



BRETT DELMAGE/THE BUZZ

THE CENTRETOWN BUZZ

Ottawa drags feet on pedestrian safety

Alayne McGregor

How can you safely stay two metres away from another person on a sidewalk only two metres wide?

That's the question Ottawa pedestrians have been asking themselves since COVID-19 social distancing began—and nowhere is it a bigger issue than on Centretown's main shopping street, Bank Street.

As Councillor Catherine McKenney points out, this busy street has essential destinations which residents need to get to even in a pandemic, including grocery stores, pharmacies, a pet food store, and the emergency food centre. "And this is all within a short distance on a street that people have to walk on. Bank Street has to be a priority."

On quieter streets, one

can simply step out into the street to keep far enough away to avoid infection.

This is not easy on Bank Street with its heavier vehicle traffic, large numbers of parked cars—and many pedestrians.

Together with Councillor Shawn Menard, McKenney has strongly pushed to have at least one curb/parking lane of Bank Street, downtown and in the Glebe, reallocated to pedestrian traffic.

This would add at least three metres of additional walking space along the street.

On Monday, Menard announced that the Bank Street Bridge at the south end of the Glebe would have its two outer curb lanes dedicated for pedestrians and active transportation.

But that's the only section of Bank Street so far to be narrowed.

Some recently rebuilt

parts of Bank Street do have wider sidewalks, McKenney said, "but then if you look across the street, the sidewalk will be 1.8m, maybe 2m in some cases—so absolutely not adequate for several people being able to pass. Even two people passing each other, if you're walking up from behind someone and pass them, that's a slow pass.

"You're not always going in opposite directions. I've noticed that when I'm out walking my dog. I will pass someone and I will step out to the street because I know that's going to take me 10 to 15 seconds to get around someone, so it's not a safe pass. So the sidewalks on Bank in certain areas are wider, absolutely—but to get to each of those essential services, we need more space."

Mayor Jim Watson has consistently opposed narrowing Bank Street, al-

though he did say he would support creating "pods" around grocery stores and pharmacies to allow pedestrians more space for very short distances.

When the issue was discussed at City Council on March 25, Watson directed staff that any road closures or sidewalk extensions must be paid out of councillors' individual office budgets.

Last week, McKenney said, she received a suggestion from city staff of two

"bump outs" on Bank Street: "one in front of the Shoppers Drug Mart on Bank at Gladstone (eliminating maybe 2 parking spots), the other on Somerset just east of Bank at the door to Massine's (eliminating 3 parking spots). I declined to pay for these out of my office budget since they are highly insufficient in providing safe physical distance for pedestrians walking to essential services."

(cont on 7)



BRETT DELMAGE/THE BUZZ

Justine Bell: being active and engaged in my community is in my blood

Alayne McGregor

Centretown has a new public school board trustee—who's deeply concerned that every student gets the education they need to contribute to society.

Justine Bell was sworn in as the trustee for Zone 10 (Somerset/Kitchissippi) on February 18.

She replaces Erica Braunovan, who resigned in December. Thirteen candidates were interviewed for the seat, and trustees chose Bell by secret ballot.

Bell is a federal public servant, a senior analyst at Global Affairs Canada on poverty reduction.

Her background is in international development, and she's led on Canada's policy for engaging civil society organizations around the world, worked on Canada's efforts in Afghanistan, and volunteered with refugees.

She's also deeply attached to this neighbourhood: "when we had our child, we realized this was the best place that we could ever wish to live in Ottawa and probably in Canada if not the world."

She's lived in Centretown for 12 years, currently on Cambridge Street North, and her five-year-old daughter is in junior kindergarten at Cambridge Street Public School.

When she talked to *The BUZZ*, she emphasized how much her own family background made her want to become a trustee.

"Being active and engaged in my community is in my blood."

(cont on 11)



GUILLERMO TREJO/THE BUZZ

The BUZZ goes online

To protect the health of our volunteers and you, our subscribers *The Centretown BUZZ* is publishing an online-only edition for April 2020 for the first time in our 25-year history.

We know you look forward to *The BUZZ* landing in your mailbox each month, and that you may find this change, in a time when so much is changing, challenging at first.

We believe you will find that the benefits of this new format, which will allow us to bring you more coverage, more commentary, and more colour than ever before, will make the challenge worthwhile.

As a monthly publication we are taking this one issue at a time. We hope you remain safe and healthy until such time that *The BUZZ* is again delivered to your door, and we are committed to ensuring that our coverage of this and other issues important to Centretown continues to inform and entertain you.

Don't miss an issue!:

Download the paper as a PDF: centretownbuzz.com.

Join our mailing list and make sure you don't miss future online editions of the *BUZZ*: subscribe@centretownbuzz.com

And please let your neighbours and friends know that they can read *The BUZZ* online. We don't want our regular readers to miss a thing—and we hope to reach even more Centretowners!

April 17, 2020 — Vol. 25, No. 4

THE CENTRETOWN BUZZ

AT THE HEART OF OTTAWA SINCE 1995.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of *The BUZZ* will be published May 15. Deadline for ads and submissions: May 4. ISSN 1204-1604

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

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The Good, the Bad, and the Bumpy

Ryan Lythall

We are living in challenging times. If you're a person who is physically and/or mentally challenged, life can quickly become overwhelming these days.

For the most part, mainstream media has largely avoided discussing how COVID-19 has affected people with disabilities. I will do my best to share our story.

At my end, things have been relatively normal. I live in my own apartment with 24/7 care and I use a ventilator.

My number one concern right now is making sure that all of my staff stay healthy and that I provide a safe, healthy, and clean environment.

As of this writing, all of my personal support workers (PSWs) are healthy and have been showing up for their shifts. As well, all of my PSWs have also been keeping extra clean. I have access to N95 masks as well as other protective wear if the need arises.

As far as my medical supplies and household supplies go, most of the places that I deal with are still doing deliveries.

Recently, I've ventured out to grab a few essential items, but beside that I've been able to have everything delivered. For these reasons, I consider myself to be one of the lucky ones.

Over the last few weeks, I've had lots of time to connect with friends online, many of whom are physically and/or mentally dis-

abled. Many of them have addressed a wide range of concerns. Below is a list of just a handful of issues and concerns that people with disabilities are facing right now.

The most important issue is ensuring that their caregivers are practicing good hand-washing technique, including using hand sanitizer.

When the pandemic first hit, many people began buying toilet paper, hand sanitizers, and other cleaning products. For most people with disabilities, we rely on others for hands-on assistance.

It's vital that our caregiver(s) be proactive in washing their hands and keeping our places clean, for their health and ours. This involves constantly using hand sanitizer. It plays an important role in our battle to stay healthy.

I'm asking all of you to please be mindful of that the next time you go shopping. Also, if you have any extra hand sanitizer, please consider giving a bottle to someone in need. If you're unsure of who to donate to, please reach out to me on twitter and I'll be happy to give you that information.

It's also difficult not being able to have visitors, including family and loved ones. A lot of people are lonely right now. This is particularly true for those in long-term-care hospitals and homes, group homes, seniors' care homes, and retirement centres.

All of these places have stopped allowing visitors, except in exceptional cases. For those people, it can be extremely lonely and depressing, particularly if they

don't have access to technology in order to communicate.

My heart goes out to them and their loved ones who are currently experiencing this.

Right now people with disabilities are more affected by public transportation, including Para Transpo. Not much has been said about how the city is tackling the issue of keeping the vehicles clean.

It was recently reported that a few OC Transpo drivers tested positive for COVID-19, which is scary considering the number of riders who come in contact with drivers, even with new safety measures in place.

Para Transpo drivers have much more contact with passengers: for example, helping passengers off and on their vehicles, and securing a wheelchair or a walker with straps.

For persons using a wheelchair, the driver has to bend down in front of them and behind them to hook the straps to the chair.

If the passenger requires an extra lap belt or shoulder belt, clearly the driver needs to get close enough to do that.

For people who use walkers on Para Transpo, the passenger is usually sitting elsewhere when the driver's securing their walker. Less risky, but still a high risk.

As well, most if not all Para Transpo users fall under the category of being extra-vulnerable to COVID-19. So, as you can see, proper cleaning of Para Transpo vehicles is very important.

As for me, I'm refusing to take Para Transpo until the

situation improves and I'm given proof that vehicles are being properly cleaned.

There are other important issues as well: for example, not being able to effectively practice physical and social distancing due to the size of our wheelchairs and other mobility devices, which almost completely fill a sidewalk.

A good solution for that would be to shut down certain roads to traffic and allow pedestrians to use them. That way, we can all do physical and social distancing while getting groceries or getting much needed fresh air.

One other issue that I want to quickly mention is wheelchair accessible washrooms. With everything shut down, it's much harder to find them now: damn near impossible, actually.

And finally, I want to thank everyone who is still working, especially those in healthcare, including mental health. Many of them are risking their lives in order to save ours. You are much needed and appreciated. Thank you also to everyone who continues to check in with me and ask if I need anything.

In closing, I ask everyone out there to please be kind, caring, and understanding. Please reach out to friends, loved ones, and even strangers, even if just to say, "Hey, how are you?"

We're all in this together and we will all get out of this together. Let's make it out better than we did going in.

Find Ryan on Twitter:
[@rolling_enigma](https://twitter.com/rolling_enigma)

A message from the editor

Alayne McGregor

Life changed abruptly just after we published the March edition of The Centretown BUZZ.

Within the space of two weeks, all the upcoming shows and events we had featured in the paper were cancelled.

The public gatherings we had planned to cover were no more. Basic services like libraries, pools, and community centres closed, and transit ridership slumped. Most stores, except for an increasingly tight definition of essential, were shuttered.

What could go online, or offer takeout or delivery, did; what couldn't, ended.

Behind the scenes, *The BUZZ* team debated what to do.

We decided we couldn't put our organizers or volunteer deliverers at risk by asking them to pick up and deliver paper copies.

The solution: to go online with a paper in the same format as we've always produced, but available for you to read as a PDF.

Our advertisers were kind enough to continue supporting us, so for now we can afford to pay our basic costs and keep going.

Our regular writers wanted to continue. In fact, we've received more articles than usual, including from new contributors.

And there's lots to write about! The health emergency upended our original article

plan, but we quickly adjusted to write about the effects of the emergency on Centretown—and how residents are stepping up to do more.

Central Ottawa has some particular challenges right now: many apartment-dwellers have little access to greenspace; narrower sidewalks and busier roads make it difficult to self-distance while getting necessary healthful exercise; many small business owners and residents with contingent jobs have seen their income dry up; and a higher percentage of homeless people have suddenly lost basic services.

We've written about those issues this month. And, for those who need a break from constant COVID-19 coverage, we've also included articles and profiles on other useful topics.

The theme of this issue is "Heroes of Centretown", and you can read about how people here are stepping up to help those least able to cope these days.

If you can, consider signing up with the Centretown Community Association (see page 12) to volunteer to help.

Please let us know what you think of this issue. Could you read it comfortably? Was there something else we should have covered?

We're always open to your ideas:
editor@centretownbuzz.com

Operation Ramzieh: neighbourly love, delivered

Alayne McGregor

For Abbas Mahmoud, the smiles and thanks are what have sustained him during the first month of the current pandemic.

Mahmoud is the founder of Operation Ramzieh, a program that delivers food boxes to seniors and other people stuck in their homes. When he was delivering boxes last week, “I knocked on a door and this woman insisted on speaking to me. She just told me how wonderful. She was in a wheelchair and she just insisted on talking to me for a while. She said, ‘God bless you! This is amazing what you guys are doing. And we’re so grateful.’”

