

Centretown steps up for its food centre, 4



E-scooters to start buzzing, 3

THE CENTRETOWN BUZZ



52 Preston Street was Hallowe'en central this year. From October 18 to 31, Alain Nantel (by door) and his son put up a new scary scene each weekday — out at 7 a.m. so children could see it on their way to school and then down at dusk. They had first done this in 2020 to replace the then-cancelled trick-or-treating, combining store-bought pieces with homemade props. People have so enjoyed the displays, Nantel said, that he continued this year with all new ideas. Videos of the displays are available on Nantel's [YouTube channel](#).

ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ

Study evaluates police vs social services

Alayne McGregor

The proposed 2.86 percent (\$14 million) increase in the Ottawa Police budget for 2022 has reignited the bigger question of who can more effectively handle people in crisis: police or social services.

Now a coalition of 12 community health centres across Ottawa has done the research. Last month they released a report, “Rethinking Community Safety in Ottawa”, that analyzed non-violent police interactions with the public, and proposed less expensive and more effective alternatives.

These included dealing with the homeless and precariously housed — “the homeless guy doesn’t need a cop — he needs some water and a pair of socks”; those suffering mental health problems; youth; and women who are victims of violence. It estimated that mental health interventions alone cost \$50 to \$75 million per year.

For each category, the report outlined extensive long-term and short-term responses based on current work by local agencies. For homelessness, for example, existing programs like supportive housing, drop-in centres, eviction prevention, crisis outreach, and recovery beds could produce better outcomes and reduce the need for police interventions “if they were given the resources to expand both the volume and geography of their programs.”

The report quoted international studies showing many 9-1-1 calls didn’t need a police report. “Ottawa service providers underscore the need for change, noting that many people facing a crisis feel stuck, needing help but not wanting criminal justice involvement. People with loved ones facing a mental health crisis don’t want to see them arrested but don’t have an alternative urgent response. Parents who encounter folks who are without homes and in distress want them to get help, but not arrested—they currently have no options. Par-

ents of youth who need interventions, but not a criminal record, don’t know where to turn.”

The health centres proposed 31 specific initiatives, each costed-out from \$100,000 to \$14 million, to send “the right people to the right situations at the right time.” These would cost “a fraction of what the City of Ottawa now spends” on police responses and improve community safety, the report said.

At the press conference introducing the report, Michelle Groulx, the executive director of the Ottawa Coalition of Business Improvement Areas (OCOBIA), recounted how businesses were seeing increased mental health and drug addiction issues during the pandemic. She said OCOBIA wants “to see permanent housing and social services support that provide a means to recovery, not daily relapse. This healing begins with the very first contact during a crisis, preferably before escalation, by the right person at the right time.”

City Council rejected a freeze on the police budget in July. At the Somerset/Kitchissippi ward budget consultation Oct. 20, Councillor Jeff Leiper said he expected another attempt in the debate on the full budget on Dec. 8.

If councillors could be convinced to read the “Rethinking Community Safety” report, Leiper said, and “buy in to some of the initiatives as a means of saving money further down the road, maybe they will change their minds.”

Councillor Catherine McKenney said grassroots groups are putting pressure on the police budget. “It really is becoming, I think, more widely accepted that funding mental health supports, outreach, community development, recreation programming for youth is how we will address the issues that we have traditionally called on the police to do in the community.”

The Police Services Board will consider the police budget on Nov. 22. City Council cannot alter the budget: it can either accept it, or reject it and send it back to the board.

Tax break helps only half of Bank Street businesses

Kate F. Mackenzie

Only 46 percent of Bank Street businesses will qualify for a recently announced city tax break for small businesses, according to Christine Leadman, executive director of the Bank Street BIA.

The 15 percent tax break was approved by Ottawa City Council in October and will come into effect in 2022. It will be phased in at a rate of 7.5 percent over two years.

Leadman said the overall impact the city is providing for small businesses is commendable but won’t help all businesses. The rest will see a slight increase in their taxes to offset the \$9.9 million that the tax break will cost.

A staff report to the city’s Finance and Economic Development Committee (FEDCO) estimates 5,800 properties or 10,000 small businesses will benefit from the tax break.

The property must be less than 25,000 square feet to qualify, explains Michelle Groulx, executive director of the Ottawa Coalition of Business Improvement Areas (OCOBIA).

“It’s a difficult situation where you see some businesses who are in larger properties that will not get that discount,” she said. “The larger properties, or their taxes, are going to be increasing to a degree to achieve that parity.”

The discount will ultimately bring more equality to how larger and smaller properties are taxed. Previously, businesses in larger properties like shopping centres were already taxed at a lower rate than the properties that will receive the reduction, Groulx explained. “This discount is actually bringing the small properties closer to the level to where the shopping centre has been taxed over the past few years,” she said.

Yukang Li, the executive director of the Chinatown BIA, said the tax break will be good and might attract new businesses to currently vacant spaces. Most small businesses in Chinatown will qualify. Li said the busi-

nesses and property owners he has spoken with are “very much looking forward to it.”

Although a decrease in taxes is a positive step toward helping small businesses, a concern mentioned by Councillor Eli El-Chantiry, during the October 5 FEDCO meeting, is that business owners “are at the mercy of the landlords” in receiving the discount.

Groulx said it’s a fair concern and, if tenants do not see their commercial tax go down, it’s “highly questionable” and should be reported.

However, according to Councillor Catherine McKenney, who supports the tax break, the city does not have the authority to fine property owners that do not pass on the discount. “It will be a good-faith gesture; we’re hoping that the property owners pass it along,” McKenney said.

Since the commercial tax is charged separately to the tenant from the base rent, Groulx expects it to be an easy transfer with landlords simply passing down the actual cost.

“Where I see complications is if a tenant has a bundled up type of commercial lease with their property manager,” she said. “I don’t see it very often. But where it does exist, I think commercial tenants are going to have to go in and talk [with their landlords] about what that tax is, [because] it is the full intention of this program to be able to pass that discount on to the tenant.”

