

Mika Weaver

Mika Weaver has steered Singing Pebble Books for decades, sometimes through bumpy waters. But her business has thrived during the pandemic.

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The Ottawa Occupation

Old Ottawa East residents share their views and photos of the Ottawa occupation.

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We review the Gray Jay Hospitality

Our intrepid restaurant reviewer steps out for a gastronomic smorgasbord at Old Ottawa East's new destination eatery.

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Three-week stand-off mercifully ends...

The trucker convoy - no winners in Ottawa's ugly occupation



JOHN DANCE PHOTO

New census data reveals...

Old Ottawa East's five year population growth dramatically exceeds neighbouring communities

JOHN DANCE

Recently released census data show that over the 2016-2021 period Old Ottawa East's population grew five times faster than the Glebe's and 10 times faster than Old Ottawa South's.

Over the five years, Old Ottawa East (OOE) grew by 1,092 people, almost 15 percent, to a total of 8,580. The Glebe, which remains the largest of the three communities, grew 2.8 percent for a new population of 11,922 according to the 2021 census. Not included in the Glebe population is any of the "Glebe Annex - Little Italy" census tract which now has a population of 4,835, with LRT-station-driven growth of 22 percent



over the last half decade. Old Ottawa South (OOS) grew by 1.5 percent and had 6,433 residents according to the census.

Canada as a whole grew by 5.2 percent, and Ottawa had five-year population

growth of 8.9 percent.

OOE's growth was concentrated in its northern part and was driven by the new Corners on Main and Greystone Village developments. "Census tract 15," which covers this area, saw growth of 20.9 percent while census tract 16 - which is evenly split between OOS and OOE - grew by just 0.4 percent.

Although OOE's growth is notable, many other Ottawa communities grew much faster. Indeed six communities, mostly in the south, more than doubled their population.

Additional detailed demographic

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Ottawa's occupational hazard

For three nerve-wracking weeks in February, Ottawa's downtown core was paralyzed by hundreds of truckers and other COVID-restriction protesters who encamped on our streets. Their immobilized trucks and cars gridlocked daily life and commerce in the downtown area until police finally mobilized to break up the protest.

JOHN DANCE PHOTOS



The protest began peacefully and attracted a myriad of participants espousing many and varied causes. However, downtown residents quickly tired of incessant truck and car horns blaring, acts of verbal and physical intimidation against mask-wearers and failure by local government and police to deal with increasingly brazen acts of criminal conduct. While the occupied zone was packed with protesters waving Canadian flags, noticeably absent throughout the entire ordeal was any evidence of national unity.



Parenting 101

Young student 'moms' at Immaculata High learn that raising healthy kids is not child's play

LORI GANDY

Immaculata High School teacher Jillian Budgell says she has the best job in the school because she teaches the fun courses: theatre, cooking/hospitality and the Parenting course. She especially loves teaching the Raising Healthy Children unit of the latter, which includes a hands-on newborn care-giving experience.

Students 'check out' a RealCare Baby 3 Infant Simulator for 24 hours. These RealityWorks 'babies' have wireless programming to track and report on baby-care behaviours. The babies look like real newborns and they 'cry' when they need to be fed, burped, rocked or changed.

How it works

The babies come with security ID tags, each with a serial number that Budgell programs to a specific baby. Students wear a hospital bracelet with a tag programmed to their baby and they can't take it off. Every time the baby fusses, students must tap their wrist tag to one of the baby's sensors; a chime sounds, indicating the system recognizes the parent is present.

"If students don't scan the tag, nothing works," says Budgell. "So they can't give baby to a parent while they go to the mall."

As Budgell explains: "When baby needs something, it starts to fuss, and the noise gets progressively louder. The student has two minutes to scan their tag and respond to the baby's need. Otherwise a 'miss' will be recorded. The baby will keep crying until the student figures out what the baby needs."

Feeding, burping and changing

Each baby comes with a bottle with a tiny sensor. As soon as the bottle is near the baby's face, the crying will switch to a sucking sound. Feeding can take anywhere from a few minutes to up to 30 minutes and if the student stops too soon, the baby will start fussing.

After feeding, burping might be required.



LORI GANDY PHOTO

Sometimes baby needs to be rocked. Students must handle the baby with care at all times as there's a motion sensor inside the baby. There's also a sensor to track if the student keeps the neck supported. If they mishandle the baby, it starts to scream. If feeding wasn't the correct response, the baby will keep crying. Each baby also has two diapers with colour-coded tags. Students must switch the baby's diaper to satisfy the diaper-change requirement.

The student experience

"Students are really excited when they get the babies," says Budgell. "But the next day when they bring them back, they are like: 'Take it!'"

Amber-Rose Erysthee and Isabella Schoorl completed their stints as new moms in March. Both had previous

experience with babies/children: Erysthee helped with a younger sister; Schoorl has been babysitting for the past 7 years. But they were both surprised at the challenges they faced as new moms.

Schoorl says of her experience with her baby, Opal: "I really enjoyed the experience of being a parent for a little bit," she says. "Some things, I expected. I knew she was going to cry. But there was definitely anxiety at times when she was screaming, and I didn't know what she wanted. It was so loud, so continuous."

As Erysthee says of caring for baby Hakim, "I thought it was going to be easy, that I could handle it." She was surprised and proud about how she managed. "It was difficult, but I stayed calm under the pressure. When he started crying, I relaxed, told myself to just breath. I was really good, surprisingly."

The truth about parenting shocked them: "Oh my gosh!" says Erysthee. "It's very time-consuming and you have to set your life around the baby. You can't think about yourself anymore. I mean, it's yours. You cannot just say 'I'll take care of you later.' You have to do it right now because they're depending on you. I learned a lot about myself too."

Schoorl agrees: "There's so much more responsibility than I've ever imagined. I just barely handled this 24-hour shift." Schoorl spoke about the toll it took on her: "By the end of the day I was trying to get things done, and I went to see my girlfriend after school and I just wanted to hang out with her, but the baby needed something. Then I went home and wanted to make something



LORI GANDY PHOTO

ABOVE: Jillian Budgell, who teaches the Parenting course at Immaculata, is pictured here with one of her 'babies'; **LEFT:** Isabella Schoorl (left) with Opal; Amber-Rose Erysthee (right) with Hakim; **BELOW LEFT:** The five babies - three boys and two girls, are snuggled in the suitcase where they are stored and recharged.

to eat but I couldn't because the baby needed something."

When asked about the biggest challenge of caring for a newborn, there was complete agreement.

"Sleeping at night," says Schoorl. "I was about to go to sleep when the baby started screaming, so I got up and fed her. Then she woke up at 2am and 4am and 6 am. It was a continuous thing. In the morning, I felt really drained and exhausted."

"Definitely sleeping," says Erysthee. "Because you are tired and have to take care of him as well. I wanted to sleep, and I was, like, oh my gosh."

Erysthee and Schoorl both said they appreciate their parents more after this experience.

Schoorl laughs: "They tell me stories about how I was such a good kid. But I'm thinking there were probably times when they just wanted to put me somewhere else."

Erysthee agrees. "Yes, oh my gosh, yes. My mom has three kids and I'm like, how do you do it?"

Important lessons learned that will serve them well in the future. Schoorl is planning a career in Early Childhood Education. Erysthee wants to study social work and develop a business to support pregnant women who are single and alone.

The Mainstreeter wishes them both much success in their future endeavours.



JILLIAN BUDGELL PHOTO

SHARING LUNCH WITH... MIKA WEAVER

“The cornerstone of my business is happy customers...”

Thirty years ago, Mika Weaver finished university and started working full-time at Singing Pebble Books. She's still there. Theresa Wallace spoke to her about what it's been like to run an independent bookstore for three decades. She picked up some reading tips and advice on running a small business along the way.

In this Sharing Lunch With interview with the owner of Single Pebble Books, Mika Weaver explains that as for many other independent bookstores, the pandemic has helped to boost community support of her business, even as the business has helped to support the community in turn.

Q. You have been working fulltime at Singing Pebbles since you graduated from university 30 years ago, and you took over the store in 1995. How did you become a bookstore owner?

A. I started working on this block when I was 14 years old in 1983. I worked at The Wheat Germ, the health food store where my mother was manager. When I was 18, she started The Green Door and Singing Pebble Books and I worked at those places too. In my family, our family businesses have always been exactly that—all the family works in the family business. I was at McGill University, and I would come home because the bookstore needed someone to take care of it and my mom was overwhelmed taking care of the restaurant. I was the first-ever cashier of the Green Door; I used to take the bus from McGill on Friday afternoons and arrive for the Friday night dinner shift, work all day Saturday, then half a day on

Sunday, then bus back to Montreal on Sunday nights. I came back to Ottawa in January of 1992, when I was 22, and that is when I started working fulltime at Singing Pebble Books. I took over the store from my mom in 1995 when I was 25.

Q. Mika, there's a sense that independent bookstores have thrived during the pandemic. What do you think?

A. The news story of independents having their day in the sun has to be unpacked a bit. There has been a huge increase in the community supporting our store and vice versa. We have been so happy to have lots of customers coming in. The good news is we are not going out of business, but that doesn't mean suddenly we can open 10 franchises. It is success, for sure, but success relative to what the past two decades of declining sales have been like for independent bookstores.

Q. You were quoted in a CBC News article saying that in the first pandemic shutdown, you lost sleep over how you were going to pay for 300 puzzles you'd ordered. But soon they were flying off the shelves. Why puzzles?

A. I am a puzzler and I have a theory about that. With the stress and the anxiety of the pandemic, there is something soothing for the mind and body in puzzling. You know by the picture on the box what it is going to look like, but you have to puzzle through it, and at the end you have a sense of completion. You get to do this work, and you know how it is going to end up, and there is a calmness to it.

Q. You own a successful retail business. You have three kids. How did you manage when you, your business and your children were all very young?

A. I had my first child in 1997 and I made it fit together with a lot of help from my support system. The first house



Singing Pebbles Books owner, Mika Weaver is pictured here - not surprisingly with an armful of books - at the entrance of her much-beloved bookstore at 206 Main Street.

I bought was in the neighbourhood on Simcoe; I remember walking with my few-month-old baby in the 1998 ice storm from the bookstore to my home and worrying about everything and thinking the storm looked pretty bad. But my staff have been a huge part of me being able to parent my kids and being able to survive as a business, and my mother helped me a lot with babysitting. I went back to work pretty quickly after giving birth to each of my three children, but I did not work as many hours, and I could do some of my work at home. Having my own business made it easier to take care of the kids because I could fit my schedule around them. On the down

“The collective bookselling experience of Singing Pebble Books staff verges on one hundred years.” because someone here thinks it is really good.”

side, I do not know what it is like to have paid maternity leave and benefits.

