching at the Crichton Cultural Community Centre!

attended evening classes.

All these years later, Cindy and Catherine are still an integral part of what is now Pathway Yoga, the vibrant yoga community that evolved from those early years at the 4Cs. Pathway Yoga is a not-for-profit studio, now located in Old Ottawa East, and boasting Catherine as a board member. Cindy still attends Wednesday morning classes regularly with

with Stuart Maskell has kept me happy and healthy. These programs and the teachers who provide them are fantastic!"

Catherine says, "My body doesn't work the same way it used to, but Stuart's class has a slightly different target audience and approach now which suits me just perfectly. I really appreciate the precise instructions during yoga classes



Photo courtesy Catherine Blake

Neighbourhood yoga class participants from left to right: Penny McConnell, Dilshad Macklem, Gemma Kerr, Cindy Ryley, and Catherine Blake.

So began several years teaching at the 4Cs, in a bright and airy former classroom with tall windows and beautiful hardwood floors. There I met Cindy Ryley and Catherine Blake, a mother and daughter whom I've been privileged to know and teach for over 20 years.

Cindy was a founder of New Edinburgh's legendary gourmet food shop, Ryley MacLachlan Fine Caterers (now known as Epicuria), and I loved hearing about her travels and love of cooking. She and her husband Tim came to classes at the 4Cs during the day, while as a young and active IT consultant, Catherine

two other wonderful New Edinburgh residents: Dilshad Macklem and Gemma Kerr. Catherine attends two different classes per week, often in the company of yet another New Edinburgh resident, Penny McConnell.

In Cindy's words, "Being a part of this community and sharing the activities it offers and the friendships that have developed has been very important both physically and mentally ... Starting with Barbara Young's and Karen Holtkamp's yoga classes, then joining Louise Hannant's classes at Lindenlea Community Centre and now participating in Pilates classes

which fully immerse me, leaving me grounded because the focus and concentration has allowed me to forget about the stress of life and the world in general. I leave the studio standing taller, shoulders back and down, and breathing calmly."

In times when families are scattered far and wide, how many mothers and daughters have the opportunity to settle in a close-knit neighbourhood such as New Edinburgh, sharing yoga and Pilates classes, summers at the cottage, and of course, delicious meals – all in harmony and mutual support? These two women are a model of living well, with integrity, creativity, generosity, and community spirit!

Barbara Young is a senior Iyengar yoga teacher and founder of Pathway Yoga: [pathwayyoga.ca](http://pathwayyoga.ca)

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# From stillness to strength: A conversation with local yoga teacher Jessica Younes

By Debjani Mitra

This series is dedicated to change makers in our community. Please email Debjani Mitra if you'd like to be featured for this column or have any suggestions.

Jessica Younes has a reputation for leading yoga classes that are mindful and deeply restorative. What follows is an edited conversation.

**New Edinburgh News: What inspired you to begin practicing — and eventually teaching — yoga? Has yoga always been a part of your life?**

Jessica Younes: Yoga wasn't something I grew up around. It arrived later, at a time when the ground beneath me felt unsteady. What started as a simple post-gym stretch, slowly became so much more. Over time, I realized it was the one place where my mind settled, my breath softened, and my own questions finally had room to be heard. It evolved from a physical practice into a space of clarity, purpose, and self-connection. Yoga became the doorway to understanding my body, my patterns, and the parts of myself I used to rush past.

Teaching came naturally once I felt how much the practice was changing me from the inside out. I wanted to hold space for others to feel that same grounding, strength, and renewal — to give them a moment to return to themselves the way yoga does for

me.

It's funny, at my yoga teacher training, on the very first day, I was asked if I planned to teach after graduating. I said no; that wasn't the end goal at all. Now, years later, I can't imagine doing anything else.

**NEN: What are your favourite aspects of teaching, and what do you hope to bring to your students?**

JY: One of my favourite parts of teaching is witnessing those small, powerful moments when people drop out of their heads and into their bodies. When something softens, realigns, or just... clicks.

As someone who has always been the woman who "does it all," always moving, always giving, yoga became the place where I finally found stillness. Even in my strongest, most energizing classes, I try to offer that same experience to my students: a moment to pause, breathe, and simply be with themselves. It doesn't have to be long — sometimes it's just a single inhale that feels spacious, or a brief stillness between transitions that reminds them they're allowed to slow down.

What I hope to bring to every student is a space where they can feel supported, empowered, and connected to themselves. A space that helps them feel strong but also grounded; challenged but also cared for. If they leave class feeling even a little more at home in their bodies, then I've done what



Photo courtesy of Debjani Mitra

**Yoga teacher Jessica Younes in her studio. Her teaching blends strength with softness, embodied movement with presence, and a deep sense of grounding.**

I'm meant to do.

**NEN: You teach locally at The Mat Lab and recently launched Luníc, a holistic aesthetics and wellness clinic. Can you tell us more about that journey?**

When I moved to Canada by myself three years ago, I wasn't teaching in studios at all. I started with free yoga classes in the park whenever the weather permitted. Those classes were simple, humble, from the heart, and they were beautiful. They reminded me why I teach: connection, movement, community.

From there came Rideau Sports Centre and The Mat Lab: the first places that gave me space to share my style, my perspective, and everything I had carried with me into this new life in Ottawa. These two places will always be

incredibly dear to me because that's where it all began, where I found my voice as a teacher, and where people first welcomed me into their movement routines.

Then came the next evolution: my friend, an aesthetic nurse, was opening her own clinic and asked me what I thought about bringing a

wellness component into that space. That's where the idea for Luníc was born — a place where people can care for themselves from the outside and the inside.

We're very intentional about what we offer. In a world where trends and commercialism can easily take over, we choose practices and treatments that truly support people. Luníc is our way of creating a more thoughtful, holistic approach to beauty and wellness, one that honours both the physical and the emotional body.

**NEN: Where can people find more information about you and your classes?**

You can find me on Instagram at @flo.withjess — I share my class schedule, updates, and my journey at Luníc Ottawa.

*Debjani Mitra is an occasional contributor to NEN who lives in New Edinburgh. She is a public health professional who is passionate about advocating children's and women's health.*

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*Best regards to all for a happy and healthy 2026. I look forward to assisting you with your real estate questions and needs in the future.*

*J'aimerais remercier tous mes amis, voisins et clients qui ont travaillé avec moi cette année et qui m'ont référé des nouveaux clients. Je me sens privilégiée de vivre et de travailler dans notre communauté.*

*Je souhaite à tous santé et joie pour l'année 2026. Je suis toujours disponible pour répondre à vos questions au sujet de l'immobilier et pour vous servir.*



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# The fractured road to understanding autism (Part 2)

By Ralph Hesse

In 1980, rates of autism were estimated to be approximately between two and five persons per 10,000. Today, estimates are as high as one in 31. What's going on? How does a neurodevelopmental disorder, which occurs at birth, skyrocket 12,000 per cent in under 50 years? It hasn't. Both estimates of frequency are wildly incorrect; from gross underestimation in 1980 to absurd, overinflated numbers today. Let's explore the dynamics that have led to these incredible discrepancies.