Mahmoud would normally be running his two restaurants, The Waverley on Elgin Street and the Moscow Tea Room in the ByWard Market. When they had to

Lebanese civil war. As they prospered in Ottawa, his mother didn’t forget her village back in Lebanon.

“We came from a very poor village, and my mom used to support a lot of that village. It is still fairly poor. My mom, every time she’d go back there, she would feed people, as many people as she could.

“And she’d always [make] a point to feed the mother. She thought if you give the money to the women, the women would take better care of it and make it stretch a lot further.”

When his mother died last July, she was buried in that village.

“I left the village when I was four or five years old, so I didn’t know much about it. When I went there, a lot of the village elders were talking to us about how much my mom would just always feed them. She just arranged,

of a lot of families there, sending money to the mothers.”

Mahmoud had planned to return to the village this year to help some of those families. When the pandemic made that impossible, he looked for another use for the money. He thought of his aunt, in her 80s, and of his older landlord who lives alone.

“I called them to get groceries, and I dropped it off to them, and the idea came from there. There must be a lot of seniors sitting at home, too afraid to go out or maybe they shouldn’t go out.”

To start up the operation, Mahmoud donated \$40,000 and has continued to donate; he has also started a GoFundMe campaign. Volunteers, many from Centretown, have stepped up to sort food into boxes and deliver them to shut-ins.



RAJEEV SINGH/THE BUZZ

Masked and gloved volunteers pack boxes, two metres apart

shut down in March, he and his staff shifted to delivering food boxes. Boxes are designed to last 12 to 14 days and include staples like oatmeal, soup, bread, jams, peanut butter, fruits, and vegetables.

The project is named after Mahmoud’s mother.

His family came to Canada in the 1970s, fleeing the

between all the women, who needed what and who could share what.

“So she helped a lot of people in the town who went to her for food when they didn’t have any. Every year, she’d go back and we’d send money with her and she would just give it to people. Or if she couldn’t go, she would send it. She took care

The city health department and a nurse from Public Health inspected their operation, he said, and volunteers are washing their hands every hour.

“We all wear masks and we wear gloves as well, and when we pack the boxes, we try to stay a good six feet apart from each other. Then, when we deliver the food, we



RAJEEV SINGH/THE BUZZ

Packing boxes for Operation Ramzieh at The Waverley

just knock on doors. We try to avoid contact [although] a lot of the seniors want to come out and say hello and talk to you or at least thank you.

“But the idea is that the volunteers will pull up in their cars and fill up their cars with boxes and then they go deliver them.

“Every time I get a new person coming to volunteer, we’ll go do a run and they’ll come back in tears. Like ‘Oh my God, I can’t believe how people are thanking me.’”

Budget Rent-a-Car lends trucks for deliveries. Food donations have come in from farmers—eggs, milk, potatoes—and from closed restaurants and hotels.

“We’ve been on their websites asking them, before your food goes bad, please give it to us. We reached out to them first to help us, and then we started to fundraise after that.”

Besides money, they “desperately need diapers because we have a lot of single mothers. In Ottawa, we’re starting to get some pet food as well, to keep people’s morale up. But we can use anything that people can use. So we’re looking for baby milk, diapers, all kinds of food.”

The project started with seniors: “they’re the most at risk. But then it just snow-

bailed into a lot of single mothers, people not having money, and from there it went to people with compromised immune systems.”

It’s been a revelation. “I didn’t know that there were this many people in need, to tell you the truth. I didn’t know about these drop-in centres and crisis shelters for women and stuff like that, until we started this project.”

They’re coordinating with local food banks because many don’t deliver food, as well as working with organizations ranging from Interval House to the Canadian Mental Health Association to the Wabano Centre to the Ismaili Council Ottawa to the Somerset West Community Health Centre to the Bruyère Centre.

The operation has expanded to Toronto, because they were getting many phone calls from there: “people just pleading for food. They’re petrified.

“I used to have businesses in Toronto, and I called up a friend of mine who has a warehouse and a restaurant. He was, like, come do it here right away. He lent us his site.”

When *The BUZZ* interviewed Mahmoud he had just delivered to two seniors’ apartment towers in Toronto—knocking on every door to deliver to a few hundred

residents in less than an hour.

“As we pulled up, there were people on their patios cheering us, because they were waiting for the food. As we dropped off each box, those people are just so happy.

“It’s sad that we’re in this, but it’s fulfilling to help people. Every couple of days I like to go on a delivery because almost every day I want to give up. I get home and I think I can’t do this anymore.

“And then I go on a trip and it invigorates me. Today was a rough one for me. I was about to give up and when I got to this woman’s house who insisted on talking to me, she just had the greatest smile, and she thanked me relentlessly.”

The operation has expanded far beyond his initial hopes.

“Honestly, I just thought we’d feed a few seniors. And then when your phone starts ringing, and you have mothers crying that they don’t have any food to feed their babies. Or you have seniors that are alone and they’re petrified. You just keep going.”

Mahmoud said he hoped for government funding to help Operation Ramzieh grow. But with volunteers and donations, “we’re going to keep going for as long as we can. There’s a lot of people right now that are feeling scared and lonely and isolated.

“We started adding some flowers for a little bit, until we ran out, and that really made a difference. I’m trying to make cards that we can put little notes in. But I think people just need to call people, to tell that they care, that they’re there for them, even if they don’t need anything.

“I know people need food, but the isolation and the fear—I really felt a lot of fear in that building today.”



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Don't push that button!

Alayne McGregor

It's called "beg button ballet"—the frustrating extra step pedestrians have to go through in order to legally cross at many Ottawa intersections. And, in the current pandemic, it's also raising worries about virus transmission caused by many people touching these buttons.

Responding to these concerns, Councillor Shawn Menard asked city staff last month to investigate making all intersections in a ward automatically give Walk signals, if a ward councillor so requested and "when safe to do so."

Last week, staff resoundingly rejected that idea.

At some intersections in Centretown—and many across Ottawa—pedestrians must press a yellow-encased "beg" button in order to get a Walk signal. Even if the corresponding traffic signal turns green for vehicles, unless the

button is pressed the pedestrian signal may still show Don't Walk, and less time is allocated for crossing.

Somerset Ward Councillor Catherine McKenney describes that situation as "highly problematic. It gives drivers the message that they can go, that the pedestrian doesn't have the right to cross. It makes pedestrians nervous because they see they don't have that invitation to cross."

The good news is that only about 15% of intersections in Centretown are like this. McKenney said the rest had been reprogrammed to automatically show Walk—after years of pressure by them and by previous Councillor Diane Holmes.

"So that means that they change on a regular basis, so if you're a pedestrian you don't have to use that button."

All intersections still have the beg buttons, because they're also used by

the visually impaired to get audible pedestrian signals (through a long press on the button).

But how do you tell whether you need to press the button?

"That's the problem, right? You can't," McKenney said. "I will often get messages from people that say, 'I wish at this intersection I didn't have to press the button', and I say, 'You don't have to press the button! It's automatic [at that intersection].'"

"But then there will be other intersections where, as a pedestrian, you'll amble up, you'll see that the light's about to change because a car has actuated it. But then you won't get your Walk signal. So it's confusing. It's hard to know which intersections are automatic and which aren't. So, it's better just to have them all automatic, and treat pedestrians with the respect and with the safety measures in mind that we need to."

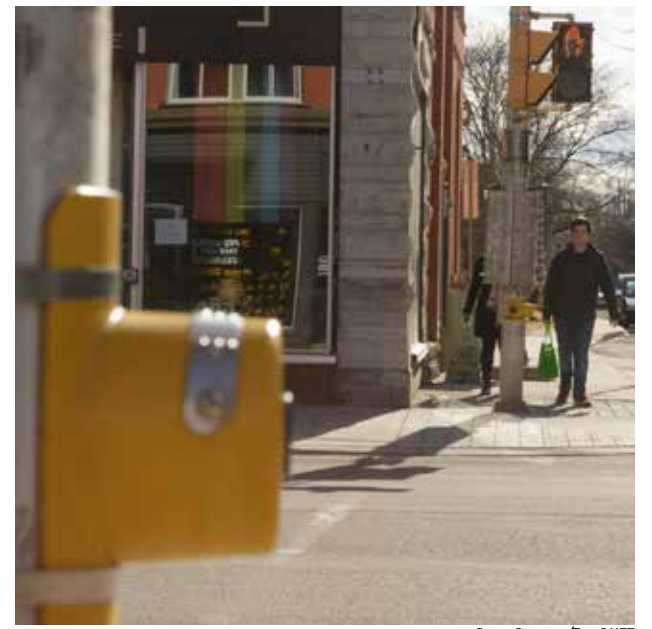
Earlier this month, the City of Edmonton made pedestrian signals automatic at

56 high-pedestrian intersections in the city, as well as those around hospitals, in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Concerns that people touching the buttons with their fingers might spread the virus is another reason to make them automatic, McKenney said. "But even without that, I think that the safety of pedestrians would warrant having fully automatic lights."

They noted that this might not apply to all of Ottawa: "you may have some intersections that see one or two pedestrians a day, maybe. But I know that in a dense neighbourhood like the one I represent, there really is no reason not to give a pedestrian light on every cycle."

Last week, city staff rejected the Menard proposal, saying that it was not recommended by Ottawa Public Health. "The transmission risk associated with push button use would be relatively low and would be best dealt with by practicing good hand hygiene at all times."



BRETT DELMAGE/THE BUZZ

Staff also argued that the change would increase complaints from motorists delayed by longer signal timings; encourage motorists to run red lights; and disrupt bus schedules by causing longer waits at intersections for pedestrian crossings. The memo said staff were currently investigating changing signal software so that pedestrians would automatically get a Walk signal if a

vehicle is detected at a signalized intersection.

McKenney described the staff memo as "a very unsatisfactory response to a growing need in our communities for pedestrian comfort and safety."

"I'm not surprised given the overall reluctance to make this a more equitable and sustainable city by the leadership in the city."

Sir Wilfrid Laurier students on finding positivity and routine amidst COVID-19 chaos

Mariam El-Behiry

The chatter started at high schools in early March: everyone was talking about a virus.

The first case of coronavirus was soon confirmed in Ottawa. Yet no one was prepared for Friday, March 13.

Students were told to empty their lockers. The final bell rang, and the students headed to their buses, backpacks heavy, and minds brimming.

They have not yet returned.

Not long ago, Sir Wilfrid Laurier Secondary School was a bustling school with students flooding the halls and grabbing a bite to eat with friends in nearby hang-out spots.

However, following the indefinite closures of all Ontario schools and the stay-at-home order, the streets of Ottawa are sombre and

ghostly. While students are self-quarantining, challenges are arising as they try to maintain their independence, find positivity, and attempt to preserve the normalcy and familiarity of their former routines.

No matter the level of study, all students are affected by this abrupt change of scenery, finding themselves bored, anxious, and devoid of social pleasures.

Senior high school students have had their year cut short by the COVID-19 chaos and have had to deal with the disappointment of events such as the prom and the graduation ceremony possibly getting cancelled.

Today, teachers and students are entering the world of digital education and trying to cope with the uncertainty surrounding our return to normal life.

It was only right to ask students to react to having to adjust to a sudden and un-

familiar routine: what challenges they are faced with, dealing with the uncertainty of it all, and what is keeping them positive and allowing them to maintain their peace.