Q. You keep your staff for a long time. Has that been a cornerstone of your success?

A. Yes, definitely. The cornerstone of my business is happy customers, but part of that is happy staff. Moira MacKinnon worked here for 20 years until she retired and moved to Prince Edward Island. Prior to working with us, Laura Rayner had her own bookstore, Mother Tongue Books, and before that she worked at the women's bookstore on Elgin Street. We

have Moira's sister, Anne MacKinnon Diamond; she has been working in bookstores for decades. The collective bookselling experience of Singing Pebble Books staff verges on one hundred years.

Q. Is Singing Pebble Books a spiritual bookstore?

A. Around the time I took over ownership of the store, Chapters moved to Ottawa. There were 24 independent bookstores in Ottawa then and it was important to distinguish your area of specialty. At that time there was Ampersand, a children's bookstore. There was Food for Thought, a cookbook bookstore. And there was Singing Pebble Books, specializing as a mind, body, spirit store. If you wanted books about personal development, yoga, philosophy, psychology, you came to us. Now almost three decades later, there are four independent bookstores in Ottawa, and we have, all of us, become more general bookstores with curated content. So we have the best of the best. We have some fiction, we have Canada Reads, the latest cookbooks, the latest Margaret MacMillan history.

Q. So you can order in any book a customer wants?

A. If a book is in print, we can get it. What is important to me is happy customers and not looking for the bottom line every day. Sometimes people call and say, “I don't want to bother you, but I am looking for this book.” It is not a bother. We are the place to ask. If something is out of print and absolutely unavailable, we won't be able to help, but that rarely

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...OWNER OF SINGING PEBBLE BOOKS

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happens. We have found some obscure titles and it's all in a day's work. We will call you as soon as your book is here. Another thing we can help with is urgent requests. If someone needs a book by tomorrow and we do not have it, we can check with all the other independents in town and locate it for the customer. If someone is urgently looking for a certain book and they need it by tomorrow for their Winnipeg granddaughter's birthday, for example, I can go on my software system called Book Manager, which is located in Kelowna. I can see independent bookstores all over the country and I can find the book in Winnipeg and give that information to the customer. And, of course, customers can always order books online from us. Orders over \$100 are shipped free all over the country.

Q. The independents that are left, do you have a connection with them?

A. I am friends with Lisa Greaves from Octopus Books. If she is out of a book, she will give me a call. Jim Sherman from Perfect Books will call. We have a back and forth. Hilary Porter, the manager of Books on Beechwood, worked here for about a year. Another one of my employees worked at Octopus during the pandemic because Lisa had a backlog of orders. There is a huge conviviality amongst all the independent bookstores in Ottawa.

Q. What's the most memorable book you have sold?

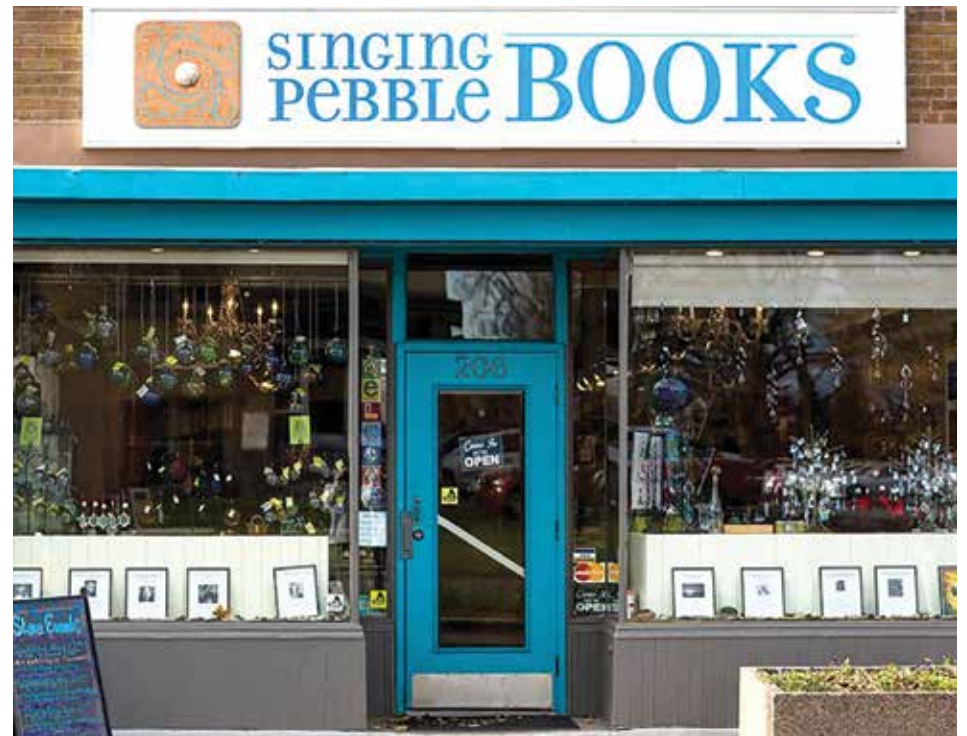
A. My father was a huge book collector and had a massive personal library. After

he died, some of his collection was passed on to me. I kept some things, and placed others for sale on AbeBooks, a network of used and out-of-print booksellers. One of them was a big book called *Anthropologia Nova* published in 1728. We thought for sure someone in Europe would buy it. One day Tiernan, my eldest son, who is now 24, was working in the store alone. A person came in looking for this particular book. It was not on our shelves upstairs. It was in the basement and Tiernan had to go down and root around. He was able to find the book and the person purchased it on the spot for \$500. I still do not know who bought it, or how they knew it was in our store.

"We don't get paid to promote anything...if we are saying it is good and we are promoting it, it is because someone here thinks it is really good."

Q. What advice do you have for people who want to open a bookstore or own their own business?

A. When you have children, when can you say you have done enough, and so you have nothing left to do? And when do you stop worrying about them? It is a very similar experience having your own business. When would you have done enough tidying, choosing, creating, displaying, reorganizing, hiring just the



SUPPLIED PHOTO

right employee, connecting with your customers, doing social media, checking your books, placing your orders? It could take up all the time you have if you want it to. So, pace yourself.

Q. If you could have any three authors in your bookstore for a book reading, who would you invite?

A. I would invite Maya Angelou, author of *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings*. Her books are incredible literary works of art and deeply meaningful. I am showing my age here—I'm 52—but I would also love to have Gloria Steinem at the store. These are people with vibrant personalities, and I imagine meeting them in person would be really something. Oh, and the Dalai Lama for good measure. Definitely.

Q. What is your biggest worry?

A. The biggest worry is the unknown. Over the course of my many years here, before I knew there was going to be a bus strike, I didn't know I should worry about a bus strike. Then the bus strike happened, and all of a sudden employees could not get to work, and business was significantly affected. In 2008, I did not know to worry about a global financial crisis. I did not know to worry about the rise of online booksellers and could never even have imagined how it would affect my business and how it did so drastically and so consistently for so long. I did not know to worry about Main Street construction until I heard it was going to be happening and then when it did people couldn't physically get to my store. Part of the reason I went to Saint Paul University in 2014 and took a Masters degree in counselling and spirituality was because I thought the Main Street construction was going to be the downfall of my store and I needed to be ready. But I am still here. I did stop counselling when the pandemic started because things got busier at the store, and I also had my own

family to take care of. My youngest child was only 10 when the pandemic struck. But just to reiterate, having your own business is conducive to having a family, because when you work for yourself, you have a great amount of flexibility to deal with whatever day-to-day things come up at work, at home, and in the world, including a pandemic.

Q. What are you reading right now?

A. *The Push* by Ashley Audrain. I am also reading *State of Terror*. And *The School for Good Mothers* by Jessamine Chan, which is a bit like *The Handmaid's Tale* meets *Klara and the Sun*, a novel by Kazuo Ishiguro.

Q. Who is your favourite author who also owns a bookstore?

A. Ann Patchett, and right now I am reading her book *These Precious Days*. On my list of books to read is Louise Erdrich's *The Sentence*; I have heard good things about this novel and maybe Erdrich will become my next favourite author who owns a bookstore.

Q. Can you explain two benefits of shopping at your store?

A. Compared to other loyalty programs, our frequent buyer points is a very generous system. It is the equivalent of me giving away between \$30,000 and \$50,000 per year. We are very happy to share with our customers that they have, for example, \$10 to spend next time they are in the store. Another benefit is that when you shop with us, you know something is not in our window or coming up on the first page of our website because we have been paid by a marketing company or a publishing company to push that product. We don't get paid to promote anything. That's what we mean by curated: if we are saying it is good and we are promoting it, it is because someone here thinks it is really good.



THERESA WALLACE PHOTOS

Mika Weaver with her employee Laura Rayner, who also previously owned a bookstore.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Rave reviews for Saint Paul University

I am a graduate of the theology faculty at Saint Paul University. I was interested therefore to read just now your interview with the Rector, Mme. Chantal Beauvais, in the February issue of your newspaper. It is excellent! Thank you for the update.

I have watched at more of a distance, but it confirms my impression that Mme. Beauvais and her colleagues have done a fabulous job of bringing even greater value to this wonderful university.

Louise Beggs

Freedom convoy closures highlight OOE traffic considerations

The three week closure of Colonel By Drive and Queen Elizabeth Drive due to the truckers visit to Ottawa has highlighted the very good reasons why these roads should remain open.

Old Ottawa East has only two north/south arteries for traffic. One is Main Street, through Greenfield Avenue to King Edward Avenue. The other is Colonel By Drive. The closure of Colonel By has caused a dramatic increase of traffic along Main Street and has been particularly disruptive and unpleasant along residential Greenfield.

The population of Old Ottawa East has increased and will continue to do so with the completion of the 1000+ resident Greystone development and the effects of proposed densification of our community. As we enter the post COVID period, traffic through Old Ottawa East can be expected to increase as many workers who reside outside of our community return to downtown offices. Private vehicles, whether they are gasoline or electric, are not going to go away. Their owners, you and I, require easy and efficient access in and out of our community. Any closure of Colonel By Drive and, to a lesser degree, Queen Elizabeth Drive severely hampers access and forces more traffic down the Main/Greenfield corridor.

For these reasons and others, Colonel By Drive and Queen Elizabeth Drive should remain open to vehicular traffic except for temporary closures for traditional events such as marathons and summer Sunday morning cycling. Our community should oppose any permanent closures.

Jim Strang
22 Kings Landing Pvt.

The Ottawa Occupation was fueled by misinformation and ignorance

When I was a child there was a game we would play at parties called Broken Telephone. About 15 kids would sit in a circle, and the first person in the circle would whisper a sentence to the next person. That person would then say what she or he thought they heard until all 15 people had had the same experience of repeating the sentence. When the 15th person was asked to repeat the sentence, it was always far different from the original.