## Expanding and diluting the diagnostic criteria

There is a condition listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders known as "Generalized Anxiety Disorder." It reflects a person who displays ongoing and excessive worry and anxiety that results in restlessness, fatigue, muscle tension, and irritability. The person has difficulty concentrating and often, trouble sleeping. These symptoms affect the person's life in a negative way, resulting

in missed opportunities as the person is afraid to do many things and often does not enjoy activities due to worry and concern. About two to three per cent of persons have this disorder. Now, imagine we change the title and criteria of this condition. We will now call it "Generalized Anxiety SPECTRUM Disorder." We will now include persons who occasionally worry and sometimes have less enjoyment of activities because of fear or excessive concern. Every now and then the person loses sleep, worrying about some topic of concern. Raise your hand if this new definition includes you!

This is exactly what has happened with our definition of Autism. In 2013, the condition of "Autism" was formally changed to "Autism Spectrum Disorder." This new designation included persons formally diagnosed as having "Asperger's" – a label representing people who have severe difficulties socializing with others, displaying significant social awkwardness and very intense interests in narrow

fields of study. Now incorporating Asperger's in the definition of autism shouldn't in and of itself inflate the numbers so dramatically because Asperger's is not common. But the floodgates nevertheless opened! Now, it appeared that every "weird" child, every painfully shy child or perceived social "misfit" can be included as having autism. We have diluted our understanding of autism to the degree that it covers everyone who has some difficulties with personal interactions. This has been facilitated by the impact of our second dynamic.

## The availability of government and private grants and services for persons with autism

There has been an explosion of services for children diagnosed with "Autism Spectrum Disorder." With these opportunities comes the tendency for parents and health professionals to advocate for any troubled child that approximates having symptoms of autism to be labelled as such. Imagine a child that doesn't

get along with others, has frequent temper tantrums, and is often hostile and is unwilling to follow social norms and rules.

Any good psychologist would first explore the possibility that the child has "Conduct Disorder," a condition that reflects features of antisocial tendencies and significant behavioural problems. But what services are out there to help children with conduct disorder? Why not find a sympathetic health care professional to declare that the child may have Autism Spectrum Disorder? Now the child has a greater chance of being enrolled in a program that offers a wealth of services and supports. Additionally, let's consider that a psychologist is the director of a government funded program charged with helping children with autism. Might there be a tendency for that psychologist to apply a liberal definition of what constitutes autism in order to enhance the relevance of the program? This point might appear cynical, but I have personally witnessed this in my

profession.

## The de-stigmatization of autism

In the 1950s, shortly after autism was introduced as a discrete condition encompassing a range of symptoms (severe deficits in language, extreme interest in objects over people, erratic responses to stimuli, obsessive need for order and routine) it was postulated that autism was caused by poor parenting. Specifically the term "refrigerator parent" was coined; a label popularized by psychologist Bruno Bettelheim, who declared that autistic children were essentially mentally and emotionally imprisoned, unable to break out of their extreme social inhibitions because of their "cold" and aloof parents.

In those days, mothers were almost always the primary caretakers, and they were blamed for causing their child to become autistic. These children were believed to be deeply damaged and often needed institutionalized care where substitute caretakers would provide round-the-clock



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“warm” emotional support and psychotherapy that would help the child break out of their psychologically defensive walls, built out of the distrust of others via the experience of their “refrigerator” mother. This narrative persisted through the 1970s and into the early 1980s.

Fast forward to the present time, where we find a quote by Elizabeth Laugeson, PsyD, cited in the September 2025 edition of the American Psychological Association’s Monitor on Psychology: “One of the most important things the public can understand is that autism is a form of neurodiversity and not a deficit or disease.”

The stigmatization and parent-blaming through to the 1980s resulted in families denying that their child had autism, even if it was crystal clear that they did. I had many professional experiences in the 1980s where I would determine that a child had autism, only to be rebuked by the parent, who would then seek another health care professional in the hopes of making an alternative diagnosis.

Ironically in 2008, my last year working as a psychologist for persons with developmental disabilities, the opposite would happen. I would make a preliminary diagnosis of conduct disorder, or Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, or conclude that the individual in question had no mental health problem at all, only to be insistently told that I was wrong, it was autism, discovering afterwards that the parent found another psychologist or physician to validate it.

When we examine the change of perspective about autism over the years, it is no wonder that we are witnessing a paradigm shift as to its frequency. And by the way, it is my opinion that Laugeson’s affirmation that autism is not a deficit is just as misguided as Bettelheim’s “refrigerator” theory. Sure, most everyone now knows that a parenting

style doesn’t cause autism. Research has shown that there are strong genetic components leading to the condition, and although environmental considerations are relevant, no specific factor has been decisively identified. But autism is very much a deficit, not just some cluster of characteristics along a neurodevelopmental scale. We are all “neurodiverse.” That term offers little of value. Make no mistake: having autism is lousy; it robs you of having a variety of genuine and rich personal relationships, it handicaps your ability to express yourself fully, and restricts your capacity to fully enjoy a diversity of life experiences.

Today, the significant overrepresentation of the frequency of autism has hindered our capacity to find effective treatments. Until we go back to understanding the complexities of a disorder without the forces of social and cultural trends prejudicing our perspective, we will have our hands tied. Suffice to say, there is no “epidemic of autism,” and the unfortunate narratives that gain traction on the heels of any supposed epidemic only complicate matters. Vaccines don’t cause autism any more than food colouring, but these false flag reasons will persist until we go back to understanding autism through the lens of proper scientific inquiry and testing.

*Ralph Hesse currently teaches psychology at the State University of New York at Cortland. He has taught for 24 years and has taught online courses since moving to Lindenlea. He is retired from his primary job as a Civil Service psychologist serving persons with Developmental Disabilities. He holds a Master’s Degree in Experimental Psychology.*

#### Managing Editor’s Note

*This article reflects the author’s personal views and experiences. Because autism*

*is a topic that affects many families, children, and adults in our community, the New Edinburgh News would like to provide additional scientific and clinical context to support readers in understanding this complex issue.*

*Reported autism prevalence has changed significantly over the past several decades. Research from public health agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control and the Public Health Agency of Canada, indicates that this shift is primarily the result of expanded diagnostic criteria, improved screening tools, greater public awareness, earlier identification, and the recognition of autistic girls, women, racialized children, and adults who were historically overlooked. A diagnosis requires a detailed developmental history, structured assessment tools, cross-environmental observations, and functional impacts. There is no empirical evidence that autism is widely misdiagnosed for access to services, nor that clinicians routinely apply the diagnosis liberally for programmatic reasons. In fact, many autistic people – especially girls and adults – remain underdiagnosed. While autism can involve significant challenges, particularly in an inaccessible or unsupported environment, many autistic people strongly reject deficit-only descriptions and report rich, connected, and fulfilling lives. Contemporary research and clinical guidelines emphasize a spectrum of strengths and needs, and recognize the importance of environmental and social supports in shaping outcomes.*

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# Music, meditation, and a special visitor: February at MacKay United

By Andy and Hersha Bethune

February can be a quiet month in the neighbourhood. The holidays are over, spring still feels far away, and routines settle back into place. At MacKay United Church, though, the middle of winter is shaping up to include a few moments that invite people to pause, listen, and, in one case, welcome a rare visitor.

On Tue., Feb. 3 at 7 pm, MacKay United will host the final evening in its current Music & Meditation series. These gatherings are simple and intentionally low-key: live music, a guided meditation, and an hour set aside to step out of the usual rush of the week. The evening is offered both in person and online, on

a freewill donation basis, and is open to anyone – no experience with meditation or with church required. Some people come for the music, some for the silence, and some just for a reason to leave the house on a winter evening.