Jim Sherman, the owner of Perfect Books on Elgin Street, said the tax break and any support are “more than welcome.” Sherman said he has an extremely positive working relationship with his landlord and is not concerned that he won’t pass on the discount.

Groulx said the BIAs are on high alert to inform all of their members that the tax discount is coming and to expect to see a change on their bill in June 2022. Additionally, the City of Ottawa is listing all properties that will qualify for the discount on their website.

Check centretownbuzz.com for more stories.

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101-210 Gloucester St.
Ottawa, ON
K2P 2K4
Phone: 613-565-6012

centretownbuzz.com
twitter.com/centretownbuzz
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BUZZ Staff

Managing editor: Alayne McGregor
editor@centretownbuzz.com

Associate editor: Eleanor Sawyer

City Editor: Robert Smythe
cityskyline@centretownbuzz.com

Distribution manager: Archie Campbell
circulation@centretownbuzz.com

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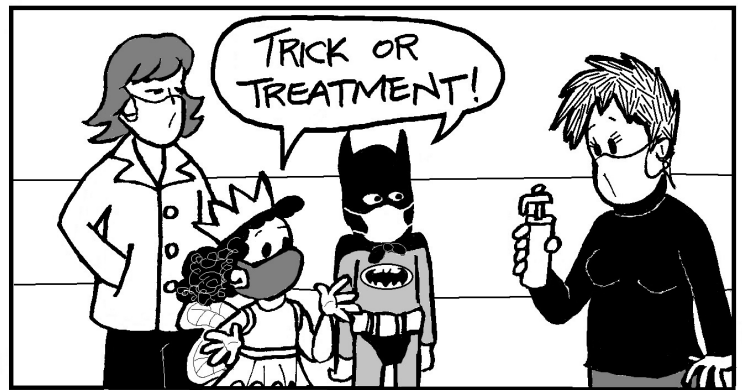
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The Lighter Side of the Pandemic, by Karen Munro-Caple



The Good, the Bad, and the Bumpy: Make Centretown roads smoother

Ryan Lythall

In going to my bank and to Loblaws on Isabella Street, I usually go down Metcalfe Street, cross Catherine and roll under the Queensway. From there, I'd cross Isabella into the Loblaws parking lot.

By (happy) accident, I came across the Elgin Street bike lane that goes directly to the bank. I had seen it before in passing but didn't realize where it went. And ever since, I've used this bike path, which goes under the Queensway.

I only have one issue with this path.

It's far too short. It seems to end right where I cross to go to the bank. In my opinion, the Elgin Street bike path should connect to the canal or Queen Elizabeth Drive.

On another note, Queen Elizabeth Drive needs to be repaved—at least the part that goes to TD. I've tried several times to take Queen Elizabeth when the NCC closed it to vehicle traffic. I always had to get off the road and use the multi-use path along the canal each time because Queen Elizabeth Drive is far too bumpy for me to roll on. I sincerely hope that I'm not alone in saying that.

In fact, when it comes to bike lanes

and multi-use paths, they need to be smooth and regularly maintained. I often use the O'Connor bike lane and I've noticed that certain parts are also pretty bumpy.

I've always supported bike lanes and paths, and use them as much as possible. I also know several people with disabilities who do as well.

Ottawa needs more bike lanes, especially in Centretown. Not only would it be safer, but it would also make getting around truly accessible to everyone.

Follow Ryan on Twitter:
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Blaine Cameron: effective advocate, fierce hockey player



Blaine Cameron OTTAWA ACORN
Alayne McGregor

A tireless advocate whose victories improved people's lives. A fine friend. A fierce wheelchair hockey player.

Those are some of the ways Centretown activist Blaine Cameron is remembered. Cameron, 48, died October 15 from heart failure.

He worked for accessible Internet, affordable housing, and disability rights, and was a familiar face for almost a decade with Ottawa ACORN, the organization of low- to moderate-income families, where he chaired the central Ottawa chapter. He also worked on many NDP election campaigns.

Cameron lived for many years near Bank and Cooper; he returned recently to live with his parents because of problems obtaining personal support workers. He was affected by Becker muscular

dystrophy and used a powered wheelchair — but despite that was a regular at every ACORN march, meeting, or fundraiser.

On October 27, MPP Joel Harden paid tribute to Cameron in the Ontario Legislature, describing him as “a leader in our city” and talking about his first success: winning \$250,000 in rent rebates for tenants in his former building in Vanier, where he had been trapped for months in a cockroach-ridden apartment because of a broken elevator.

“He helped win increases in the asset limits for ODSP recipients. He fought for hikes in Ottawa's affordable housing spending, and he helped win a national program, the Connecting Families Program, which offers low-income families \$10-a-month Internet. And that's reached 200,000 families across Canada,” Harden said.

Cameron also pushed for improved tenant protection in city bylaws, which culminated in the city's new Rental Housing Property Management By-law and pest control regulations which came into effect this summer. More recently, he was working on an Internet For All campaign for an affordable city broadband Internet program.

On October 30 in Jack Purcell Park, about 50 friends and family members gathered for a celebration of life for Cameron. The event included a community canvass for rent control, Harden said, because “that's what Blaine would have wanted.”

A tribute on ACORN's website described Cameron as a “dream leader - fearless, humble, and dedicated to the fight for social and economic justice.”

As a leader, “he was unfailingly encouraging and kind to other members,” his friend Ray Noyes said. “He wouldn't just say you did a good job: he would break it down and analyze exactly what you had done well, and comment on what your strengths are, what your knowledge is, what your abilities are. He knew how to handle someone who was talking out of turn or taking over the conversation without hurting anyone's feelings.”

Noyes said Cameron loved books, movies, and chess. They loved chatting in person and over the phone about politics and philosophy and theology and psychology, and especially social justice. “He was my friend and my buddy and he was a good guy to talk to.”

One of his biggest passions was playing hockey in his wheelchair. He joined the Ottawa Power Wheelchair Hockey League in 2012.

League representative Donna Haycock said that Cameron was “a gentleman [and] a fierce competitor” who quickly developed “an insatiable love and passion” for the sport.