Sahan Malwatta, a senior, has, like many of his peers, been dealing with certain anxieties but is overall dealing calmly and optimistically with the situation.

"I have a personal connection because my dad is an executive chef and he was temporarily laid off from work, so I can tell that he has been stressed out because he had mortgages and taxes to pay."

"He had to apply for the EI from the government which provides money but that is not even enough so it is stressful for the whole family."

"I love music and I've been playing instrumental music since grade 7 and it's a big part of my life so I've been practicing a lot. I've

also been trying to work out more and go for walks and runs.

"I do martial arts and since I have no form of exercise I have turned to other alternatives."

Mashkura Tabssum Tathoye, a junior, has taken up cooking and learning about the stock market to pass the time, and is enjoying time bonding with family.

"Our teachers and principals don't have answers, which can feel frustrating, but we have to understand that they are doing the best for us. It's difficult but we are trying to cope."

When asked about her transition to e-learning, she said that, although she prefers in-class learning and is finding it hard to adjust with her STEM courses, she is making the best of the situation.

"I'm just grateful that me and my family are safe. It

could have been much worse and I am readjusting more and more every day."

Marissa Khan, another senior, is making time to stay connected to her faith and is enjoying making her way through her to-read list.

"All I do [normally] is read textbooks for school or novels for English class because I have to."

"All this free time has really given me a chance to read fiction for fun and read religious books about Allah and his messenger."

"This is something that is so important to me, yet I never allowed myself to get the chance to put time aside and do research because of my coursework."

"However, I am making it my mission to learn and better myself mentally and physically."

On the change of her life as she knows it, she is nervous but is treating this experience as a learning curve.

"It is really easy to lose hope and feel lost during these hard times when no one has solutions for you, not even the people you rely on every day."

"Physically, I am healthy and safe at home which is a luxury during these times."

"There are so many things we take for granted and the minute these things go away, we feel like it's the end of the world."

"It is important to recognize that this is a sign to change our habits and be more aware of what we are given in this life."

Mariam El-Behiry is an Ottawa high school student and a regular BUZZ contributor.

Joel Harden

MPP, Ottawa Centre



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Centretown's food banks need you more than ever

Alayne McGregor

The COVID-19 pandemic has put the Centretown Emergency Food Centre on thin ice—and it could use your help.

When panic buying started in mid-March, the food bank couldn't buy many of the staples—beef, chicken, sugar, toilet paper, soup—its clients need. For the last two weeks, they've been giving Ottawa Food Bank gift cards instead.

Co-ordinator Kerry Kaiser has been cheered by “wonderful acts of kindness.” When the Lieutenant's Pump on Elgin had to temporarily close, it donated all the produce it had on hand to the centre. Staff brought in “boxes of fresh produce, beautiful stuff. They'd rather give it to us than let it go to waste.”

The centre is located in Centretown United Church at 507 Bank Street. It serves those in need east of Lyon Street and west of Main, down to Billings Bridge.

The centre does not deliver. Allison Dingle, who chairs the centre's management committee, said that has been difficult for many of its clients, who are staying indoors for fear of the

virus or because they've been asked to self-isolate. The centre has also asked senior-age volunteers not to come in to avoid risking them and is working with a smaller core of younger volunteers. “We're operating on a very small staff. It's really a challenge still.” Staff are exhausted, she said.

“We couldn't have kept at the pace we were serving people. We had to reduce our hours and reduce the amount of work that it takes to serve a client.” The centre is now only open on Monday and Friday from noon to 1 p.m., instead of four days a week.

Before COVID-19 clients could choose which food products they needed from the centre's shelves. The centre will return to handing out food next week but it will be standard, pre-packaged bags of groceries. “We can't say, “What kind of pasta do you want? What kind of tomato sauce would you like?” They just have to take it because we don't have time to interview them.”

What the centre needs now is cash, she said. They don't have the people to sort food donations, because they must limit the number of volunteers in the centre at one time.

The response has been good. “We have been get-

ting a lot of donations. People have been very aware of how many people are in need in our community. We are still short of some things, but we're doing pretty well. I think anyone who comes to us next week, we're assuming we'll be able to give them most of what we normally give.”

Kaiser suggested that the provincial government consider giving an emergency top-up to social assistance recipients so they could buy food themselves. Even an extra \$100 would help: “This is setting us right back financially,” she said.

If the emergency lasts much longer, the situation will get more difficult. The centre survives on donations and its volunteer base. If it can't use volunteers, its survival is threatened, and if clients get ill, they put the centre's two staff and 70 volunteers at risk.

But “we're here. We're doing our very best for people, and people are grateful. We're doing what we can do as well as we can,” Dingle said.

The western part of Centretown is served by the Dalhousie Food Cupboard. It's located in the Bronson Centre at 211 Bronson Avenue, and is open from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Wednesdays and

Thursdays. It serves those west of Lyon Street, west to Breezhill Avenue, and south to Carling Avenue.

The Cupboard also says it's changing how it distributes food. It will only serve one client at a time, and is giving out pre-packed bags with available foods for a quicker, simpler turnaround.

Both centres have increased their disinfecting, cleaning, and use of disposable gloves.

For Food Assistance:

cefcottawa.org/if-you-need-food/dalhousiefoodcupboard.ca/get-food.html

Donate:

To the CEFC
canadahelps.org/en/charities/centretown-churches-social-action-committee/
or send cheques to the centre at 507 Bank Street.

To the Dalhousie Food Cupboard
dalhousiefoodcupboard.ca/donate.html
or send cheques payable to “Dalhousie Food Action Group Inc” to 211 Bronson Avenue, Suite 107.

Both food banks are registered charities.

COVID-19 and homelessness

Gail McGuire

For many of us, our COVID-19 problems have been limited to distancing, handwashing, and disinfecting surfaces in our homes.

The Cornerstone Shelter For Women in Centretown is for women without homes, due to mental, financial, or physical challenges. The all-woman staff provides counselling, programming, and assistance towards independence. They have 61 residents, who may wait two to three years for permanent homes. Agencies such as Cornerstone, Options Bytown, and Salus provide supportive housing (Cornerstone has three supportive housing locations), while Ottawa Community Housing and a portion of Centretown Citizens Housing Corporation provide subsidized places for independent living.

Kia Rainbow, Cornerstone's executive director, has met regularly online with shelter agencies such as the Shepherds of Good Hope, the Mission, and the Salvation Army. As part of an Inner City Health coalition, they have explored how shelter life is challenged by COVID-19. Issues identified include the need to increase cleaning and extension of

cleaning contracts to seven days per week and social distancing in communal areas such as dining rooms. Cornerstone has placed one chair only per table and has limited dining to 20 minutes. They're using paper plates and disposable utensils.

Residents' reactions have ranged from anxious to nervous to not recognizing the problem, Rainbow said.

Cornerstone has applied for additional federal funds and requested personal protective equipment and extra funding for staffing costs such as time away from work, overtime, and taxis when reduced transit prevents staff from getting to work. Without these funds they cannot protect either staff or residents.

During the pandemic we in Centretown have focused on community solidarity; many of us have volunteered to support the more vulnerable. Beyond the pandemic we will be faced with financial reckonings, personally and as a nation.

We will remember our vulnerability, and that those of us without homes were made especially vulnerable. We will need to recommit ourselves to resolving our housing emergency, as declared by the City of Ottawa in January.



Do your part to stop the spread of COVID-19

Stay home
Practice physical (social) distancing

OttawaPublicHealth.ca/PhysicalDistancing

Four Weeks in October:

The City of Ottawa and the pandemic of 1918

CLOSE SCHOOLS, THEATRES, ETC. TO CHECK "FLU"

Drastic Action Taken by Ottawa Board of Health at Special Meeting; Also Asking Churches to Discontinue Services on Sunday

ORGANIZE REGISTRY OF NURSES TO GRAPPLE WITH THE EPIDEMIC

Every theatre, every school and seminary, and all places for public gathering in the city, are closed to the public until further notice.

Such is the drastic action taken by the local Board of Health at a special meeting in the City Hall, which lasted until after midnight on Friday, to check the spread of the influenza epidemic, which is reported to be increasing hourly. In addition to closing the above-mentioned institutions and places, the board is requesting the churches of the city to discontinue divine service on Sunday, and the owners of the Ottawa Electric Street Railway to ventilate their cars as much as possible until further notice.

OTTAWA EVENING JOURNAL/THE BUZZ

The news on Saturday, October 5, 1918.

Robert Smythe

By now we are all too conscious of terms like "flattening the curve", "social distancing", and "self-quarantine". A pandemic's behaviour has become frighteningly familiar.

In the final days of World War I the City of Ottawa was forced to react to a monstrous public health crisis without the benefit of advanced medical science or mass communication.

Yet the city's—ultimately successful—response showed some similarity to actions being taken today.

The history of a local public health system in Ontario predates Confederation.

In 1833, the Legislature of Upper Canada approved an Act allowing local municipalities "to enact Boards of Health to guard against the introduction of malignant, contagious and infectious diseases in the Province."

The City of Ottawa established its Board of Health in 1865 with the mayor as the chair. Part-time medical officers of health were appointed from the city's pool of doctors. The Province of Ontario's first Public Health Act was passed in 1873.

Ottawa had experienced acute health emergencies in the years that preceded the outbreak of the "Spanish Influenza" in 1918.

Communicable diseases like typhoid, tuberculosis, and smallpox had already taken their toll and tested the city's administration, which was forced to hire public health nurses and build isolation hospitals.

Without the tardy but dogged leadership of Ottawa's Mayor Harold Fisher and public health officials, the impact of modern history's most devastating global epidemic could have been much worse.

When the Spanish Influenza arrived in September 1918, Ottawa's newspapers were seized with the details surrounding the last battles of WWI. There was little mention of the growing epidemic in the press until the end of that month. As deaths mounted, the Board of Health issued a statement defining the symptoms of the disease and warning the public of its highly infectious nature.

"Undoubtedly the several cases of influenza which have appeared recently in this community are of the type popularly known as the Spanish grippe.

"This disease of influenza is a virulent form. It is characterized by a sudden onset, with a high fever, but not necessarily chills. It presents at its most pronounced diffuse pains throughout the body which are most severe at the base of the skull and in the small of the back." (*Ottawa Journal*, September 26, 1918)

Some days later, the *Journal* revealed the severity of the outbreak: on Monday, September 30, it reported that eight people had died over the weekend.

Twenty-one more had died in the previous twenty days.

"Mayor Fisher said he thought every precaution should be taken to guard against the spread of the

disease. He urged people to keep out of crowds when they felt an attack coming on, and that they should keep to themselves as much as possible in their homes," the article went on.

By the end of the week the situation had become grave.

Medical staff in the city's hospitals were down with influenza. Physicians were pushed to their limits, unable to attend many of the afflicted. Those who were not ill were taking precautionary measures to avoid the disease.

Section 56 of the Public Health Act of Ontario gave the municipality wide powers "where any communicable disease is found to exist to use all possible care to prevent the spread of disease or contagion by any means in their judgment most effective for the public safety."

On October 4, the Board of Health convened an emergency session.