Later in the month, MacKay United will also welcome a guest who does not often pass through Ottawa. On Sun. Feb. 1, the Right Reverend Dr. Kimberley Heath, the 45th Moderator of the United Church of Canada, will be in town to lead the service together with Rev. Peter Woods, the Minister at MacKay United. The Moderator serves as the national spiritual leader of the United Church, traveling widely and representing the church across the country.

Because her schedule is quite full and Ottawa is not a frequent stop, this visit is a rare opportunity to hear her message and to meet her in person. Together, these two very different events say something about how MacKay United understands its place in the community. On one hand, it offers quiet, small-scale gatherings that don't demand much more than an hour and a willingness to sit and listen. On the other, it remains connected to the wider life of the United Church and occasionally becomes a stopping point for figures with a much broader national role.

Music in particular continues to be a steady part of life at the church. In that spirit, MacKay United's choir is currently

welcoming new singers. No audition is required: just a love of music and a willingness to be part of a group. The choir rehearses on Thursdays at 7 pm and on Sundays before worship, and is open to anyone who enjoys singing and being part of a community effort. Those interested can email [admin@mackayunitedchurch.com](mailto:admin@mackayunitedchurch.com) for more information.

Over the years, MacKay United has hosted everything from concerts and meditation evenings to potlucks, small groups, and outreach projects. Some people come every week; others come only for particular events. Some are long-time members of the congregation; others are neighbours who simply wander in when something catches their

interest. The atmosphere is intentionally unpretentious.

In a season when winter can make days feel repetitive and a little closed-in, these small points of connection – a quiet Tuesday evening, a Sunday visit from a national church leader, or a weekly choir rehearsal – offer reminders that the neighbourhood still has places to gather, listen, and take part.

Visit [mackayunited.ca](http://mackayunited.ca) for more information about these and other activities at MacKay United.

*Andy and Hersha Bethune live in the neighbourhood with their daughter and are regular contributors to the New Edinburgh News.*

## From the puzzler

By Frédérick Lavoie

Hi neighbours!

I've kept the pattern going: like its predecessors, this puzzle is anchored around an Ottawa intersection, with the street names crossing in the grid as they do in real life. (In this case, look at 12-Across and 9-Down.)

With spoilers: I wish I could say I had more experience with that actual intersection, as a

Carleton grad. Alas, between Line 2's long closure and the pandemic, things did not quite line up for that. I have, however, been sure to go back – the yearly butterfly exhibit is a delight!

By saying this, I must concede to my sister's teasing that I am easily delighted by animals, and that I use her visits to indulge myself: 4-Down is a nod to that, where we were

both thrilled to hand-feed some wondrously soft alpacas. That Chelsea-based location has unfortunately closed, but Google tells me there are other farms at Maple Hill or Wilhaven Ridge!

Of course, my current goal is to convince my wife that we should totally take our shiny white car to Parc Oméga...

For crossword answers, check page 33.

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30						31			
32						33			
	34					35			

### Across

- 1 Feeling under the weather
- 4 Shrinking Sea in Central Asia
- 8 "Goodbye," in Gatineau
- 10 From around here
- 12 Bird-named athlete from Carleton
- 13 The \_\_\_ Project, Ottawa Police Service's collection of hygiene products
- 14 "Don't mind me, just making sure it works"
- 16 Roll of turf
- 17 Cop-show shorthand for \_\_\_ tim
- 18 . . . - - - . . . , translated from Morse code
- 19 Result of texting OC Transpo at 560-560
- 20 Musical groups Tegan and Sara, or Twin Flames
- 23 Whistle-blower at Lansdowne, perhaps?
- 24 Cleaning staff's tool
- 27 They've presented their letters of credence at Rideau Hall
- 30 Major Indigenous group of Aotearoa (New Zealand)
- 31 Participates in the Library's Stories of Summer
- 32 "So nice to \_ - \_ \_ you!": line after a first Zoom call, maybe
- 33 Painter of Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe (The Luncheon on the Grass) and Le buveur d'absinthe (The Absinthe Drinker)
- 34 "Fancy that!", long ago
- 35 Not close at all

### Down

- 1 Regional russet potato
- 2 Fuming mad
- 3 LRT Station between uOttawa and Hurdman
- 4 Place to raise llama look-alikes
- 5 Convincingly beat
- 6 Vast tracts of land
- 7 Cowboy's rope
- 8 The "A" of the NAC
- 9 Carleton, Saint Paul, or UQO
- 11 "I vote we should!"
- 15 Locations
- 20 Grotte Notre \_\_\_ de Lourdes, Vanier grotto
- 21 "Basic taste" of savoury foods
- 22 Double-reeded orchestral instruments
- 24 Polynesian-themed Disney movie with a live-action remake scheduled for 2026
- 25 \_\_\_ of Ottawa: honour awarded to Jim Watson, Holly Ellingwood, and Wyatt McWilliams in 2025
- 26 "Over here!", in a library
- 28 General vicinity
- 29 Past just hard of hearing



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# Remembering the Warsaw ghetto through a family's story

By John Leefe

Lindenlea resident Renée Levcovitch-McHale has made a timely contribution to Holocaust education by self-publishing a new memoir about her parents, both survivors of the notorious Warsaw ghetto in Nazi-occupied Poland during World War II.

Poignantly titled *Kaddish For My Father - Flowers For My Mother*, this heartfelt memoir chronicles the hard-to-fathom suffering and triumphant survival of her Jewish parents, who “were among a tiny portion of Poland’s three million Jews not murdered by Nazi Germany.” Given the recent increase in acts of antisemitism – from December’s senseless slaughter of 20 worshippers at a Hannukah gathering in Australia to a stabbing at a kosher food section in an Ottawa Loblaws – this book could not have been released at a more propitious time.

Renée is a retired Global Affairs advisor who says she never really understood her parents’ courageous struggles in wartime Poland. Both survived the ghettos and slave labor camps, where Jews would work in horrendous mines and factories to feed the Nazi military machine when the regime attacked Soviet Russia in 1942.

“With my parents’ deaths, I yearned to know more about Poland and their lives there. But until I began this journey to honour their lives, my grasp of this background was weak,” she acknowledges.

Over the course of 17 chapters, Renée’s memoir connects on emotional, spiritual, and intellectual levels as she takes readers on a personal odyssey to discover the truth of the horrors her parents suffered. Equally important, she peppers the memoir with insightful historical context about Poland’s long history of antisemitism – a feeling that preceded the war and, surprisingly, continued long after the Nazi regime ended.

Renée’s father, Gershon Lewkowicz, was born into an orthodox Jewish family in 1908 in Kielce, when the territory was part of Russia. Her mother, Rosa (Opolska) Lewkowicz, was born in 1924 into a non-orthodox Jewish family. Despite their different

backgrounds and birthplaces, they experienced similar cruelty when the Nazis established Jewish ghettos across the country.

