



A last thanks to Pearl Pirie, 4



The harvest from a community garden, 7

THE CENTRETOWN BUZZ



The CCA Fall Fair in Dundonald Park on September 18 featured Indigenous drumming and chanting by elder Michele Penney (see stories on page 5 and 7). STEPHEN THIRLWALL/THE BUZZ

Major issues remain with city Official Plan

Alayne McGregor

As the final draft of the new Official Plan reaches Ottawa City Council this week, greenspace, over-intensification, spot rezonings, and affordable housing remain major issues likely to spark lengthy debate.

There's still a lot of community dissatisfaction with aspects of the plan, and whether it fully addresses major issues facing Ottawa such as the climate and homelessness crises.

Citizen groups have proposed numerous amendments to the plan which councillors will debate at committee starting October 14. City Council will take the final vote on the plan on October 27, after which it will only need provincial approval to come into effect in early 2022.

The plan sets the framework for city decisions in the next 10 years: as its section 11.6 says, the city cannot undertake any project or pass any by-law that doesn't conform to the intent and policies of the plan.

[The Federation of Citizens Associations \(FCA\)](#) brief proposed keeping increases in density in sync with increased parks and trees, and noted that spot rezonings should not undercut the guidelines developed with community input.

[The People's Official](#)

[Plan \(POP\)](#) called for infill that enhanced the valued characteristics of neighbourhoods and included affordable housing for families. It said the plan should include more energy efficiency and green standards for buildings, and the alignment of urban expansion with the reduction in GHG emissions.

The POP and the FCA also called for an annual "Vital Signs" dashboard on each of the Official Plan's policy objectives.

See centretownbuzz.com for interviews with FCA President Alex Cullen and urban planner Carolyn Whitzman about issues with and ways to improve this plan.

A long life loving the people and dogs of Centretown

Alayne McGregor

A familiar face is no longer watching over Centretown.

For many years, Barbara Arnold and her husband Bob would relax together at a window table in the Royal Oak pub, chatting together or with friends who joined them there, catching up on news as neighbours stopped at the window to talk.

The BUZZ featured their [Centretown romance in our October 2019 issue](#). At that point they had celebrated 67 years of marriage, all spent in Centretown.

Barbara died on September 16 at the age of 88, leaving her husband, four children, six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Heather Mochan, the general manager of the pub at 318 Bank Street, said she had served the couple for about five years. Before the pub had to shut down for the pandemic in April, they would "come in here every day, to hang out to just see everybody. It's like a little family here."

They always picked the window table, "They'd always people-watch out the window. They loved to see what was going on on Bank Street, chatting with people. People would always stop by



The windows of the Royal Oak look out onto Bank Street.

ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ

and chat with them. Barbara would feed all the dogs that came by.

"They knew everything that was going on. It seems like they knew everybody."

They were like "the grandparents of the Oak. Everybody looked out for them."

Barbara was "a little firecracker, a fiery-type person with her little come-backs and quips. She was always making you laugh. She was just fun.

"She was super-caring. She would always ask how you were doing. She was very loving. She was a sweetheart

but she would always have a little joke or two."

Mochan said she was heartbroken to hear of Barbara's death.

"Everybody was. Bob called me in the morning and just let me know. It was a hard day."

Bob Arnold has returned to the window table in the Royal Oak, Mochan said. "He's in every day. He has this routine: he'll come in in the morning and then he'll come in just before dinnertime. And if he doesn't come to see us, he gives us a call to let us know."

LRT breakdown leads to local bus cancellations

Alayne McGregor

Even Centretowners who only ride the bus are being affected by Ottawa's current light rail shutdown.

Since the LRT ground to a halt on September 19, R1 buses are providing cross-town service. But many of those buses have been shifted off local routes.

An OC Transpo memo shows 148 cancelled daily trips on 23 routes. Of these 38 were on the R2 bus which travels on Preston and Bronson, and 43 on other routes serving Centretown – totalling 55 percent of the cancellations. Rami El Feghali, the acting director of Transit Customer Systems & Planning, confirmed October 8 that this was the most recent list.

Route 7 has lost 17 trips a day; route 10, two; route 12, seven; route 14, six; route 15, 11. The trips are spread throughout the day. Other local trips are using 40-foot buses rather than the larger articulated or double-decker buses, El Feghali said.

Councillor Catherine McKenney was not pleased.

"We lost many useful cross-town bus routes when

the LRT was launched, and now we're losing more when it's out of service. I do not believe that Ottawa residents are getting the transit service they need, that they deserve, or that they are paying for."

[Ottawa Transit Riders Association \(OTRA\)](#) board member Stuart MacKay said that OTRA members are not happy. Many who now must use the R1 buses have found 45-minute commutes "stretching into an hour and a half, sometimes two hours, sometimes even more." Because the R1 buses bunch up, some are empty and some completely full.

As well, he said he'd heard from one Centretown resident that buses here – like the 6, 7, and 14 – had become "a bit more packed," creating anxiety over the ability to do social distancing on these routes.

"People are still wary – I think we all are after this pandemic – of crowded situations. There are some folks who have that anxiety about getting on a crowded bus who are seeking alternative means of transportation – Ubers or taxis or trying to get a lift from a friend.

cont on page 3 "LRT"

October 15, 2021 — Vol. 26, No. 9

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 Nov. 12. Deadline for ads and submissions: Nov. 1. 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 Lighter Side of the Pandemic, by Karen Munro-Caple



The Good, the Bad, and the Bumpy: Centretown construction is part of life

Ryan Lythall

Construction is a part of life, especially if you live in Centretown. Whether it's a new condominium or road-work, it's almost impossible to avoid some type of construction.