With the advent of social media, this game is now being played out in society at lightning speed with disturbing results. The three-week occupation of downtown Ottawa is a case in point. Misinformation and ignorance foster incredible beliefs. Some participants in the occupation thought that the United States military would come to rescue them. Others believed letters to the Governor General could convince her to dissolve the government. And several believed they had First Amendment rights from the American Constitution.



These positions are the result of the toxic mixture of misinformation and ignorance nourished and amplified by social media. They are worrisome signs that our cherished democracy is in jeopardy. Old Ottawa East (OOE) is one small cog in a large Canadian democratic wheel that needs truth, knowledge and facts for it to turn freely. Using the uncontrolled internet for our information is fraught with risk. Anyone today can switch on their camera and microphone and spread confusion and lies at breakneck speed. I have listened to some of these "authorities" and done my own research to investigate their credentials. In most cases, these people have no substantiating knowledge or experience to backstop their fanciful claims. To keep the wheel of democracy turning freely, all of us must seek to get our information from accredited sources that use fact-checking as a foundation for their public communication.

Furthermore, no democratic institution can work well if the citizens do not engage with our elected officials whom we have voted into office to represent our values and needs. Over the last few years I have become more involved at the local level with my elected Councilor. This has proven to be a highly rewarding experience, and I encourage all OOE residents to do likewise.

Some years ago my MP informed me that one letter written to a politician represents 1000 people who share the same view but did not write. The occupation will have lasting effects on Ottawa that all of us – citizens and politicians – desperately need to address. Please take 15 minutes to share your thoughts with your elected officials. It could help prevent weeks of upset. Rest assured that there will be more dangerous games of Broken Telephone played in future.

Peter Croal
Elliot Avenue

THE MAINSTREETER

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High school volunteers should submit papers for signature to Daniel Racicot.

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Community Police (for non-emergency concerns): 613-236-1222 x5287 or huntmr@ottawapolice.ca

Old Town Hall: 613.627.0062

OPINION

The Battle of Billings Bridge

Views from the front lines of the anti-convoy protest

ROBIN LECKIE

Although I wasn't directly bothered by the congestion and noise and mess in my Rideau Gardens neighbourhood, I could feel the tension and stress in my City due to the "occupation" by the so-called trucker convoy. The morning of February 13th, I saw a tweet from Joel Harden (MLA, Ottawa Centre), inviting people to join two anti-convoy protests at Bronson Avenue and at Riverside Drive, near Billings Bridge Shopping Centre. I walked to Riverside and found a group of about 30 people blocking a line of 35 or so trucks and cars, all of them with flags and signs supporting the convoy.

The police officer then asked: "So, how does this end?", and I thought to myself: "that's your problem".

Most people milled around in front of the line of vehicles, while some walked slowly by the cars and trucks. Soon after I arrived, a police liaison officer told the crowd that the convoy truckers had agreed to leave and travel away from downtown, where they would regroup! This was not well accepted by the crowd. The police officer then asked: "So, how does this end?" and I thought to myself: "that's your problem." No one knew the answer to his question, but the truckers' offer was not accepted, and we all stayed where we were.

More and more people joined us, and a large "End the Occupation" sign was held aloft at the end of Riverside, facing Bank Street. Joel Harden led some supportive chants and discussion circles, in which we were asked what we all wanted from this protest. In my own discussions



JEFF SUTTON PHOTO

Many local residents joined with other Ottawans along Riverside Drive on February 13th in the anti-convey protest against the three week-long occupation of our City by groups opposed to COVID restrictions.

with participants, I heard frustration with the lawlessness, the noise, and the lack of action by police, as well as a sense of helplessness.

"At the protest, I never said anything to any of them, but I felt angry and frustrated. When I heard, later, that they had finally left, after having to remove all convoy paraphernalia and turning over their fuel supplies, I was relieved and felt empowered."

After two hours, I went home to warm up and came back a couple of hours later. Now, there was a much larger crowd, and many people were walking alongside the vehicles. The convoy truck and car drivers looked down at their phones or stared uneasily straight ahead. One driver had gotten out of his

car and was talking to a group of protestors - brave guy, I thought. In one car, the young woman sat and smiled pleasantly. In the truck at the end of the line, the passenger was a young boy, scampering around the truck; the driver seemed frustrated, maybe a little angry. My only regret: I should have asked the father of that little boy if his son needed some water or something to eat.

At the protest, I never said anything to any of them, but I felt angry and frustrated. When I heard, later, that they had finally left, after having to remove all convoy paraphernalia and turning over their fuel supplies, I was relieved and felt empowered. I later wondered if our protest did, in some way, add impetus to the growing sentiment that the government needed to do something to end the occupation before citizens took matters into their own hands; I guess I'll never know.

Robin Leckie is a McNaughton Street resident who joined others from Old Ottawa East on February 13th to protest the truckers' convoy "occupation."

Federal election polling results

Old Ottawa East voting patterns differ from city-wide balloting trends

JOHN DANCE

So we all know that the Liberals formed a minority government last September and Yasir Naqvi was elected as the new Liberal Member of Parliament for Ottawa Centre. And we know he bested his rivals by a considerable margin. But now that the detailed poll-by-poll results are available from Elections Canada, it's clear that within Old Ottawa East (OOE) there were some notable variations in voting patterns.

Overall, OOE residents gave a larger margin of support to Naqvi than to his opponents, relative to all electors in Ottawa Centre. With 47 percent of the vote, Naqvi received two percent more votes in OOE than he did elsewhere. The Ottawa Centre riding is large, bounded by the Rideau Canal and Rideau River on the east but running beyond Baseline Road to the south and all the way west to Maitland Avenue. OOE votes constituted only six percent of the total cast in Ottawa Centre.

Conservative candidate Carol Clemenhausen received almost one percent more votes in OOE than riding-wide and the NDP's Angela MacEwen, who finished second, had a correspondingly lesser share. The Green Party's Angela Keller-Herzog had about the same share in OOE as in the whole riding while the People's Party's Regina Watteel had slightly more.

Greater variations are apparent among the various polling stations within OOE. Basically, there were four groupings of polls: those in each of the Lees apartments; those living north of Hazel Street and in Greystone Village who voted at the Church of the Ascension and at Canadian Martyrs; those living in the southern area who voted at Saint Paul University; and those who voted in advance polls.

The NDP was the dominant party for the residents of the Lees apartments with 40 percent of the vote compared to 35 percent for the Liberals. The People's Party did better there than elsewhere in OOE (3.3. percent vs 2.4 percent) while the Greens did a little worse.

Another notable variation is that at the church polls, the Conservatives pulled in

about four percent more votes than their overall OOE share, while the Liberals were down about the same amount.

The poll for residents of Greystone Village and Corners on Main resulted in Naqvi doing slightly better than elsewhere in OOE, but the Conservative and NDP candidates each received 22 percent of votes cast. Keller-Herzog did better in this poll than she did elsewhere.

In OOE, about 40 percent of votes were cast at the advance polls, a percentage higher than in previous elections. According to CTV, nationally there was an increased advanced poll usage of 18.5 percent compared to the 2019 election and a 57 percent increase compared to the 2015 election. This stemmed from the provision of additional advance polls and the availability of mail ballots.

The Liberals did particularly well in the two advance polls which drew in people from throughout OOE. With about 52 percent of votes, the Liberals had five percent more than their overall OOE share. In this case the Liberals' added share reflected the NDP's lost share.

This quick analysis shows some interesting differences in OOE voting patterns but what's not clear is what drives these differences. It appears that apartment dwellers may have strong NDP sympathies while new development residents may be more supportive of Conservative policies or its candidate. The impact of growing advance poll voting and how campaigns need to adapt to this trend are matters that have not been well studied. Elections Canada implemented additional advance voting options to increase the ease of voting and to increase overall turnout.



The detailed poll results of last fall's federal election reveal varied voting patterns in different sections of Old Ottawa East. The Lees apartment buildings each had a separate poll; polls 14-18 were located at The Church of the Ascension and Canadian Martyrs; and the remaining polls, including the two advance polls 613 and 614, were at Saint Paul University.

MAP: ELECTIONS CANADA

City ignores tree request

MAINSTREETER STAFF

Ottawa City Council has ignored the Old Ottawa East Community Association's (OOECA) request that developers not merely protect trees but also plant and maintain new ones to enhance the community's "tree canopy."

The tree provisions of the City's new "high performance development standards," described as "a key tool to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Ottawa's buildings and increase our climate resiliency," were not changed by the City's planning committee in March despite OOECA and other community groups, including Community Associations for Environmental Sustainability, making the case that more canopy trees are a key means of addressing climate change.

The City's new standards pertaining to trees are inferior to those of Toronto. For instance, Toronto requires that

developers of larger projects provide a watering and maintenance program for four years, whereas in Ottawa, it's just two years.

OOECA recommended that developers be required to plant a number of trees proportional to the building lot size, but the new standard makes no provision for the number of trees that are required, only that there be "high-quality soil sufficient to support canopy cover."

One glimmer of hope at the City's March planning committee meeting was the declaration by Steve Willis, the City's General Manager of Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development, that the new zoning bylaw implementing the Official Plan should focus on "removing barriers to modest intensification while retaining qualities people value such as room for trees, attractive streetscapes and compatible building forms."

Old Ottawa East's population grows to 8,580

Continued from Page 1

information on OOE and other communities will be available next year through the Ottawa Neighbourhood Study run by the University of Ottawa. Also, the Ottawa Neighbourhood Equity Index of the Social Planning Council of

Canada is a treasure-trove of valuable data on Ottawa's communities.

The equity index is a tool to assess and compare "unnecessary and unfair differences at a neighbourhood level on factors impacting wellbeing." On a scale of 1 to 196, with 1 being the most inequitable neighbourhood, the northern

part of OOE ranks 90 while the southern part is 190.

The specific neighbourhoods of the Glebe and OOS also rank in the top 10 percent on the equity index with the exception of Glebe Annex- Little Italy which is ranked 70.

What's going on?

The lights are still out on Colonel By Drive

MAINSTREETER STAFF

In the February issue of *The Mainstreeter* we reported that, according to the National Capital Commission (NCC), the City of Ottawa is responsible for fixing the broken streetlights along Colonel By Drive north of Clegg Street. So, *The Mainstreeter* followed up with the City to find out what's going on, and it's not good news, although Councillor Shawn Menard is pressing for resolution of the longstanding problem.

"City staff have reviewed the lighting system along the Rideau Canal corridor and are considering various options for repairing the lights that are currently not working," Chris Brinkmann, the City's Manager of Traffic Operations, responded to *The Mainstreeter*.