Renée says: “The Nazis violently forced Warsaw’s 350,000 Jews – a third of the city’s population – into a

Gershon led a ghetto uprising while working in a slave labour camp and smuggling ammunition. He ultimately escaped to the forests surrounding Kielce, where he allied himself with other anti-fascists. He was involved in coordinating activity between the work camps

parents suffered:

*[My mother] left the ghetto regularly to find and smuggle in food for her family. If caught, she would have been killed. As she looked Polish, she would don her school uniform, removing her yellow Jewish star.*

*Once, when standing in line for food, a former Christian schoolmate pointed her out to a German soldier. “She’s a Jew!” Stunned, my mother was certain she was done for, as thoughts swirled in her head that this very boy had sometimes wanted to walk her home, holding her books. How could he have changed so much as to mark her for death? Ironically, it was a German guard who saved her. This German looked at the boy and said: “What are you doing? She’s only a young girl!” He let her go. This was one of many examples of my parents narrowly dodging death.*

*The Nazis sent my father to two of the more notorious forced labour camps near Kielce...where some Jews were slowly poisoned to death working in underwater mines filled with picric acid...” The conditions in the camp were horrible,” he said in his deposition, “...there was typhus everywhere. The sick ones were killed on the spot. Even the grave diggers who buried bodies were killed although they were healthy. People lied on uncovered cots. There was terrible dirt. Ears got blocked.”*

Even for readers who consider themselves well informed about the Holocaust, this memoir offers valuable insight into the sources of antisemitism that occurred well after the war ended. For instance,

she chronicles the 1946 Kielce pogrom, until more recently a relatively unknown massacre that killed 42 Jews and hospitalized 50 more in her father’s hometown. He narrowly avoided being killed.

This ongoing antisemitism ultimately forced her parents to reconsider whether a life in their native country was worth the risk. Ultimately, they emigrated in 1949 to Israel, and later Turkey and Belgium, eventually settling in Toronto in 1953.

Renée says that “this book is not about me. It’s a testament to the courage and humanity of two survivors among the millions subjected to Nazi horrors. It is an attempt, during a time of rising authoritarianism, to help everyone understand we must confront evil in all forms from the very beginning.”

Perhaps the greatest virtue in this multi-faceted memoir is the way Renée describes the spiritual satisfaction of knowing, admiring and honoring her parents’ wartime struggles – especially her father’s common sense and stoic determination to survive and support his family in post-war Canada. In this sense, the title *Kaddish* is entirely appropriate in that it refers to the central prayer of the Jewish mourning ritual, recited at funeral services to remember and honour loved ones.

*Kaddish For My Father - Flowers For My Mother* is available at Books on Beechwood. All proceeds from the sales of this memoir will be donated to the Ottawa-based Centre for Holocaust Education and Scholarship.

Retired public servant John Leefe lives in Lindenlea

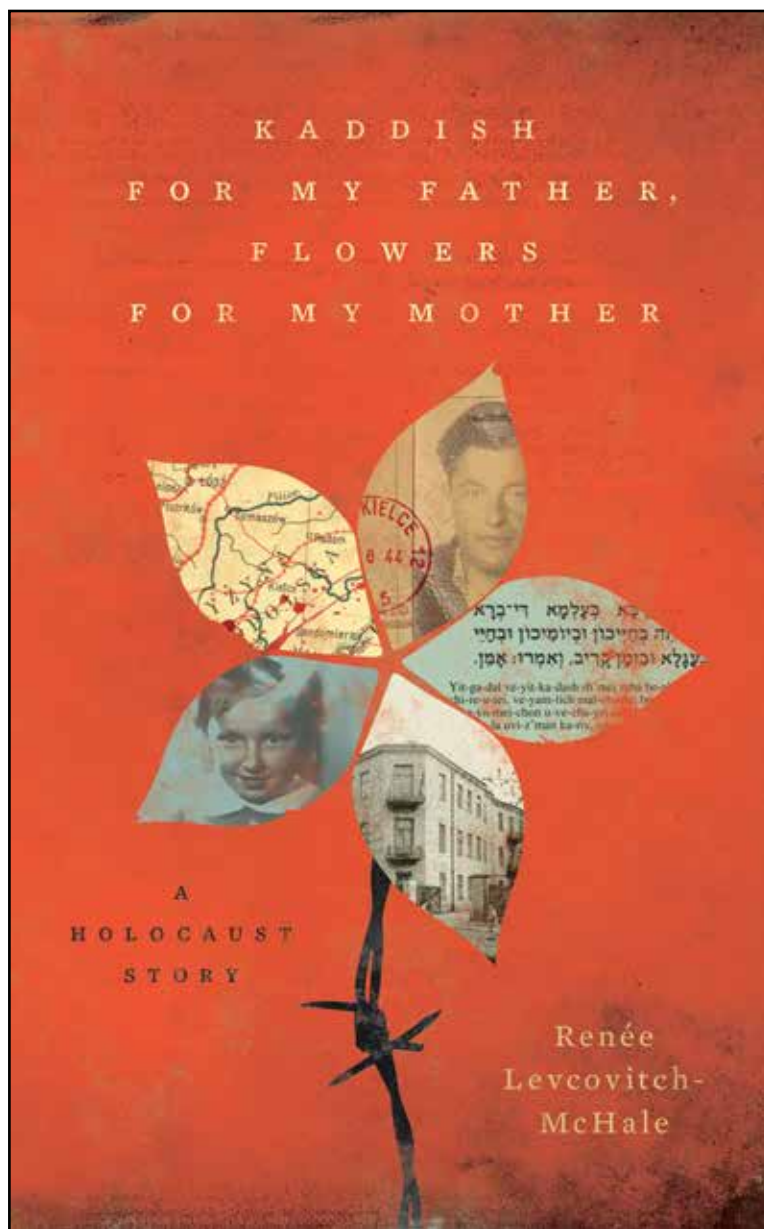


Image by Richard Ljoenes

This book is now available at Books on Beechwood.

ghetto representing less than three per cent of the city’s land mass...armed guards were ordered to shoot Jews trying to escape. Over the next two years the Nazis forcibly transported thousands of Jews from surrounding communities into the confined space. Hunger and disease worsened, all compounded by Nazi brutality that included beatings and executions for the slightest offence”.

Through interviews with Holocaust survivors, family friends who knew her parents and her father’s written deposition taken shortly after the Nazi regime was defeated in 1945, readers learn how

and potential forest hideouts, all while plotting at various times to acquire small arms and escape to the forest. He was also among those seeking out contacts with Polish partisan groups. “This was a risky activity,” Renée notes, “given the constant danger of an encounter with Polish partisans only interested in robbing and killing Jews.”

Renée also writes of her mother’s experiences in the ghetto, where food had to be smuggled in to prevent starvation and the prospect of death was constant. The following passages, although difficult to read, demonstrate the severity of the cruelty both of her

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# The 2026 Spring Book Sale wants your books!

By Carolyn Brereton

Spring may seem a long way off, but volunteers with the Rockcliffe Park Spring Book Sale are already working towards this year's event and we need your donations of gently used books (in English and French).

Book drop-offs are accepted at the library (380 Springfield Rd.) during opening hours. Donations should be deposited in the blue tote bag found on the shelves along the north wall (the Springfield Road side). The library can get quite busy, so please, contact us if you intend to have a sizable donation – more than a couple of bags or boxes. Get in touch at: [rpspringbooksale25@gmail.com](mailto:rpspringbooksale25@gmail.com) to arrange for a pick-up.

Unfortunately, we are not accepting audio-visual materials, magazines, textbooks, or encyclopedias. Please also consider the condition of the items you are donating;

if a book is in poor shape – mouldy, torn, or badly marked – please dispose of it at home.

## Curious about what we do with the funds raised?

Much of the funds remain with the Rockcliffe Branch, and are used to enhance the library collections, especially express books, DVDs, magazines and newspapers; the rest goes to programming.

The funding allows for a variety of programs which would otherwise not be available. One of the notable events from last summer was the broadcast of the Rockcliffe Park "Kids Podcast Club" on CKCU FM's Wednesday morning programme "The Vacant Lot."