This story isn't new! In fact, I recall writing last year about how construction affects people with disabilities. However, it is a topic worth revisiting simply because it keeps happening throughout this city.

What if I have an emergency, or I need money or to pick up medication? I don't know about you, but I rarely have a clear head when faced with an emergency. At that moment, all I care about is getting from point A to point B and, hopefully, returning to point A. When you're a person with a disability, there's no guarantee that you'll even

get beyond point A.

I have come across construction sites with temporary ramps in place. In my experience, many of those ramps are used at long-term construction sites. Regardless of how long construction is scheduled for, wheelchair accessibility should be mandatory.

A few weeks ago, I happened to be headed to the bank just before the road crew began repaving Metcalfe Street. On my return, that same part of Metcalfe was down to one lane. By the next day, the curb on the sidewalk was no longer level with the street. When I saw the sidewalk, I posted pictures to my social media accounts. Shortly, City Councillor Catherine McKenney reached out to me to say "on it." Lo and behold! By the next day there was a makeshift ramp in place.

I strongly recommend



A dangerous section of Metcalfe Street where the curb and the street no longer matched.
RYAN LYTHALL/THE BUZZ

that any and all construction sites be wheelchair-accessible. If they aren't, I suggest residents should reach out to their city councillor. And as a reminder to all city councillors and our mayor, please listen to the concerns of the citizens of Ottawa. Many of

us understand that you can't fix all the problems. In some cases, all we're asking is to be heard.

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

MPP report: Protective hospital safety zones needed

Joel Harden

On September 13, I arrived at the Civic Hospital. Anti-vaxxers and anti-maskers were holding a protest there as part of a nation-wide day of action. I worried that protesters intended to block or disrupt the hospital [as it has happened elsewhere in Canada](#).

One of the protestors—a constituent that our MPP office has been helping—came over to say hello. This person lives with pain daily and their life has fallen apart.

My heart sank. Standing next to me was someone our society has left behind. I was shown videos of their involvement in anti-mask, anti-vaccine protests. The constituent remarked on the speeches they had given to massive crowds and the support they had

received.

As the constituent expounded on anti-vaccine and anti-mask arguments, I wasn't filled with anger. I felt a deep sadness and awareness of the challenge before us under COVID-19. I told the constituent we were not aligned on these issues. I urged them to be safe and mindful of the safety of others. And I won't stop fighting for justice on their disability claim.

But how do we talk to those who are persuaded by disinformation campaigns?

I support COVID-19 vaccine mandates and vaccine certificates. Ontario must introduce these measures which will mean consequences for those who refuse to get vaccinated. Protests are likely to continue so we must keep everyone safe.

This is why we're calling for hospital safety zones to protect patients and

staff. We have asked Premier Ford to help us pass a safety zones bill presented by Andrea Horwath, leader of the Official Opposition, right away to help make it happen.

But, as we do this, let's address disinformation campaigns with persuasive arguments and resist the urge to belittle others. Let's build that bridge so others may cross.

Correction

In the Dalhousie Community Association column in the September 2021 BUZZ, an error was inserted during editing. Ottawa Community Housing, not the Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corporation, is the largest social housing provider in Ottawa.

Skyline: A return to the old formula

Robert Smythe

History may have come full circle with a recent application to construct a biggish building on Bell Street between Arlington and Louisa.

It's been almost 60 years since this area has seen similarly scaled developments. That was when the City of Ottawa's Department of Urban Renewal was considering two contiguous Dalhousie neighbourhoods as candidates for full-scale razing and redevelopment. These were the blocks between Bell and Booth Streets south of Gladstone, and the district between Preston and Booth Streets.

Under the City of Ottawa building condition survey system of 1959-61, both areas had been classified as "urban blight" zones and therefore eligible for total "slum clearance" using public funding. In the end, the planners chose Preston Street as the area most in need of direct government intervention.

For Bell Street, they determined that the private sector could do the job. As an incentive, they designated

this area for future high-rise development under the city's first comprehensive zoning bylaw. The 12-storey Bell Towers (now LIV Apartments) and the Lancaster (now Cambridge House) Apartments on Cambridge Street North were built as a result of this.

By the mid-1970s, these urban renewal schemes had fallen into disrepute and the beginnings of what became the Dalhousie Neighbourhood Plan were underway. Typically, such community plans focused on rehabilitating existing housing stock and down-zoning residential areas for low-profile development. This is what the city once hoped would happen in the Bell Street neighbourhood.

And what of the latest big-building proposal? The Ironwood Fund Limited Partnership has submitted rezoning and site plan applications to redevelop what was once a 1960's era separate school, later remodeled into a sports and health centre with various other offices. The land is currently zoned as a Minor Institution property. The maximum height limit is 15 metres or approximately five



The 10-storey apartment building proposal set off by the requisite lower red brick storeys. (Ottawa development info files)

storeys.

If approved, we would see one wing of the existing building demolished (this entire section had been ingeniously cantilevered to create an open schoolyard beneath) and replaced with a 10-storey residential tower designed by Hobin Architecture Inc. Mixed uses would remain in the portion of the old school building that is to be retained.

The new building would contain 139 apartment units and a total of 1,001 square metres of amenity space furnished through common in-



City of Ottawa and CMHC housing officials give the Preston and Bell Street urban renewal schemes an approving glance, 1961. (City Archives)

door and outdoor spaces, private terraces and balconies, and an internal courtyard area. Car parking for 88 vehicles and 79 bicycle parking spaces are to be provided.