That cryptic and not particularly informative response does not sit well with residents who have put up with a dark parkway for more than two years.

"It is very dangerous, and it has been shocking to all of us that we've been left in the dark for so many months," Tanis Browning-Shelp posted on the OOE Grapevine Facebook site. She says runners are choosing to run on the Colonel By roadway and "it is a disaster waiting to happen. They are NOT visible up there either and traffic often moves swiftly at dusk with little to no monitoring."

"These lights need to be working for safety and security purposes. I find the response, well...unresponsive," noted Patti Burnett.

"[The City's] lack of progress to deal with this is ridiculous; but not surprising,"

says Sherri Macki. "Looking at 'various options' is lip service to appease us. I'm curious to know what 'options' they're looking at - to fix the existing poles or replace them? And to know what timeline that is. It's time they got a move on them for the safety of our community."

"It's a bloody danger when biking or running particularly and they have been out way too long," commented Elina Hill Schofield.

"At what point does it become a priority? When someone is hurt?" asks Alicia Beazley. "They need to do some serious risk assessment- which we know the city doesn't seem very capable of."

Councillor Shawn Menard has been trying to prod the City into action on the lights for more than two years and acknowledges that, "It gets very dark along the canal in certain sections, and it's a concerning safety issue."

"Our maintenance contractor has made several visits to the street lights to replace lamps, however there is a design flaw in the NCC Acorn fixtures which allows rain water to seep into the glass," Menard explains. "This causes premature lamp failures as well as failure of the entire fixture. Additionally, there are portions of the underground cable that provides power to the street lights which has failed. The City has been working with the NCC to source replacement fixtures."

Councillor Menard has requested that NCC and City staff implement a temporary and permanent solution to the problems. "This has been going on for far too long and needs resolution," says Menard.



JOHN DANCE PHOTO

Canal runners are among those left in the dark by the City's failure to fix the broken lights on Colonel By Drive north of the Queensway.

Some Flora snow queries get answered, and some don't

MAINSTREETER STAFF

This past winter, the City assiduously cleared and salted the sidewalk for the rarely used entrance to the storage/electrical room under the Flora Footbridge's eastern abutment, but once again bridge users were barred from using the stairs at the Old Ottawa East end.

Asked how much the clearing of this sidewalk cost and why the stairs couldn't be done at the same time, Bryden Denyes, the City's Manager of Roads Services, responded in general terms, saying, "there is an alternative path for pedestrians in close proximity." He did not answer *The Mainstreeter's* question of how

much it cost to clear the storage room's sidewalk.

Another question that arose this winter was why the snow on the bridge's main span was plowed into the middle, thus making it difficult to safely bike past pedestrians travelling in the same direction.

The windrow of snow down the centre of the bridge "ensures no snow falls onto the Skateway surface below and that equipment operators can safely clear the snow without damaging the footbridge," says Denyes.



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Occupation, LRT, COVID, climate change to name a few

With six months to go, there are already issues aplenty in upcoming municipal election

JOHN DANCE

It's six months away but issues for the coming municipal election are popping up all over: what should the annual tax increase be in the face of high inflation and extraordinary municipal costs like COVID and the occupation; how should the new Official Plan be implemented; how could City Council work better; what is the City doing about climate change and so on.

The list is long but, at this point, it's not clear what the dominant issues will be, let alone what mayoral and councillor candidates will pledge. Indeed, although there are now three declared candidates to replace the retiring Mayor Jim Watson, Capital Ward has just one declared candidate, the incumbent Shawn Menard.

"Under the current administration, council has become more divided and toxic than ever..."

How City Council functions may be at the top of the list of issues, given what the declared mayoral candidates have said so far. Bob Chiarelli, quoted in the Barrhaven Independent, says that "Under the current administration, council has become more divided and toxic than ever, with urban councillors being shut out of chair positions, being kept out of the loop, and sometimes being embarrassed in public."

The other two declared candidates have similar perspectives with Diane Deans saying "My first priority will be to bring this City back together. I think the City has been seriously divided, especially this term, where the rural and suburban communities have been pitted against the core of the City."

When announcing her candidacy, Catherine McKenney commented that residents are "looking for a City that is greener, that takes climate action, a City that has transit that functions."

Fixing Lansdowne - who should pay?

Old Ottawa East (OOE) voters have at least two issues that particularly concern them and those in adjacent

communities. First, there is the future of the Alta Vista Transportation Corridor lands beside Springhurst Park and on the other side of the river running all the way to Conroy Road. Most residents are opposed to the construction of the four-lane roadway that was proposed decades ago for this corridor. Next term, City Council will consider a revised master transportation plan recommending what should be done.

"...there are many who regard the City's efforts on climate change to be inadequate."

A second set of issues is whether Lansdowne Park should have new north-side stands and a new arena, and who should pay for them. The Ottawa Sports and Entertainment Group (OSEG), City staff and many existing councillors are keen on modernizing these major facilities. But the work would be done in the context of the City having received none of the forecast revenues from its partnership with OSEG, and Lansdowne remaining without ready LRT access.

Transportation issues including the future use of Colonel By Drive and a future truck crossing of the Ottawa River are also important in terms of impact on OOE residents. For instance, with a new Ottawa River crossing, the trucks which cause so much noise for residents living near the Nicholas interchange would be diverted.

Suburbs vs. urban core

City Council approved a new Official Plan last year but it's the revised zoning bylaw that will give teeth to the plan. Residents in the R1 zone, with its strict limits on what can be built, may be particularly affected by the proposed zoning changes, so these may be a hot topic during the election campaign. Determining just what a "15-minute" community includes and involves may also warrant discussion. And the emphasis on such features as the "Rideau Canal district" and the downtown and inner core "transects" requires articulation.

A related concern is the composition

and functioning of the City's Planning Committee. The Old Ottawa East Community Association (OOECA) and other central community associations have long argued that the more numerous suburban and rural councillor block have dominated Planning Committee to the detriment of the central communities. Also, OOECA has recommended that any councillor serving on the Planning Committee should not be allowed to accept campaign donations from developers.

Inadequate action on climate change

OOE residents also want City Council to implement policies for housing that is affordable to lower income people and those who are entering the housing market for the first time.

Similarly, there are many who regard the City's efforts on climate change to be inadequate. While the new Official Plan aims for a 40 percent tree canopy, to date, little has been done by the City to grow the tree canopy in central Ottawa. A related issue for OOE residents is whether the City will take responsibility for the green corridor that runs along the river on the east side of Greystone Village. In doing so, the City could

create a linear river park running from Strathcona Park all the way to Linda Thom Park in Old Ottawa South.

COVID & the occupation

And there are lots of issues stemming from COVID and the occupation. For instance, should the Ottawa Police Services be reformed and, if so, how? Should the City's public health capacity be strengthened so that the City and residents are better prepared for health crises? In what ways should the fabric of the City change to reflect what was learned as a result of the pandemic? Does the City require a more diversified economy, so it isn't so reliant on government and high tech? Should the City provide financial assistance to community associations, given all of the community-building work that they do?

The provincial election will be held in June and there will also be a number of issues directly affecting local communities. One of these relates to the Ontario Affordable Housing Task Force recommendations which are targeted to create 1.5 million dwelling units over the next decade but would diminish municipal control and community influence on what's built.

Greystone Village

An update on Regional's Phase 3 plans

MAINSTREETER STAFF

The Regional Group plans to submit its revised plans to the City planning department for Phase 3 of the Greystone Village development. The revised plan for two mid-rise residential buildings to the south and north of the Deschâtelets Building reflects the changes that were discussed with residents and the community association.

The City's review of the "site plan control" application may take half a year or so. Regional doesn't have a construction start date set at this time as the timing is dependent on the City's approval of its application.

Evan Garfinkel, Regional's manager of land development, says "We would ideally like to start construction shortly after we receive planning approvals."

Elsewhere on the Greystone site, Regional is now completing the "Ballantyne" mid-rise residential building on des Oblats Avenue and initial occupancy is forecast to be this spring. The nine-storey "Spencer" to the southwest of the Deschâtelets Building will take about two years to complete. Pile driving for the foundation was finished in March.

OUR READERS ON THE OCCUPATION

Shock, disgust, confusion and sadness among many emotions expressed by Old Ottawa East residents

JOHN DANCE

Of all of the major post-Second World War events that have affected Ottawa and its constituent communities, none has so profoundly torn at its fabric as did the “freedom convoy,” or, as many called it, the blockade or occupation of downtown Ottawa for three weeks beginning at the end of January.

Ottawa has endured the prolonged COVID pandemic, it’s had tornadoes, floods and the Ice Storm of 1998 and even the October Crisis of 1970, but none of these events generated the degree of fear, anger, frustration, stress and disruption that the truckers’ convoy did with its blockade of Wellington and nearby streets.

Old Ottawa East (OOE) bordered the “red zone” where the occupation took place and the protesters’ secondary encampment at the baseball stadium on Coventry Road was just across the river.

So while in OOE the sound of blaring truck horns was distant and our sidewalks and roadways mostly remained open, the surreal world of massive snow-covered trucks fully occupying Wellington Street with festive protesters, many literally wrapped in Canadian flags, was just a 20-minute walk away. More significantly, family members, friends, colleagues and those trying to run their businesses had to deal with the unprecedented disruption and, in a number of cases, harassment, and physical assault.

And the occupation continued day after day with the only apparent effort of authorities being to contain rather than curtail it. When it finally ended with the federal government invoking the Emergencies Act and a massive three-day police effort to push protesters and their vehicles out of the downtown, there was general relief but also many questions.

The dismay caused by the occupation has now been overwhelmed by Canadians’ visceral loathing of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the realization that freedom really is under brutal attack across the ocean, a quantum difference from the protesters’ perceived loss of freedom related to pandemic restrictions.

The Mainstreeter solicited residents’ views on the occupation, as below. The expressed views may not be fully representative of our community. Nevertheless, given the profound impact of the occupation, *The Mainstreeter* wanted to have on the record the perceptions of some of our residents.

Georgia Blondon - *Sad and Depressing*

We returned to Ottawa after a much needed vacation to Mexico, during the second week of the convoy occupation. Being on the beach in Mexico was an amazing break after so many COVID lockdowns at home. Returning to our beautiful city to find the almost war-like conditions the convoy was creating was sad and depressing, adding to the stress of the COVID enemy. I believe the Ottawa police chief, at the time, and our government did not address the beginning of the convoy threat appropriately and our City was caught off guard and unprotected.

Nancy MacDonald - *Attack on Democracy*

[T]he way it affected me was not in any real physical way, rather a fear and worry about an attack on democracy. It showed the reality of racism and homophobia in our country, but also an anarchist type of scary mentality. I felt quite unsettled and had an underlying worry for those three weeks.

