



Capital Pride goes virtual, 4



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THE CENTRETOWN BUZZ

New ward options split Centretown

Alayne McGregor



Pavement artist François Pelletier turned a section of Bank Street just north of Gladstone Avenue into a seascape on Saturday, August 1, with his painting of a narwhal. He was commissioned by the Downtown Bank BIA as part of its Saturday closures of Bank Street from Queen to Flora streets. The street was closed to motor vehicles from 9 a.m. to midnight every Saturday through August 8 with merchants and restaurants allowed to spread onto sidewalks and the street: the closure attracted a steady stream of happy cyclists, e-scooter riders, and pedestrians, as well as diners and drinkers in outdoor patios. The narwhal painting was only for that evening, and disappeared in the rain the next day.

Alayne McGregor/The BUZZ

The consultants hired to propose new boundaries for Ottawa’s city wards released their five options in June—and every option would split Somerset Ward in half and combine it with other wards.

One option would split the ward at Bronson Avenue, a second at Kent Street, and three others at O’Connor Street—despite the consultants saying that preserving “geographic communities of interest” was a prime consideration in the review.

The new ward boundaries will come into effect for the next city elections, in fall 2022, and would be in effect until 2030 or 2034. City Council will vote on the consultants’ final recommendations this winter.

Currently, Somerset Ward stretches from Parliament Hill in the north to the Queensway in the south, and from the Rideau Canal to LRT Line 2. It includes Ottawa’s downtown plus the neighbourhoods of Centretown, LeBreton Flats, and Dalhousie/Centretown West.

These boundaries have remained almost the same since 1994,

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David Gladstone was an activist and bon vivant who left his mark on Centretown



Charles Arsen-Marchand/The BUZZ

Alayne McGregor

David Gladstone—a longtime civic activist, *Centretown BUZZ* journalist, and research scientist—died in early June. He had many passions, and the biggest was for his home neighbourhood of Centretown.

For decades, he was a familiar face around the neigh-

bourhood: strolling down Elgin Street, organizing community meetings, making cogent presentations at city hall committees, capturing people and architecture with his camera, dancing to live music at local night-spots, or dressing up as Captain Canada on July 1.

“He was a wonderful blessing for the Centretown community,” said former City Councillor Diane Holmes. “For many years he was a real stalwart of planning in Centretown to maintain a residential neighbourhood this close to downtown and to maintain the health of the commercial streets.”

“He loved the community so much that he wanted to be out and about talking with as many people as he could about what was going on,” said *BUZZ* volunteer Archie Campbell. “Everybody knew

him. He was like a good reporter who chats up everybody and listens to what they say and sometimes writes some of the stuff down.

“He was a forceful advocate. He was good at raising red flags for the community about what the important issues were, what people needed to mobilize about.”

Gladstone was one of *The BUZZ*’s most consistent and prolific writers and photographers. In the paper’s first decade, he only missed one issue, and from 1999 onward, he had a monthly column. He’d summarize his work as chair of the planning committee for the Centretown Citizens Community Association (CCCA), talk about city transportation issues, and add “chatty exposition” of what he’d seen and heard in the last month.

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The BUZZ is back on the street!

Archie Campbell, Chair, *BUZZ* board of directors

Like many small enterprises and non-profits in Ottawa in these extraordinary times, *The BUZZ* had to do business differently for the past four months.

Until there was a safer environment for our volunteers to deliver the paper door to door, we decided to go digital in April, May and June. You can read these issues online as PDFs at centretownbuzz.com.

We expected that this decision would likely mean a decline in advertising and possibly the need to do a GoFundMe or equivalent campaign to raise money to keep us afloat. However, to our pleasant surprise, most of our advertisers have stuck with us, allowing us to continue publishing the paper and serving the community.

Although social media feedback from our readers has been positive, many have also told us they miss the experience of reading an old-fashioned community newspaper. We recently did a survey of our deliverers and a clear majority were eager to start delivering again.

So we’re back on the streets, delivering a paper to the doorsteps of 10,000 Centretown residents.

And we’re also about to hit our 25th anniversary milestone in October! We are grateful for the support Centretowners have shown us over these years through both the good and the bad times.

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THE CENTRETOWN BUZZ

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Blue Roses bloom in Centretown

Patricia Marsden-Dole

A blue rose is for a woman who chooses her own way in life no matter the consequences. Such was one woman's choice of flower for her memorial, as presented in a local park by a worker from the Somerset West Community Health Centre. The lady had lived her last years in a downtown rooming house.

This local story inspired *Blue Roses Bloom in Centretown*, a documentary film by Danielle Rolfe, a director/producer at KublaCom Pictures, about the lives of some of our neighbours living in rooming houses in the city core. (To learn more about this film: KublaCom Pictures at www.kubla.com.ca.)

There are many forms of housing in our community: high-priced single houses; hotels and Airbnbs; apartments in large old homes; apartment and

condo buildings; seniors' residences; rooming and halfway houses; shelters; homeless spots under trees, on benches, under porches and stairways; and the city jail. The last five possibilities make us wonder about the health and security of the inhabitants for those who lay their heads to rest in these locations. Perhaps the homeless and those in jail have the healthiest options.

In a 2016 team report created by master of social work students at Carleton University, there were 1,328 rooming house units in Ottawa, of which 441 were in the catchment area of Somerset West Community Health Centre and 259 in that of the Centretown Community Health Centre. This accounts for over half of such housing.

These inhabitants are our neighbours. So who are they? What are their living conditions like in this time of a pandemic? The Carleton U team re-

ported in their research that eight of 10 respondents spoke about their experiences of homelessness, criminal convictions, physical and mental illness, broken relationships, and addictions.

Overcrowding is the rule, as hallways, kitchens and bathrooms are shared by any number of tenants. The combination of these facts—as reported by the Alliance for Canadian Homelessness, Housing and Health: Toronto—results in men having a 2.01 higher mortality rate and women a 1.79 higher rate than the average Canadian.

So what can we do? One way is to support the Centretown Emergency Food Centre with donations of packaged food or money. Another is to acknowledge the existence of these neighbours, and look into volunteer opportunities through the advice of the local community health centres.

The Good, the Bad, and the Bumpy: why ignore us?

Ryan Lythall

Since my column in June, there have been some new developments in getting around in downtown Ottawa during this pandemic.

Bank and Somerset Streets are being closed to cars during weekends to allow patios to open up more space, while maintaining physical distancing. Every Saturday, a 15-block stretch of Bank Street is shut down to traffic to allow people to walk and roam freely on the street and, hopefully, support local businesses in the area.