He was named the league's Top Defensive Forward for four years running (2014-17) and played competitively in tournaments across North America. He was also a vocal leader on the court, and a mentor to younger players.

What Noyes will miss most is just the fact that Cameron is “not there at the other end of the phone line anymore. It's surprising how stunned and empty you feel when someone you expect it to be around for a long time is suddenly gone.”



An architect's perspective drawing of the 60-storey ICON II at 829 Carling at Preston. The emphasis is on verticality. (City of Ottawa development information files)



What would a Skyline column be without an accompanying historic photo? This is how the Preston-Carling district appeared in 1944, with an arrow pointing to the new building's site. (Library and Archives Canada)

Skyline: Another Preston-Carling tower aims high. Is it a reach too far?

Robert Smythe

Will the 45-storey ICON condo towering above the northeast corner of Preston and Carling soon have a taller companion at the northwest corner?

The proposed 60-storey ICON II tower will be the latest contribution to this area's nascent skyscraper district. It adds an additional 15 floors in Little Italy's ongoing arms race for height supremacy. Both buildings come from the same developer (Claridge Homes) and the same Toronto-based design firm (Hariri Pontarini Architects).

Of course, this is exactly what the City of Ottawa's Official Plan has called for since the Preston-Carling District Secondary Plan was approved in 2016. It allows buildings of 31 storeys or more, although a cap of 55 floors was contemplated. There was a notion that twin towers, either fraternal or identical, could form a southern gateway to this traditional main street. A one-storey CIBC bank branch now sits on the future building site.

When the neighbourhood's community design plan was being formulated, mega-growth concentrated at Preston Street's north and south ends was accepted as a trade-off for preserving the unique, small-scale character of the stretch in between.

There are other buildings lined up in the high-rise queue ahead of the latest 60-storey entry. For example, next door on a former car dealership property, there is Richcraft's three-tower proposal with heights up to 55 floors.

So apart from Soho Italia's measly 30 stories now under construction, in the five years since the community plan has been in place, Claridge's ICON I has been the only one to take the plunge.

As it stands, the tentatively named ICON II requires very few modifications to the City of Ottawa's regulatory framework—amendments to both the city's zoning bylaw and its official plan to permit a maximum of 60 storeys on this corner—because the current underlying Traditional Mainstreet zone allows only nine and the official plan's height limits are just shy of what's being sought. They are also requesting a stacked-bicycle parking system in place of a horizontal one.

Since it would be almost on top of an LRT station, a Transportation Impact Assessment concludes that the traffic impact on the surrounding street network will be minimal.

This could be tested once a major hospital complex, with attendant transportation and parking demands, is constructed nearby.

Given the unusually generous provision of parking for 385 cars, it isn't obvious

that residents of the 459 units will necessarily take advantage of the convenient public transit at their door. Speaking of green transportation: parking for 230 bikes will follow the bylaw's typical car-parking formula of half a space per unit.

The developer's technical consultants have also carried out the standard wind and shadow impact analyses. The wind study (by Gradient Wind Engineers and Scientists) determined that "no pedestrian areas within or surrounding the site were found to experience [wind] conditions that would be considered as **dangerous**." (Emphasis added.) Avoiding dangerous seems to be a fairly low threshold.

Shadows: 60-storey buildings cast a fairly long shadow. But the architects' studies insist that it will be fleeting and won't linger too long in one place.

Is the building's proposed name misleading? Can it truly be called iconic? ICON I's design employed mildly wavy contours to counter its straight edges. With an emphasis on unrelieved verticality, ICON II will brook no such scale-softening concessions.

Ottawa's Urban Design Review Panel is scheduled to assess the tower's architectural appearance. Because multiple stacks of brown brick run up and down the building's full height, one wag, former DCA president Michael Powell, has likened the design to a KitKat bar.

Stay tuned for further details. An online community consultation, organized and moderated by Somerset Ward Councillor Catherine McKenney, may take place at a future date.

E-scooters: the safety battle on city sidewalks

Elise Kieffer

This fall, Ottawa's three major e-scooter providers – Lime, Neuron, and Bird – have been working to mitigate safety and mobility challenges caused by the misuse of e-scooters. Expect to hear and see the results soon.

Haphazard e-scooter parking in the city has continued to create accessibility issues for those with physical disabilities and those who are visually impaired. However, the number of direct complaints to e-scooter companies has decreased from 2020, the first year of the project.

"They can be a bit of a nuisance, especially when the sidewalks are crowded," said Glebe resident Carol Brillinger when asked about mobility concerns associated with e-scooters. In older areas of Ottawa, the inability to find proper e-scooter parking has also become a safety concern for many with mobility issues.

The three e-scooter providers are currently working with the City of Ottawa to create designated parking spaces for riders in more densely populated areas. According to the city, designated e-scooter parking can be made easily accessible where street furniture such as benches, flower boxes and

bike racks are found.

The Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) raised concerns in a meeting with the city and the e-scooter companies about the impact that unsafe e-scooter parking practices and the lack of e-scooter detection have on those with physical disabilities, or visual impairments. These concerns also extend to parents with strollers and to seniors.

To respond to the complaints, Lime, Neuron and Bird have updated their apps to include visual parking spaces on online maps. This provides customers with designated areas to park scooters to mitigate this problem, as the suppliers work to imple-

ment longer-term measures.

They're also making scooters more audible, a change the CNIB had been pushing for since the beginning of the project.

"We will be piloting sound emission in the next few weeks in Ottawa, after working closely with CNIB, as well as the accessibility advisory community at city hall," said Chris Schafer, vice-president of government affairs for Bird Canada.

On a trial basis, e-scooters in Ottawa will start to emit a constant buzzing noise while in motion. This will help those with visual disabilities, as well as drivers, to be more aware of e-scooter riders around them.

The e-scooter company Tier had done this in England.

Although the e-scooter companies of Ottawa have run into safety and mobility challenges, according to one Centretown resident, the positives outweigh the negatives. "The benefit of it (e-scootering) is that more people are able to enjoy the city and see it (Ottawa) from a different perspective," said

avid green transportation user Patrick Thompson.