It will be interesting to see if we ever learn what really was the failing of the Ottawa police, the police board, and the City council.

Susan O'Reilly - *Lost Faith in Our Institutions*

I found the occupation stressed me accumulatively - naïvely I believed it would be over the first weekend. As I soon realized, my optimism was misplaced. These people came to cause havoc and the impact on those living and working downtown was tortuous. As a neighbour I felt helpless. As a good citizen I felt

enraged. I was disappointed in the police, the Mayor and the Police Board. I’ll be putting that frustration into action at the polls.

Each morning I would encounter trucks with flags and F*UCK Trudeau signage as I dropped my daughter off to school. It was distressing.

I feared for her safety as she walked home - wearing a mask took courage, as you were a target. She was once nearly run over by a protest truck while walking. To say I was angry is an understatement.

Their camp at Coventry complete with saunas, made me feel surrounded on all sides. I literally stayed home and turned off the media to provide myself with an emotional/mental break. I recognize my privilege in doing so, and understand many others were forced to face and engage with this hatred daily.

Members of the BIPOC, LGBTQ2S community were terrorized, along with those hardworking people who were robbed of their livelihoods.

Like many, I wondered how this would end and prayed lives would not be lost. Fortunately, all I lost was my faith in our institutions. For so many the losses are incalculable and ongoing.

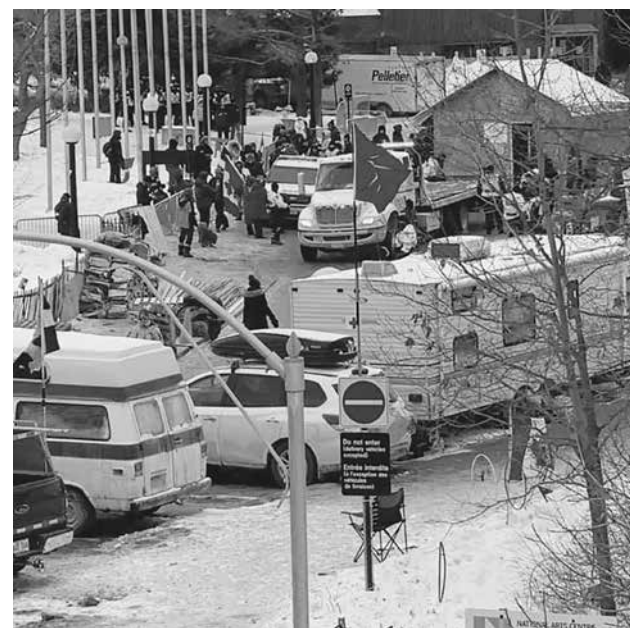
Donna Wood - *The Line between a Legal Right and an Illegal Action*

The last few weeks have definitely been a challenge. For residents in the downtown area the challenges were first hand and so real that it was hard to comprehend at the time. Verbal abuse, fear for personal safety, and physical isolation due to “freedom convoy” protesters had an untenable sense of irony. For businesses in the area it was an amplification of the challenges they have already faced due to the pandemic.

For the most part, other than increased traffic and sightings of vehicles with signage linking them to the protests, our immediate neighbourhood seemed safe. The challenges were related more to worrying about friends and family in the red zone.

Media coverage and social media were obviously factors in how people reacted to the situation. It was pretty much a no-win situation for the three levels of government. No matter what they did to respond there would be critics. Each level of government had its own accountability challenges that didn’t always align with the needs and requests of the other levels of government.

Also, there seems to be a lack of understanding, among some people, about the line between a legal right and an illegal action. Finding the right balance between managing a situation and ending it without



inciting more violence and fueling a full-on riot is never easy.

Sadly, I don't think that extreme or radical views are going away anytime soon and I hope that all levels of government do their due diligence quickly, review what happened, and learn from it. We need to establish response protocols that provide guidance and strengthen the understanding of roles and responsibilities (authorities, costs, and communications) between the various levels of government as well as between government departments and politicians

Peter Tobin - *Sad and Worried*

I did not experience any material inconvenience or infringement on my liberty during the chaos. However, from the first day I felt sad and worried, sensing the awareness that “this is not going to end well.” By day 2, I was upset that the media was buying into the term ‘freedom convoy’ as I had already started to use the words blockade and occupation to describe the protest.

I gladly joined the Battle of Billings Bridge, happy to see the “Make Ottawa boring again” sign but then felt complicit and guilty as others shamed and ridiculed the occupants that we were blocking. Shaming and ridiculing were not going to encourage the occupiers to go home; it was more likely going to have the opposite effect.

Unfortunately, I am still momentarily alarmed whenever I see a large 18-wheeler or even a smaller truck.

Continued on Page 13

OUR READERS ON THE OCCUPATION

Continued from Page 12

Jim Strang - Almost Religious Fervour and Belief in their Cause

I went down to ground zero along Wellington Street on several occasions to talk to the truckers. I was quite honestly surprised with their almost religious fervour and belief in their cause. I also found that they were completely politically naive and didn't really understand the way their government operated. A dangerous combination.

They saw themselves as hard working, tax-paying, salt of the earth citizens who were completely frustrated by this government's largely eastern bias that was increasingly adopting policies including those involved with carbon tax, the crippling of Canada's energy industry and, as they saw it, the use of their tax money against them. They were frustrated, angry and felt that this was the only way the Feds would take notice of them.

The truckers I spoke with told me that no matter what, they weren't prepared to break any laws in that they relied on maintaining a clean criminal record to maintain their trucker licences and continue to be able to work across all North American borders. They were disgusted by the incidents that had taken place at the War Memorial and at the Shepherds of Good Hope. In fact, one of the guys told me that he had over 60 pounds of meat in his truck that he had brought for barbecues and that he was taking the next morning down to the Shepherds as a donation. They told me that there would be no more Nazi or Confederate flags in that their group abhorred these actions by a few nut cases. They felt that the press had grossly misrepresented them over these isolated incidents.

I did not feel threatened or unsafe at any time during any discussions I had or while walking anywhere in the occupied area.

Living where we do in Old Ottawa East there was little inconvenience with regards to truck parking, and we were able to get around to where we had to go. The constant blaring of the horns was hardly noticeable due to the many tall buildings between us and Wellington Street and the fact that all windows were closed against the -20C temperatures at the time. It would have been a very different situation in the summer.

Having said this, I do sympathize completely with those closer to downtown who were besieged by trucks and heavy vehicles, the polluting fumes from idling diesel engines, the constant din from the horns and the closure and disruption of local businesses.

Nick Masciantonio - Kids were not allowed to go off school grounds

Our son, Jack, is in grade 8 at Glashan School and takes OC Transpo. Like the pandemic, we don't realize what mental health harm our kids have suffered. The convoy didn't help. Especially the day there were also rumours of disrupting schools. Glashan is at the corner of Kent and Catherine streets, the initial influx was peppered by horns as they made their way up.

Just as some COVID restrictions were easing up on the kids, they were not allowed to go off school grounds during lunches and recesses. And most disappointing, two recreational skates on the Rideau Canal were also cancelled. Middle school experience has been a huge disappointment and filled with stress for the last two



JOHN DANCE AND DAVID HENDERSON PHOTOS

PRIOR PAGE: Confederation Park just south of the National Arts Centre was taken over by protestors. This photo shows the protestors' large "shed" being removed under supervision of police. ABOVE: Massive trucks blocked the entire width of Wellington Street. Main Street was part of the escape route for some of the protestors as they fled the downtown area.

years. This blockade didn't help.

Theresa Wallace - Fears of Insurrection

On the day of the siege of the Capitol Building in Washington last year, our son rushed down from where he was working upstairs and said, "Turn on the TV. Something's happening." I looked from my new grandbaby in my arms to the terror unfolding on the screen and had a hard time reconciling the two. During the occupation of downtown Ottawa, my biggest fear was that it would end with a similar violent attack on our Parliamentary precinct and include the use of weapons and loss of life. And I worried that during such an attack, our police would stand back, claim they were ill-equipped to respond, and do nothing to defend the bricks and mortar symbols of our democracy and the people inside.

Linda Pollock - Trucks Should Never Have Made it to Wellington Street

With the exception of one Saturday morning when we saw and heard half a dozen smaller trucks with flags honking their way along Main Street, heading downtown, we were not personally affected by the truck occupation. Our son however, a Centretown resident working from home, did find the continuous noise both late at night and during working hours extremely frustrating. We were appalled, however, at the reports of disrespectful, rude, harassing, bordering on violent behaviour by some of the occupiers.

It was particularly distressing to learn that the targets of much of this behaviour were often the most vulnerable residents, gay, trans and BIPOC people and people wearing masks. It certainly has blown a gaping hole in the reputation of Canadians as respectful,

peaceful, law-abiding people.

We find it hard to understand why Ottawa police were so poorly prepared for such an event, given the clear intentions posted on social media by some of the convoy leaders in advance of arriving in Ottawa, and in light of the experience in Washington a year earlier. Those trucks should never have made it to Wellington Street. Once there, however, their barbecues, hot tubs, porta pottys and, most disgusting, dancing at the National War Memorial, made a mockery of some of our most cherished institutions.

They said they were fighting for our "freedom", the freedom to selfishly disregard the health and safety of fellow citizens. I wonder if any of them have modified their understanding of freedom now in light of the violent oppression in Ukraine.



The Mainstreeter encourages all residents of Old Ottawa East (OOE) to engage in civic and local affairs and to express their views on issues of importance to them and to our community. As this article demonstrates, OOE residents have a lot to say about issues that impact their daily lives, and when they express their views in writing, they do so in a thoughtful way.

Letters to the editor of The Mainstreeter represent a simple, effective way to state your views on topics of interest or concern to you, and to others in our community. If you feel strongly about a local or civic issue, please email your views in 250 words or less to editor@mainstreeter.ca and we will do our best to publish your submission.

Design group proposing 284 new units

Developers of the former Sisters Convent unveil plans for a rental community

PETER TOBIN

Shortly after purchasing the former convent home of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart last April, partners Ottawa-based Smart Living Properties and Toronto-based Forum Equity Partners (Forum/SLP) stated they had no intention of demolishing the huge red brick building. Rather, the partnership announced instead that they would adapt the convent as a rental community.

Despite the paucity of updates over the ensuing months, and only sporadic activity around the site, there was no reason to sense the partners ever strayed from that intent. Doubtless, Forum/SLP found itself in a juggling act, balancing profitability with the intricacies of City zoning and concerns regarding the neighbourhood's reaction. Given the pandemic, wait and see seemed a reasonable strategy.

However, behind the scenes, efforts to formulate a concept plan had been well under way. Faced with the challenge of

working up a very old building, Forum/SLP engaged Woodman Architects and Fotenn Planning + Design to assist.