To achieve all of this, these applicants would require a doubling of the current height limit and some setback reductions. They

argue that the mass of the building is "proposed to be broken up through the use of differing materiality, fenestration and balconies" and "the use of various setbacks." Some years ago architects coined this fancy word "materiality" as a term fit to replace what we know as just material.

As has now become standard for these projects, the lower three floors are to be veneered in a red brick fringe out of an apparent respect for the neighbourhood, although this area is not necessarily a traditional "red brick" district. City Council will deliberate on this zoning bylaw amendment later this fall.



The Bell Novelty Confectionery once occupied the southeast corner of the site. This photo was taken 60 years ago during the city's urban renewal survey. (City Archives)

LRT shutdown affects local transit routes

cont from page 1

"I have a real concern for some of these folks, or the more casual transit users, we're going to lose them forever from the public transit system because of this situation with the train derailment.

"It's a combination of anxiety over safety because of COVID and just the inconvenience, just the fact that the system has become so unreliable. It's affecting peoples' lives. It's affecting their ability to get to work, to get to appointments. You hit a point where you say this isn't working for me. I have to find alternatives, whether that's purchasing a car or doing rideshares."

He said that shifting buses from local routes is problematic because these routes are

essential. "They're the routes that people use to go to medical appointments, to go get their groceries. You stand outside Massine's at the corner of Bank and Somerset - that bus stop there is always busy because it's folks who have got groceries."

"OC Transpo tends to focus so much on the commuter aspect. The LRT is designed to be a commuter train, to get people in and out of the downtown core. But the bus system can't be neglected like this, because those are the routes that actually help tie neighbourhoods together, that people need to use. To cut these routes back affects people on such a daily scale - not being able to get to an appointment, adding so much time to students' journeys to get to class in the

morning. What we're seeing now is that we don't have the resources to do both, as soon as a catastrophic failure happens, and we have to pull those buses out of those local routes to service the train, we don't have a backup plan."

El Feghali said the cancelled local trips were chosen because they could be removed "with the least impact on customers. No crucial trips at the busiest times, or first or last trips, have been cancelled." He said OC Transpo also avoided creating large gaps between buses, which generally "meant that the most frequent routes experienced cancelled trips."

The BUZZ heard bus service complaints from several Centretowners on Twitter. Jared Denison said the "11 is often late and when it finally

shows up it's packed and standing room only." Geri Moss Norbury said she is now driving her son and his classmate to school because their route 14 "keeps getting pulled to work R1 service in the morning."

Sam Gill said "routes 6, 7 and 11 are always packed, along with R1 of course. Local bus frequency downtown was an issue even before Line 1 broke. Meanwhile when I go to the burbs I see buses driving around empty with the same frequency."

Councillor Mathieu Fleury recently produced a spreadsheet of bus cancellations affecting his Rideau-Vanier ward, which is served by most of the same buses as Centretown. His statistics show 222 bus cancellations in September in that ward (for all reasons, not just R1), or 22.2 percent of the total

cancellations across the city. MacKay said the current LRT shutdown is "a real tipping point for transit in our city. If riders don't have confidence in the reliability of the system, they won't use the system."

OTRA says it supports McKenney's call for a judicial inquiry. "There needs to be a full accounting of what's happened with the LRT. It's a system that the public is paying for and the public should know what it's getting. Ev-

erything about this system is hidden within so many layers of secrecy and through legalese and through word salad that they've made the situation for themselves worse.

"If you can't get a straight answer out of OC Transpo, out of RTG, out of City Council, then why are you even going to ride the system anymore?"

MacKay said OTRA will oppose the planned transit fare hike in January "because the system's not reliable."

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Planet of the Scapes: Time to give thanks



Malagan eggplant rounds *PEARL PIRIE/THE BUZZ*
Pearl Pirie

It is harvest time. The good earth has allowed our survival and flourishing again. With days shortening, and nights close to zero degrees, it is time to reflect on what the year has allowed.

The occasional feedback and question from readers has been gratifying. I hope over the years you've found some good ideas to add to

your routine, and had some entertainment and happy moments over your table at home. I have been privileged to write *Planet of the Scapes* since July 2014, under four editors.

This, including the one guest column done by Ellen Chang-Richardson, is my 80th column. At two to three recipes each, that's been a lot of food. And to close out, here are three more dishes to enjoy.

Appetizer: Malagan Eggplant Rounds (20-30 minutes)

An advantage of YouTube travel is encountering new flavour possibilities. In Malaga, they would use sugar cane molasses but a strong honey works well too, even if that loses the vegan aspect.

- 1 medium eggplant (or zucchini in a pinch)
- 1 egg
- ¼ cup ground almond (for more nutrition)
- ¼ cup corn meal
- ¼ cup flour
- drizzle of honey or molasses

Dredge slices of eggplant in egg, then in the dry mixture. Either bake 20 minutes or fry 10 minutes per side on medium heat in olive oil. Serve hot, drizzled with honey.

Main Dish: Chard Day and Night (20 minutes, serves 2)

- 1 bunch Swiss chard
- 1 Tbsp margarine
- 1 small yellow onion
- 1 or 2 pinches of dried parsley

Chop the onion and cut the stems from the chard, setting aside the leaves. Fry the stems and onion in margarine for 4-6 minutes until soft. Sprinkle with dried parsley. (To dry parsley, spread it out on a cookie sheet at 90 degrees for 45 minutes.)