Eleven students from Rockcliffe Park Public School, supported by librarians Suzanne White and Martha Hodgson, participated in two live radio sessions in June and July. During the first session, they discussed



Photo by Philippe Marchand

Check out the many treasures at Rockcliffe Book Sale on April 25 and 26.

their favourite books on air, and in the second, conducted an interview with children's author Graham Annable.

Other initiatives include distribution of board books

to vulnerable communities; books in Inuktitut/English for the graduating Inuktitut Kindergarten class at R. E. Wilson school; music programming at St. Brigid

School; and programming with the Elmvale Acres branch to increase library services to address complex mental health challenges of students connected to the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO).

Not all the programming is directed towards literacy for children. Martha and her team at the branch are involved in outreach to local senior's residences. They also arrange imaginative art programs for adults and presentations from local authors, while the popular Music in the Stacks series entertains library visitors of all ages.

This year's sale takes place Apr. 25 and 26 at the Rockcliffe Park Community Centre, 380 Springfield Rd.

Carolyn Brereton is a previous editor of New Edinburgh News, lives in New Edinburgh and sits on the New Edinburgh News advisory committee.

## Happy new year from Rockcliffe Park Public Library!

By Martha Hodgson

Curious about what book lovers in Ottawa were reading in 2025? The Rockcliffe Park Public Library has gathered lists of the year's most popular books, based on the number of hold requests. What better time than the darkest, coldest weeks of the year to light up your life with a great book?

This year's runaway hit: *The Let Them Theory* – Mel Robbins' self-help powerhouse

dominated our hold lists.

In fiction, romance ruled again with Emily Henry's slow-burn rivalry in *Great Big Beautiful Life*; Taylor Jenkins Reid's NASA-era drama *Atmosphere*; and Carley Fortune's heartfelt Ontario cottage-country return in *One Golden Summer*.

Historical fiction also surged: Fredrik Backman's tender *My Friends*; Claire Leslie Hall's *Broken Country* (past love meets present turmoil); and

Emma Donoghue's one-day Paris snapshot *The Paris Express* – a 2025 Giller nominee.

Series fans stayed fed: Dan Brown brought Robert Langdon back in *The Secret of Secrets*, and Michael Connelly launched a new Catalina-set mystery with *Nightshade*.

In our children's department, J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series, and Peter Brown's Wild Robot trilogy continue to be perennial favourites. *The Wild Robot* has seen a significant resurgence after the release of the movie adaptation in 2024.

Demand for phonics-based readers like Bob Books skyrocketed with Ontario's reading curriculum shift. The library has invested in decodable books, such as Bob Books, to meet this demand. You can find more decodable books in our collections.

The full lists of the Best of 2025 are available on our website. Come into the branch to check out one of these popular titles!

Rockcliffe Park branch continues to offer Monday morning Storytime each week at 9:30 am and Pop-up activities for kids every Thursday from 3:30 to 5 pm

Our Adult Book Club continues to meet the first Tuesday

of each month and is always welcoming new readers. On Tue., Feb. 3 we will discuss *The Spoon Stealer* by Lesley Crewe and on Mar. 3, *The Wager* by David Gunn.

On the second Tuesday of each month, in the evening, we host the Rockcliffe Park Acoustic Music Circle. This is a drop-in for musicians ages 16+, to make some music. Bring your acoustic musical instrument: wind, string, keyboard or percussion. (Instruments are not provided)

This is a great way for local musicians to share their work with the community. This is for artists, who may not have access to traditional venues or performance opportunities or for more experienced musicians looking to hone their performance skills, experiment with new material, and test out ideas. This music performance circle can provide exposure to a variety of music genres (classical, jazz, rock, folk, pop, etc.), as well as new and experimental forms.

Check out our website for all the information about children's programs, and to see what else we have planned for February and March for adults.

As part of our adult programming process, we are always

looking for suggestions and input from you. We have provided a wide range of topics, based on our conversations with you. Let us know which of these types of presenters or performers you would like to see more of (you can pick as many as you like): Musicians, artists, authors, scientists, natural science specialists (birding, plants, etc.), or others. Please specify as many as you like!

Lastly, we are always on the hunt for presenters, performers, or workshop facilitators at the Rockcliffe Park Branch, so please share your recommendations with us. We are at 380 Springfield Rd.

## Opening Hours

Monday: 10 am–5 pm

Tuesday: 1–8 pm

Wednesday: 10 am–5 pm

Thursday: 1–8 pm

Friday: 1–6 pm

Saturday: 10 am–2 pm

Sunday: Closed

Martha Hodgson Public Service Supervisor – Rockcliffe Park Branch Ottawa Public Library 613-580-2424 x27622 | [martha.hodgson@biblioot-tawalibrary.ca](mailto:martha.hodgson@biblioot-tawalibrary.ca)

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# Catherine Willis-O'Connor's painting of New Edinburgh

Catherine Willis-O'Connor's *Leech's Drugs, Spring 1940* captures a singular moment in the everyday life of New Edinburgh's commercial past. This storefront, once known locally as Leech's Drugs, stood on what was then one of the village's main business streets; a place where residents picked up essentials and crossed paths with neighbours. While local directories and directories of extant businesses today no longer list a store by that name, the idea of the neighbourhood drugstore remains familiar; New Edinburgh still has two community pharmacies, one at 5 Beechwood Avenue and

another at 222 Beechwood Avenue, serving residents with prescriptions, health services, and personalized care.

In the first half of the twentieth century, local drugstores like Leech's would often have occupied central spots along streets that connected people's homes to parks, schools, and places of work. These pharmacies served as both health resources and social spaces, a daily stop for newspaper purchases, a quick greeting across the counter, or a chance encounter with a neighbour.

The street life of New Edinburgh in 1940 was shaped by the larger history of the neighbourhood itself.

Founded in 1829 by Thomas McKay, a key builder of the Rideau Canal's lock system, New Edinburgh began as a village at the junction of the Rideau and Ottawa Rivers. McKay laid out streets and built mills that drew workers and their families, giving rise to modest housing and small shops where daily commerce was conducted.

Over time, the village evolved. By the late 1800s it was formally incorporated and then later annexed into the expanding city of Ottawa in 1887. Despite this growth, the neighbourhood preserved a sense of village scale, with Beechwood Avenue and

nearby lanes remaining centres of local life. Much of the area's architecture dates from the 19th century, and residents today continue to value its tree-lined streets and park spaces along the Rideau and Ottawa Rivers.

Willis-O'Connor's work invites viewers to look closely at these everyday elements, not just as isolated buildings, but as parts of a larger social fabric. When we see a painting of a storefront, we can also imagine the street it was on: the paths leading through the neighbourhood, the river visible nearby, and the echoes of earlier generations moving along those same routes. In

this way, the history of a place like New Edinburgh consists not only of its well-known landmarks (Rideau Hall, 24 Sussex Drive, or the embassies tucked into side streets) but also of the small, unglamorous beginnings of local shops and services that served residents' daily needs.

By focusing on rich, everyday detail, the painting *Leech's Drugs, Spring 1940* offers more than a snapshot: it gestures toward an ongoing story of community life, continuity, and change in one of Ottawa's oldest neighbourhoods.