PETER TOBIN PHOTO

Smart Living Properties and Forum Equity Partners (SLP/Forum) have engaged a design firm to help prepare plans for the redevelopment of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart Convent building. The SLP/Forum partners have announced plans to refurbish the Convent property into a rental community of 284 units at "attainable" rental costs.

For the convent refurbishment, the combined project team collaborated to map out the way forward and develop

a site proposal. Their proposal was presented to Ottawa Centre Councillor Shawn Menard and a few representatives of the Old Ottawa East (OOE) Community Association (OOECA) on March 29. In early April, Forum/SLP representatives met on Zoom with OOECA's Planning Committee, which then reported to the community association at its April 12th meeting. A broader consultation with the wider OOE community will follow as part of the formal Public Meeting shortly after the rezoning and site plan application submissions are filed with the City.

To get an idea of the project and the intended demographic, it should be noted that there will be space provided for only 20 parking spots, all or nearly all for auto-sharing and visitors. By contrast, there will be 291 bike spots, mostly internal. That means there will be more bike parking spaces than the total number of residential units. The majority of the units will be studios,

Continued on Page 15



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Former Sisters Convent development plans announced



SUPPLIED IMAGE

Plans for the redesigned Convent property include an L-shaped 4th storey to the west along Springhurst Avenue and a public park to the east of the building. Zoning applications and additional public consultation are expected to be undertaken later in the spring.

Continued from Page 14

what Forum/SLP describes as “well-appointed and efficiently designed”. In addition, about 10% will be three bedroom units, while the rest would be 1 and 2 bedroom units. Common elements will include work stations and generous amenities both inside and on the roof. An L-shaped four-storey addition will see the west side extended towards and along Springhurst Avenue. Heritage elements will be preserved in recognition of the Sisters’ long time presence here. The chapel windows are unsuitable as is, but the replacements will look exactly the same.

The Virgin Mary statue will be retained but relocated to the new

public park on the east side of the property. The entire building will be refitted and include geo-thermal heating. Rental costs per unit will obviously fluctuate, but the partnership intends them to be “attainable”.

A myriad of factors could alter these plans over time, including inflation, supply chain disruptions and regulatory hurdles, among others. The Ontario Task Force on Housing’s recent recommendations, if enacted, will favour developers, but the City’s 1% Vacant Unit Tax could be a problem for them. Should currently out-of-control house prices push more buyers to consider renting, the Forum/SLP project could face a shift in the intended demographic and, as a result, to the overall plan.

Please wear a mask and stay safe!

Joel Harden

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109 Catherine St.
Ottawa, ON. K2P 2M8

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Next issue of *The Mainstreeter...* Article submission and advertising deadline: May 13, 2022



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Asking price has dropped

Update on the Springhurst Avenue double lot development

MAINSTREETER STAFF

In response to community push-back and buyers' lack of interest, the asking price of the double lot at 67 Springhurst has been reduced and fewer residences are now proposed for the site.

As reported in a previous issue of *The Mainstreeter*, this lot with its older house had been on the market since last summer for \$2.8 million. Now the asking price is \$2,549,000.

The real estate agent's pitch for the higher price was that 22-26 dwelling units could be built on the site. Now, the listing speaks of the possibility of "eight semi-detached homes with accessory dwelling units, but there are other possible options." As per existing City policy, each of the semi-detached homes could have a second dwelling unit,

meaning up to 16 units could be built, provided the design met all necessary zoning restrictions.

In December, neighbouring residents met virtually with the designer who was associated with the would-be development. They took particular issue with the proposed number of units.

Even at the lower price, the listing shows how valuable land has become in Old Ottawa East and other central communities. "Only \$319,000 per home for land costs!" the on-line ad exclaims. "Fantastic location between the River and The Canal!" Neighbouring residents are already aware that it is a fantastic location - but the real question in their minds is just how many units should be built.



LORNE ABUGOV PHOTO

The listed asking price for this double lot at 67 Springhurst has dropped by \$250,000 and the number of possible dwelling units has been reduced from 22-26 units to eight semi-detached homes.



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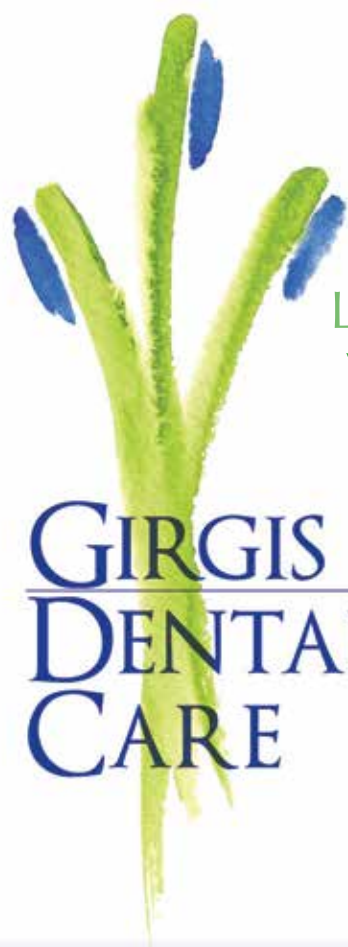
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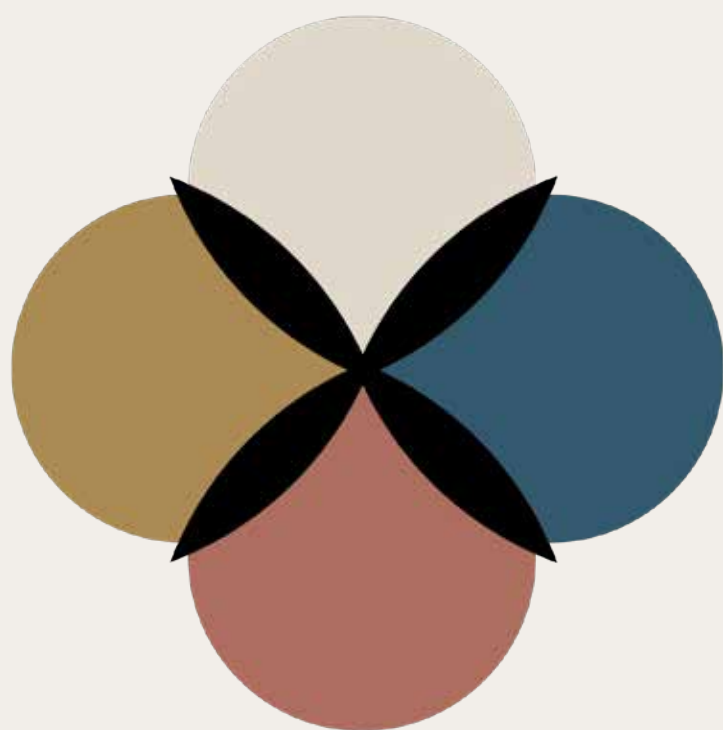
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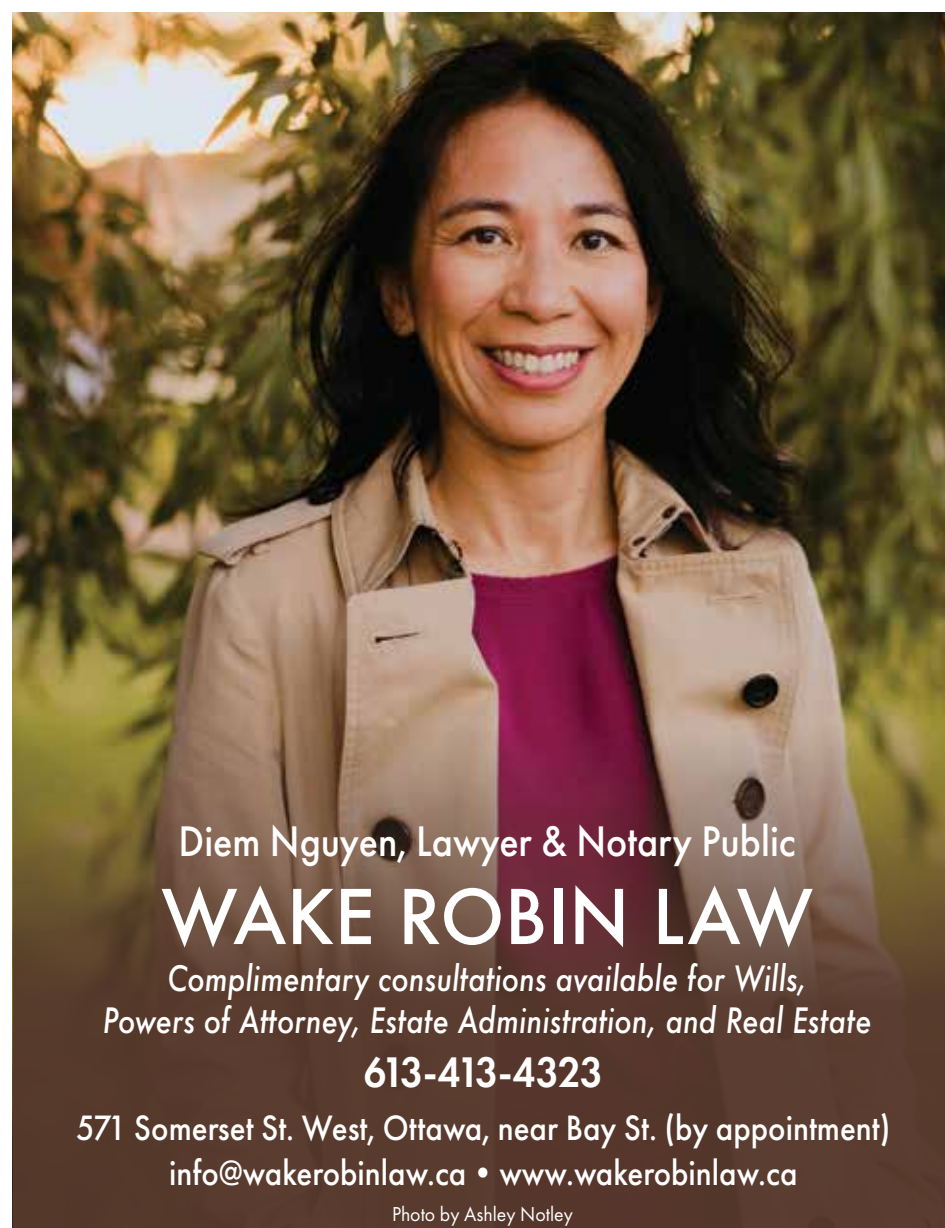
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Photo by Ashley Notley

The Main Farmers' Market returns to nearly normal this spring

COLETTE DÉRY

At long last, spring has returned to Old Ottawa East (OOE), and with it a sense of excitement for this season of hope and growth.