Many residents, who were asked at Somerset and Bank Streets, said that pilot programs such as the ones initiated with Lime, Neuron and Bird are meant to sort out issues like these, to help integrate e-scooters into the rest of the city and to support greener transportation methods for the future.

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Storytelling is a learning tool

Karen Sinclair and Karen Fee

The 27th annual Ottawa Children's Storytelling Festival will run from November 22 to 27. The festival will be held online through the Ottawa Public Library's website with limited in-person seating at the Odawa Native Friendship Centre.

While in-person storytelling provides the richest experience, "the move online in 2020 because of COVID-19 resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of families attending the festival," said Festival Coordinator Ruth Stewart-Verger.

Listening to stories builds self-confidence and creativity, and teaches an appreciation for the arts. It improves memory and concentration—woe betide a parent or grandparent who has tried to skip a paragraph or two in a favourite bedtime story. "But you didn't say . . . !"

Proven to benefit children's mental and emotional health, storytelling is also an effective way to transmit cultural knowledge, beliefs and values, and is a powerful tool for socialization.

Storytellers at this year's festival reflect the experiences, wit and wisdom of Indigenous people, Francophones

and Anglophones. By listening to stories from other cultures, children broaden their emotional intelligence and empathy, identifying what feelings they have in common rather than focusing on differences.

Jacqui Du Toit, Kitchissippi's storyteller, actor and educator, describes a storyteller as someone who takes an audience on a journey, who bridges the gap between reality and imagination.

"They open the door and help the audience step into their imagination. Stories breathe life into children. And that's what children and youth need right now! Stories that help them figure out what is happening in their world."

Jacqui was born, raised and educated in theatre arts in South Africa. After moving to Ottawa in 2008 she found that she missed the diversity, colours and vibrancy of the arts community in Cape Town.

It was tough breaking into the Ottawa arts scene, especially for a non-white creator.

In an interview with the *Ottawa Citizen* in July 2020, Jacqui said, "I was only seeing one kind of theatre on stage . . . and that was white theatre. British white theatre.

I didn't see any Inuit, Indigenous, African or Caribbean theatre. I was so frustrated by what I was seeing and the rejections."

Jacqui's enthusiasm and love for her craft is infectious. "Imagination is limitless but we tend to shut it down as we get older." Stories have existed since the beginning of time and storytelling in all its formats around the world enables "cross-pollination, a weaving of reality and imagination."

For her, it always comes back to the beginning of time. "We can look at how to inspire the next generation," to apply lessons learned not

only from each other but from the "four-legged and winged creatures."

Jacqui's tales of that Trickster Rabbit - Traditional stories from her South African homeland, [will be presented on Tuesday, November 23 at 12:30 p.m.](#)

The festival will be available for free on the [Ottawa Public Library website's Kids' Zone](#). Contact the festival at 613-722-8402.

Karen Sinclair is a local author and storyteller, and Karen Fee is a storytelling grandmother. Both are members of Ottawa Storytellers.



Jacqui Du Toit will tell Tales of Trickster Rabbit on Nov. 23. MERRITT DELOUX/CAPTIVATE CREATIVE STUDIOS

Transit riders question optimistic ridership projections

Alayne McGregor

Will 82 percent of riders actually return to OC Transpo in 2022? That's one assumption the Ottawa Transit Riders (OTR) is questioning in the city's proposed transit budget.

OTR board member Kari Glynnes Elliott said the budget assumes 60 percent ridership by the end of December and 82 percent by the end of 2022. She calls that "wildly unrealistic," given that "it's highly unlikely there's going to be a massive return to downtown work."

"I'm a public servant and we're being told in the public service that nobody should be forced back to work. And one of the reasons is that transit is such an issue, so it's circular."

Elliott argued that transit reliability was already "in a downward spiral" before the LRT opened in 2019, resulting in people not taking the bus because they couldn't afford to be late. OC Transpo "cannibalized the bus system to pay for LRT with the expectation the LRT would solve the problems" – and it hasn't.

Transit has been underfunded for a decade or more, she said – exactly the wrong direction in the current cli-

mate emergency. In order to solve its problems, it needs more revenue from taxes and less from the farebox. In addition, Transpo needs to add dedicated bus lanes, and communicate more clearly when trips are cancelled so people don't wait for a bus that doesn't arrive.

OTR also opposes the proposed 2.5 percent fare increase in January; Elliott said Ottawa fares are among the highest in Canada.

She described the planned fare holiday in December as a "ridiculous exercise," that would not encourage long-term ridership. She also doubted it would be pos-

sible given the many steps needed to ensure the LRT is fully running by then.

The city Transit Commission will debate the budget on November 17, and City Council on December 8. Citizens can [write to the commission](#) or speak at its meeting.

Elliott said that OTR will make a presentation, but "I don't believe that it will make any difference whatsoever." The commission has not listened to any previous suggestions from the group, despite their trying to present solutions rather than complaints. She said OTR will focus on finding solutions at [its AGM on November 16](#).

Centretown steps up for its food centre

Patricia Marsden-Dole

The response to the virtual community walkathon fundraiser on October 3 was very generous. The Centretown community came together to feed the hungry, looking for help at the Centretown Emergency Food Centre (CEFC) located at Centretown United Church.

This year's Walkathon for the Centre provided many people with a good reason to get out on a wet autumnal day for a walk under a dripping umbrella. The walkathon complements the pandemic reality that many

Centretowners have come to enjoy daily walks along the canal and down past the locks to the Ottawa River. Dogs, children, older adults and all ages in between enjoyed wet feet, wet posters, laughter, good conversations and satisfaction in supporting the fundraiser.

The CEFC also received extra help this harvest season from the coordinators of the Ottawa Emergency Food Centre Plot at the Ottawa East Community Garden (located behind Saint Paul University). The garden has made weekly deliveries of fresh vegetables (10-15 lbs

each delivery) up to 20 in all.