For those of us with a disability, options for where we can dine or shop on Bank Street are limited, especially for those of us who use a wheelchair or other mobility devices. Many businesses don't always acknowledge people with disabilities. I've been in stores and restaurants with the full intent of purchasing an item and have been completely ignored, while other customers around me were being helped.

I have become more optimistic,

however, with a company called Bird Canada, which opened in Ottawa on July 16 as part of a pilot project in partnership with the city. Bird Canada is one of three companies renting e-scooters. For anyone living in Centretown, you've probably seen these black e-scooters parked on the street.

When I first heard that they were coming to Ottawa, I was worried. My first thought was how these scooters on the street would affect people with disabilities in terms of getting around. As it is, we already have to contend with bicyclists, rollerbladers, skateboarders, and regular scooters when we're out on the streets. These e-scooters would add another barrier to our difficulties in navigating the streets and sidewalks of Ottawa.

Three days after Bird Canada started operating in Ottawa, I was contacted on Twitter by Austin Spademan, the AGM for Ottawa for Bird Canada. He reached out to me to find out what he can do to address accessibility concerns raised by people with disabilities in Ottawa. I was also pleased to learn that Austin had been in touch with the CNIB regard-

ing similar safety concerns and accessibility issues. The issue of accessibility regarding these e-scooters blocking sidewalks was also mentioned in a live segment during the morning news.

So I ask, if an e-scooter company can take the time to acknowledge people with disabilities and our concerns regarding accessibility, why can't other businesses do the same? I'm not expecting a press release or issues about people with disabilities to be on the daily news. But I'm asking for an acknowledgement.

Sooner or later, local businesses and restaurants will see us everywhere in the community, online, and in their store or restaurant. So why ignore us?

Even if we can't buy what you're selling or renting, such as an e-scooter, a good relationship with different community members not only makes good business sense, but it also shows that you see us and acknowledge our concerns. Also, we can recommend your business to our friends, on Social Media, or in an online column.

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

Comment: CARP calls for culture change in LTC homes

Sue McDonald

The tragic loss of life in long-term care homes due to COVID-19 has exposed many of the problems that have plagued Ontario's long-term care system for years.

Over the years, many strategies have been tried to repair the system, including stronger policies and more regulations, investments in staff, support from specialists, and increased oversight by government. However, it is evident that these have been insufficient to appropriately address the inherent weaknesses in the current system.

The Ottawa branch of the Canadian Association for Retired Persons (CARP) recommends a transformative culture change for Ontario's long-term care system as the most effective means of improving the quality of life

and care of residents, and of dealing with the inherent weaknesses exposed by the current crisis.

There have been a number of innovative models that have embraced this culture change in the U.S., Europe, Australia and, recently, in Ontario. For example, there are the Eden Alternative, the Green House Project, Butterfly Homes, and Hogewey Villages.

The common elements in these models include:

- using a relationship-based approach to care where the resident, staff and families feel part of a community;
- setting up small home-like environments;
- providing more hours of direct care for residents;
- employing full-time, well-paid staff who are trained in empathy and culture change;

- recognizing families and caregivers as integral members of the team; and
- engaging volunteers who are trained in empathy and culture change.

The benefits of these models include decreased use of medications, decreased number of aggressive incidents, decreased visits to hospitals, reduced food waste, and reduced staff sick time, all while increasing positive interactions with staff, families, and residents.

We owe it to current and future residents of long-term care homes to change a system that has not provided them with safe, quality care, or focused on their individual needs. Please ask your MPP or city councillor to investigate these models for local long-term care homes.

For more information: changeltcnw@gmail.com

Sue McDonald is a member of the CARP Ottawa Advocacy Working Group on Long-term Care.



David Gladstone "never gave up"



David Gladstone dressed as Captain Canada every July 1

JOHNNY VEGAS/THE BUZZ

cont from page 1

"He was always fairly acerbic," founding *BUZZ* editor Robert Smythe said, "and would ascribe the worst intentions to people who brought forth bad developments. I pretty much published what he wrote. Sometimes he was a little intemperate and I would try to knock off the rough edges. And we tried to avoid libel."

Gladstone always had issues of *The BUZZ* with him and would press them on anyone he met.

His last column was in April, 2013; in 2015, he moved to Toronto for health reasons and to be nearer his

family. His obituary said he died on June 4, and had been suffering from primary progressive Multiple Sclerosis.

From his home on Frank Street in the Golden Triangle, it was only a few blocks to Ottawa City Hall. It became his second home, said fellow light rail advocate David Jeanes.

Passionate and tenacious

"I have never met anyone who was as passionate about planning as him," Smythe said. "He was always outraged when the city didn't follow its own zoning and Official Plan policies and he was quite dogged in believ-

ing zoning was paramount."

"He was tenacious," said fellow City Centre Coalition member Ida Henderson. "He just wouldn't give up. If there was a point he wanted to make, I'm quite sure he drove some people nuts sometimes trying to make it. 'I've got my five minutes; you're going to listen to me.' He would doggedly hold people to account."

Gladstone was a master of city hall procedure, Henderson said—and that allowed him to spearhead a citizen takeover in 1998 of a city committee looking at the downstream effects of opening up on-ramps to the Airport Parkway. He wound up chairing the committee and "we basically controlled the agenda! They never let us do that again."

A dream of light rail to Hull

In the 1990s, Gladstone was one of the authors of the Friends of the O-Train's (FOTO) "Practical Plan" to bring surface light rail to downtown and to extend along existing rail corridors.

He worked in the Louis St. Laurent Building in Gatineau, across from the Casino du Lac Leamy, and experienced the complicated transit connections to that area, Jeanes said. A rail line extends from Ottawa's Bayview Station across the Prince of Wales Bridge to the Casino, and Gladstone never gave up the dream of creating a commuter rail service across that bridge.

He was featured in a video promoting commuter rail between Ottawa and Gatineau by filmmaker Jim Blondeau

(www.youtube.com/watch?v=-hxoA3IDGt8).

"I was impressed with this little guy who seemed to be so fervent about his belief that we had to do more for public transit," said FOTO member Tim Lane. "His basic premise was that we spend so much on roads and not anywhere near enough on transit and we're not making use of the facilities that are already there."

In 1994, FOTO volunteers including Gladstone ignored "No Trespassing" signs, and cleaned up the gravel pathway between the Bayview O-Train station and the Ottawa River Pathway, so it could be used by pedestrians and cyclists. This later became the popular Trillium Pathway.