After surviving not only the full reconstruction of Main Street (and temporary relocation of the Market), but also a difficult couple of pandemic years as well, the Main Farmers' Market is preparing to both welcome back its loyal customers for a 16th season and introduce a whole new clientele to the experience of locally grown and produced food.

If the last two years of the Market were focused on adapting to pandemic measures, this year's edition will be more forward-looking; as the 2022 season approaches, the Main Farmers' Market is planning for a closer return to normalcy, even as it continues to keep safety measures in place so that vendors as well as Market shoppers feel comfortable.

From May 14 to October 29, between 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. on Saturdays, the Market will offer shoppers fresh local produce, plants and food products. As it has been for the past several years, the Market will be located in the regular parking lot on Main Street next to Singing Pebble Books.

OOE is an established neighbourhood in our City, but it still has room to welcome new residents into the community. Once completed, the new housing development of Greystone Village will contain 900 dwellings, and its stately Grande Allée will become the Market's new home in 2023. The Market Board and vendors are very excited to introduce newcomers to OOE to the Market, and confident that, by the time the Market moves to its new location, all of our new arrivals will have become loyal customers.

Until then, as life now appears to be slowly returning to normal, the Main Farmers' Market is planning to welcome 30 new and returning vendors to participate in its 2022 season.

Some of the vendors coming back to the Market include: Almanac Urban Mill &



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Bakery, Capital Greens Urban Farm, Culture Kombucha, Barkley Apple Orchard, Emballage Bee Sustainable, Betty's Pickles and Preserves, Agricola Cooperative Farm, Kokoro Bakeshop, and Hall's Apple Market.

Both the producers and visitors to the Market appreciate the opportunity to meet and talk about all things fresh and local, and this chance to exchange ideas and advice is just one of the reasons the Market is such a special destination.

Eager gardeners will particularly enjoy the Main Farmers' Market in May, as a number of seed growers will be selling seedlings for those who are keen to start their plants.

So celebrate the longer, warmer days with local goodness. When your friends and neighbours ask you where to find starter plants, delicious baked goods or fresh veggies for your table, tell them to "meet me at the Main Farmers' Market!"

OPENING DAY IS MAY 14!

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LOCAL BITES

Arrivederci Little Italy, but...

PETER TOBIN

Ciao to the new Vespa Wine Bar

If you walked up or down the west side of Main Street in February or March there's a good chance you met Rolf Robillard at the site of the former Little Italy Fine Foods. Robillard was informing anyone passing by that he would be opening a new wine bar on the site, and that he already had a liquor licence in hand.



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Those who enjoyed Little Italy Fine Foods, enjoyed it a lot. Now the same owners hope the lure of great wine, pizzas and pastas will attract many of those customers and more new ones to their Vespa Wine Bar on Main Street.

Did the pandemic affect Little Italy Fine Food's survival? "It certainly didn't help" explained Robillard. It is possible that the proximity of a similar store, Nicastrò's in the Glebe, also had a role to play in the Main Street store's closure.

I assumed that Robillard was the owner of the newly-opened Vespa Wine Bar, but he corrected me, saying that "technically my wife is the owner". That would be Antonella Di Brizzi, whom many of you know as the owner of Love Your Skin Beauty Lounge on Main Street near Lees Avenue. The Di Brizzi family also owns an Italian restaurant and a Little Italy Fine Foods outlet; both of those are in Orleans. Robillard will continue taking on the daily operations of the enterprise on Main Street.

If you are a lover of Little Italy's famous pizza don't worry as there are seven different 12 inch pizzas on Vespa's menu, ranging in price from \$19 to \$24. Staff member Stephane Elibani told me that they would not

only offer great coffee and, of course, wine but antipasti (\$19) and a cheese plate (\$24). Rounding out the menu are three different pastas (\$25 to \$28) and three salads, including the house Caesar (\$15).

Elibani, who has a wealth of experience on the local restaurant scene, had difficulty defining his role for me. "I'll be doing everything" he said.

As *The Mainstreeter* went to press, Elibani and the rest of the Vespa Wine Bar team had already had a busy two weeks since the wine bar opened its doors in late March. All the staff were hopeful that their new business had seen the end of the rounds of ping-ponging between COVID closures and re-openings.

All the best, Vespa. Thanks for bringing an extra level of activity to Main Street and filling a need for liquid refreshments. All of us in Old Ottawa East hope you have a smooth ride.

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LOCAL BITES

Review: The Gray Jay Hospitality, 221 Echo Drive

Dining at Gray Jay - a true culinary gem



To the casual observer, the Gray Jay exterior looks much like its predecessor, the Royal Oak Pub, but the sumptuous cuisine served inside has come a long way from bangers and mash.

QUINN ABUGOV

When the iconic canal-front building at the corner of Hawthorne Avenue and Colonel By Drive became vacant in late 2020, many wondered what would become of the picturesque location. Previously occupied by the Royal Oak Pub for two decades, this location had become a cornerstone establishment in Old Ottawa East.

Enter - Gray Jay Hospitality.

You might have heard of the Gray Jay before in Ottawa foodie circles. Owned and operated by chefs Dominique Dufour and Devon Bionda, the restaurant gained acclaim at their former Preston Street quarters serving some of the best-crafted plates Ottawa had to offer. In fact, Dufour was a competitor on the Food Network's 2020 season of Top Chef Canada.

The new Old Ottawa East location will include two patios, a ground-floor dining area that can seat up to 60 patrons, and a second-storey room suitable for private dining. The patios and second-storey room were still under construction when our party of five recently visited for dinner.

Seasonal food the name of the game at Gray Jay

While the location has changed, the Gray Jay's food philosophy remains the same. Dufour and Bionda have a hyper-local, Canadian focus for every dish on the menu. Simply put - if it can't be grown or produced in Canada, they don't serve it. They go to great lengths each summer to ferment exotic citrus fruits grown in Quebec, like Japanese yuzu, in order to preserve them for off-season use. Seasonal food is the name of the game at the Gray Jay.

Their menu offers many unique items not commonly found in the local restaurant scene, such as reindeer moss and sea buckthorn. These local

ingredients, in tandem with the newly renovated dining room and bar, create a comfortable and understated dining atmosphere that is uniquely Canadian. The restaurant has a fireside coziness ambience that was much appreciated on the brisk March evening of our visit. Of interest, the renovations were done entirely by the staff, making the quick turnaround from English pub to comfortable, fine dining restaurant all the more impressive.

Food menu bursts with creativity

As no one in our group had previously dined at the Gray Jay, our server gave us a thorough rundown of the food and drink menus. Guests can choose to eat A La Carte from the 11-item menu or from a five course Chef's tasting menu (\$90 per person, wine pairing \$60). The Gray Jay's drink menu consists of an extensive wine list, locally sourced beers and creative cocktails that also track the Gray Jay's ethos of using in-season, Canadian ingredients.

The food menu bursts with creativity, colour and unique ingredient selections. Two-thirds of the plates were smaller, bright, forward-thinking and crafted for sharing. For the heartier appetites, three of the dishes were larger and better suited for one stomach. The menu is rounded out with two dessert offerings, and a Quebec cheese plate served with their house-made Seeded Rye bread.

Our first course was comprised of a handful of the smaller sharing plates. The meaty charcuterie plate (\$21) featured three house-made selections - basturma and lonza, both made from wild boar, and a venison saucisson sec. All three paired beautifully with the seeded rye bread served with an aromatic boar fat butter and house made pickles (\$7) and the aforementioned Quebec cheese plate (\$12).

A beautifully paired presentation of Rose dumplings (\$17), stuffed with a decadent mushroom and tofu filling, served alongside a sunflower seed milk cream sauce, was a hit with our group. The consensus view was the dumplings were the most visually appealing of the menu items, as each dumpling was delicately shaped like a Rose - with beet root paste giving the dish a distinct red accent.

The vegan Beets and Roots (\$15) salad was served warm with roasted beets, marinated turnips and rutabaga accompanied by a savoury black oil spread and a sweet berry jus. The flavours paired very well with the earthy tones of the perfectly cooked root vegetables, and the variety of colours presented on the plate was stunning.

The Cucumber Salad (\$20), served with yuzu marinated cucumber ribbons, two types of mushrooms, daikon and an aged cheddar 'folly' cream sauce, was refreshing and cleansed the palate, but scored among the lower-rated dishes by our group who found that the folly cream sauce had overpowered the other elements of the dish.

Items were decadent and perfect for sharing

To round out the first-wave of the meal, we sampled the Boar Cheeks Tartelettes (\$16), the Fogo Island Crab Tostada (\$22) and the Mushroom Croquettes (\$18). The Boar Cheek Tartelettes were simply fantastic, and were stuffed with a luscious smoked, roasted pepper jam topped with reindeer moss. The Crab tostada was flavourful and fresh, with a bright tomato sauce enveloping the crab meat and crispy exterior. The croquettes were a smash hit, crispy, golden and stuffed with mushroom chunks and Stilton Cheese, served alongside a mushroom aioli. All three items were decadent and perfect for sharing.

After loosening my belt buckle from

the onslaught of food already sampled, the large plates began arriving. My choice of the spiced Braised Lamb Shank (\$38) was perfectly tender and packed a mean punch in the spice department thanks to the cumin, paprika and harissa glaze. The dish was balanced by a squash puree and an apple and squash sauce, which added fantastic, sweet notes to the otherwise savoury lamb shank.

Two other main courses rounded out the feast - the Squash Glissantes (\$26) and the Nova Scotia Scallops (\$35). The Glissantes was a croissant-shaped weave of sheet noodles infused with squash and stuffed with a ricotta cheese kefir (fermented milk) and pea pesto sauce. The dish, while easy on the eyes, was an overly dense pasta lacking some of the aromatic punch delivered by other dishes on the menu. By contrast, the scallops were plump, juicy and seasoned to perfection, accompanied with a sausage millefeuille, jalapenos and basil.

Rounding out our meal, my guests and I sampled the Gray Jay's two dessert offerings. The texture of the Basque Cheesecake (\$12) was light and airy, and the creaminess of the cheese shone through - similar in note to a classic Japanese cheesecake. The Salt and Sea (\$12), made with oats, rice, caramel and caviar, was interesting and artful in its presentation, but had slightly less flavour than the cheesecake and needed a sweet note to pull the dish together.

Chef Dufour, as quoted in the Ottawa Citizen last year, mentioned that one of her goals was to bring the 100-year-old building "back to its former glory". From this writer's perspective, the team at Gray Jay Hospitality has knocked that goal right out of the park, and in turn, has given the neighbourhood a brilliant new food destination and community gathering space. Prices aren't for the faint of heart, but for a wonderful dining experience, the Gray Jay absolutely soars.