- Add:
- a handful of fresh spinach
 - the chard leaves
 - ¼ cup water
 - 2 eggs
 - ¼ cup old cheddar, or your choice of cheese

Roll and slice the leaves and place them on top of the softened veggies in the pan. Top with ¼ cup water. Crack 2 eggs over the vegetables, and lay slices of old cheddar (optional) on top. Cover to steam over medium heat for 15 minutes.

Slide onto a plate. Feel the nutrients wash your bloodstream.

§
A special meal deserves a surprise finish. If you ever had the pleasure of dining at Zen Kitchen, chef Caroline Ishii would often appear inquiring about the meal and delivering an amuse-bouche. This is my equivalent as a parting sweetness.

Dessert: Rhubarb Ginger Truffles

- Jam reduction:**
Cover and cook:
- 1 cup, or 1/3 lb. rhubarb, chopped
 - ¼ cup sugar
 - pinch of salt

The salt takes the bitter edge off. Cook on medium-low heat covered for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally until it is as thick as apple sauce. Cook 15 more minutes uncovered until as thick as apple butter.

- Add to this mixture:
- 1 Tbsp minced crystallized ginger



PEARL PIRIE/THE BUZZ

- 1 sage leaf
- Chill.

Balls:

- ½ cup butter or margarine
- ½ cup icing sugar
- ½ cup ground almonds
- ½ cup cocoa (Valrhona if you can find it, or Cocoa Camino)
- 1 cup melted chocolate

Set aside additional cocoa, icing sugar, or ground almonds for rolling

Mix into a paste. Place the cocoa or icing sugar or nuts on a small plate. Place some chocolate paste on top. Daub with fruit. Cover with more chocolate paste. Roll between your palms to make a ball. Keep in the freezer or fridge and bring to room temperature to serve.

Pearl Pirie's fourth poetry collection, footlights has been shortlisted for the Lampman Award. Get your copy at Perfect Books. Check out her author site at:

www.pearlpirie.com

Most importantly, get vaccinated, and keep washing your hands and phones and wearing masks to protect us all.

Thank you, Pearl!

This is the final *Planet of the Scapes* column in *The BUZZ*. We thank Pearl Pirie for 80 columns of delicious recipes and wish her all the best.

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This new mural, on Bank Street at Lisgar Street, was created by Ottawa-based artists Kalkidan Assefa, Allan André, and Jimmy Baptiste.

BRETT DELMAGE/THE BUZZ

New mural inspired by nature and the outdoors

Elise Kieffer

A new mural appeared this summer at the intersection of Bank and Lisgar. Created by Ottawa-based artists Kalkidan Assefa, Allan André, and Jimmy Baptiste, the mural was painted in partnership with the Downtown Bank Street Business Improvement Area (BIA).

After strong winds destroyed the previous mural

this spring, André asked his social media followers what the people of Ottawa wanted to see in the world of street art. Although there was an outpouring of answers, many of the suggestions had the common theme of “green art.” – art inspired by nature or the outdoors.

This piece was designed to symbolize freedom and the feeling of true liberation which can be found while experiencing nature.

The mural is on the fence around a currently undeveloped site. According to the BIA, this mural is planned to stay up as long as natural conditions allow.

It is one of a number of outdoor murals by local Ottawa artists which appeared this spring and summer, in a move to revive art in Ottawa due to the easing of restrictions and a new-found interest in outdoor art which had been spurred on by the pandemic.

Dalhousie Community Assn report

Ed McKenna

LeBreton Flats: downtown or a Dalhousie neighbourhood?

How are we to view the future of LeBreton Flats? We know developers see the area as an “extension of downtown,” a place appropriate for residential towers up to 55 storeys. The city and the National Capital Commission seem to agree, and the Official Plan and zoning bylaws have been changed to allow skyscrapers to be constructed on LeBreton Flats.

As DCA President Catherine Boucher pointed out during an interview on CFRA last month, there’s another way to look at this area. “If we see LeBreton Flats as an extension of our existing neighbourhood,” she said, the city’s plan to secure community benefits from the development of LeBreton Flats, approved by the Planning Committee September 23, is “somewhat worrisome.”

Why? Doesn’t the DCA support parks, day care, affordable housing? Of course, said Boucher. “These priorities reflect those we have put forward for many years.”

What’s worrisome is that there’s no plan to bring these benefits to Dalhousie anytime soon. For example, the day care is scheduled “10 to 20 years in the future,” according to city staff.

Despite the current needs of the people who live on the south side of Albert Street, any community benefits associated with the development of LeBreton Flats will be a long time coming. It’s been almost 60 years since residents and businesses

were removed from LeBreton Flats. According to the city, it will be at least 90 years before the community finally is restored.

“I’ve always said that the rebuilding of LeBreton Flats will not happen in my lifetime,” Boucher said. “Let’s speed up the process so that community benefits from the development of LeBreton Flats contribute to the existing neighbourhood and those of us who live in Dalhousie today.”

Harvest Time

“It’s so peaceful here!” said Natasha McRae from the corner of Somerset and Preston. “There are nasturtiums and marigolds in full bloom, and tomatoes and herbs still to be harvested.”

We were talking on the phone one evening earlier this month. While we chatted, McRae was picking kale at her plot in the DCA Community Garden, located on the future site of the Vietnamese Boat People Museum, across Somerset from the venerable Frisby Tire shop. It’s the only community garden in Dalhousie.