They ordered the immediate closure of every school, theatre and place of public

Preventing Spanish Influenza Is Better Than Curing It

Keep your nasal passages, throat and lungs in a perfectly antiseptic condition by the use of the Branston Violet Ray Ozone Generator. No Germs can exist where this is used. Use it in your home. Install it in your office and factory. Keep your employes healthy and efficient. Call or phone for a Free Demonstration at the

Ottawa Electric Co.
35 Sparks Street



Showing Model 29 in Use Several Other Models to Choose From

Manufactured in Canada by The Chas. A. Branston Co., Toronto

OTTAWA EVENING JOURNAL/THE BUZZ

Quack "remedies" abounded. The Ottawa Electric Company pushed the Branston Violet Ray Ozone Generator Inhaler.

gathering.

Churches were asked to not hold services that Sunday, and the owners of the Ottawa Electric Street Railway were directed to ventilate their cars as much as possible until further notice.

Said *The Ottawa Journal* on October 5:

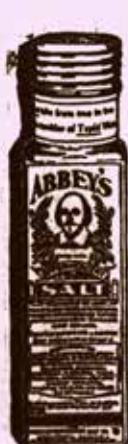
"Such is the drastic action taken by the local Board of Health... to check the spread of the influenza epidemic which is reported to be increasing by the hour."

(cont on 7)

Safeguard Yourself Against "SPANISH INFLUENZA"

Take a glass of Abbey's Effervescent Salt each morning before breakfast. This is one of the best safeguards

Start the day with the blood flowing briskly through your veins and a glow of health throughout your body and you are better prepared to combat the Spanish Influenza germ.



Abbey's Effervescent Salt

Is a mild laxative and a thorough internal cleanser and health giver. Physicians and Druggists have recommended it for years, as the most satisfying SALINE known. Keep your body clean internally for perfect health—and withstand the danger of getting this disease.

Any druggist will supply **ABBEY'S**

OTTAWA EVENING JOURNAL/THE BUZZ

Abbey's Effervescent Salt, a "mild laxative" and "internal cleanser", was billed as a safeguard against the danger of Spanish Influenza.

FAMILIES LAID UP IN SORE DISTRESS LOOKING FOR AID

Mayor Makes Urgent Appeal for Assistance for Persons Stricken With Influenza —All Help Scarce.

His Worship Declares Ontario Board of Health Wrong in Stand on Epidemic.

Whole families suffering with influenza here are in great distress because of lack of nursing and other help. Dozens of cases have been reported to the Nurses' Registry at the City Hall where five, six,

Have New Bomb

Made of Inflammable Material and Very Light.

PARIS, Oct. 9.—The Germans during the past few days have been using in their air work a new type of inflammable bomb, combining great effectiveness with light weight.

A single airplane, it is said, can carry two hundred of these bombs.

The only way of fighting the fire caused by this new form of destructive weapon appears to be the isolation of the blazes set, as pouring water on it is literally adding fuel to the flames on account of the chemicals of which the bombs are composed.

OTTAWA EVENING JOURNAL/THE BUZZ

Appeal for aid on Wednesday, October 9, 1918.

Flu of 1918

(cont from 6)

Should the City of Ottawa have taken action weeks earlier? In hindsight it is easy to say yes. But many believed that this was the regular flu and not the Spanish type which was beginning to spread in large American cities. Once the city recognized the scale of the emergency, Mayor Fisher established a command centre at City Hall to track the spread and coordinate the public and private resources needed to fight the epidemic. He sent a memorandum to all heads of city departments:

“The only important business we have in the City Hall at present is the work in connection with the epidemic. People do not cease to be sick at five o’clock. There are therefore no office hours.”

His first battle was to cancel major planned public gatherings like the Ontario

Plowmen’s Association International Plowing Match at the Experimental Farm set for October 16-18, an event which carries considerable political clout to this day.

Fisher’s chief opponent was Ontario’s Chief Health Officer, Dr. J.W.S. McCullough, who wrote, “I have no hesitation in approving of the meeting of farmers and implement manufacturers on this occasion, as the danger from the so-called Spanish Influenza is reduced to a minimum by meeting in the open air.” (*Ottawa Citizen*, October 12, 1918)

Alarmed that the match would attract hundreds of competitors and thousands of spectators from across the province, Fisher appealed directly to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Agriculture to withdraw permission to use the Farm.

Unsurprisingly unable to find a farmer willing to risk hosting the event, the orga-

nizers cancelled it “for the safety of human life which must receive first consideration” (*Ottawa Citizen*, October 15, 1918). Several business conventions expected to arrive in the city were also postponed indefinitely.

To respond directly to the outbreak, temporary emergency hospitals were opened in the Aberdeen Pavilion at Lansdowne Park and in several of the vacated public schools.

A platoon of Red Cross ambulances was organized to deliver patients to them. Ottawa’s Boy Scout troops were recruited to deliver 27,000 notices to city households on how to protect themselves against the Spanish Flu. An appeal to retired and married nurses, who were older and less likely to catch the disease, for assistance to the homes of the affected, was somewhat successful.

The nurses were provided with hand-made protective caps and aprons sewn by other volunteers.

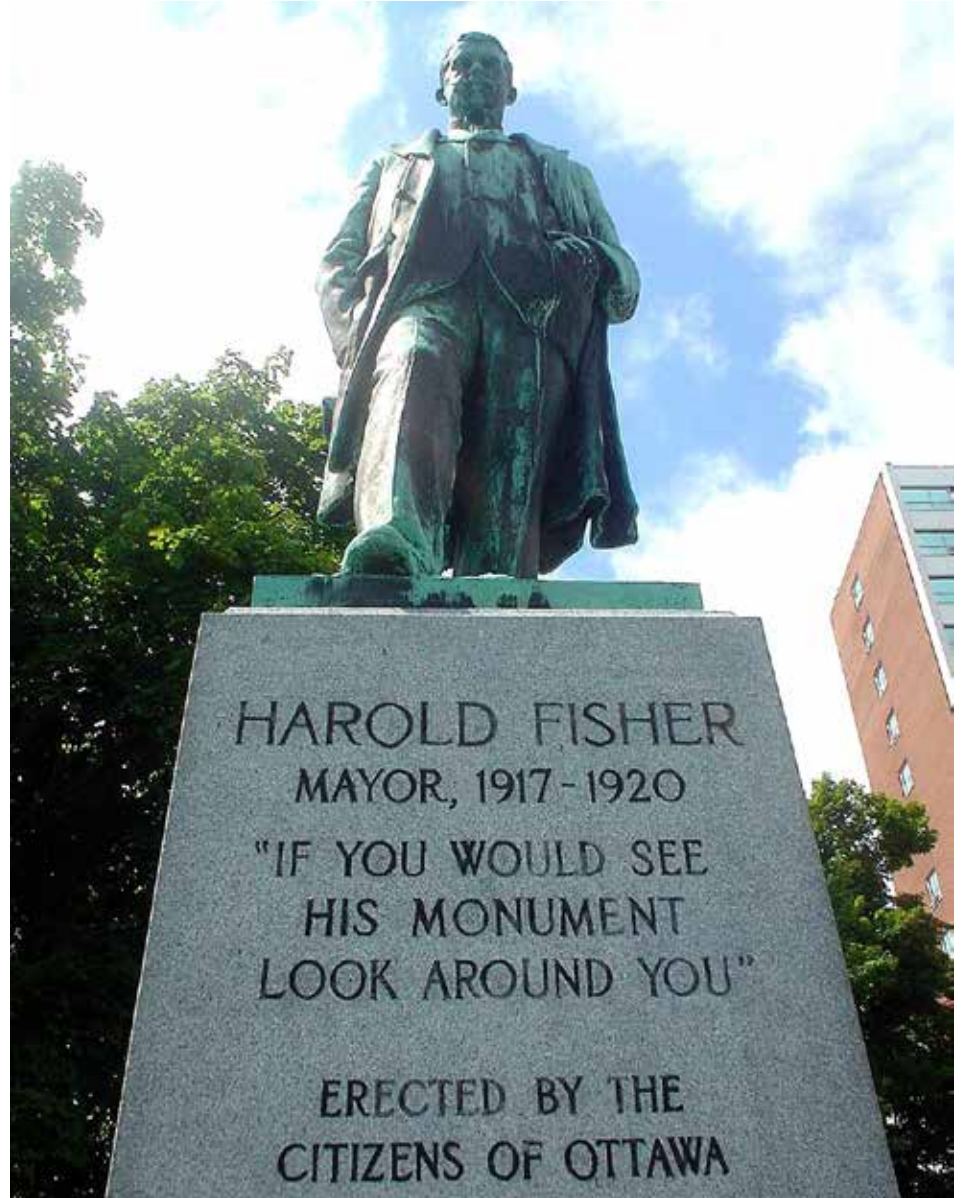
Masks and gowns called ‘pneumonia jackets’ were fabricated in a sewing room at City Hall to fill the large orders placed by the hospitals.

Looking back, the chief failure was not closing nonessential businesses and the city’s places of work.

With a pre-work-from-home civil service supporting the Government of Canada still in the teeth of a world war, this was a challenge.

As a result each department was stripped of hundreds of staff members.

Business establishments



STEPHEN BOISVERT VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS/THE BUZZ

Honourable legacy: Harold Fisher’s statue stands on the grounds of Ottawa’s Civic Hospital

like the Eaton’s Shoe Store on Sparks Street improvised.

They advertised, “For the Prevention of Spanish Influenza we will have a man in attendance continually disinfecting our establishment to prevent the spread of this epidemic.”

The mortality rate continued to jump until the fourth week of October when a drop in new cases began to appear. Home nursing assistants were still caring for over 2,500 flu victims, doc-

tors had at least 1,000 patients, and the hospitals were beyond capacity.

Finally, on Monday, October 21, Mrs. A.J. Freiman, who had been coordinating the effort at Lansdowne Park reported that there had been no new deaths the previous day. By the end of the month, the official death toll from Spanish Influenza stood at 540 people, which was a relatively small percentage of the nation’s total of 55,000.

However, on some days almost twice as many deaths were said to have been caused by “pneumonia” or “la grippe”—so the total number may have been much higher.

The epidemic began to depart the city as quickly as it had come, with much smaller rebound outbreaks in 1919 and 1920.

There were lessons learned.

In 1919, Harold Fisher launched a relentless campaign to build the new Ottawa Civic Hospital—an institution that was once called “Fisher’s Folly”.

And the federal government created a new branch—the Department of Health.

The After Effects of Spanish Influenza

This terrible scourge leaves in its wake weak hearts, shattered nerves, impoverished blood, and a general run-down, debilitated condition of the system.

Thousands of people throughout Canada are just now needing the timely use of

Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills

They will stimulate and strengthen the weak heart, bring back the shattered nervous system to a perfect condition, renew the lost vitality, build up the strength, and enrich the blood.

Price 30c a box, at all Dealers, or mailed direct on receipt of price by

The T. Milburn Co., Limited, - Toronto, Ont.

OTTAWA EVENING JOURNAL/THE BUZZ

The T. Milburn Company sold a variety of dangerous and addictive “cures”, often opiates or stimulants

Opening up Bank Street

(cont from 1)

Interviewed on CBC Radio, Watson argued that re-allocating a lane on Bank would interfere with bus traffic. McKenney disagrees. “There will still be three lanes. A bus can pull up to what will be the new curb. There’s plenty of space for emergency vehicles, and we can plan the space for the small amount of traffic that is using all of our streets today.”

Watson also contended the widening would encourage people to congregate on the street. McKenney said it would simply handle already-existing pedestrian traffic, which will “continue to increase as we continue to

have to self-distance during this pandemic.” People can choose quieter side streets, as Watson suggested, when they are walking for fresh air, McKenney said. But they still need to use Bank Street for essential trips. “People live and travel in this area—they don’t drive near Bank, get out, go in, and come back out.”