"We just did it!" said Jeanes. "We cleared out about 35 to 40 huge bags of garbage, and we put up metal signs down the pathway and at Bayview Station saying this way to the pathway. Councillor Holmes supported us and we did it under the Cleaning the Capital program. We even got a certificate for the clean-up job even though it was to a certain extent illegal. Whenever there was anything like that happening, David was there as one of the ringleaders."

The music photographer

Gladstone knew Centretown's nightlife as well as its politics. "He definitely did have a bit of bon vivant about him. David was known up and down Elgin Street. He knew all the pubs and restaurants and bars and

nightclubs," Henderson said.

He was close friends with Ottawa crooner and big band singer Johnny Vegas, and a regular at Vegas' Wednesday night shows in the upstairs room at Maxwell's.

"David was an avid supporter of local music," Vegas said. "David and his trusty camera would show up to all sorts of different shows and take photographs and sometimes get up and dance. And of course like to have a pint or two."

"I loved watching him dance. He had a really quirky little dance he'd do when he got excited. He would hop and bop a little bit and then he'd spin around. At Barrymore's, his nickname was Spinner! Because when he really enjoyed a song he'd get up there and he'd be pogoing along and then he'd do these spins on the dance floor. He was quite infectious."

Gladstone documented "so many gigs" at Ottawa music venues, Vegas said. "He started handing me photos. He would take a roll of film and then he'd go out and get double exposures made and he would hand a lot of the pictures to me. I still have a huge stack of unscanned photos from Dave. Eventually I just started calling him my official photographer."

A proud Canadian

Every July 1, Gladstone would dress up in a red and white Captain Canada outfit, Henderson said. "He was a very proud Canadian. He would wander Elgin Street in his outfit."

Brilliant and analytical

Gladstone had two degrees in engineering, and worked as a civilian scientist at the Department of National Defence.

He used that same analytical intelligence as an activist: questioning assumptions, analyzing data, and looking for alternate solutions. Whether at meetings or in his monthly *BUZZ* column, he picked his words deliberately and pointedly.

"As a civil engineer, he had a lot of skepticism about the competence and advice that staff gave the city on planning and transportation issues," Campbell said.

"He was really brilliant—a lot of people don't realize that," Vegas said. "It came across as quirky. At one point David made some copies of papers he had written for scientific magazines. One of them was the physics of how David slew Goliath!"

"He was easily exasperated by people that he didn't respect," Jeanes said. "He'd often express real consternation how somebody could be doing something so stupid, if there was something the city or consultants were proposing or doing that, from his point of view, didn't make sense. He could easily show some frustration that way.

"But it never stopped him from his activism. He never gave up. He never walked away from a problem. And he was always writing about it in *The BUZZ* and making sure that people knew what was going on."

MPP Report: Stop Ford's back to school "plan"

Joel Harden

Unacceptable, ridiculous, reckless: I've heard these and saucier words used to describe the Ford government's back to school "plan" next month. My inboxes are exploding. At a time when the world is learning lessons from COVID-19 and school safety, Premier Ford is rolling the dice with our public education system.

Last week, he offered \$16,000 per school to adjust to new COVID-19 protocols, which doesn't pay for a single additional staff member for more thorough cleaning or for lower-class sizes. Ford's plan puts students in Grades 4 to 8 back in crowded classrooms of 30 or more and in spaces where social distancing is impossible. Or he will force families, most likely working moms, to forsake their employment for child care.

High school students will learn part-time, twice

per week, through online learning. Students with disabilities were given a measly \$34 each, well below what is needed.

This plan is a declaration of indifference to our public schools. If it goes ahead, Ontario will be unprepared for a second wave of COVID-19. We can't let that happen.

Some may be skeptical about fighting back. It's summertime and there's less than a month left to make changes. The Ford government is hiding from legislative and serious public scrutiny. But your voice matters and fighting back makes a difference. That's what the autism movement showed us with the Ford government, even during the summer months.

That's what generations of people have done (and must do) to governments who choose empty rhetoric over responsible action. It's time for urgent troublemaking on three fronts.

First, we must push the Ford government for appropriate funding for public

education. MPP Marit Stiles, the Ontario NDP education critic, has proposed an Action Plan for a Safe Return to Schools (www.maritstiles.ca/action_plan_for_a_safe_return_to_schools) based on best practices worldwide. We need investments in the billions, not millions, of dollars. Contact the premier and the education minister, and ensure your friends in PC ridings call or email their MPPs. Believe me, it all matters.

Second, join the Ontario Parent Action Network (schoolwalkins@gmail.com) and share messages with your school administrators and trustees. Insist that vacant public spaces (community centres, postsecondary campuses) are utilized to ensure safety and social distancing in public schools.

Together, we can defend our schools, our kids, and the talented staff who make things work. Tell Premier Ford that we can't do public education on the cheap. Make your voice heard now.

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Planet of the Scapes: bounty on our hands



1 avocado, sliced
quick-fried bean-lengths of garlic scapes
1 slice of green or red pepper
Your choice of sauce: salad dressing or a nutty garlic sauce.

Place the fillings on one third of the leaf and top with a dressing or sauce. Cut the roll in half or into thirds, depending on the leaf size.

It's good for a hot day when you don't want to turn on an appliance and you can virtually feel the vitamins rush your blood stream.

Dessert: Fruited Banana Bread

If you're shopping as infrequently as we are, bananas in the heat might be getting ahead of you too. This loaf isn't your run-of-the-mill one. It's pretty and tasty. The almond extract and cherries push it over the top into really special.

2 tsp flax seeds, ground
Add 2 tsp water and set aside

Beat the wet:

1 cup of brown sugar
1/4 cup margarine, melted
1/4 cup apple sauce
3 medium bananas, mashed
1/2 tsp almond extract



1/2 tsp apple cider vinegar
250 g creamed coconut, warmed

Mix the dry:

1 cup whole wheat flour
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1 1/2 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp salt

Mix the wet and the dry and the flax seed mixture

Add:

2 squares baker's chocolate, chopped
1/4 cup pecans
1/2 cup maraschino cherries, pressed dry and cut in half.

Spoon into a 9x5" loaf pan. Bake at 350 F (180 C) for one hour or until toothpick comes out dry.

Veganized and adapted from *Company's Coming: Muffins and More* by Jean Paré.