Image by Catherine Willis-O'Connor

Inspired by the attention to the unique history of New Edinburgh, Catherine Willis-O'Connor painted *Leech's Drugs, Spring 1940*, only to discover that it's the exact location of Vesna Pavic's Exquisite Hair-Styling and Aesthetics (New Edinburgh Spa). Catherine read about Vesna's story in Janet Uren's book *The Villagers: History of the People of Life of New Edinburgh*.



# It's a raven invasion: Watch out for your kittens!

By Tony Gaston

As earth-bound species, we humans do not tend to look upwards very much. Mostly, when we are walking, our eyes are on the path, on our dogs, or on the passing traffic. Look upwards over Beechwood though, any time from mid-December onwards, and you may see pairs of large black birds twisting and turning in the sky: ravens performing their pairing rituals in a kind of sky-dance. There are at least two pairs based in the New Edinburgh-Vanier area this year, and they appear interested in the St Charles Church, Rideau Terrace Apartments, or the Chartwell building, all of which they land on from time to time. Previous nest sites include the French Embassy on Sussex and 24 Sussex Drive, where they occupied the large conifer in the front garden during the 2020 pandemic.

Forty years ago, when I first came to Ottawa, the sight of a raven over the city might happen once or twice a year. In those days, ravens were found mainly out in the



Photo courtesy Tony Gaston

**Raven in flight, showing the characteristic wedge-shaped tail, thick beak, and hackled throat.**

countryside, especially over in Quebec, where they nested in quarries and on cliffs tucked away in hard-to-see places. Gradually but steadily over the subsequent decades, ravens have become more urban. In the 1990s, a pair nested on a

hydro pylon beside the Ottawa river south of the Queensway. In the 2000s, a pair nested on a high-rise construction crane in Hintonburg. Since then, their presence in the city has increased steadily. One of the first nests in our area was the

residence of the Indian High Commissioner on Acacia Ave. in Rockcliffe. The urban invasion was given greater impetus by the pandemic, which cleared the streets and made them better suited to scavenging ravens.

In Canada's northern communities, ravens are important to the village scene. In Nunavut, the gruff croaking of ravens is a constant background to street noises, with bulky black birds perched everywhere on house-tops and hydro poles. People complain about the racket, but no one does anything about it: ravens have a long standing reputation with some Indigenous peoples and are not to be messed with. There are stories of ravens, either out of retaliation or pure mischief, dropping rocks on cars, stealing peoples' personal effects, and menacing puppies and kittens. It is probably not wise to let ravens get too intimate with our pets.

Leaving bagged garbage on the street unbinning is an invitation for it to be scattered hither and yon. Ravens

are much more powerful than crows – even canvas bags and rucksacks will be investigated and potentially ripped open in pursuit of any hidden goodies. The Haida creation story of Raven opening a clamshell and subsequently letting people out into the world is a perfect illustration of their curiosity regarding any enclosed object. The release of humanity was not a preconceived act, just a consequence of Raven's inquisitive nature. The Haida sculptor Bill Reid described the Raven as "...completely self-centred, uninvolved bringer of change, through inadvertence and accident..." As in the case of the clamshell, ravens never know what they may find when they dig into your garbage.

Tony Gaston used to be a member of the Canadian Wildlife Service. He has lived on Dufferin Road since 1980. His children's book, *A Raven Conspiracy (Ages 7-10)* is available at Books on Beechwood. He would welcome any comments on his articles at: [tonygaston-consult@gmail.com](mailto:tonygaston-consult@gmail.com)

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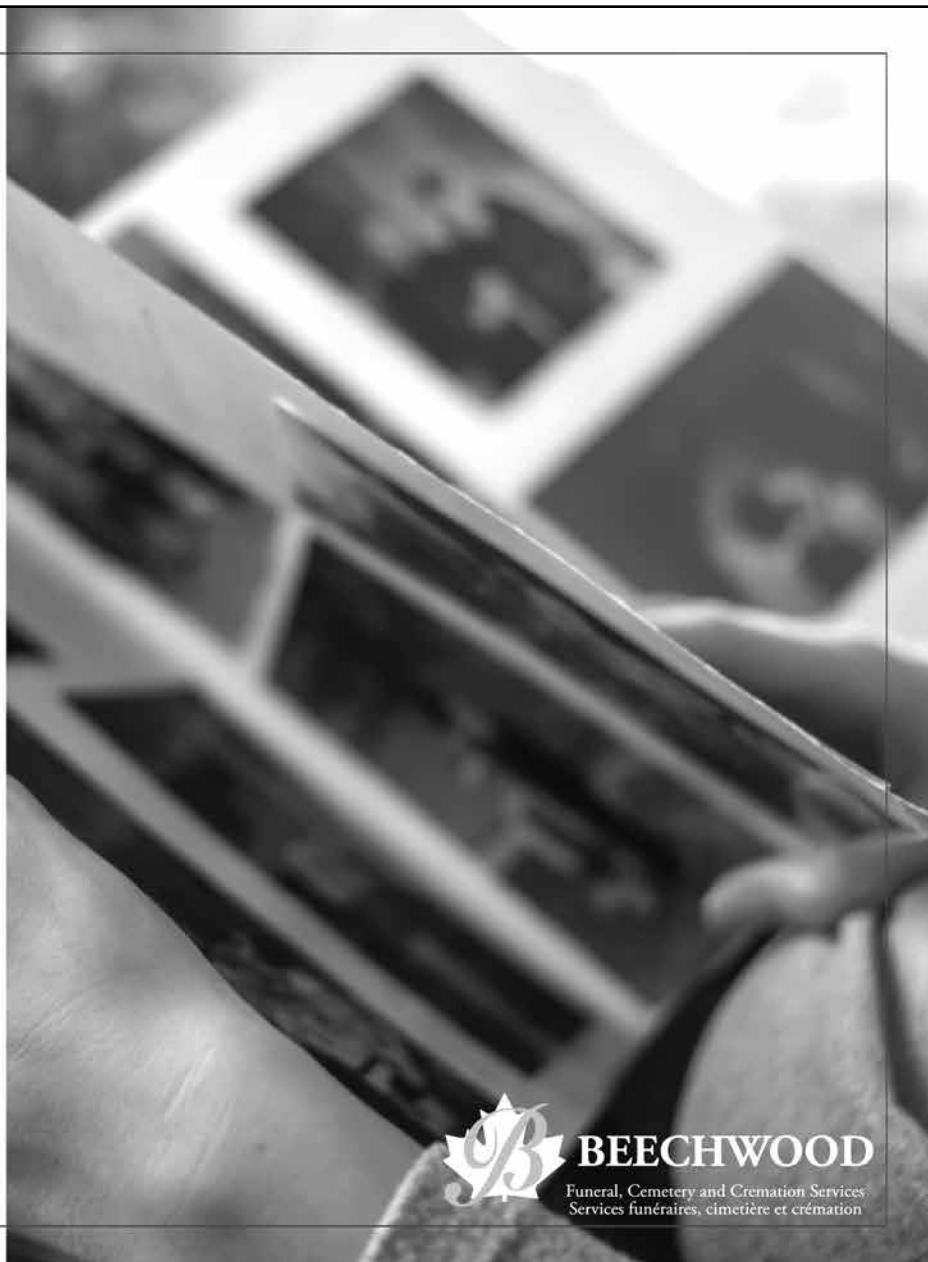
There were so many decisions to make, and I wasn't sure if we were honouring him the way he would have wanted. Now, I wish we had talked about it sooner.

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# February, the middle month

By Douglas Cornish

February might be the most popular month of the year, but why?