The cost for closing off one lane of Bank Street? “Probably around five thousand,” McKenney said. “We got our own quote early on for different scenarios. So, yes, it’s quite expensive to rent these barrels for what could be months.”

The city would need to use standard road closure devices: “you have to make sure that the space that you’re providing for pedestrians is safe, at night that it’s reflective.” Last week, Councillor Jeff Leiper had a section of Byron Avenue in Westboro closed to all but local traffic in order to give walking and cycling priority. Leiper had to pay for this closure out of his ward’s traffic calming budget; he told CBC it cost about \$3500/month.

In addition, the National Capital Commission said Monday that it was developing “a pilot project to close parts of Queen Elizabeth Driveway to motor vehicle traffic”, and was working with stakeholders and partners to ensure coordination.

McKenney had previously suggested either the Driveway or Colonel By Drive be closed, especially since the multi-use paths along those roads are narrow and heavily-used. “I think that would give people who want to get out and want to enjoy a nice spring or summer day, that space to be able to do so.”

The NCC rejected a proposal to close the Sir John A. Macdonald Parkway, despite the fact it has been regularly closed on Sundays for bike days, “due to advice from public health agencies, logistical challenges, staffing requirements and the need to ensure continued access for transit and emergency services.”

McKenney said they were still hoping to get a satisfactory plan that “meets the health needs and safety needs of pedestrians. If that’s the case, we hope to have it in place relatively soon.”

Their proposal has been supported by a heavy stream of pro-lane-closure comments on twitter from Ottawa residents. Ecology Ottawa is also circulating a petition urging City Council to re-purpose underused roadways to provide safe outdoor access for pedestrians and cyclists during the COVID-19 crisis.

McKenney points out that other Canadian and international cities, including Calgary, Edmonton, and Vancouver, have closed roads. “Toronto is looking at

road closures. So it’s being done in other municipalities during the pandemic, recognizing that, again in urban wards, we have got to walk.”

The city of Oakland, California, announced on April 9 that it was closing 10% of its streets (74 miles) “so that bicyclists and pedestrians can spread out and take in fresh air safely.”

Walking has always been far more important in Centretown than elsewhere in Ottawa. Every 10 years, the city runs an Origin-Destination survey to get an official count of where residents are going and by what mode. The latest survey, in 2011, showed that in central Ottawa, 12% of all trips were on foot. In Ottawa as a whole? Only 1%.

Planet of the Scapes: the comforts of home

Pearl Pirie

Self-isolation has made cooks out of most of us.

It may yet bring back some dishes we'd forgotten: you can mix mushroom soup with canned green beans, pour it over chow mein noodles, and bake. (Don't, though). We run our house on

solar; power use is critical. It made me wonder about scalloped potatoes without an oven.

Vegan Stove-top Scalloped Potatoes (serves 4)
1 Tbsp margarine
3 stalks celery, chopped
1 large onion, chopped
4 washed, scrubbed potatoes, sliced thin



PEARL PIRIE/THE BUZZ

2 cups unsweetened almond milk
Salt, pepper, paprika
Fry the first three ingredients until they start to soften.
Add the potatoes, spices, and almond milk. Cover and cook on medium low for 30 minutes, stirring halfway.
For a crisp top, put briefly under the grill, then serve.

Roasted Broccoli and Chickpeas

Preheat oven to 375 F
Stir together:

1 head broccoli (or mixed cauliflower and broccoli) cut into florets
1 can of chickpeas, drained, rinsed, and dried
2 Tbsp olive oil
1-2 cloves of garlic, minced
pinch of salt
Spread all on a baking sheet large enough to avoid crowd-

ing, or they will steam not brown. Bake for 20-30 minutes, turning once.

Divine maple tahini sauce:

Puree together:
½ cup tahini
2 Tbsp olive oil
1 clove garlic, minced
1 t salt
1/4 cup maple syrup
juice of 1 lemon
Serve over roasted vegetables. Tempting though it is, best not to drink it straight!

Pearl Pirie's fourth poetry collection, footlights, is coming out in the fall of 2020 with Radiant Press. Not Quite Dawn, from éditions des petits nuages is available for \$13 including shipping. See all her books and sign up for her newsletter at www.pearlpirie.com



PEARL PIRIE/THE BUZZ



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What's On(line) for April

Tony Wolfarth

This month, we're focussing on some of the many free performances you can watch from home.

NAC Presents

The National Arts Centre (NAC) is providing a way for Canadian musicians to perform online. Concerts run for one hour and come directly from the performer's studio or residence.

Some take requests to play their favourites—songs they don't usually perform. In April on-line viewers can see Laila Biali, Catherine Major, Madison Violet, Patricia Cano, Leeroy Stagger, and more—as well as a

theatrical performance by Pierre Brault.

nac-cna.ca/en/calendar/.

CKCU FM Online

Folkies in Ottawa know and love Chris White's Canadian Spaces. While CKCU has shut its doors temporarily, Chris is taking it online: Saturdays at 10 a.m. and Sundays at 7 p.m.

www.facebook.com/canadianspaces/

More Streaming Music

Pop-up streaming concerts can be found on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube, via artists' social media accounts.

Joel Plaskett Online

Joel Plaskett partnered with the Globe & Mail ahead of the release of his latest 4-album set "44": theglobeandmail.com/arts/music/video-watch-a-replay-of-joel-plasketts-full-concert-with-the-globe/

National Film Board

Many of the NFB's best films can be viewed on their site for free. Recommended:

Aftermath: The Remnants of War (2001), *Ladies and Gentlemen: Mr. Leonard Cohen* (1965), about his early days as a writer and poet in Montreal, and *Cree Hunters of Mistassini* (1974), about a lost way of life, with three Cree families living off the land in James Bay, directed by Boyce Richardson, a celebrated NFB auteur who was made a member of the Order of Canada in 2002. www.nfb.ca.

The International Documentary Film Amsterdam IDFA is an Amsterdam-based documentary film festival considered one of the biggest and best in the world. IDFA has made 200 of its collection, ideally suited for binge watching, available.

Most of the Canadian collection are short documentaries. www.idfa.nl/en/

A Night at the Garden

In 1939, when the US declared its neutrality in

WWII, the American Nazi Party held a rally with 20,000 participants at Madison Square Garden. 80 years on, it's a short (7-minute) documentary. *A Night at the Garden* was nominated for an Oscar. anightatthegarden.com

In case you missed it

Concerned you have missed special events during the lockdown? Many have been extended or postponed, including:

The 4th Annual Irish Film Festival of Ottawa—postponed until Sept. 18-20
CATS at the NAC—postponed until July 28
Hamilton at the NAC—postponed until Nov. 24

Tony Wohlfarth is an Ottawa-based freelance film and entertainment writer. He is self-isolating at home while indulging in an abundance of online entertainment resources.

FARM BOY

We're here, Metcalfe Street! NOW OPEN!

193 Metcalfe Street, Ottawa

Monday to Friday - 8 am to 9 pm **FARMBOY.CA**
Saturday and Sunday - 8 am to 8 pm

Save lives, Stay home.

Restez chez vous, sauvez des vies.

For up to date information on #COVID19 follow @ottawahealth, @CPHO_Canada, @govcanhealth, and Canada.ca/coronavirus

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CATHERINE
McKENNA

Time on our hands: making bread with what you've got

Marna Nightingale

"It is all a question of weeding out what you yourself like best to do, so that you can live most agreeably in a world full of an increasing number of disagreeable surprises." M.F.K. Fisher, *How to Cook a Wolf*

It seems like everyone, including me, is suddenly baking bread.

Ordinarily I love making pies and cookies but there are only so many desserts one household can eat.

Something less fancy, more nourishing, and more homely seems called for now.

So many people are discovering, or rediscovering, bread-making right now, and at the same time we're all—I hope—trying to shop less often, at fewer stores. It can be a challenge to lay hands on flour and yeast.

Bakers can—and will—talk for hours about favourite flours. Most bread recipes call for "hard" or "strong" flour...but if you have flour, any flour, it will make bread as good or better than you can get at the store. (Also, Canadian all-purpose flour is an entirely different beast from American, much higher in gluten and thus better for bread; worth knowing if your recipe book is from the US).

Similarly, there are many kinds of yeast, and many opinions about yeast...and it all makes dough rise.

Use what you have or can get and don't worry; people have been baking, eating,

and enjoying bread made with what they could lay their hands on for nearly as long as people have existed.

If you're lucky enough to have yeast, and it's still alive (combine a pinch of yeast, a teaspoon of sugar, and a little warm water in a cup and wait 15 minutes to see if it bubbles and smells bready), Jim Lahey's No-Knead Loaf is simple, reliably, delicious, and easily found online. It uses a parsimonious 1/4 teaspoon of your precious yeast, too.

If you don't have yeast, and are willing to wait a week or more, you can make a sourdough starter.

Or, you can make a quickbread.

I spoke to some of the people who have helped me with my baking conundrums through the years and asked them for their favourite no-yeast recipes.

For myself, when the ancient jar of yeast in my fridge let me down with a bump last month, I discovered (I'm sure I didn't invent this) a quickbread variation on Lahey's loaf.

Marna's Emergency Bread

Combine:
3 cups flour
1 tsp salt
1 1/3 cups cool water
Mix just until flour is incorporated, forming a loose, shaggy dough. Cover tightly and leave for 12-18 hours.
Preheat oven to 375F
Sift together:

1 Tbsp double-action baking powder

1/3 cup flour
Work this well into your dough. When you have a soft, springy ball of evenly-mixed dough, turn it onto a greased or floured pan and bake it for 45 minutes or until the loaf is brown and sounds hollow.

Let sit for 30-60 minutes before slicing.

Leaving the dough for so long before baking develops the gluten. While the results are denser than a yeasted loaf, they're still very nice indeed.

Sarah Darkes and Melody Mielke shared quickbread recipes with me as well.

Sarah's Baking Powder Biscuits

You can add cheese, herbs, or both to these. Sarah does a rosemary-cheddar version I love.

Use the highest-fat milk you have.

The basic rule of biscuits is to handle the dough as little as possible with your hands to keep your fat as cold as possible.

I like to freeze lard or butter and use a grater to shred it, so I can mix my dough quickly and without having to use my warm hands to rub the fat in.

Measure frozen butter with a sharp knife, going by the markings on the label.

Combine:
5 cups flour
1/2 cup butter

2 Tbsp double-acting baking powder

About 1 1/2 cups milk, buttermilk or soured milk

1/2 tsp salt if you use unsalted butter; otherwise none.

To make soured milk, add 2 Tbsp lemon juice or white vinegar to 2 cups of milk; set aside for 20 minutes or until it thickens slightly and turns a creamy pale yellow.

Sift together (or fluff with a fork) flour, salt, if used, and baking powder. Add any extras.

Incorporate butter, mixing with a spoon or kneading gently until the mixture feels like raw oats.

Add milk slowly, mixing gently with a fork or spoon just until you can form a ball; the dough should not be sticky.

If dough becomes too wet, add a bit more flour to even it out.

Preheat oven to 400F and grease a cookie sheet.

On a well-floured surface, roll the dough into a rough rectangle about 1/2" thick, fold the rectangle into thirds, re-roll the dough to 1/2" thick, and cut out biscuits with a coffee cup (dip the cup in flour periodically to stop the dough from sticking).

Bake for 15 minutes until golden brown.

Sarah's Soda Bread

Best with a mix of white and whole wheat, oat, or rye flours, but they'll be perfectly fine with what you've got.