Stay home, despite what others may be doing. 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 \$12 including shipping. See all her books and sign up for her newsletter at www.pearlpirie.com



The 2019 Capital Pride Parade filled Bank Street, but the 2020 event will be online only. BRENT MUNDILL/THE BUZZ

Rainbows online instead of in the streets, as Capital Pride 2020 goes virtual

Mariam El-Behiry

At the end of summer, the streets of Ottawa would normally be packed with rainbow flags, floats, and music to celebrate Pride Month and all the colors and joy it brings to the city's 2SLGBTQ+ community and its allies. That can't happen with the pandemic, but Capital Pride organizers are still presenting the annual festival—on computers instead to preserve the health of participants.

The Capital Pride website (capitalpride.ca) outlines a series of events and performances during the week of August 23 to 30, which attendees can join in virtually. They include Pride Pageant, Queer Talent Extravaganza, QTBIPOC Just Dance! with Sandy Duperval, Drag Bingo with Latrice Royale, and It's Drag Henny with Jujubee and Crystal Methyd! A speaker series will allow activists, artists, and the public to have thoughtful virtual conversations.

Youth who identify in

the 2SLGBTQ+ community are also invited for a night of voguing, a drag makeup tutorial, and an art tutorial presented by the Ontario Art Gallery. Youth Got Pride will take place on Monday, August 24, from 3 to 5:30 p.m. through the Capital Pride website.

Youth artists in the community can display their talent in a Youth Art Showcase on Sunday, August 23. Their pieces will be presented at the Ottawa Art Gallery via an online 3D immersive tour on the Capital Pride website.

Virtual Family Pride on August 23 will provide a space for parents, guardians, and children. It will include fun crafts and activities tailored especially to those 12 and under.

Organizations and community groups within the 2SLGBTQ+ community can showcase their work in a Community Market via a 3D virtual immersive tour at the Ottawa Art Gallery. This event will be launched on August 23.

The Pride parade will be replaced this year by an online montage video. It is normally led by honorary Grand Marshals, people who have made an impact in the local or broader Pride community.

The 2020 Grand Marshals will be local 2SLGBTQ+ health workers, honouring "those who have dedicated their lives to helping the community during the COVID-19 pandemic". Public nominations are currently being accepted on the Capital Pride website: capitalpride.ca/virtual-pride-festival/pride-parade-grand-marshals-2020/

Capital Pride is asking for donations on its website to help make the events happen.

The festival is determined to continue, saying "Pride isn't just a time to party—it's where 2SLGBTQ+ communities and allies can celebrate their true selves. Now more than ever, we must remind ourselves that we are a proud and resilient community."

Pearl Pirie

We split a Community Shared Agriculture (CSA) farm share with a neighbour. Neighbours can be handy that way. As the summer progresses, each share grows.

When we got collard greens large enough to double as fans for ancient Egyptian royalty, I was flummoxed. Our neighbour said veggie wraps! Treat the leaf

PEARL PIRIE/THE BUZZ

as you would a cabbage or chard leaf, and skim off the thickness of stem to allow rolling up like an egg roll.

Main Dish: Collard Green Roll Ups (Serves 2)

1 large collard green leaf per serving.
2 small carrots, cut in matchsticks
1/2 a small cucumber or zucchini, cut in matchsticks
1/4 block of veggie or herb firm tofu, sliced



Justine Bell

School Trustee
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Catherine McKenney City Councillor for Somerset Ward

Stay the course!

You've maintained social distancing and flattened the curve so far. Let's keep up the good work for a while longer and keep ourselves, our families, and our communities safe.



Keep in touch!

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

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Questions? We can help!

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First-person: Cooking for a Cause brings good food to all

Jessie Duffy

The first time I dropped lunch off to the Sandy Hill Community Health Centre, a man told me how he had lost his lifeline. He took a cardboard box filled with freshly-made meals out of my car and hefted it onto his shoulder.

“It was \$300 worth of fentanyl,” he told me. “I don’t know what I’m going to do.”

I followed beside him in a gutted silence, out of the parking lot and towards the front door, carrying another box with about hundred bags of sandwiches and baked goods. We handed them over to the front-line workers; they handed the bags into the small, scattered crowd outside, and I start to despair of whether all that good food can really do any good after all.

Five months into the pandemic lockdowns and physical distancing protocols that maintain a stranglehold on our lives and livelihoods, hope isn’t always easy to come by. But for the small collective of committed staff and volunteers I work with at Arlington 5, a ramshackle but spirited coffee house in Centretown, the ability to offer hospitality to an underserved community has given us a reason to at least try.



JEFF RABOURN/COOKING FOR A CAUSE

Each week, we make close to 300 lunches—chickpea salad sandwiches, banana-walnut muffins, zucchini burgers, seed cookies—as part of a community initiative called *Cooking For a Cause*.

It’s a collaboration with the [Parkdale Food Centre](#), the Ottawa Community Food Partnership, and [FoodRescue.ca](#), and primarily funded through the Ottawa Community Foundation and the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

This holistic relief effort has paired local food businesses, like Arlington 5, with community support agencies



Jessie Duffy preparing food for Cooking for a Cause.

JEFF RABOURN/COOKING FOR A CAUSE

to feed our most vulnerable, isolated, and food-insecure neighbours, including those in need of treatment for substance abuse disorder, while serving up some of the best hospitality the city has to offer.

For many, this is the first time in their lives they have eaten this well. For us, this is hospitality, plain and simple.

Since we opened in October 2015, Arlington 5 set out to be a community refuge first, much like coffee houses have been throughout history. By establishing wholehearted hospitality from the outset, our approach is to build social capital for our neighbourhood, through the subtle art of seeing one another, the practice of connection, and the immutable offering of restorative sustenance.

In other words, we encourage that mighty salve of humankind—belonging—and by doing so become a space, a place, that belongs to the neighbourhood.

Without the use of our physical space to gather during this pandemic, *Cooking for a Cause* offers a means to extend our community table to neighbours we have neglected, and give them a taste of what matters most to us.

When hope feels in short supply, we have only to turn into the circle of care that keeps growing around us (you could call that community) and tune in to the numerous accounts from so-

cial workers telling us about the increased wellness they are witnessing among their clients.

Wounds are healing faster, we hear, and more and more, people remark on how good they feel. Good food is power. Good food is hope. And community care looks an awful lot like hospitality when it is available to all.

On my next delivery, I noticed someone sitting outside the door. Their face appeared ashen and far-away. One of the security guards handed them a small bag with a banana muffin, and a larger one with a sandwich.