There's so much crammed into its mere 28 days: Valentine's Day, Groundhog Day, and Family Day (observed in six provinces). The Super Bowl is in February. February is the month of Black History and our National Flag Day. It's the blahs month. Winterlude is in February. Also, because it has just 28 days most years, it is the only month that can pass without a single full moon. There have even been famous poems written about February. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's "Afternoon in February" is one example, which captures the bleakness of a winter's end.

I think the most important distinction February has is that it's the middle winter month. You have January on one side and March on the other. February is the proverbial meat

in the sandwich, the middle child of winter. By February (no matter what the winter is like), you are right into winter, my friends. Christmas has passed, and so has New Year's, and you wake up in February and realize that winter is still here. Unless you spend your winters in a warmer climate, February is the non-vacation month. Most travelling was done over the holidays and New Year's; the March break is not yet upon us. February is the stay-at-home month, the waiting month.

Once you hit March, winter is well over, perhaps not physically, but emotionally, because you know (or hope) that spring is just around the corner. February is the month of waiting, the month of anxiousness, the month of "let's get it over already" and move on.

February is a waiting room. "What are you here for"? "I'm waiting for spring", is the accepted answer. Sometimes, it can be a long wait. It's often

a "hurry up and wait" situation, then a start-stop predicament. Spring never comes in February (except in Victoria), but the idea of spring often creeps into one's mind, and because of the shortness of the month, it is assumed that spring is coming. Of course, assumption is probably best left to the economists. You're dealing with Mother Nature, so especially in the present state of climate change, anything and everything goes. You can never argue (and win) with Mother Nature.

February can be a testing ground of one's patience and an examination of one's resilience. It's a "character" month. It can be a very cold month – even a snowy month. As brief as it is and as many festivities that are contained within its 28 days, February does require some moxie to get through. Of course, February will end and spring will arrive; that is a given, but seasonal emotional anxiety, especially in this part

of the country, is ever-present.

Some people do have more of an internal seasonal barometer than others, but the so-called February blahs can affect many people. Everyone has their limitations. To February or not to February, we don't really have a choice – but we will get through it.

*Born in Victoria, one of five children, Douglas Cornish grew up mainly in Ottawa, living in New Edinburgh for 12 years. He has lived in two European countries. He now resides in his family home in Manor Park, caring for his disabled brother.*



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# EVENTS CALENDAR

## February

**Feb. 7 – Winter Celebration | Rideau Hall | 12:30–4 pm | Free**

All activities are free of charge. Experience the joy of winter at Rideau Hall with family and friends during Winter Celebration. Explore the snow-clad grounds of Rideau Hall and discover winter games and pastimes from all over the world. Lace up your skates in the Winter Pavilion – a stunning heritage building – and skate on the Rideau Hall Rink. Warm up with a tour of the residence and check out some special indoor activities! Visit the State rooms where the Governor General honours Canadians, welcomes

dignitaries, and fulfils her official duties. For ongoing updates/schedule changes or other events, visit [gg.ca](http://gg.ca).

**Feb. 19 – New Edinburgh Seniors Social Group – Craft Drop-In | New Edinburgh Park Fieldhouse 203 Stanley Ave. | 1–3 pm**

Bring any craft you are working on, from knitting, crochet, embroidery, or cross-stitch, to paper crafts, etc. Craft with your senior neighbours over a cup of tea! For this date only, direct any questions to Lee Jolliffe at [jolliffe.lee@gmail.com](mailto:jolliffe.lee@gmail.com) or 613.400.8562. We hope to see you there.

**Feb. 2 and every Monday in February – New Edinburgh Community Choir | St. Bart’s Church**

**125 MacKay St. | 7:30–9:30 pm**

Over a decade old and still growing! Come and experience choral singing! No auditions and everyone is welcome. Contact [newechoir@gmail.com](mailto:newechoir@gmail.com) or call Isobel Bisby at 613.304.7919 as location may change for some meetings.

**Feb. 11 – Meeting of the Crichton Community Council Board of Directors | Location to be confirmed | 8–9 pm**

Held on the second Wednesday of every month. Meeting times, dates and locations may vary to accommodate the availability of CCC Directors or guests. Email if you would like to attend the meeting, if there is a topic you would

like to discuss with the CCC’s Directors, or if you are interested in joining us as a volunteer: [CrichtonCommunityCouncil@gmail.com](mailto:CrichtonCommunityCouncil@gmail.com) (Please be advised that meeting details noted in this event calendar are subject to change.)

**Feb. 16 – Family Day Rink Fest (CCC) | New Edinburgh Park Fieldhouse 203 Stanley Ave. | 1–4 pm | Free**

Get ready for a fun-filled afternoon of skating, curling, and exciting international hockey action at the CCC Family Day Rink Fest! Bring the whole family out to enjoy the rink with open skating sessions and a chance to try your hand at curling. Whether you’re gliding across the ice or sliding a stone, there’s something for everyone to enjoy! And to keep the energy high, indulge in some delicious hot chocolate as you soak in the winter fun. It’s the perfect way to spend Family Day: active, festive, and full of excitement. See you there!

**Feb. 17 – New Edinburgh Community Alliance**

**(NECA) Board Meeting | New Edinburgh Park Fieldhouse 203 Stanley Ave. | 7–9 pm**

All New Edinburgh residents are welcome to attend; if you can’t make it in person, feel free to join virtually via Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88411580165> Meeting ID: 884 1158 0165

**Feb. 21 – Open Mic at the Fieldhouse (CCC) | New Edinburgh Park Fieldhouse 203 Stanley Ave. | 7–10 pm | Free**

Prepare to be entertained or bring your talent to share at New Ed’s Open Mic at the Fieldhouse. Admission is free, but donations (to help pay for our new PA system) are appreciated. The kitchen bar will be open offering a variety of refreshments including alcoholic and non-alcoholic options. Performers have two songs or about 8–10 minutes at the mic. Two microphones, a mixer and speakers are available. Performers can register at [CrichtonCommunityCouncil@gmail.com](mailto:CrichtonCommunityCouncil@gmail.com) or in person at 6 pm First come,

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**Feb. 28 – Snow & Connection: Join Leap of Faith, Art as Therapy | Richelieu Park 300 Pères-Blancs Ave. | 10–11:30 am**

An outdoor workshop inviting mindful, nature-based artistic creation, exploring the question: how do we find connection in winter? Mindfully connect with snow and the natural world as you create sculptures and visual messages for other people passing by. Experiment with tree trunks and other natural surfaces as your canvas! We will explore the theme of creating connection. Pre-registration required: [eventbrite.ca/o/leap-of-faith-art-as-therapy-86783702073](https://eventbrite.ca/o/leap-of-faith-art-as-therapy-86783702073)

## March

**Mar. 11 – Meeting of the Crichton Community Council Board of Directors | Location to be confirmed | 8–9 pm**

Held on the second Wednesday of every month. Meeting times,

dates and locations may vary to accommodate the availability of CCC Directors or guests. Email if you would like to attend the meeting, if there is a topic you would like to discuss with the CCC's Directors, or if you are interested in joining us as a volunteer: [CrichtonCommunityCouncil@gmail.com](mailto:CrichtonCommunityCouncil@gmail.com) (Please be advised that meeting details noted in this event calendar are subject to change.)