Many people living in central Ottawa continue to need extra support during these pandemic times. The generous community response confirmed again for the volunteers, who keep the CEFC going, and those at the board of the Centretown Churches Social Action Committee (CCSAC), that the community supports and shares their ongoing efforts to care for the less lucky sitting on our doorsteps.

With less financial backing from other sources for the coming year, we hope this will get the CEFC over the hump.

Catherine McKenney

City Councillor
for Somerset Ward

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MPP report: standing up against hate

Joel Harden

Ottawa Centre never ceases to amaze me. From hurricanes to massive floods, from bus crashes to an historic pandemic, I've seen our community rise up in the face of adversity. In October, it happened again on Broadview Avenue.

A bigot from British Columbia arrived on Broadview Avenue on October 18 intent on protesting "gender ideology" in our public schools. The previous week he had filmed and photographed children outside Toronto schools while displaying transphobic messages. These are acts of open violence against queer, transgender and gender non-conforming people.

The bigot filmed, posed and displayed his hate outside public schools. He told his online followers he'd

be back the next day. But the next day, he wasn't alone. Rainbow Carleton—a queer/transgender student group at Carleton University—put out a call for a counter-demonstration both before and after school.

When I arrived at 8:30 a.m., the intersection at Broadview and Avondale was crammed with people—at least a hundred students, parents and neighbours. And when the bigot appeared, we challenged him, told him he wasn't welcome and asked him to leave.

When he refused, we turned our backs, still blocking his signs. We chanted queer-positive and transgender-positive slogans to drown out the hate. After an hour of this, and a memorable stand-off with Councillor Catherine McKenney (a trans non-binary elected official), the bigot left. He

pledged to come back after school with more people—classic bully tactics.

This time the students were ready. Hundreds mobilized to insist the bigots leave and, after 20 minutes, they did but not before inciting violence and shoving at least one student to the ground.

Some might ask, Was this the best community response? Why not ignore the bigotry and deprive it of attention? Alas, history isn't kind to those who suggest that strategy works. Ignoring hate is dangerous. As the Southern Poverty Law Center explains, "... in the face of hate, silence is deadly. Apathy will be interpreted as acceptance—by the perpetrators, the public, and—worse—the victims. If left unchallenged, hate persists and grows."

At least half of home-



Councillor Catherine McKenney (l), holding a "Trans Youth Matter" sign, confronts a transphobic protester outside a local school.

MICHELLE DOUGLAS/THE BUZZ

less youth in Ottawa were rejected by their families for their gender identity. Rates of suicide and suicidal ideation among transgender youth denied access to necessary health care are alarmingly high. As my colleague MPP Suze Morrison noted this week in a crucial Private Members Bill on this issue, we have much more to do. Queer, transgender, and

gender non-conforming folks are proud this week and that is a victory in itself. Our

community organized against hate and I was proud to be there as your MPP.



CCA report

Jack Hanna

Christmas shopping at the Elgin Farmers Market

Plans are shaping up to reopen the Elgin Street Farmers Market for one day of Christmas shopping on Saturday, December 4, from 3 to 7 p.m. The market will be held in Boushey Square at Elgin and Waverley.

Vendors will offer all sorts of gifts and stocking stuffers. There will be handmade pottery, soaps, candles, salsas, jams, pickles and pies, as well as honey, coffees, teas, and artisanal beers, wines, ciders and spirits.

Expect live music and hot take-away food.

Deck the trees, feed the birds

The CCA's Dundonald Park gardening group is inviting everyone to a decorating party on Sunday, December 12, from 2 to 4 p.m. to decorate the trees in the park with simple, homemade holiday ornaments that birds can eat. The park is at Somerset and Lyon Streets.

"We will decorate the trees with goodies for birds," says lead gardener Barbara Sibbald.

"We hope people will do a little artistry in advance and bring popcorn strings, dried oranges, suet balls, and such. Decorations that are not fragile such as wooden ornaments are great too."

Please, no plastic items. It will be a much needed

winter feast for birds.

Big building proposed alongside the canal

The first new big building in decades to be built adjacent to the canal needs to be a model of energy efficiency, the CCA says.

"If a high-end condo building cannot be low-carbon, what building can be?" the CCA asks in its submission to the city.

"The developer can afford the upfront costs of a very energy-efficient building, costs the (condo) owners will recover in operating savings in perpetuity."

A nine-storey building is proposed for 50 The Driveway, where the Canadian Nurses Association headquarters building now sits. The new high rise will have 66 high-priced condos.

The developer is asking for rezoning to permit a higher building than current zoning allows. The CCA says a building providing leading-edge energy efficiency should be part of the community benefits the developer provides in exchange for greater height.

CCA wins last-minute improvements to new city Official Plan

The CCA successfully argued for last-minute changes to Ottawa's new Official Plan (OP), approved by city council in late October. CCA won strengthened protection for heritage houses and buildings, and a measure to

promote better architectural design of new buildings.

In the final round of public input to the new OP, the CCA made a written submission and a verbal presentation to City Council committees. Councillor Catherine McKenney worked to get city staff to incorporate the improvements.

With the changes, if a new development is on, or close to, a heritage property and might diminish heritage value, the developer has to submit a Heritage Impact Assessment.

The CCA and Councillor McKenney also argued for a greater number of proposed new buildings to be scrutinized by the Urban Design Review Panel, a committee of architects that suggests improvements to architectural designs.



Justine Bell
School Trustee
Zone 10 Somerset/Kitchissippi
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Preserving the heritage of Western Centretown

Stephen Thirlwall

The City of Ottawa has proposed new boundaries for a Heritage Conservation District (HCD) in Western Centretown centred around Dundonald Park.

These districts are defined in the Ontario Heritage Act “for the preservation of historic buildings and neighbourhoods”.

There are three levels of heritage designation: 1. individual heritage buildings/properties that receive a high level of protection;

2. a heritage register of secondary buildings that may provide some protection from the redevelopment, and 3. heritage conservation districts/communities/cultural landscapes with special significance and visual coherency providing some degree of protection.