I tried not to stare while they tucked into their food, as though I were a server keeping an eye on my table to see how the first bite goes over. “It’s still warm.” I looked over, and saw that they had said this to no one in particular, but their eyes met mine for a quick moment. Then I noticed that they were smiling. As it turns out, so was I.

Jessie Duffy is the owner of and co-conspirator at Arlington 5, at 5 Arlington Avenue in Centretown.

Ottawa Face Masks

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272 Bank Street

Study promises increased protection for Centretown heritage buildings

Jack Hanna

A rare opportunity to protect old houses in Centretown has arisen with a new city study.

The city is in the midst of a sweeping initiative to study and protect heritage buildings specifically in Centretown.

The consultants for the study recently recommended establishing a new Heritage Conservation District (HCD) in the neighbourhood around Dundonald Park, at Somerset and Lyon. The proposed district would encompass 11 city blocks.

That’s far too little, says the Centretown Community Association (CCA). The consultants have been “conservative and minimalist,” the CCA says in a letter to the city. There are plenty of streets of magnificent century-old houses just outside the proposed HCD that “certainly merit heritage protection,” it argues.

An HCD, enabled under provincial law, lets the city regulate and guide development. The city can rule on changes to the exterior of a building or new construction, ensuring it respects and enhances a district’s historic character.

Another possible location for an HCD is the Golden Triangle, the area between Elgin Street and the Rideau Canal. “Swathes of the



Prime heritage locations are marked in red on this city map.

Golden Triangle have both a density and level of heritage resources among the highest in Centretown,” the CCA points out.

As well, the Golden Triangle has a very special boundary on its eastern side—the canal, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

There are venerable houses, gardens, parklands, and open spaces adjacent to the canal. This strip could be in danger of heavy development pressure, because the Ottawa LRT station is nearby. A Golden Triangle HCD would protect the historic character, openness, and beauty of this zone.


Centretown already has two heritage districts. The extensive Centretown HCD shapes development over some 55 square blocks. It stretches from Elgin to Kent and south to the Queensway. A second, small HCD consists of the buildings facing Minto Park on Elgin. The

city intends to update the secondary plans for these districts.

The Centretown heritage initiative also includes updates to the Ottawa Heritage Register, an official list of heritage buildings throughout the city. City staff intend to add some 700 houses and buildings in the community to that register.

As well, staff will consider recommending that some spectacular older buildings be individually earmarked for the strongest level of protection under provincial law, such as that given to the Museum of Nature. About a dozen possibilities have been identified, including McPhail Memorial Baptist Church, St. Theresa Roman Catholic Church, and the sprawling, stately apartment building at 63 Cartier.

The city has created a website dedicated to its Centretown heritage work: ottawa.ca/centretownheritage



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What's On this month

Tony Wohlfarth

We're Back

Ottawa began re-opening in late July, as the province allowed restaurants, movie theatres, and bars to re-open in the third stage of the pandemic recovery.

ByTowne Cinema

The ByTowne Cinema (325 Rideau Street) re-opened on July 24. This week, it screened the Ottawa premiere of *Good Trouble*, a fascinating documentary about the life of John Lewis, a Democratic Congressperson from Georgia who was a leader of the civil rights movement.

Lewis led a march for voter registration from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, on March 7, 1965. The marchers were infamously attacked by state troopers on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in an event now known as Bloody Sunday. Lewis died of pancreatic cancer on July 17 at the age of 80.

Good Trouble brilliantly weaves together archival footage with contemporary (2018) interviews with Lewis, Elijah Cummings, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Hillary Clinton. What is remarkable is the painful realization that voter suppression is still an issue. Lewis was arrested 45 times—five of them while he was an elected member of Congress — during a lifetime of struggle. Running time is 1h36.

While this month's run at the ByTowne ends August 13, the film can be screened online: www.magnoliapictures.com/johnlewis.

Street Murals

On July 25, the Bank Street Business Improvement Area (BIA) unveiled two large street murals—one at Bank and Lisgar Streets, and the other on Cooper Street west of Bank.

Street art has blossomed in recent years. A large mural adorns the building on Louisa Street off Preston Street

in Little Italy. I also like the colourful mural on Bronson Avenue at Somerset Street. There's also a large mural of two Ottawa area musicians on the east side of the By-Towne Cinema.

Live Music

CityFolk returns with a virtual fest from September 17-20. At deadline time, the list of performing artists had not been announced. Check cityfolkfestival.com for tickets and other details.

Summer Music Camp

The Canadian Amateur Musicians Summer Music Camp has gone virtual this summer with classes via Zoom. Registration and other program details can be accessed at cammac.ca/en/

Ottawa Art Gallery Re-opens

The OAG (50 Mackenzie King Bridge) has re-opened. Admission is free but entry must be reserved online via Eventbrite to ensure timed entry and physical distancing.

Ottawa International Animation Festival (OIAF)

On September 23, the Ottawa International Animation Festival returns with a selection of the best animation films from around the world. The festival runs until October 4. Information on tickets and films can be accessed at: www.animationfestival.ca/index.php?option=com_oiaf&task=showselections

National Museums

Both the Canadian War Museum and the Canadian Museum of History re-opened on July 23.

The best news? Both are offering complimentary admission. The museums are open from Thursday to Sunday each week and tickets must be reserved online in advance. They're a good place to escape the heat and enjoy your staycation.

The Agricultural Museum at 910 Prince of Wales Drive also re-opened to visitors on August 1.

The Gladstone Theatre

The Gladstone Theatre (910 Gladstone Ave.) returned with outdoor performances continuing through August 15. Tickets and information are available at: www.thegladstone.ca/

National Gallery

The National Gallery of Canada re-opened on July 18 and has updated its *Abadakone* exhibit of Aboriginal art. The gallery offers complimentary admission Thursday from 5 to 8 p.m. More info: gallery.ca

Out of Town: Paris in the Days of Post-Impressionism

The Museum of Fine Arts, 1380 Sherbrooke Street West in downtown Montreal, features a special exhibition of more than 500 pieces of art from the post-impressionism era.

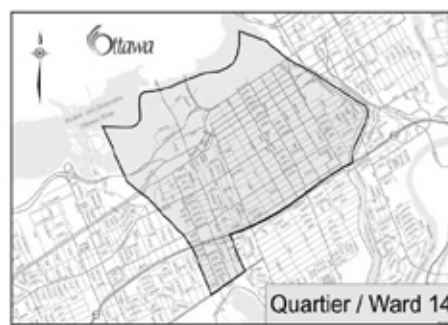
The art is by well-known artists Edouard Monet, Camille Pissarro, Paul Gauguin, Paul Signac, Pierre Bonnard, Odilon Redon, Georges Seurat and Marc Chagall and more. The art is drawn from private collections and has not been exhibited together before.