**Mar. 17 – New Edinburgh Community Alliance (NECA) Board Meeting | New Edinburgh Park Fieldhouse 203 Stanley Ave. | 7–9 pm**

All New Edinburgh residents are welcome to attend; if you can't make it in person, feel free to join virtually via Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88411580165> Meeting ID: 884 1158 0165

**Mar. 28 – The Flamenco For Food and Fun Project | New Edinburgh Park Fieldhouse 203 Stanley Ave. | 6:30–11 pm | Free**

Join us for an evening of passionate music and dance hosted by Sueños Flamencos at the New Edinburgh Park

Fieldhouse! Includes a Flamenco presentation by Sueños Flamencos (and students) Mini flamenco lesson: palmas, cante, baile y guitarra (clapping, singing, dancing, and guitar); and Juerga (flamenco party for all). If you are able, please bring non-perishable food items for the food bank, your reusable travel mug for FREE tea! Enjoy an unforgettable night of flamenco music and dance, while giving back to the community.

**Mar. 28 – Shelter & Comfort: Join Leap of Faith, Art as Therapy | Richelieu Park 300 Pères-Blancs Ave. | 10–11:30 am**

An outdoor workshop inviting mindful, nature-based artistic creation and exploring the question: how do we find comfort in winter? Gather nature's gifts to use as materials to create a shelter such as a nest, lean-to, or fairy house, to explore the theme of comfort during cold times. These creations will be temporary as the elements and creatures of the forest interact with them. Pre-registration required:

[eventbrite.ca/o/leap-of-faith-art-as-therapy-86783702073](https://eventbrite.ca/o/leap-of-faith-art-as-therapy-86783702073)

## Have an event coming up?

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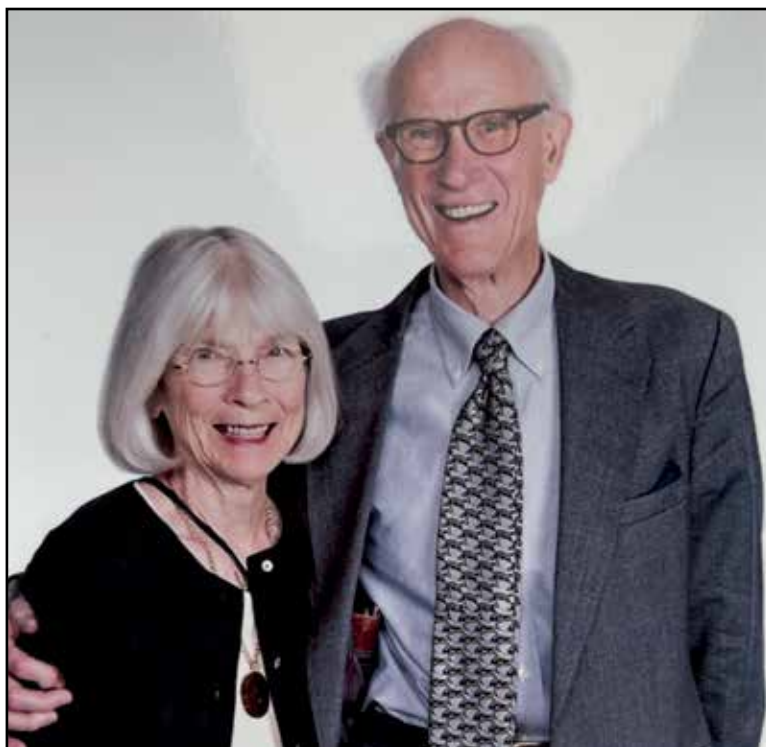
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## In memoriam: Gyde Vanier Shepherd



### By Jane Heintzman

Our community was greatly saddened by the recent loss of Gyde Vanier Shepherd, one of New Edinburgh's longest-standing residents. Gyde was a pillar of our community for close to six decades, taking a lively interest in all aspects of neighbourhood life, and inspiring others with his infectious enthusiasm for the beauty of our surroundings, and for local events and causes. He and Rosemary, his beloved wife of nearly 62 years, have lived in their lovely house on MacKay Street for a remarkable 57 years – a bedrock of stability and rootedness in our peripatetic world.

The Shepherds' MacKay Street home was a bustling spot while their four offspring, Pippa, Gyde, Thomas, and Ben were growing up and attending local schools. While Pippa has settled in Vancouver to pursue her career as a marine conservation specialist, Thomas and his family live in Whitehorse, where Thomas works with First

Nations communities. Gyde Jr. and Ben have returned to their Ottawa roots: Gyde after several years working for the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation in northern Yukon, and Ben to raise his family and teach after years teaching in Colombia.

Gyde Sr. had an academic background that included an undergraduate degree from McGill, followed by graduate studies in history, political science, and art history at Oxford and Harvard Universities. His professional career as an art historian, curator, and arts administrator was launched at a heady time in Canada, as the country geared up for its centennial year in 1967. Gyde worked under the direction of legendary National Gallery Director Jean Sutherland Boggs to prepare for the Gallery's Expo 67 exhibits in Montreal. They collaborated closely to bring about the creation of the current National Gallery building on Sussex Drive.

In keeping with his generous and unpretentious nature,

Gyde firmly believed in making the Gallery accessible and welcoming to visitors of all backgrounds, interests and ages – a place of community, connection, and peaceful reflection. For four decades, he served as a board member and adjudicator for the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation to support aspiring artists in the early stages of their careers.

With Rosemary's support, Gyde took the courageous step of returning to Harvard in the early 1990s to complete his PhD which he set aside in 1965 to take up a position with the Frick Collection in New York City. His dissertation, *A Monument to Pope Pius II: Pintorichio and Raphael in the Piccolomini Library in Siena, 1494–1508*, was a study of late 15th-century fresco styles.

Gyde was a strong Christian, a faith reflected in his gentleness, kindness, generous spirit, and concern for others. He was a founding Board Member of L'Arche Ottawa, a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting and creating communities for persons with intellectual disabilities. Above all, he was devoted to his family: to Rosemary, his beloved wife and life's companion; to his children, Pippa, Gyde (Marie-Claude), Thomas (Mara) and Ben (Karla); and to his six grandchildren: Emily, Ella, Sadie, Isabella, Alejandro, and Gabriela.

Gyde will be deeply missed by his family members and friends, and by all in the neighbourhood who were touched by his cheerful and affirming presence in our daily lives.

*Jane is a long-time contributor to NEN, well known for her dedication to this paper's 'For the Birds' column.*

## Congratulations



Congratulations to *NEN* contributor Ralph Hesse, who was officially sworn in as a new Canadian citizen at a ceremony on Jan. 15, 2026. Originally from New York state, Ralph has lived in

Lindenlea since 2018. He and his wife La Rayne are active in the community, where you'll see them walking, cycling, or volunteering at the MacKay United Church.



Congratulations to long-time New Edinburgh resident Gavin Murphy for enabling Kemptville District Hospital to purchase a new X-ray machine!

KDH reports that the matching goal for the X-Ray Campaign has been met, saying:

"Thanks to an extraordinary \$230,000 matching gift from Gavin Murphy, and the

incredible generosity of supporters who rose to the challenge, every dollar donated to the campaign was doubled, allowing us to move forward with the purchase of a new X-ray machine and enhance diagnostic care at KDH for our patients and care teams. This will support patient care by providing faster, more accurate diagnoses and improved patient experience."

## Got some news to share?

Anniversaries, weddings, birthdays, retirements, milestones and remembrances: *New Edinburgh News* readers want to hear about them!

Send us your text and photo to:

[editor@newedinburgh.ca](mailto:editor@newedinburgh.ca)

Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.