Western Centretown as a whole is a “living” archive where the classic oldness still shows through on every street. Yet it has adapted to modern realities, with buildings built over 100 years ago blending with late 1990s townhouse complexes and even some more modern buildings.

A unique character and cohesiveness

As a distinct low-rise area, Western Centretown is clearly defined – bounded by Kent Street on the east,

Bronson Avenue on the west, Gloucester Street on the north, and Catherine Street on the south.

The outer boundary can be trimmed back by excluding the northwestern block that is all high rises and the southeastern block that is the former intercity bus station, as well as most of the rest of Catherine Street that is non-heritage industrial/commercial. There are three or four old buildings just northwest of Gloucester and Lyon that should be included.

Essentially, this forms about a 46-block district that is very cohesive. Within this area, a very few buildings look visually out of place, particularly The Beer Store and Tim Hortons.

A community look and feel

Western Centretown consists almost entirely of two-to-three storey low-rise residential buildings/properties, with low-rise commercial strips on two secondary main streets (Somerset Street West and Gladstone Avenue) that partially divide it into three sub-neighbourhoods. Dundonald and McNabb Parks form two hubs for the community.

Overall, there is a very high degree of coherence in building age, height, materials, design and function. Diversity is in the range of conditions and the degree of building grandeur. But do

these differences make some of the very similar houses of lesser heritage value?

The area looks and feels like a community with two schools for children and one for adults, a few churches, a community centre, the Bronson Centre, the Chinese-Canadian Cultural Centre, and the Montgomery Legion Hall. It is different from all surrounding areas, except for the edge of Central Centretown west of the Bank Street corridor and south of MacLaren, which could have been considered part of Western Centretown.

To the north is all high-rise residences, offices and commercial spaces; south is industrial space and the Queensway. Dalhousie, on the west, is a very different low-rise residential area with the Chinatown strip of numerous restaurants and shops. Like Central Centretown, Dalhousie is undergoing extensive redevelopment.

Over 80 percent of the buildings in Western Centretown were built between 90 and 156 years ago (1865-1931); the vast majority constructed between 1885 and 1914. The buildings are mostly quite large but vary from modest single houses to huge mansions and to duplexes, triplexes, and old-style row houses. There are a very limited number of small apartment blocks, unlike Central Centretown, which



Intricate brickwork designs decorate this building in the proposed HCD. *STEPHEN THIRLWALL/THE BUZZ*

has many large ones.

Primarily, the buildings are red-orange brick, many with intricate brickwork designs and often fancy wooden balconies and trims. A few are clapboard, stucco or other materials. While a lot of renovation has been done throughout the area to bring homes closer to current-day standards, the outward appearance of their historic age is very much evident.

Between 1925 and the late 1990s, there seems to have been very little new building, but some infill, replacement houses and apartments. Many are over 50 years old. Several buildings that I thought were from the ‘50s-’70s turned out to be around 100 years old. During 1997-1999, a rush of row-house “communities” were constructed. There are very few mid rises, probably built during this same time.

Since 2010, there has been some high-rise development at the northern edge, and a small amount of low-rise infill or replacement multi-unit buildings. In at least three of the newer construction sites, rebuilding followed fires that destroyed the previous buildings.

Over the years, waves of intensification have caused many older homes to be subdivided into multiple units (apartments, rooms to rent in homes and extensions, and rooming houses). There also has been a small increase in commercial spaces within old houses (e.g. the small funeral home on Cooper Street).

The community of Western Centretown remains very much alive and vibrant in spite of many changes of residents and increasing diversity. Residents are attracted here by the history, ambience, closeness to services and shops, ease of getting around, quietness, relative lack of congestion and, earlier on, reasonable prices. This is truly worth preserving. As a whole, the community fits the 15-minute neighbourhood model. To break up this community in ways that disrupt this model should be discouraged.

A heritage landscape and community is a place where people live. It is not just the buildings. I was reminded of this when an elderly man stopped to chat as I was cleaning up my front garden before winter. Within minutes, he told me a detailed history of the block I live on – naming previous inhabitants, describing original buildings and changes, and explaining that the original residents were primarily Francophone.

Defining an HCD

The proposed size of the Western Centretown HCD covers approximately 9 blocks of the complete community. It excludes the outer edges, perhaps to make smoother boundary lines. The proposal also focuses only on a particular concentration of clearly heritage buildings near Dundonald Park. This automatically excludes the southern third of

Western Centretown served by McNabb Park, even though it contains some equally impressive historical age and style buildings. Three very old and important churches are also excluded.

Even if only the Dundonald focus is taken, there are various groups of old and classic buildings throughout the wider catchment area that are not very different from the ones included in the HCD. (These buildings, however, may be on the city’s heritage register. If a building is not in an HCD but is on that register, there’s an automatic 60-day freeze on threatened demolitions to allow city staff sufficient time to assess a building’s heritage value in detail and recommend heritage designation if it meets the criteria.)

Applying the 15-minute community overlay, the boundary should at least extend right across from Kent to Bronson and from the north side of Lisgar to the south side of Florence, excluding the McNabb complex in the southwest corner and a few small areas along the north and eastern edges. This area includes the equivalent of about 25 neighbourhood blocks.

To ensure preservation?

Preservation will require strictly maintaining a maximum building height of four storeys; minimizing the breadth and depth of new building sizes, especially not permitting buildings and parking to completely fill the properties; minimizing the number of new replacement buildings; and assisting owners in maintaining the designated heritage buildings. This maintenance is becoming more difficult in terms of finding materials, understanding old style construction, and increasing costs.

Tall and wide mid-rise and high-rise development have no place here.

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DCA report

Ed McKenna

Parkland at 1010 Somerset Street West

Back in March, the city announced that it had purchased from the federal government the property at 1010 Somerset: 2.55 hectares of land beside Plouffe Park that extends west to the Trillium Line, between Oak and Somerset.

Ever since, the Dalhousie Community Association, with the Plant Pool Recreation Association, has stepped up its advocacy for the use of the land as much-needed greenspace. That need will increase significantly with the development of more than 1,000 new residential units planned for 933 Gladstone, immediately to the south.