MARNA NIGHTINGALE

(If you have a spice grinder, or you're willing to clean your coffee grinder twice, you can make oat flour by grinding up any kind of oats: steel-cut, instant...)

Preheat oven to 400F.

Combine:
3 1/2 cups flour, ideally half all-purpose and half whole-wheat or oat

1 tsp salt if using unsalted butter

1 tsp baking soda

2 Tbsp butter

1 large egg

1 1/2 cups buttermilk

Sift together flour(s), salt if used, and baking soda, or combine and fluff together with a fork.

Add and incorporate butter. In a separate bowl, whisk the egg and milk together just until mixed, and add gradually to dry mix; you may not need it all.

As with the biscuits, you want a soft and not too sticky ball of dough; adjust with more flour or more milk or even water if needed.

Shape the dough into a round loaf and turn onto on a cookie sheet which you have either greased and floured or

covered in parchment paper. Bake for about 40 minutes; check the colour at 30 minutes. The loaf will sound slightly hollow when done. Let sit 10-15 minutes before slicing.

Mel's Lakota-style Frybread

Combine:

2 cups flour

1 Tbsp baking powder

1 tsp salt

1/4 cup sugar OR 1/4 cup fat, any kind (for sweet or savoury)

1 cup water

Mix dry ingredients, rubbing in fat, if used, until the dough feels like cornmeal. Add water slowly until dough is sticky but can still be worked by hand.

Divide dough into four balls and roll or pat each ball out on a floured surface until about as thick as pizza crust.

To fry, heat about 1/2 inch of oil or grease and cook as you would pancakes, flipping each once, until golden brown.

You can also bake it in a 400F oven or cook it on a griddle or a BBQ.

2020 Jane's Walk Ottawa-Gatineau postponed to September 12-13

Jane's Walk

In light of COVID-19 the local Jane's Walk festival of walking tours will be postponed until Sept. 12 and 13, 2020.

In the meantime, the group will be offering new ways to explore our communities.

The essence of Jane's Walk—connecting people and their communities—is more important now than ever before.

While people are staying apart physically, Jane's Walk Ottawa-Gatineau hopes to create new ways to connect and support each other through this isolating time.

Whether via a virtual walking tour, a photo essay of a tour route, a scavenger hunt or another innovative idea, organizers hope to provide alternative "walks" throughout the spring.

Jane's Walk is a pedestrian-focused, community-driven festival that improves urban literacy by offering insights into planning, design, local history, and civic engagement through the simple acts of walking, observing, and discussing. Last year, 3,000 people joined dozens of walking tours in celebration of the ideas of late author and urbanist Jane Jacobs,

who changed how we design and think about cities by promoting community vitality and a neighbourly street life.

The festival normally takes place over the first weekend in May to mark Jane's birthday, May 4.

In our 12th year, Jane's Walk Ottawa-Gatineau hopes to offer more than 60 different walking tours for you to choose from in September.

Meanwhile, walk leaders and new volunteers are encouraged to flex their creativity and support this movement to create connections by dreaming up a new way for people to experience their walking tour. Have an idea? Get in touch:

janeswalkottawa.ca
jane@janeswalkottawa.ca



JANE'S WALK / THE BUZZ



JANE'S WALK / THE BUZZ



MARNA NIGHTINGALE/THE BUZZ

Community gardens are essential services

Eleanor Sawyer

Just Food, which coordinates the Community Gardening Network (CGN) of Ottawa, is urging the provincial government to reverse its decision of March 31 to close all community gardens across the province due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The organization believes community gardens were mistakenly classified as recreational activities as opposed to essential food services.

In Ottawa alone, there could be as many as 7,000 people relying on community gardens to supplement their food.

Ottawa food banks also receive much-needed fresh food from these community gardens.

Many thousands of people in the Ottawa area have already invested in their seeds and started seedlings for this season.

There are tens of thousands of people across the province who grow food for their households.

On March 31, Just Food urged people to send an open letter from Sustain Ontario to their MPP, or to all the Ottawa-area MPPs if the garden is a citywide service, with a copy to jt2@justfood.ca, so they could track the number of letters. The organization is also working with both provincial MPPs and municipal councillors to reverse the government's decision.

Ottawa Public Health has agreed to work with them to develop safe practices for community gardeners once the decision has been reversed.

The B.C. government reversed an earlier decision it had taken and has now made community gardens essential services.

The city of Gatineau is supporting 22 community and collective gardens with the requirement that gardeners comply with the guidelines for physical distancing and use of common equipment.

Just Foods is a nonprofit, local, community-based organization that works on both rural and urban foods issues in Ottawa and the surrounding region.

For more information on the organization and the open letter, or if you are interested in supporting community gardeners, see

justfood.ca or community.gardening@justfood.ca.



GAIL MCGUIRE/THE BUZZ

Personal reflections on COVID-19

Stephen Thirlwall

A growing number of people around the world have been expecting a major environmental calamity clearly linked to inappropriate human actions on our environment. We wanted someone else to blame and to fix it. This is not the case with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Its appearance doesn't have clear links to human activities, and there is no one to blame for its start; it is something beyond us. But its spread does follow the paths of our individual and collective human behaviours. So that is where we can have the greatest effect in curbing its spread—by curbing our behaviours, at least temporarily, and perhaps some of them permanently.

Vaccines and treatments would help immensely, but take a long time to develop and properly test, let alone to implement worldwide. Personal actions, such as quarantine and personal distancing, will slow the spread until new technologies can fully come into play.

Where we can use technology now is in keeping ourselves informed and keeping in touch with and assisting others—without necessarily being with them. Radio, telephone, television, Internet, cars, masks, gloves, and many other technologies can keep us connected, allow relatively safe travelling and shopping when necessary for essentials, while minimizing direct interpersonal contact. Group chats on the Internet are invaluable.

The collectivity of our response is of extreme importance. Inappropriate actions of a few cause the spread of the virus to many. Any of us can unconsciously become centres of outbreak. So far all levels of government have followed the advice of global medical experts and cooperated. Gradually, other institutions, businesses, social groups, and most individuals have followed suit. The response was phased in step by step, day by day. There had to be a recognition of the severity of the situation, an acceptance that strict actions were necessary and time for our bodies and minds to adjust to the new conditions.



STEPHEN THIRLWALL/THE BUZZ

We want to feel unrestricted yet we know this is no longer possible. Ignoring or denying the problem means putting yourself and others at risk.

For a few days, I felt somewhat depressed at staying at home all day, until I was able to accept things and realize that there was still so much I could do within the new confines. At present, it is possible to go outside for short periods because most streets are empty: the symbols of this time are empty streets and closed shops and businesses. The only other times that come close to this are the mornings of Christmas and New Year's Day.

Each day, we learn. We discover that panicking is not good for anyone. Hoarding upsets otherwise functional supply chains and endangers everyone. Profiteering, reselling products at many times their price is not acceptable behaviour at this or any time. Industry needs to quickly produce as many ventilators as possible. We can acclimatize ourselves to the use of gloves and face masks and regularly washing our hands and face with soap. More learning is still to come.

For decades humanity has been following two main courses in its development. One has been towards greater globalization through relationships, collective associations, travel, and media exposure. Huge numbers of people have moved from one part of the world to another, increasing diversity everywhere. The world is now interconnected whether we like this or not, and we can't turn back.

Fighting the pandemic requires all countries to collaborate. The pandemic itself is pushing us in this direction.

At the same time, individuals and groups wish to establish their own unique identity, a process that seems to lead towards fragmenting into smaller and smaller groups. Every group has sub-groups. But in parallel with this trend is a growing concern for strong neighbourhoods where people care for one another and where diversity is accepted, respected and even encouraged.

These two opposing processes could come together eventually, as a deeper understanding of diversity, unity and equality of peoples is achieved. This pandemic is giving the world's population a chance to step aside from our normal activities and reflect on what society means today and where it can go in the future. This is the first time in human history in which countries and territories around the world have all actively worked together on such a grand scale to contain the spread of a virus within and between all localities, while putting this concern ahead of the daily politics, commerce, and social activity.

One could say this coronavirus is (depending on what we believe) a reminder from God, from Nature, or from some accidental sequence, which lets us know humans have limitations in the grand scheme of existence.

We are connected directly or indirectly with everything else around us and depend on everything.

And everything also depends on us. Human survival and development rely on our acceptance of both our diversity and oneness, and our ability to adapt and work peacefully together in new ways.

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ROYAL LEPAGE
Team Realty

Justine Bell profile

(cont from 1)

She grew up in her grandmother's house in North Vancouver: "a big, old heritage house. We lived on the main floor, my brother Sean and my mom and my dad. My grandparents lived in the basement and my Aunt Kathleen and my cousin Nathan lived up on the top floor."

Her grandmother was the founding editor of *The Native Voice*, the first national indigenous peoples' newspaper in Canada, and the house was "always open to activists and allies. From a very young age, I learnt about social injustice and inequality within our communities across Canada. My father was also very actively involved as a city councillor, and my mother was a nurses' assistant at a hospital there."

Her late brother Sean dropped out of high school, which she said affected him throughout his life.

"I remember the conversations around his disruptive behaviour in the classroom. It wasn't until many, many years later that he was diagnosed with dyslexia. He did contribute to society—he worked with people with disabilities—but he suffered quite a bit in his life."

On the other hand, her cousin Nathan, who has Down Syndrome, thrived at school because, during the 1980s and 90s, the BC school system added special aides and other supports for people with disabilities.

"So that's one of the reasons as well that I really feel strongly, and I am completely dedicated to, a democratic society where everyone can thrive, and where those that are disadvantaged can actually get the support that they need to thrive."

Bell has worked in international development and on poverty reduction for the past 15-20 years.

In Mexico City, she worked for Amnesty International and the Food and Agriculture Organization, with refugees and agricultural workers.

When she came back to Ottawa to get her master's in public policy and administration, she immediately started

working on issues concerning how to engage civil society to make democracy work.

In Mexico City, she met her husband, Guillermo Trejo, a visual artist and master printmaker who teaches at the Ottawa School of Art and sits on the board of the Ottawa Art Gallery.

In 2019, Bell was asked to run for the NDP in North Vancouver in the federal election. She and her family moved there for six months, "and I gave it my all. And then I came back to Ottawa and I was honest with people that I really needed a break at that time. My husband said to me, 'Listen, we have built such a strong community here in Ottawa I think we need to focus on our life here. Why don't you go find a board to sit on?'"

That fall, her daughter Shanti entered junior kindergarten a couple months late.

"She started to come home with stories that were very unnerving, stories of disruptive behaviour in the classroom. Me being the good policy analyst that I am, I started to investigate what are the policies of safe schools? What can the teachers do when you have a number of children that have behavioral issues? I spoke with the teachers. I spoke with the principal."

Then she reached out to her school trustee to learn "what could be done and what sort of supports could be put in place into this classroom so that all children could be safe."

Braunovan had already stepped down, but agreed to meet with her. "By the end of the conversation she got me thinking about stepping up into this position as trustee. So it really just fell into place quite organically."

"I found it incredibly challenging to navigate the system—and so I want to help other parents to be able to seek out and know what to seek out in order to get the services they need so that their children can thrive."

Bell started her term in the middle of several major disruptions: first, the rotating teachers' strikes, and then the

complete school shutdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It's incredibly intense, and I'm very grateful for my background in international development, which has given me a lot of background in the issues of poverty and economic growth and how it all intertwines, and the importance of intersectional analysis. Because I think if I came to this without a relevant background, it would be an uphill battle, because there's so much to learn and there's so much going on right now."