The garden was established four years ago with funds secured through Section 37 of the Planning Act. There are 36 raised garden boxes at the site, each large enough to support two gardens. McRae is one of the garden coordinators. “It’s been a pretty good year,” she said. “We’ve been resourceful in dealing with the pandemic restrictions and the garden has operated at full capacity all summer.”

Some gardeners will be harvesting kale for weeks to come but garden clean-up is

already scheduled for the end of the month. Then it’s time to start thinking about the 2022 growing season. “We usually have about 30 people on the waiting list for garden plots and this year we were able to add 10 new gardeners,” said McRae.

If you’re interested in being peaceful on Preston and getting on the DCA Community Garden waiting list, you can contact the gardeners at: dcacommunitygarden@gmail.com

DCA Membership

The DCA welcomes new members and invites all residents to participate in our monthly board and committee meetings. Contact us at: president@ottawadalhousie.ca

Fair weather for a fall fair day

Stephen Thirlwall

The Dundonald Park Fall Fair was a major success this year after being cancelled the last two years.

Many different community groups and organizations were involved in planning the September 18 afternoon event. With masks and distancing in play, over 200 people engaged with the various displays and activities. The fair opened with Indigenous chanting and drumming to bless the event.

At one end of the park, close to the children’s playground, the air was filled with bubbles around the Centretown Community Health Centre (CCHC)’s Bubble and Movement activities for kids. Beside it were displays on pollination of plants. They included samples of various pollinator insects in small clear boxes and many blow-up photographs showing local flowers and their pollinators. The Neighbourhoods Centretown tree survey project also had a table.

There was a special display promoting the banning of single-use plastic, which showed three huge bags filled with plastic bottles that had been collected from

streets and parks where they had been thrown away. Children pushed these around while parents tried to guess the number of bottles. The winner was given a multi-use drink container. Tree sprouts and grow-your-own-microgreens kits were given away free at other tables, while children busily planted tulip bulbs in the garden beds, guided by the Dundonald Garden Group, for next spring’s blooming.

At the other end of the fair, a singer/guitarist performed and people could pick up packaged snacks and bags of hot popcorn from a free treats table. Close by, there was also a table with information about the Centretown Community Association and the Elgin Street Farmers Market.

Other tables had examples of Indigenous musical instruments (drums, rattles, clackers) and items that can be loaned from the Ottawa

Tool Library. The CCHC handed out pulses soup mix and recipes. The Ottawa Art Gallery gave out Turtle Island beading kits to children.

The Ottawa Public Library had their Bibliobike so children could borrow books. On the grass beside this, a story time was held mid-fair, which included some singing and dancing with the children, and was again opened by Indigenous singing.

People of all ages and backgrounds attended the fair. But it was very special that so many parents with children were present.

If there is further opening in the city of social gatherings, hopefully, more fairs, movies and other activities will return to the park. As people attending the fair came from farther afield than usual, it shows the great need for at least small parks in more locations throughout Somerset Ward.



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Yasir Naqvi sets priorities for his first term as MP

Alayne McGregor

On September 20, Yasir Naqvi was elected as the new MP for Ottawa Centre. *The BUZZ* interviewed him on October 1, as he was setting up his office.

Was this campaign different?

“What was unique about this campaign was that it happened during the pandemic. When I was knocking on doors throughout the community, people were really open to having a conversation. I connect that to the fact that we have not had anybody knocking on doors in about 18 months. We’ve all been living in isolation. It made for a far more interesting and engaging interaction to talk to people about issues. I think people had a lot of pent-up time to talk to somebody else at their porch.”

What are your top priorities for your first six months in office?

Naqvi said dealing with the issues around chronic homelessness in our community would be a priority. He planned to work with Councillor Catherine McKenney and the Mayor, and wanted to see what projects are in line, from a not-for-profit social housing perspective, and how he could help accelerate

funding for those projects.

Secondly, he wanted to work with community associations around climate action, based on the Climate Action Plan he released during the election. This would include issues like the urban tree canopy, encouraging native species of plants, and examining air quality in some of the densely-populated parts of the riding, especially in Centretown.

What would your protection law for the Experimental Farm consist of?

“There is no legislative protection for the Central Experimental Farm. We know how important it is to our community. I’m proposing to bring legislation that will protect the farm as heritage public lands. So it is protected the way it is, forever.”

The farm would be reserved for purposes like its working farm, agricultural research, the museum, a possible botanical garden, and “for the public use for people to enjoy and to benefit from that important greenspace in the downtown core.”

This would include not selling off any further sections of the farm, he said. When asked about the proposed Baseline Road Rapid Transit Corridor, which was

approved by City Council in 2017 and which would take a 10-metre strip of the farm along Baseline Road for a busway, Naqvi said he was not aware of that proposal and would have to look into it. “I would tell you that my inclination would be to protect the farm the way it is right now.”

You said you wanted to ensure that Ottawa’s LRT was properly integrated with the future Civic hospital campus. What role can you take to do that?

Naqvi promised to work with the hospital, the city, and the province on this issue, and work to get federal support as necessary.

“In my view, if we are building a modern 21st-century hospital, it has to be integrated with public transit, so that there is that convenience and ease for people to use public transit, whether they are staff who work at the hospital or family members who are visiting. We have to also keep in mind that we are a winter city and there are months covered with snow so you have to again ensure that there is adaptability to the climate as well.”

You wrote to Tobi Nussbaum at the NCC about extend-

ing for a full year the pilot project of closing Colonel By Drive to motor vehicles. Have you had any response?