The DCA wrote to the city on two occasions in October, to point out that the site plan proposed for the first of these residences, a 338-unit, 18-storey tower on Oak, does not sufficiently protect the parkland to the north. Sewer, water, and utility pipes, and even the alignment of Oak Street, could intrude on the newly-acquired land and adversely affect its development as greenspace.

A meeting between community organizations and city staff to discuss the future of the parkland at 1010 Somerset is being convened by Councillor McKenney on January 6, 2022.

Library Watch

A massive flock of Canada Geese rose from the water that's collected at the bottom of the excavation at the northwest corner of Albert and Commissioner, on LeBreton Flats.

It was the end of October, and the occupation of the site by the geese was a reminder that we haven't heard much lately about this landmark development, the Ottawa Public Library and Library and Archives Canada (OPL-LAC) Joint Facility.

Now there's news: A new name (Ādisōke), a significant budget increase approved by Council, and a decision by the city to approve the Site Plan Control application.

Construction is scheduled to begin this month. We'll be watching!

A Parking Garage at 829 Carling?

The DCA has written to the city to oppose a proposal to amend the Preston-Carling Secondary Plan to allow Claridge Homes to build a 60-storey tower at the northwest corner of Carling and Pres-



ton. The development will include an above-ground parking garage, which will rise six storeys from street level. Above that Claridge proposes 54 storeys for 459 residential units. (Claridge's new tower on the other side of Preston is "only" 45 stories.)

As with all skyscrapers, it's their impact at street level that is of greatest concern. The DCA has highlighted several of these issues, including parking, building access, landscaping, and the pedestrian experience on Preston, Carling and Sidney.

The application will be considered by the city's Planning Committee in January, 2022.

Victoria Island

The gentrification of LeBreton Flats proceeds, but the erasure of the area's vibrant residential, commercial, and industrial past has been only partial on the Chaudière, Albert and Victoria Islands.

Yes, the office and condo towers are rising, but significant elements of our industrial heritage are being preserved, and despite the construction, there's a new walking path around Chaudière Island that includes a spectacular viewpoint above the falls, and pleasant sitting areas amidst newly-planted native trees and other flora.

But what of the west side of Victoria Island?

The National Capital Commission has recently responded to a letter from the DCA posted in September, which inquired about plans for the redevelopment of the Island. Future uses of the Island will be determined with the involvement of the Algonquin Anishinabe Nation, says the NCC.

Expect Victoria Island to reopen to the public in 2025.

For more news about what's happening in our community, join us! Contact: president@ottawadalhousie.ca

What's on this month in Ottawa

Tony Wohlfarth

National Arts Centre

As the NAC returns to in-person (if physically-distanced) shows, Newfoundland and Labrador's Alan Doyle performs live along with the Ottawa Valley's own Kelly Prescott in the National Arts Centre's Southam Hall on Tuesday, November 16. The NAC is offering a physical copy of Doyle's forthcoming EP with each ticket.

Canadian folk icons Connie Kaldor and Garnet Rogers perform together in the NAC Studio on November 19.

Looking ahead to December, the NAC features Jill Barber & The Skydiggers on December 3 to 4. On December 18, the NAC welcomes back Matt Anderson in a Christmas show called *The Snowman's Ball*. The New Brunswick born guitarist made his debut on the NAC stage with Stuart Maclean's Vinyl Café in 2009.

JW Jones

On December 16, Centrepointe Theatre (101 Centrepointe Drive) features a concert with Ottawa blues guitarist JW Jones & Friends.

Kellylee Evans

On December 18, the Shenkman Arts Centre (245 Centrum Boulevard) welcomes Ottawa's own Kellylee Evans in her Christmas show, *Winter Song*, featuring a mix of holiday classics and original songs.

Nomadland

Frances McDormand plays the lead role in this award-winning film from 2020. It will screen at the By-Towne Cinema (325 Rideau), from November 21 to 24.

Nomadland portrays the lifestyle of The Nomads, an underclass of seniors who live in their recreational vehicles (RVs). They eke out an existence at a variety of casual jobs: in an Amazon warehouse or as park rangers. Fern (played by McDormand) is typical. When she lost her husband, she lost her home in Empire, Nevada, and was "houseless" – not homeless.

The script is based on a book of the same name by Jessica Bruder.

I found McDormand's

performance in *Nomadland* incredible. The camera work by Joshua James Richard is also remarkable.

Nomadland won the Academy Award for best film in 2021. Its director, Chloé Zhao, won the Academy Award for best director, and McDormand also won the award for best actress in a leading role. The running time is 1h47m.

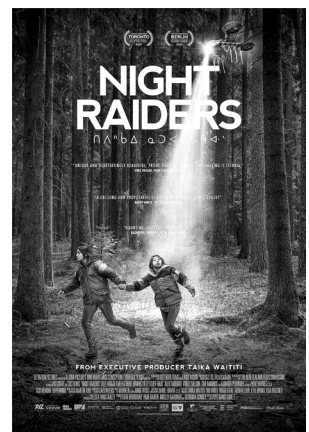
Night Raiders

Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers stars in an extraordinary science fiction feature-length film, currently screening at the ByTowne until Nov. 13.

Tailfeathers plays the role of Niska, the mother of an eleven-year-old girl. The film opens as the duo abandon their survival existence and move to the city. The new world is a dystopian post-war existence, where drones and viruses control the population.

Niska and Waseese (Brooklyn Letexier-Hart) lead an aboriginal rebellion against a militaristic society bent on population control and limits on personal freedoms.

Night Raiders premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) in September, where its director, Danis Goulet, won the Emerging Talent Award. The film is in English, with some dialogue in Cree with English subtitles. The running time is 1h37m.



National Gallery of Canada

On October 31, *The Centretown BUZZ* had an opportunity to preview three exhibitions at the gallery (380 Sussex).



Muhammad Ali, 1970 by Yousuf Karsh MUSÉE DES BEAUX-ARTS DE MONTRÉAL

The New Generation Photo Awards are on display until December 5. *The Sobey Art Award* nominees are on offer until February 20.