The school board can no longer meet in person, and must conduct its meetings electronically, which makes it difficult, even in four-hour meetings, "to cover all of the issues that everyone around the table is bringing forth."

"And then on top of that, there's the regular business that—if we don't get to it—it's going to have a negative effect on students."

"It's been a challenge but I've been very impressed at how the trustees and the school board have been open to dialogue and to supporting me actually to getting up to speed on what a trustee's role is, what a superintendent's role is, what the board's role is."

"This is a perfect opportunity to jump in and find out exactly what you can and cannot do according to legislation."

She herself is working from home on reduced hours, "because the public service has permitted parents who need to take care of their children at this time to do what they have to do."

"Right now my husband and I have worked it out so from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m., I work on my day job, with my earphones on, and from 1 til 4, I take care of Shanti."

"Then the rest of the night we share when it comes to doing my trustee work and him doing his art work."

Bell said she'd heard from "a few parents—especially on-line in social media—that this is really tough."

"This is a hard time for a lot of parents. Even if you



GUILLERMO TREJO/THE BUZZ

Working from home with her daughter Shanti and a helpful cat

have the security of having a job and pay, being at home 24/7 with your children and the expectations that you could take on the educator role is a lot for people."

"From my experience as well, I've really appreciated how much the board has done to reach out and make this experience not overwhelming for parents, by mentioning five hours of focused study per week as part of the latest initiative."

"I can tell you that even with five hours a week, it's tough—and a lot of people have reached out, wanting to know what's next, wanting to know especially with the high school students if they're going to be able to graduate. I've heard quite a bit from parents on that front."

She said she was making it a personal priority to let parents know about resources and that "your school is there for you to reach out to so you can get those supports that you need."

While "we're in unprecedented times," she praised the school board for "finding out who needs resources when it comes to online support during this time, reaching out to our teachers, and regularly making time to say that, if this is the way we're moving forward, what do you suggest? In basically a week's time, they rolled all that information together

and came up with a plan. I've heard from a number of teachers that they really appreciate what our board has been doing to communicate what their expectations are."

In the teachers' labour dispute, she emphasized how much she appreciated how teachers have "advocated for the well-being of students. There's a fine line that you have to walk as a trustee and being vocal about labour negotiations."

"And so I did my best to hear from the teachers, reach out to the teachers, and to educate myself as best I could about the current reality."

Talking to teachers, she said, the issue of destructive behaviour in the classroom that she and her daughter encountered "came up time and time again. The types of resources and supports that they need in order to make sure that all children, all students are able to get educated, and the importance of class sizes, and the importance of ensuring your support staff make a livable wage—these are things that I heard right off the bat."

In the longer term, Bell says the number one school issue "in Centretown and across Ottawa is the issue of equity. How can we ensure that, no matter where you come from, no matter what your socio-economic status is, that you get the education you need to contribute to so-

ciety in a positive way? I will be working as hard as I can to ensure that there is equity—that students in Centretown no matter where they come from, can really follow their dreams the way I've been able to do."

She's concerned about perceived and real differences between English-only and French immersion school programs—whether some students are relegated to English programs because they're considered less talented, and whether the English schools are achieving as much academically as the French immersion schools.

If there is a difference, "there's something that we need to be doing as a board to improve those statistics."

She also wants to help parents of children with special education needs: "how do they navigate what can be done to support their child, so that their child can leave the school system and be as best-off as they can?"

Bell emphasized she wants to hear from people, through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, email, or phone.

"I want to hear the issues that people are facing, because it's only through hearing from my community that I will be able to represent them at that table with all of the other trustees."

justine.bell@ocdsb.ca
613-858-2275.

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Let's get through COVID-19 together

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Somerset Ward Update

Catherine McKenney

Dear friends,

We are in an unprecedented situation. Weeks, possibly months, of isolation and self-distancing will put a strain on all of us. That's why it's so important that we pay attention to our physical and mental well-being and to remember that it is ok not to be ok.

One important way to look after yourself is to stay informed through legitimate and knowledgeable sources. There is some misinformation out there, particularly on social media, and much of it will do nothing more than cause unnecessary worry or provide useless advice.

If you want to know what's happening with COVID-19 in Ottawa, including how best to protect yourself, your family, and your neighbours, please visit the Ottawa Public Health website as your main source of information. Medical Officer for Health Dr. Vera Etches and her team of experts are working around the clock to

keep our community safe, and they are providing timely, accurate information on their website. It should be your first and best source of information.

The City of Ottawa has responded to this situation with a number of important programs, including deferrals for property tax payments and water bills; social services support for seniors and other low-income residents; a Buy Local campaign and other supports for small businesses; and much more.

You can stay up to date on the City's response by visiting my website, where I continuously update information about services available to you; how to volunteer in your neighbourhood; available resources like grocery stores, pharmacies, and other essential businesses; and tips on protecting your mental health. I am also distributing a weekly email update during the COVID-19 crisis that focuses on the programs available to residents. You can sign up for it by vis-

iting the newsletter page on my website.

At the same time, the City has enacted various measures to meet the Ontario Government's quarantine and self-distancing requirements. This includes some restrictions like the closure of dog parks, playgrounds, libraries, and community centres. We all know that this is a hardship for many, but it is important to limit places where people can gather so we can stop the spread of the virus.

Despite the challenges we are facing, I am so impressed with how our community has come together (while staying two metres apart!).

Every day, I hear from people who are helping each other with groceries, with check-in phone calls and video chats, and with online entertainment like concerts and readings.

Our community is doing a tremendous job to protect itself while supporting others. This is how we will beat the virus: by following our medical experts' advice and by watching out for the more vulnerable among us. I am proud to be a member of this community, which demonstrates our compassion and understanding with every passing week and perseveres in the face of extraordinary circumstances. From the bottom of my heart, thank you.

Be safe, be kind, and be well.

Catherine

catherinemckenney.ca
ottawapublichealth.ca



STEPHEN THIRLWALL/THE BUZZ

CCA report

Jack Hanna

Volunteers flood in

When the Centretown Community Association sent out a call for volunteers to help during the COVID-19 crisis, people responded. There were more than 200 names on the CCA's volunteers list by early April.

"The response is heartening," said Shawn Barber, CCA president. "People in Centretown and across the city are rising to the challenge of COVID-19."

The Centretown Community Association has started a service to match a person needing assistance during the COVID-19 crisis—for instance, to pick up groceries—with a volunteer.

The CCA started the Centretown Support Network (CSN), after hearing from seniors, shut-ins, and single parents who could use help with deliveries and other challenges.

The service covers all of Centretown—from the Canal to Bronson and from the river as far south as the Queensway.

The CSN can make deliveries of groceries and pharmaceuticals, walk a dog, or provide other assistance.

Some problems the volunteers cannot themselves address—for instance, a landlord increasing the rent—but the CSN has a list of community resources and may be able to direct the individual to the right organization or individual to take action.

If you would like to be put in touch with a CSN volunteer, you have two options, phone or email. (If you phone, you will hear a recorded greeting. Leave your name, number and a brief message. A CSN person will call you within 24 hours.)

The support network makes use of a big list of Centretown volunteers wanting to help out during the crisis.

The community association has been directing volunteers to various organizations providing assistance during the crisis. Centretown people are helping to pack and deliver dinners and grocery boxes for food programs, and to sew protective gowns to be worn by frontline workers.

The support network is another way for Centretowners to be neighbourly as we all face the global challenge of COVID-19.

Knox: Free hot dinners

During the COVID-19 crisis, the folks at Knox realize the need is greater still, and increased the frequency of their hot take-out meals. In early April, Knox was providing meals twice a week to about 150 people and aiming to go to three times a week. Volunteers from the CCA's list help administer the expanded program, and pack meals, greet guests, and hand out dinners.

Operation Ramzieh: Groceries for the vulnerable

When The Waverley on Elgin had to close, the owner and staff decided to help out by providing groceries to the elderly and other vulnerable folks.

Waverley owner Abbas Mahmoud made the first big donation—and named the operation after his mother.

The operation has already distributed more than 14,600 boxes and expanded to Toronto, operating out of a restaurant there. CCA volunteers pack and distribute grocery boxes.

We all need a toilet

The CCA recently wrote to the mayor and to Coun-

cillor Catherine McKenney outlining one problem COVID-19 is causing for people living on the streets: lost access to washrooms. City Hall, community centres, the public library, and coffee shops—all are closed, and there are no washrooms in the core available to those living on the street.

The CCA proposed that the city open a section of the ground floor of City Hall, so people can get to the washrooms, and that the city locate porta-potties around the city's core, and maintain and disinfect them frequently. McKenney responded that they are trying to get the city to open community-centre washrooms and deploy porta-potties.

To sprawl or not to sprawl

City Council is wrestling with whether Ottawa's boundary for housing subdivisions should expand—to permit greater urban sprawl.

The impending decision on sprawl versus intensification will underpin Ottawa's new Official Plan governing the city's future to 2046.

Allowing the city to sprawl exacerbates climate change. It works against affordable housing and a walkable city. And it is costly; taxes go up to pay for more roads, water and sewer systems, community centres and other city infrastructure, and longer and less efficient transit routes.

A key vote is scheduled for May 11, at a special meeting of the city's Planning Committee and Agricultural and Rural Affairs Committee. If you want to tell Mayor Jim Watson or Councillor McKenney your concerns about this issue, now's a good time.

"Out Of The Cold" expands, adapts

P Marsden-Dole

Knox Presbyterian Church, at the corners of Elgin and Lisgar, has stepped up to the call for some additional kindness in this time of COVID-19.

Knox has been helping out in Centretown for many years. In 1943 the Women's Guild, with the support of their church community, created a lunch program for people working in the nearby federal defence buildings. In 1945 that service was extended to feed hungry soldiers returning from the war via the nearby Ottawa train station.

In 1995, volunteers, under the inspiration and guidance of George Fyffe,

revived the practice, but this time for the homeless eking out an existence in the downtown area of the nation's capital.

This project became known as the "Out of the Cold" programme, serving a hot sit-down meal in the downstairs church hall every Saturday night from November through March—the five coldest months of the year.

In this year of the pandemic, Knox's pastor, Jim Pot, and his team felt they could continue this project for the homeless to the end of April but in a different format.

I asked Pastor Jim for his inspiration for this extra effort. He said that this was the tradition of his church community in keeping with

the command of Jesus Christ to his followers to feed the hungry.

Generous financial support is being received from Faulkner Realty and extra help from Massine's Independent Grocer, as well as help from members and friends of Knox Church. Volunteers come from the church and a call out sent by the Centretown Community Association to their members.

Packaged hot meals are now available for pick-up at Knox twice a week, on Wednesday and Saturday evenings, from 5 to 6:30 p.m. during the month of April. Steve Rock, who has worked with the Ottawa Food Bank, is the volunteer manager of this project.

On yer bike: a great way to get around during physical distancing

Alayne McGregor

Got a bike? Now is the time to ride it. Now as never before, cycling is a great choice for getting around Centretown.

On your bike, you can keep physical distancing, get needed exercise, and enjoy more of the outdoors further away from your home. A bike will get you to the grocery store and your workplace, and allow you to carry a larger load. Traffic is noticeably lower right now, making it easier to cycle.

And local bike stores—which are, thankfully, considered an essential service—are still open to sell you tools and parts, and to service your bike.