“I look at major cities around the world, and I see that as we are taking climate change seriously, there is a movement afoot to convert some roads that were meant for motor vehicles and convert them to active transportation. There is an opportunity here with Colonel By, so I think that looking at the data will be important. Part of my reason to propose a year-long pilot is so that we can also look at the winter use as well, [to] allow for better decision-making long-term.”

He said he hadn’t yet heard from Nussbaum.

What can you as the local MP do to preserve the economic vibrancy of downtown Ottawa, and possibly get more people back to working downtown?

Naqvi said he had talked to small businesses and business improvement areas about this issue and recognized its importance. He said that ending the pandemic was essential to a solution, so “the fight against COVID-19 remains paramount.”

He said he expected some federal employees will remain working at home, some or all of the time.

“Whatever that is, one of the clear things that I heard from our small businesses is that they want some predictability. They want to have a better understanding of what the federal government as the major employer in the downtown core is planning to do once the pandemic is over. And I agree with that.”

“So what I want to do as MP for Ottawa Centre is to work with the federal government to see if we can come up with a set of guidelines that will apply across the government so that our businesses know what to expect as to what the new protocols are going to be. The concern is that decisions may be made which differ from ministry to ministry, from agency to agency and that does not allow for that clarity which businesses would like. I will be advocating and working towards a more uniform set of guidelines which our businesses can rely on and then do their own business planning based on that.”

And on national issues...

“One of the big areas that I want to focus on is making sure that Ontario enters into an agreement with the federal government on \$10-a-day childcare. I heard a lot about that particular issue from young families, especially women who want that system in place in Ontario.”

Somerset Ward: we must untangle the LRT mess

Catherine McKenney

Just two years old and with a \$2.1 billion price tag, phase 1 of Ottawa’s Light Rail Transit (LRT) system has experienced two derailments this past August and September—both with commuters on board! The first was not fully reported; the second caused a shutdown of the system for weeks, while the federal Transportation Safety Board and a variety of experts examined the causes and made recommendations to make the system safe again.

This has caused tremendous problems for Ottawa transit users who, during the ongoing pandemic, have found themselves crammed into overcrowded, slow-moving buses that rarely get them to their destinations on time. And to supply these buses, OC Transpo reduced service to other routes, mostly local routes in the urban core.

The inconvenience to our transit ridership has been severe. As a city councillor and member of the Transit Commission, I got an earful from transit users who are tired of paying ever-increasing fares and receiving ever-diminishing service. I can tell you that a member of my immediate family let me know her displeasure after being late day after day getting to her high school classes!

For a system that has been plagued with problems—door software issues, frozen switches, misshapen wheels, fires, computer malfunctions, etc.—we’re at a point where we have to ask several questions: What the heck is going on? How have we come to this? How can such an expensive system, involving several agencies and global corporations, and a great deal of taxpayers’ money, be of such poor quality?

I can give you some answers.

The P3 (public-private partnership) purchasing arrangement, through which the federal government insists all major infrastructure projects be done, gives most of the funding to private companies while taxpayers carry the risk. In practical terms, it means that your political representatives have little responsibility, or accountability, on how a project is developed or managed. Critical documents are hidden in the name of proprietary information. Oversight doesn’t happen because the project’s management is several layers deep and is handed off to a company that has no ties to our community.

Another problem is that we opted for the cheapest system we could buy, regardless of whether it met the basic quality tests that we had set in advance. And then the system was signed off on as “ready for rail” despite failing the tests that we were assured it had to pass.

Moreover, it’s a new train design that hasn’t been used elsewhere. The winter testing was done indoors and not in real conditions. Critical monitoring devices like the ones that report wheel overheating were omitted to save money.

In the words of one of my colleagues, we bought a lemon.

So what do we do now?

I believe the first thing we must do is get to the bottom of the whats and the whys.

This is why I tabled a motion at Ottawa City Council to call for a public judicial inquiry into the LRT fiasco. Although we’ve had several investigations already, they’ve been led by the same experts and companies that were involved in creating the system. This does not provide the public with the necessary assurances that everything is being laid out in the open.

By requesting an investigation through an impartial senior judge, we will get some of the answers that you, as the owners of this system, deserve. It will also result in a clearer picture about what we can do going forward and how we should approach similar major projects in future so that the same mistakes aren’t made again.

The vote on my motion occurred a couple of days before this paper was published, so you know by now what came of it. I can only hope that council will have seen the importance of shedding some light on the LRT so that we can get people moving again. If not, it will no doubt be raised again following the 2022 municipal election!

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Jack Hanna

Elgin Street Farmers Market online for winter

With a successful first summer behind it, the Elgin Street Farmers Market goes online for the winter. Folks can go to: www.elginstreetmarket.ca and place an order for fresh vegetables, fruits, eggs, bread, baked goods, prepared meals and more from 40 vendors. Customers can pick up their orders Saturdays at Haus of Plants on Elgin near Lewis.

The farmers market was launched by CCA in partnership with Chris Penton, an organizer of markets in Ottawa. "The market was a success from the start, a lively and chatty community place," said Penton. "The vendors were delighted."

Affordable housing workshop Oct. 20

The CCA will host an online community workshop on affordable housing on October 20 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. It will feature two experts: housing advocate and researcher Steve Pomeroy (a member of the Canadian Housing Evidence Collaborative at McMaster University), and Toronto architect and urban designer Naama Blonder (Smart Density).