100 Years of Documentation Files offers highlights from the Library and Archives Canada's extensive collection about artists and leading Canadians like A. Y. Jackson, Frederick Banting, Joe Fafard, and Jean-Paul Riopelle, as well as international artists like Yoko Ono.

Holocaust Education Month

November is Holocaust Education Month. The Centre for Holocaust Education and Scholarship (CHES) is offering a virtual talk with Helena Epstein on November 14. More info and registration are at chesatottawa.ca

In 2019, I was one of over 600 who heard leading Holocaust Scholar Deborah Lipstadt speak in Ottawa. I was delighted to discover highlights of Lipstadt's presentation available online at newsroom.carleton.ca/story/deborah-lipstadt-tackles-holocaust-deniers/

Yousuf Karsh Portraits in Montreal

Yousuf Karsh was perhaps the world's most important portrait photographer.

[A collection of 111 of his portraits is now on display](http://www.yousufkarsh.com) at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (1380 Sherbrooke) until January 30.

The show opens with the

most iconic image of Winston Churchill from 1941. The British Prime Minister arrived in Ottawa at the invitation of Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson. He famously scowled to Pearson, "Why wasn't I told about this?"

The exhibition fills three rooms in the Jean-Noël Desmarais Pavilion. I was transfixed by the incredible photos he captured of the likes of Ingrid Bergman, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, and Nelson Mandela. What is less well known about Karsh is that his studio was located at the Chateau Laurier in Ottawa.

My visit to the museum also took in Ragnar Kjartansson's immersive 360-degree film and musical experience. Kjartansson is a renowned Icelandic artist and film director. I also enjoyed the museum's excellent permanent collection of European art.

Immersive Monet in Toronto

The immersive art exhibition at the Toronto Convention Centre (255 Front Street) has been extended to February 6, 2022. Tickets and information are available at monettoronto.com/

Tony Wohlfarth is an Ottawa-based freelance film, and entertainment writer. Last month, he was a guest of the NGC and the MFA.

He is currently in Amsterdam, covering the International Documentary Film Festival.

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Plant Pool Rec Assn is on its game!

Lorrie Marlow

Over the past two years, the Plant Pool Recreation Association (PPRA) has been on its game. It has been working to provide recreation programs and advocating for more programs and greenspace in this increasingly developed area.

In 2019, PPRA operated the Plouffe Park skating rinks behind the Plant Recreation Centre, and they were well used. PPRA also increased hiring to four students for its Plouffe Park Summer Program to provide free recreational activities for 15 to 20 youth a day. It also dispersed funds from the Elisabeth Arnold Plant Pool Fund for 1500 swim vouchers to five organizations to distribute to children for free swims and funded swim lessons for Cambridge Street and St. Anthony's schools. The PPRA Women Alive program provided \$600 for women on limited means to participate in fitness programs at Plant Pool.

Its National Health and Fitness Day in June was expanded to include a basketball tournament and yoga in the park. Its free drop-in soccer and basketball programs were a success due to good coaches and the use of local school gyms. The annual PPRA Dessert Party, with the Parkdale Orchestra providing music, raised \$2,400 for its recreation programs. And, annually, PPRA board members tend the gardens outside the recreation centre.

The state of emergency declared in 2020 shut down all PPRA soccer and basketball programs. Swim vouchers and Women Alive gym memberships went unused until July 1, when the centre reopened with limited hours and attendance.

Plouffe Park skating rinks were already flooded and operating when the lockdown occurred. But PPRA was not allowed to open up the skate room or provide its free skate equipment. However, the amazing rink manager

and the new snow blower kept the ice fast and clean. The rinks were packed with skaters, while PPRA volunteers kept a close eye on the number of skaters to ensure social distancing.

Thanks to grants and ideas from the TD Park People organization, PPRA pivoted to free, outdoor events such as the Plouffe-Dalhousie Nature Walk in July and the Community Walking Challenge in October. PPRA also stepped up its online presence in order to reach residents who were eager for outdoor recreation activities. The Plouffe Park Summer Program ran outdoors for six weeks with restrictions and strict safety protocols without incident. Volunteers continued to maintain the gardens outside the centre.

In 2021, PPRA qualified for funding from the Federal Healthy Communities Initiative. The funds will be used to install a shade sail at Plouffe Park for the new seniors' outdoor recreation program. While PPRA continues to pursue permits for permanent installation, it also purchased two tent canopies to shelter its youth and seniors programs.

PPRA held an event to recognize the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Somerset West Community Health Centre provided an Orange Shirt story walk. The Odawa Friendship Centre joined us with singing, drumming and personal reflections on residential school experiences. The focus was on increased understanding through personal interactions.

On October 30, PPRA offered a Halloween event thanks to volunteers and determined children who wanted to show off their costumes!

PPRA has also qualified for the Canadian Tire JumpStart Sport Relief Fund to provide sports for youth and children. The struggle now is to find gym space as school boards have closed gyms to public use. However, PPRA has secured the gym at the Hintonburg



The four students who ran the Plouffe Park summer program. SUZANNE NASH AND LORRIE MARLOW/PPRA

Community Centre in January for its youth basketball program on Wednesday evenings.

This year, PPRA board members advocated to protect existing recreation facilities such as Tom Brown Arena and to rehabilitate the Plouffe Park basketball court and soccer fields. The association continues to participate in the consultation process for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the Corso Italia Station Secondary Plan.

The COVID-19 state of emergency identified, with stunning clarity, the need to fiercely protect what little greenspace our community has and to fight for more space. With intense housing development, the need

for more recreation facilities is obvious as the Plant Recreation Centre is already at capacity. PPRA will be at the table providing written submissions to every development and planning consultation to ensure greenspace and recreational needs are met for present and future residents.

Want to get in the game? PPRA is seeking board members and volunteers with passion and energy to be community advocates. You can also attend the PPRA AGM on December 7 at 7 p.m. at the centre. Proof of vaccination required to enter the building. Please contact us at: plantpoolrecreationassociation@gmail.com or visit plantpool.org.

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