Paul Signac lived from 1863-1935 and the pieces are from throughout his lifespan. I saw the exhibition at the beginning of August, and was overwhelmed by its breadth and scale. The Post-Impressionists utilized an abundant colour palette, which the exhibition documents.

Tickets are available at: www.mbam.qc.ca/en/exhibitions/paris-in-the-days-of-post-impressionism-signac/. An audio guide can be downloaded at the site. The exhibition runs until November 15. Entry is by timed admission and strict lockdown protocols are in place.

Tony Wohlfarth is an Ottawa-based freelance film and entertainment writer. After surviving a lockdown spanning four months, he is off on a cross-Canada adventure to Alberta, B.C. and the Maritimes later this month.

Could Somerset Ward disappear?



cont from page 1

when the previous Wellington Ward (which ran from the Rideau Canal to Bay) was combined with the eastern half of Dalhousie Ward. Wellington Ward was one of the original five wards of Ottawa, created in 1855 from West Ward in Bytown, Upper Canada.

Ottawa's ward boundaries have not been adjusted since 2005. Since then, many suburban areas have grown substantially, to the point where Barrhaven, the largest city ward, with a 2018 population of 61,528, has more residents than West Carleton-March (25,644) and Osgoode (28,279) combined. Barrhaven has 43% more people than average — a difference that the consultants anticipate will grow to 56% by 2026 — while West Carleton-March is 41% lower than the average.

Somerset Ward, in the other hand, is almost exactly on average, with a 2018 population of 41,996 compared to the average of 43,106.

Starting on August 19, the five consultants' options—plus a so-far-unreleased sixth added at the request of Mayor Jim Watson—will be up for debate by citizens. You can fill in an on-line survey, attend a virtual consultation session on Zoom in September, and send a written submission to wardboundary@ottawa.ca. The proposals are available at ottawa.ca/en/ward-boundary-review-2020

Your response as a citizen will be particularly important because, unlike most city issues, city councillors cannot lead this debate. At the July 15 City Council meeting where the options report was tabled, councillors were warned not to interfere with the process for fear of being accused of gerrymandering—because ward boundaries could affect their chances of reelection. One reason a ward boundary review in 2003 was thrown out by the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) was a lack of independence from City Council, as well as lack of community involvement and failure to consider the “rural community of interest”.

But that doesn't mean city councillors were happy with the proposals. At the Finance Committee meeting July 7, councillors from across the city referred to the options in terms such as “very disappointing,” “a slap in the face,” and “unbalanced.”

Consultant Dr. Gary Davidson told the committee that they had three paramount considerations in drawing the ward boundaries: population parity, clear boundaries, and communities of interest. Other possible factors were minority interests, ward history, capacity to represent, the geographic size and shape of the ward, and population growth.

But the councillors complained that the consultants didn't understand the community boundaries in their wards and unnaturally bisected them. Orleans Councillor Matthew Luloff complained that the boundaries ignored the east-end francophone community of interest and would weaken it by splitting it into two wards. Somerset Ward Councillor Catherine McKenney asked why the consultants did not consider Centretown, “one of the oldest communities in the city”, a community of interest?

The consultants said that “communities of interest” refers to neighbourhoods such as the Glebe or Westboro Village and commercial areas such as BIAs, as well as to the larger rural, suburban and urban communities.

“Where possible, geographic communi-

ties of interest and/or neighbourhoods should not be divided,” they said.

One particularly contentious issue is whether wards can only be urban (inside the Greenbelt), suburban (outside the Greenbelt), or rural. If wards could contain both urban and suburban or suburban and rural areas, it would be easier to balance population. Bay Ward Councillor Theresa Kavanagh questioned whether residents who simply lived further out but weren't farmers were actually “rural.”

The first round of consultation on the ward boundary review was interrupted by the start of the pandemic. It got a dismal response: only 27 people in Somerset Ward and 448 city-wide responded to the public survey, and 13 made submissions. Nineteen attended two public meetings before the remaining meetings were cancelled.

Of those who responded, 63% wanted an increase in the number of wards above the current 23 to accommodate growth, while less than 10% wanted 19 wards or fewer.

The consultants proposed five options:

1. 25 wards (13 urban, 9 suburban, 3 rural)
2. 24 wards (12 urban, 9 suburban, 3 rural)
3. 23 wards (11 urban, 9 suburban, 3 rural), with wards allocated starting in the west
4. 23 wards (11 urban, 9 suburban, 3 rural), with wards allocated starting in the east
5. 17 wards (9 urban, 6 suburban, 2 rural)

When asked why the consultants did not start the reallocation in the middle looking outwards, Davidson said that meant they ended up with two very small wards in east and west.

In each of the options, the rural wards are substantially smaller than the urban and suburban wards. The population of almost all the other wards is within +/-15% of the average, but that of rural wards is up to 41% less.

Option 1 would divide Somerset Ward at Kent Street. The western half would be combined with Hintonburg, and the eastern half with Lowertown.

Options 2, 3, and 4 would divide Somerset Ward at O'Connor Street. The western half would be combined with parts of Hintonburg and the Civic Hospital area, and the eastern half with Lowertown and Sandy Hill.

Option 5 would primarily divide Somerset Ward at the LRT Line 2 tracks. The western half would be combined with all of Kitchissippi Ward, and the eastern half with Lowertown and Sandy Hill.

At City Council, Mayor Watson moved a last-minute motion to have the consultants prepare a sixth option, which would concentrate on the three wards projected to have the highest populations—Barrhaven, Cumberland and Gloucester South Nepean—“with a view to minimizing, whenever possible, the impact of significant changes to established ward boundaries and communities of interest.”

But at the same time, the motion asked this be done without increasing the number of wards. An amendment to remove this restriction was defeated.

The consultants for this ward boundary review, Beate Bowron and Dr. Gary Davidson, also conducted the city's 2005 ward boundary review. That review, however, only made minor changes to the urban wards, while accommodating growth by adding two suburban wards. It left the rural wards with much smaller populations than the other wards. That review was appealed to the OMB by several groups, but was ultimately upheld.

At the Finance Committee, city solicitor Tim Marc, who represented the city at the OMB appeal, was asked whether City Council could reject all five of the consultants' options. The city is not bound to pick any option, he said, and could certainly modify any of the options. But it does face a real risk that staying with the status quo could also be appealed given that boundaries haven't been changed in 15 years.