They'll discuss the pros and cons of inclusionary zoning, the responsibility of federal, provincial and municipal governments toward housing policy, and what can be done at the policy level to help resolve the housing crisis. For the Zoom link, email: affordable-housing-champions@centretowncitizens.ca

Kids enjoy free popcorn and planting tulip bulbs

Free popcorn was a hit with children at the Dundonald Park Fall Festival on September 18. So was story time, conducted by the Ottawa Public Library. Lise Dumas read picture books to some 50 kids and had them singing and dancing.

Children also planted tulip bulbs and wildflower seeds with the help of volunteers from the CCA's Dundonald Park gardening group. They could learn about pollinators, blow big bubbles, and much else.

The annual festival is sponsored by the CCA and the Centretown Community Health Centre. About 250 people, mostly young families, attended.

Protecting and increasing the urban forest

CCA volunteers, who've begun building a database of trees in Centretown, have received an "amazing" welcome from residents. "People open their gates to us," says leader Darlene Pearson. "They chat with us. They want to know about their trees."

This summer some 30 volunteers catalogued about 600 trees in the west part of Centretown and the Golden Triangle. The group is striving to create an inventory of all Centretown trees, those on public lands and those on private property, so cooperation from home-owners is important.

The inventory will detail the size of the trees and their health. The NeighbourWoods group also hopes to get trees planted to replace those that have died, or been cut down, and to fill blanks in the urban canopy.

New Official Plan needs to protect heritage

In the final round of input into the development of a new Official Plan for Ottawa, the CCA emphasized respect for heritage. It argued that every development involving a heritage property, or adjacent to a heritage property, should be required to provide a "heritage impact assessment" detailing how proposed changes will respect and enhance existing beautiful old buildings. In the new OP, the city seems to be weakening heritage protection.

Get in your two cents on the city's budget

Councillors Catherine McKenney and Jeff Leiper are hosting a public consultation on the city's 2022 budget on Wednesday, October 20, at 6 p.m. See the ad on page 8 of this BUZZ, or email Councillor McKenney for Zoom details.

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What's on this month in Ottawa

Tony Wohlfarth

Irene's Pub

Irene's Pub (885 Bank Street) is open and featuring live music. On October 15, Irene's features Sean Oliver; on the 22nd, Ball & Chain.

Sean Oliver is Ottawa-based country singer-songwriter. Ball & Chain are Michael Hall and Jody Benjamin, two Ottawa-based musicians who play vintage country music.

For tickets and show information, readers can check out: irenes-pub-restaurant.myshopify.com/blogs/live-music/

Ottawa International Animation Festival

The 45th OIAF wrapped up on October 3. Over 10 days, 281 films from 38 countries were screened, along with talks by directors and other leaders in animation. Major awards went to "The Shaman's Apprentice", directed by Zacharias Kunuk, and to "Night Bus" directed by Joe Hsieh.

A complete list of all award winners: www.animationfestival.ca/awards-2021/

Irish Film Festival of Ottawa (IFFO)

Tickets are now available for the IFFO Shorts & Docs Film Program, screening virtually November 5-7 at: www.ifiinternational.ie

The opening film *Untold Secrets* is a documentary about Anne Silke, a survivor of the Mother & Baby Homes Irish Institution. Directed by Teresa Lavina, running time is 1 hr 24 min.

National Arts Centre (NAC)

The NAC (1 Elgin Street) features a list of live performances this month including Feist (October 14-17), Steph Richards & Supersense (October 16) and Alan Doyle (November 16).

The NAC Orchestra is also back with both its experimental WOLFGANG sessions on October 23, and a combination of modern classical and Mozart in *Primal Message* on October 30. And jazz lovers can enjoy pianist and vocalist Laila Biali (October 30), powerful Cuban vocalist Daymé Arocena (November 4) and saxophonist Benjamin Deschamps (November 6).

For tickets and more information, readers can check out: <https://nac-cna.ca/en/calendar/list/2021/10>

Great Canadian Theatre Company

The GCTC (1223 Wellington Street) is back with five live performances beginning November 30.

The first play is *Daisy* and it is the Canadian premiere. Based on true events, *Daisy* is a story about the ad agency which created the first modern political attack ads during the 1964 U.S. presidential election campaign.

For tickets and information about the season, check out: www.gctc.ca

Alanis Obomsawin

At age 89, Obomsawin is a famous and highly celebrated Canadian filmmaker. Her latest film, *Honour to Senator Murray Sinclair*, had its world

premiere in September at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF).

The film is based on Sinclair's acceptance speech before The Society of World Federalists at McGill University in 2016. I found the most riveting part of the 29-minute film were the excerpts from the testimony of survivors before the Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The testimony of an Inuvik elder was especially moving.

In a remarkable 50-minute interview on Q, Obomsawin talks about her five decades of filmmaking with CBC host Tom Power. See [the entry for September 30 at https://cbc.ca/q](https://cbc.ca/q)

Most of Obomsawin's films can be seen on the NFB's website.

National Day of Reconciliation

Canada's first National Day of Reconciliation on Thursday, September 30, was marked solemnly with events across the city. The most moving was my visit to the Beechwood Cemetery, where volunteers marked Orange Shirt Day with tours of the gravesite on the theme of reconciling history. The cemetery offers self-guided tours. Details are online at: <https://beechwoodottawa.ca/sites/default/files/2021-08/Reconciling%20History%20Tour.pdf>

Tony Wohlfarth is an Ottawa-based freelance film and entertainment writer. He screened Honour to Senator Murray Sinclair courtesy of the NFB. See centretownbuzz.com for more events.