Before riding, do a basic safety check on your bike, especially if it hasn't been used in a while:

Can your front and back brakes quickly stop the bike? Are your tires inflated to the recommended pressure? If they're low, you're more likely to get a flat tire, especially if you hit a pothole. If your bike has been parked over the winter, you will want to re-oil your chain and ensure it's in good condition and not showing any rust. Are any spokes missing, broken, or loose on your

wheels? If so, you need to get the wheels retrue before they get worse. Are all the various screws tight? Can you easily and smoothly shift gears?

Check your bike carefully, and decide what work you can do yourself.

If you need tools or parts like chains, tires, or tubes, phone or email your local bike store or order from their website: most stores we talked to can arrange for pick-up at the door, while others offer delivery with online ordering.

Alternatively, you can schedule a tune-up at a local shop, and drop off and pick up your bike. You'll need to make an appointment. Fresh Air Experience says they can do flat repairs and minor adjustments on the spot, although you may need to leave your bike. Full Cycle offers free shipping and some local deliveries.

All stores are restricting interaction: McCrank's is asking clients to just drop off their bikes for repair; the staff then sanitize the bike, check it out, and contact the client to confirm the repair costs. Fresh Air and Full Cycle are limiting the number of clients in the store to one at a time. Tall Tree is setting up 30-minute appointments for selling bikes via phone,

chat, and video.

The volunteer-run re-Cycles Community Bicycle Shop has been a great resource for cyclists, where they can buy bike parts and used bikes, learn how to do their own repairs, and use the shop's repair space and tools for a small hourly charge. Its shop at 473 Gladstone Avenue at Bronson is currently closed; the shop has said on twitter that it has "at least 400 bikes ready for sale, and we know that folks need and want them (not to mention that bike sales pay most of our rent). We're trying to figure out if it's even possible to sell them safely."

Sharing the re-Cycles location is the social enterprise Cycle Salvation, which refurbishes and sells donated bikes while also training people for jobs as bike mechanics. Both it and re-Cycles are excellent sources for reasonably-priced used bikes.

Cycle Salvation is still accepting donations. Its operation manager, Rob Robitaille, says bikes and bike parts can be dropped off outside at their shop and staff will bring them in. Their team is "hard at work continuing to refurbish bikes for the spring season."

They're currently working on a process where their

bikes for sale will be displayed online and they will offer curbside pick-up, he said. Since they cannot currently provide their regular hands-on bike fitting service in a safe fashion, he said, they'll specify sizes and approximate height recommendations for each bike. "It's not ideal, but we want to keep our team and our customers safe and ensure social distancing throughout the process." Neither re-Cycles nor Cycle Salvation could specify a date when they might fully reopen. cyclesalvation.org re-cycles.ca

These bike shops in or near Centretown are open for repairs, parts, and limited bike sales:

Cyco's:

cycosport.ca

Tall Tree Cycle:

talltreecycles.ca

Foster's Sports:

fosterssports.ca

Full Cycle:

fullcycle.ca

Fresh Air Experience:

freshairexp.ca

McCrank's Cycles:

mccranks.com

Kunstadt Sports has closed its stores, but will ship online orders:

kunstadt.com

MPP Report: Empathy in Action

Joel Harden

It's a wild, unsettling time. Life normally flashes by. Now the minutes of the day stick together as we stay home, and scour for news of the latest updates.

Canada's public health care system has been our first line of defense. Its front-line staff are our guardian angels, and we are thankful for their efforts every day, never more so than now.

Thank you Dr. Vera Etches, Ottawa public health officials, and front-line workers. Thank you nurses, personal support workers, hospital cleaners and support staff, doctors, orderlies, administrators, and other health care professionals. Thank you first responders: paramedics, firefighters, and police. We see your long hours, and we understand this means sacrifice from you and your families. Thank you elders who fought for the public health care system. A brief glance at the United States reminds us of what could have been without you.

Thank you neighbours for looking after each other. Thank you Parkdale Food Centre which has supported so many, including 500 folks stuck in emergency housing at the Travelodge Hotel on

Carling Avenue. Thanks for food, puzzles, games, and smiles. Thank you Good Companions Seniors Centre and Ottawa West Seniors Services who've mobilized fast to help low-income elders across our city.

Thank you donors and small businesses who have enabled this work. We are seeing incredible generosity across the city.

Thank you parents and caregivers balancing employment and family. It's not easy to create a fun day inside, even with brief trips outdoors. This is even harder for kids with disabilities or special needs. But children are vectors for illnesses, and staying home is making a difference. Keep at it.

Ottawa is such a compassionate city. I am thankful for all that has happened here to date in response to COVID-19, and mindful of what must be done in government policy to enable even more.

Moves have been made at the provincial and federal level which offer a good first step. As the Ontario NDP Critic for People with Disabilities, Seniors, and Accessibility, I know we can do even better, notably for those without much in employment income.

This is a test of solidarity. Let's pass it together.

Take care of yourselves and each other!



A lot has changed over the last few weeks. For some of us, the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting more than our way of life; it's affecting our mental health. It's okay not to feel okay during this time. Please take care of yourselves – and each other.

For helpful tips on how to support your mental health during the pandemic, please visit my website:

bit.ly/covid19selfcare

Catherine McKenney
City Councillor for Somerset Ward

catherinemckenney.ca [mckenneycatherine](https://www.facebook.com/mckenneycatherine) [cmckenney](https://twitter.com/cmckenney)

Catherine McKenney
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Stay safe!

For accurate info on COVID-19 in Ottawa, please consult Ottawa Public Health: ottawapublichealth.ca/coronavirus

To find out how the City is helping, please visit: www.catherinemckenney.ca/blog



Keep in touch!

For the latest news on Somerset Ward, sign up for my newsletter on my website and follow me on social media:

catherinemckenney.ca

[mckenneycatherine](https://www.facebook.com/mckenneycatherine)

[cmckenney](https://twitter.com/cmckenney)

[cmckenney14](https://www.instagram.com/cmckenney14)

Questions? We can help!

613-580-2484 | catherine.mckenney@ottawa.ca

Safe Wings Ottawa: saving birds one window at a time

Amanda Dookie

Picture a bird hitting your window. It falls to the ground and remains stunned for a while, then eventually flies away. It's fine, right?

Probably not: birds that manage to fly away after a window collision are rarely okay. Most are concussed or have other internal injuries that may not be apparent. Without help, most will die of these injuries in a few hours or days, or they will become easy prey or slowly starve because they can no longer fend for themselves.

Safe Wings Ottawa, a program of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club, recommends rescuing any bird that crashes into a window. The best time is immediately after it collides, before it has a chance to fly away. Don't wait to see if it recovers. Pick it up right away, place it in a securely closed paper bag or box, and call Safe Wings for further instructions.

Raising awareness of window collisions—and the need to rescue survivors—is just one of the ways Safe Wings Ottawa is helping to reduce bird deaths through research, prevention and rescue. These efforts are important because North America has lost one-third of all its birds in the last 50 years, and window collisions are one of the main reasons for this decline.

Prevention involves educating the public about collisions, advocating for bird-safe building design, and convincing building owners and managers to apply visual markers or other measures to

hazardous windows.

That includes homeowners: 44% of collisions occur at residential buildings, and fewer than 1% at high-rises (the rest are at low-rises). Think of the difference it would make if every homeowner made even one window safer for birds!

Volunteers also monitor buildings to find dead birds, rescue live ones, and collect data on each collision, which helps us demonstrate the extent of the problem, identify collision patterns, and determine which buildings pose the highest risk. We encourage members of the public to contribute to this community science initiative by submitting collision reports directly to our website.

Some of our volunteers are licensed to provide short-term care to injured birds until they can be released or, more often, transferred to the Ottawa Valley Wild Bird Care Centre to recover. Many people also contact us for help with birds that are hit by cars, attacked by other animals, tangled in fishing line, and every other reason you can imagine.

Safe Wings began researching bird-building collisions in 2014. In that first year, volunteers documented 550 collisions from 68 species. The total continues to grow every year thanks to an increase in volunteers and public support, not to mention new glass buildings. In 2019, Safe Wings documented 3,322 window collisions across 110 species. Almost 70% these birds were found dead, while 20% were captured alive (of which only

about 62% recovered and were released).

The rest were seen but not captured, or they left only an imprint on the window as evidence.

If those numbers seem high, consider that Safe Wings only monitors a few dozen buildings, and only finds 5 to 15% of the victims; the rest are scavenged, preyed on, swept up, or die where they won't be found. We believe the actual number of birds killed by collisions in the Ottawa area is 250,000 annually, just a fraction of the one billion birds estimated to die in collisions every year across North America.

Why is glass so dangerous for birds? Primarily because they don't understand it—to them, reflections of trees in windows are real, and clear glass barriers (corner windows, deck railings) are invisible. Many birds move as fast as 50 km/h in regular flight. At those speeds, the damage to a 77g American Robin or a 10g Black-capped Chickadee is most often lethal.

While the statistics are dire, Safe Wings is making progress. The federal government, the National Capital Commission and the City of Ottawa are all developing bird-safe design guidelines. Residents are applying Feather Friendly and other solutions to prevent collisions at home. Safe Wings continues to engage building owners and operators to make changes to their buildings, and to support monitoring efforts.

But we're still just scratching the surface. Until

bird-safe design is the norm, new glass buildings will continue to go up without regard for the birds they will kill—not only office buildings, but also new LRT stations and homes with floor-to-ceiling windows and clear glass deck railings.

If you find an injured bird (any bird that survives the initial impact), act quickly. Pick up the bird immediately and place it gently in a closed box or an unwaxed paper bag, top folded down and secured with a paper clip. Keep it in a quiet, safe place, and call us. Do not let it fly away even if you think it has recovered. If the bird is dead, place it in a sealed plastic bag and keep it in a cool place (the freezer is perfect, and perfectly safe) until you can drop it off or a volunteer can pick it up. Visit safewings.ca for more detailed instructions.

Even better, please make your home safe for birds—visit us to learn about effective solutions—and don't hesitate to call Safe Wings if you need advice or help for a bird in distress.

safewings.ca
info@safewings.ca
 613-216-8999

Help prevent window collisions

Do:

Make windows visible to birds with a pattern covering the exterior of the glass. Pattern elements should be no more than 5 cm apart, at least 6 mm wide, and visible in all light conditions. Use Feather Friendly visual marker tape, a patterned film, tempera paint or oil-paint markers. Or, install lengths of paracord or twine at least 3 mm thick, hung up to 10 cm apart in front of the window. Exterior screens work too, with at least 5 cm between the screen and the glass.

Locate bird feeders and baths less than 50 cm from windows.

Close curtains or blinds to reduce clear views through parallel or adjacent windows. (This will not break up reflections)

Move houseplants away from windows so birds can't easily see them.

Turn off unnecessary lights at work and at home.

Don't:

Expect hawk silhouettes or UV decals to prevent collisions. Unless you space a lot of them very closely together, birds will fly around the visible obstacles and still hit the invisible glass.

Apply bird-friendly treatments to the inside of windows, where bright sunshine will make them disappear.

Rely on products that soon fade or wash away, like UV liquids or highlighter pens.

Even bother with owl decoys.



MARNA NIGHTINGALE/THE BUZZ

Shows and exhibits will have to wait awhile



STEPHEN THIRLWALL/THE BUZZ

"It's quiet uptown ..."



BRETT DELMAGE/THE BUZZ

Caution tape and warning signs at McNabb Park