Joel Harden

MPP, Ottawa Centre

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Centretown Community Association report

Jack Hanna

For the CCA, it is a busy and blooming summer.

Dundonald gardeners receive \$1,000 grant

The Dundonald Park Gardening Group received a \$1,000 grant from the city to buy compost and plants for the park's huge beds.

CCA volunteer gardeners have been pulling weeds and putting in plants, with as many as 15 people showing up for a Sunday afternoon gardening session.

A second CCA gardening group is revitalizing the little park at the corner of Elgin and Gladstone, with fresh earth and plants donated by residents.

Want to get into the dirt? Contact Jack: jack.2014@icloud.com

CCA shrinks huge garage

CCA President Shawn Barber negotiated a big reduction in parking spaces in a proposed massive new underground parking garage.

Claridge Homes wanted to install a six-storey garage beneath three new apartment towers at Metcalfe and Nepean.

At City Council's Planning Committee, Barber spoke against the garage, arguing it went against the city's policies on climate change, getting cars out of the core, and safe streets.

The committee put the brakes on, telling the developer to speak to the community association.

Councillor Catherine McKenney organized a meeting between the developer and the CCA. After

much negotiation, Claridge agreed to halve the garage's size, from 250 to 125 spaces. The freed-up spaces will go for more bicycle and visitor parking, and other uses.

Protect heritage houses

The city is in the midst of a sweeping initiative to study and protect heritage buildings in Centretown, with the CCA playing a strong role.

Consultants hired by the city recently recommended a new Heritage Conservation District (HCD) covering 11 blocks around Dundonald Park.

That's far too small, the CCA said in a letter to the city. The district should be much larger and encompass many additional beautiful old streets worthy of heritage protection.

The CCA also argued that much of the Golden Triangle, between Elgin and the Rideau Canal, chockablock with beautiful old houses, merits heritage protection and should become an HCD.

The CCA has formed a new Heritage Working Group to respond to this initiative. Subcommittees are developing specific proposals for new Centretown West and Golden Triangle HCDs, and a third will consider the city's plan to update guidelines for Centretown's exist-

ing HCDs. Interested in heritage? Contact Jack: jack.2014@icloud.com

Neighbours helping neighbours

The CCA's Centretown Support Network (CSN) continues to match volunteers to people who need assistance during the COVID-19 crisis.

Volunteers deliver groceries for people who are self-isolating, and help get answers to all sorts of questions.

Recently, CSN volunteers sewed 50 cloth masks; they were donated to the Centretown Community Health Centre, to be distributed free to the centre's clients.

Contact the CSN at 613-518-3908 or support@centretowncitizens.ca

Reusable bags are back

With stores once again allowing reusable bags, the CCA's Single-use Plastics Group is busy advocating for their use.

The group is handing out a cheery poster proclaiming, "Reusable Bags are Welcome Here" to Centretown stores. So far they have approached about two dozen shops, receiving a warm welcome. Contact Stuart: stuartkinmond@gmail.com

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Somerset Ward: how will LeBreton Flats benefit our community?

Catherine McKenney

The National Capital Commission (NCC) is in the process of redeveloping LeBreton Flats, a largely underused 29-hectare site in a rapidly growing area. The NCC's master plan presents an impressive mixed-use community with residential districts, integrated commercial spaces, extensive public greenspace, and a focus on pedestrian-friendly design.

The plans for LeBreton Flats are ambitious and include many positive aspects. However, they do not mandate overarching community benefits such as affordable housing, ensuring access to community resources and services like child care and health centres, and a commitment to fostering local commercial and social enterprise.

One way to formalize a commitment to the community's wants and needs is implementing a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA). A CBA is a legally binding agreement with clear monitoring and enforcement mechanisms between a developer or government organization and community groups. A CBA would legal-

ly require developers to take community interests into account and include important amenities in their plans. The redevelopment of LeBreton Flats is a rare opportunity to build an equitable, sustainable, and inclusive community from the ground up. Certain social, recreational, and community priorities must be guaranteed in order for this site to reach its full potential and create a complete community.

LeBreton Flats' history and location make it an opportune site for a CBA. This large site was once home to a working-class community with residential neighbours and a successful industrial sector. The redevelopment of this land should honour this thriving community through the creation of a new downtown neighbourhood that welcomes a diverse population in a supportive environment.

The LeBreton Flats Community Benefits Coalition is a group of 27 community organizations who are pushing for the NCC to adapt a CBA as the social framework for the area's development. The coalition and residents across the city believe that the best path forward for the redevelopment of LeBreton Flats involves engaging the local

community and integrating the visions for the future into each phase of development.

In July, I brought a motion to council in support of a Community Benefits Agreement at LeBreton Flats (www.catherinemckenney.ca/s/LeBreton-Flats-CBA-motion.pdf). The motion outlines the city's role in securing community benefits and the action we can take to work with the NCC on implementing a CBA. The motion was carried by council and demonstrates that members of council endorse the principles behind a CBA for LeBreton Flats.

The city can now engage on this topic with the NCC and federal ministers to address funding support and other opportunities to ensure this development benefits current and future residents. While the city does not have the power to mandate a CBA for LeBreton Flats, the passing of my motion shows our commitment to create a vibrant downtown community that contributes positively to the surrounding area and the city.

You can find out more about the plans for a Community Benefits Agreement at LeBreton Flats at: cbaforlebretonflats.ca



Ottawa Ward Boundary Review 2020

Have your say – online survey and virtual consultation sessions

An independent consultant team is reviewing the City of Ottawa's ward boundaries and has developed six options for a new ward boundary model for public discussion. Have your say and provide your feedback on the six options through the online survey or attend a virtual consultation session.

The population in some Ottawa communities has grown dramatically since the last ward boundary review. Now, some wards have much higher populations than others – creating an equal representation imbalance.

Following this round of consultation, the consultant team will provide City Council with recommendations later this year for new ward boundaries that can be used in at least three municipal elections in 2022, 2026 and 2030 and possibly a fourth election in 2034.

Online survey – Available August 19 to September 25

Give us your feedback on the six options online at ottawa.ca/wardboundary.

Virtual consultation sessions

Participate online or by phone at one of the upcoming virtual consultation sessions on Zoom. Three of the sessions will invite comments from participants from all over the city, while another three sessions will focus on the urban, suburban and rural parts of the city. Register at ottawa.ca/wardboundary to receive an email with a passcode and login information.