Neighbours help neighbours

Susan Palmai & Linda Pollock

There are a dozen garden boxes beside Centretown United Church on Bank Street. For several years, volunteers from the church and neighbourhood have been growing vegetables in those boxes. You may have passed them many times without knowing much about the Community Garden Project.

The volunteers supply Centre 507, a city-operated day program located on the second floor of the church, with fresh produce for their soups, sandwiches and salads. Centre 507 and the Emergency Food Centre, also located in the church, combine with the community vegetable garden to form a complementary hub of services to vulnerable neighbours in Centretown.

Last year, the COVID-19 pandemic halted the vegetable garden. But this summer we are delighted to report the vegetables are back!

In fact, the volunteer roster for the garden has been expanded with help from the Central Ottawa Cluster of United Churches and from the Centretown Churches Social Action Committee comprising 23 churches of all denominations. We actually had more volunteers ready to help than we could accommodate—a lovely prob-

lem to have! This prompted a sister garden on the grounds of the Glebe St. James United Church to enhance donations to Centre 507.

The Community Garden Network has also supported us by providing clear guidelines for operating a community garden safely during COVID-19 and providing public signage for the safety of volunteers and the public.

Under shared leadership from Brian Ure, Linda Pollock and Susan Palmai, volunteers have been harvesting fresh greens and veggies since mid-June. Volunteers weed and water daily. Brian, a retired professional horticulturist, oversees the health and progress of the maturing plants, ensures that second crops replace those that have been harvested and guides



Diana Mahaffy, manager, Centretown Emergency Food Centre and former garden volunteer; and Brian Ure.

the volunteers in the care of the plants.

We coordinate with the cooks of Centre 507 with twice-a-week harvesting of what we have to donate at a time when they can use it. Neighbours stop by and ask questions about the garden

and signs welcome them to go into Centre 507 to share the bounty.

Although it has been a challenge to operate during COVID-19, we are managing, the vegetables are thriving and we hope to continue in the future.

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Stuart Kinmond: an artist in our midst

Stephen Thirlwall

Over two long weekends in September, Centretown artist Stuart Kinmond held an exhibition of his paintings at the Bronson Centre. Solitary walks over the past year, under pandemic conditions, formed the basis of his show.

While he does a little painting *en plein air*, Kinmond prefers the undisturbed atmosphere of his studio. It's better not having people looking over his shoulder making various comments: What's that? Very nice! It's so cute. Instead, he visits interesting sites to gather ideas and visual impressions and to take photographs from which he paints.

Kinmond paints with a series of brushes and palette knives on medium-sized canvases using an acrylic medium which dries quickly and is very convenient to use. One series of his works on display were portraits of individual trees, drawing out their unique personalities. When he mentioned the park where he saw the willow tree he painted, I remembered seeing that exact tree.

A few of the other works showed straightforward trees. One beautiful painting displayed a tree in full

autumn splendour, with the ground reflecting back its bright orange colour. Another portrait was far more abstract. The image could have been a tree, a cloud or just abstract shapes and textures. This is the magic of painting.

Visual artists are challenged by the flatness and rigid framing of the canvas. Their skill comes out when they draw you into the artwork, add depth, provide unusual perspectives and so on. For the portrait series, Kinmond used the frame to isolate and focus attention on the central subject—one or two trees. The swirls of his brush strokes and the sweeps and scrapes of his knives give the forms special character. In one painting, two trees appear like caricatures of human faces looking at one another. In another picture, an evergreen tree seems to perform a strange dance as its branches stick out in an unusual wind-blown pattern. His jagged evergreen startles us with the tree's own unsettledness.

Kinmond's other works were landscapes set mostly in parks. Starting work from photographs and his memory, Kinmond edits out or adds to the painting what will best express the ideas and feelings he wants

to bring out. His scene in Dundonald Park is semi-photographic. Yet it appears mystical in the interplay of light and dark, clarity and fuzziness. This captures our interest, moves us, makes us see with new eyes, and draws out our own thoughts and memories. I know Dundonald Park intimately but this was an alternate perception of it exposing new insights.

In a painting of a cemetery, you are pulled into the picture along a grassy pathway to the edge of a forest of varied colours. The frame evaporates and the space on the canvas seems wider and deeper. You are taken away to another part of your imagination. I did not at first even realize it was a graveyard.

At his best, Kinmond moves away from very planned painting to a state where the painting emerges from the free and fluid strokes of the brush. It just knows where to go. I found this was most obvious in his painting that showed a scene in a park with a bench. In a different, very atmospheric and haunting work, Kinmond captures a distant view of Pointe Gatineau in a wintery mist. You feel present in the picture, as if you are feeling the cold and watching from a distant point



Stuart Kinmond with his paintings.

STEPHEN THIRLWALL/THE BUZZ

over the snow-covered river ice and land. This painting is very compelling in spite of its subtlety and small size.

What is always interesting is how a painting can strike one viewer strongly while not stirring another person. In conversation with various people attending this exhibit, there were a few pieces that impressed most of us and other pieces that greatly touched only one or two.

Years ago, I had seen

some of Kinmond's paintings during a Centretown art tour. At that time, he was an architect and his paintings very much reflected this, as they were more urban and structural. When I next encountered him, it was through community volunteer work related to the preservation of parks, natural settings and the environment. It seems natural that this current series of paintings is of trees and pastoral landscapes.

Centretown is home to several visual artists, some more widely known than others. Those I know work through graphics, photography, different styles of painting and multimedia, dioramas, modeling, and pottery. Together, they play an important role in our community and culture. As the city opens up more, watch out for further shows by Kinmond and the other artists in our midst.



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