- **Thursday, September 10, 2020, 7 to 9 pm** (city-wide focus)
- **Saturday, September 12, 2020, 10 am to noon** (city-wide focus)
- **Monday, September 14, 2020, 7 to 9 pm** (suburban focus)
- **Saturday, September 19, 2020, 10 am to noon** (city-wide focus)
- **Tuesday, September 22, 2020, 7 to 9 pm** (rural focus)
- **Wednesday, September 23, 2020, 7 to 9 pm** (urban focus)

Simultaneous interpretation in both official languages will be available at the three city-wide sessions.

Accessibility is an important consideration for the City of Ottawa. If you require accommodation, please make a request to the consultant team at wardboundary@ottawa.ca. We will require one week's notice to arrange accommodations or supports.

ottawa.ca 3-1-1
TTY/ATS 613-580-2401

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our annual general meeting is happening virtually this year!

Wednesday, September 16, 2020
5:30 pm

Register by September 9, 2020 by emailing info@swchc.on.ca
Members may also vote by proxy.



Gardens make our city monarch-friendly

Gail McGuire and Alex Meek

Monarch butterflies will soon be seen migrating across Centretown. In September, they will travel south after spending the summer in their most northern range, 400 km north of Ottawa. It's an amazing journey to 12 mountains in Mexico where the butterflies over-winter.

Butterfly and pollinator populations have declined significantly in recent years: the monarch was recently assessed as endangered by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. Its journey south covers three countries, and its conservation is an international effort, preserving both its natural corridors along migratory routes and its winter habitats in Mexico.

Monarch-friendly gardens

Locally, one monarch-friendly garden is located at the Canadian Museum of Nature on Metcalfe Street in Centretown. The museum designed a natural area on the western side of its property, which includes native plants of Canada which attract pollinators. The monarch can be seen dining on

the nectar of echinacea and other native plants, sharing the habitat with bees, other butterfly species, and other pollinators.

The City of Ottawa has also undertaken initiatives and education in support of native pollinators. On June 7, 2019, the mayor proclaimed Ottawa's first annual Pollinator Appreciation Day. Plants donated from the Fletcher Wildlife Garden were used to establish the City Hall Pollinator Garden.

Two Centretown park gardens have been established by volunteers. The trend towards front yard gardens rather than lawns can also help compensate for pollinator habitat loss. Relative to the monarch, these gardens have a cumulative positive effect in assisting the monarch to obtain flower nectar. It needs this sugary liquid to sustain itself during its migratory journey. Flowers which are in bloom in September include echinacea, coreopsis, and (although not native) zinnia. The shape of these flowers allows a butterfly to perch on the flower-head while drinking nectar.

Children are now learning about the importance of pollinator protection at school. Here is a report about

monarch butterflies written by the author of this article in partnership with a fourth-grade student:

The monarch butterfly female lays a single egg on the underside of a milkweed plant. She attaches the egg with a glue that she produces. The egg is the size of a pencil tip. Females lay 300-500 eggs over two to five weeks of egg laying. The monarch starts off as an egg on a milkweed leaf so when it hatches as a larva (caterpillar) it can eat the milkweed. The milkweed plant is the only kind of food the larva eats.

Nectar powers their flight

After eating for about a month, it creates a chrysalis and waits to become a monarch butterfly. When it emerges it starts its journey with other monarchs.

Monarchs migrate. For the monarchs we see in Ontario this journey begins in Mexico. After flying the monarchs take a break and get some nectar to drink. Nectar gives them energy to fly. They can get nectar from a variety of plant flowers, including the flowers of some fruits and vegetables.

The monarch follows the progression of the spring season, through the southern re-

gions of the United States, as plant nectar sources become available. Continuing northward and over several generations, the monarchs arrive in our relatively late Ontario spring.

When autumn arrives in Ontario and our growing season comes to a close, the monarch adult makes an amazing journey. This time a single generation, in adult stage, begins its migration south, taking advantage of the successively longer growing season through the Northern then Southern United States.

After travelling for a long time it arrives at its destination, which is Mexico. It over-winters as an adult in Mexico, where winters are mild. In the spring it lays its eggs and dies, and the adventure starts all over again.

Monarch butterflies are pollinators. Because monarch butterflies land on flowers to drink nectar, pollen from the flower sticks to their bodies and gets transferred to other flowers the butterfly visits and so flowers are pollinated. When a flower is pollinated, the flower can form a seed. The flower drops a seed and another flower grows, so another pollinator can pollinate this flower.



Monarch butterflies will soon flock to local gardens on their way south to Mexico.

GAIL MCGUIRE/THE BUZZ



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A letter to my neighbours from your Ottawa-Carleton District School Board Trustee Justine Bell

I thought it best to let you know exactly how the upcoming school year will play out... the details of a costed plan that takes into account special education, ESL, transportation, socioemotional well-being, post-secondary planning, health and safety, parent work contexts, etc. Unfortunately, I can't right now. Instead, I'm writing to tell you about my experience, commitment and projections.

It's been five months since I became the trustee for Somerset/Kitchissippi. I don't need to tell you that in that time we have experienced a pandemic, labour negotiations, and a rising consciousness of racism...What a time to step into a leadership position! Throughout, my priority has been to listen actively and to make evidence-based decisions for the safety and well-being of all students.

I've heard you. In the hundreds of emails, the daily

phone/Zoom calls, the news articles, the board meetings, I have listened to your stories. I have heard about fears, uncertainty and frustrated children confined to their homes; about teachers' concerns regarding the mental health of students and their desire to plan for and protect them; about the lack of funds to open schools safely, the threat to our efforts to create an equal playing field and so much more. I have heard resilient and committed voices.

What has surprised me? How scary and unsettling it can be in these unprecedented times. Despite how hard it has been, I have been inspired daily by the unwavering dedication of parents, educators, the administration and community organizations. I know now, more than ever, that there are so many that will not give up the fight to ensure our right to quality public education for all children.



What's next? Trust, we need to build it together. The decisions made at the board in close coordination with public health will directly impact your lives. I take our governing decisions very seriously and will continue to seek your input, speak up, ask the obvious questions, put forth evidence-based recommendations, fight for adequate funding and work to ensure that you are informed. I will do everything in my power to ensure that your children, teachers, all educators, custodians, bus drivers, and you are safe.

Although I can't tell you exactly how things will roll out this school year, I am confident that it won't be easy and that together we will move forward with great creativity, compassion and tenacity.

For more information, please reach out to me anytime.

Facebook: @TrusteeBell
Twitter: @justinegbell
Email: Justine.Bell@ocdsb.ca