LORNE ABUGOV/CARLEE DUCHESNE PHOTOS

Two of the dishes sampled by our reviewer and his guests were the colourful Beets & Roots salad (L) and the beautifully-paired Rose Dumplings stuffed with mushrooms and tofu (R).



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OOE ARTIST FEATURE: RED BIRD LANDS IN THE HOOD!

A big red bird perched high above 1165 Bank Street (near Belmont Avenue) in Old Ottawa South signals the arrival of a new live music venue with strong ties to Old Ottawa East (OOE). Red Bird Live owner Geoff Cass is a long-time OOE resident. “Our webmaster/designer, our bookkeeper, and our merch supplier are all residents of OOE,” Cass says. “Many of our OOE neighbours and friends volunteered their time to help get the space ready. Plus, an OOE resident donated a piano!”

Cass is a backyard birder and hobby musician who plays in a band with some other neighbourhood dads. “The cardinal logo came from the cover of our first album, which was called *Radiance*,” he says. “A radiance is a flock of cardinals.” The logo was designed by Doug Taylor.

Cass describes the venue as a place to teach, learn, play, and enjoy live music in a safe, enriching environment. “Red Bird will be open during the day for people to come in and enjoy coffee and pastries.” They will be serving coffee from Almonte’s Equator Coffee Roasters. “It will also be open during the day for playing music,” he says. “Last Friday we had 25 retirees come in to jam all afternoon and try out the space.”

Previously, the site has been a car dealership, a kitchen store, a furniture store, and an axe-throwing establishment. Red Bird Live’s inviting, and funkily

A finger on the pulse of the arts in OOE

designed venue space has a capacity of 80. The chairs are comfortable, and all face the stage. “This is a music venue that happens to have a bar, not a bar with a musician over in the corner playing background music,” Cass says.

The art-enhanced café is at the front. The stage, which is located at the back, is equipped with state-of-the-art sound and lighting systems, and can accommodate a full band. “It is also good for soloists because it is comfortable and welcoming,” Cass says.

A self-described community guy—hockey coach, Hopewell dad, and Brantwood Park “Hoser”—Cass has a community recreation background. He has been involved in the Ottawa music scene for many years. “I ran a music school in Westboro through the Dovercourt Recreation Centre, and I ran the Ottawa Bluesfest School of Music and Arts. But I was a casualty of pandemic cuts on both fronts. I found myself wondering what to do next and rattling business ideas by friends. There was strong support for this idea, so we set about finding the space and doing the planning.

“Red Bird Live is here to complement what is already a very strong music scene in Ottawa. We’ve gotten feedback that live music starts too late for some people who want to get home to their families. Many musicians feel that way too. The pandemic wiped out several Ottawa music venues, so we’ll be filling a void there by providing an income to musicians. Red Bird’s music teachers are also our bartenders, baristas, and performers. This set-up will allow them to pursue their musical journeys.

“Red Bird is a venue that will attract musicians. This is a strong arts neighbourhood. We’ll have local talent performing as well as touring musicians, and gatherings of musicians jamming. We are also here to teach.”

Red Bird currently has four small

RIGHT: Red Bird Live owner and OOE resident Geoff Cass in front of his live music venue at 1165 Bank Street on February 22, opening day.
BELOW: Musician and Red Bird Music School teacher Shaun Francisco performs at Red Bird Live’s Open Stage Tuesday on March 22.



NICOLE CASS PHOTO



LAURA COLLINS PHOTO



LAURA COLLINS PHOTO

The Bluegrass House Band performs at Red Bird Live on Bluegrass Monday, March 14.

teaching rooms for private and semi-private lessons in voice, piano, guitar, drums, and several other instruments. “Our musicians’ green room will eventually double as a space for small group programming such as songwriting workshops,” Cass says. He describes Red Bird’s music lessons as organic and low pressure. “Our number one focus is to get our students to really enjoy playing their instrument. We want them to have fun getting good. We might even switch up their instrument if it is a better fit for the songs they love.”

Cass also describes Red Bird as a safe place to perform. “When you’re around a stage you grow a comfort with that stage,” he explains. “The first time you come for a lesson, you may just walk across it on the way to the teaching room. The next time, you might stop for a moment. The next time, you might pick up a hand drum and start playing. We want this to be a place where our students feel comfortable playing.

“One young guy came for his guitar lesson the other day and his brother waited for him near the stage where a musician was playing. The student came out of his lesson saying that he had

learned the A minor chord. Then the musician chimed in and said: ‘Wait! Let me play a song with an A minor in it.’ Then the kid realized that the A minor he had learned in the teaching room made it on stage!”

“We want youth to come out to Red Bird Live to perform. We love to see families playing, singing, and enjoying music. Remember, Red Bird is more performance space than bar.”

Red Bird Live’s weekly events so far:
Bluegrass Mondays (doors at 7:00 p.m., music from 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.)

Open Stage Tuesdays (sign up at 7:00 p.m., music at 8:00 p.m.)

Coffee House Sundays (open stage, music from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.)

For a list of events, or to register for lessons, go to www.redbirdlive.ca

Author Tanis Browning-Shelp (<http://www.browning-shelp.com>) pens her Maryn O’Brien Young Adult Fiction series, published by Dog-Eared Books, from her home in Old Ottawa East. Contact tanis@browning-shelp.com if you have information about artists or art events that you believe would enrich our community members’ lives.

ART BEAT



TIM HUNT'S MAIN STREET SKETCHES

Tim Hunt explores his community outfitted with a small sketchbook, pen, and watercolour kit. In our regular feature, he shares the pages from his sketchbook and tells the stories behind his work.

The Brantwood gates, standing tall at Main Street and Beckwith Road, never fail to bring a smile. Passing strangers might muse about what wonders exist beyond such a grand entrance; however, more than a century after this hyperbolic



introduction to an exclusive community was erected, the gates are still a showstopper along this bustling corridor. That they remain is a testament to locals who rallied to protect, preserve, and restore them despite neglect and threats of removal.

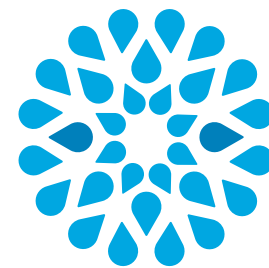
From an artist's perspective, the Brantwood gates are fun to draw. The pillars, each adorned with big round field stones and crowned with a large marble ball, have a cartoonish quality that brings to mind fairy tales or castles and dragons.

Plaques dedicated to the memory of those who served in the two World Wars seem particularly poignant in the current climate, as we hope for storybook endings.



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Habitations Partagées Mirela

La cohabitation intergénérationnelle une option gagnante pour bien vieillir chez soi!

MIREILLE LEROUX

Claire est une femme chaleureuse et jeune de cœur. Elle habite seule dans sa de maison plain-pied depuis environ 15 ans. Jamais elle n'a eu le désir de déménager en résidence pour personnes âgées. Elle veut plutôt vivre avec quelqu'un de confiance pour augmenter son sentiment de sécurité, et briser l'isolement.

En voyant l'hiver et la 2e vague de la pandémie arriver, Claire communique avec Mireille après avoir reçu une brochure expliquant le modèle de vivre ensemble d'Habitations Partagées Mirela.

Habitations Partagées Mirela est une organisation à but non lucratif franco-ontarienne qui met en relation et soutient des personnes de tous âges et de toutes origines souhaitant partager une habitation dans le but de briser l'isolement, s'épanouir, s'entraider et se loger à moindre coût dans la région d'Ottawa. L'organisme facilite le processus de jumelage du début jusqu'à la fin et continue même de soutenir les participant.es une fois le jumelage complété, pour une cohabitation sans tracas.

Mireille, une entrepreneure sociale et accompagnatrice en développement personnel, est présidente et cofondatrice de l'organisation Habitations Partagées Mirela. Passionnée par les relations humaines, elle voit le partage d'un logement comme un excellent moyen de créer des liens significatifs, de s'entraider pour un bien-vivre ensemble.

Mireille et Claire sont toutes deux grands-mamans qui comprennent à quel point les relations intergénérationnelles sont importantes et valorisantes. Ces relations contribuent au bien-être personnel, à la santé spirituelle et à la joie de vivre.

L'entente d'hébergement qu'elles ont signée comprend divers services offerts par Mireille en échange d'une réduction de loyer par Claire. Mais c'est leur relation interpersonnelle qui est devenue de plus en plus importante. Claire s'étonne de leur complicité malgré la différence d'âge : « Nous rions beaucoup. Nous cuisinons ensemble. Mireille est fiable, joyeuse, et amusante! »

Mireille ne remarque pas la différence d'âge, elle voit Claire comme la grande sœur qu'elle n'a jamais eue, qui veille sur elle, l'aime et la respecte.

Et comme le dit si bien Claire : « Je ne pourrais pas être plus heureuse de partager une expérience de vie comme celle-ci, avec une personne aussi solidaire et ouverte. Je dis toujours aux autres de ne pas avoir peur de faire le pas vers ce mode de vie en habitation partagée, parce que l'essayer, c'est l'adopter. Il y a tellement à apprendre l'une de l'autre. »



Pour en savoir davantage sur ce projet qui favorise le partage et l'entraide, visitez le site web au: www.hpmirela.ca

Habitations Partagées Mirela

Intergenerational house-sharing: a good option for aging at home

MIREILLE LEROUX

Claire is a warm, young-at-heart woman. She has lived alone in her single-storey house for about 15 years. She had no desire to move into a residence for the elderly. Instead, she wants to live with someone she trusts in order to increase her sense of security and to break the isolation.

Seeing winter and the second wave of the pandemic coming, Claire communicates with Mireille after having received a brochure explaining the model of living together from Habitations Partagées Mirela.

Habitations Partagées Mirela is a Franco-Ontarian non-profit organization that connects and supports people of all ages and backgrounds wishing to share a home in order to reduce isolation, help people flourish and boost affordable accommodation in the Ottawa area.

The organization facilitates the matching process from start to finish and continues to support participants once the match is complete to ensure hassle-free cohabitation.

Mireille, a social entrepreneur and personal development coach, is president and co-founder of Habitations Partagées Mirela. Passionate about human relations, she sees sharing a home as an excellent way to create meaningful ties, and to help

each of the sharing partners achieve a good life together.

Mireille and Claire are both grandmothers who understand how important and rewarding intergenerational relationships can be. These relationships contribute to personal well-being, spiritual health and joy in life.

The housing agreement they signed includes various services offered by Mireille in exchange for a reduction in rent by Claire. But it is their interpersonal relationship that has become increasingly important. Claire is surprised by all they have in common despite their age difference: "We laugh a lot. We cook together. Mireille is reliable, cheerful, and fun!"

Mireille doesn't notice the age difference; rather, she sees Claire as the big sister she never had, who watches over her, and loves and respects her.

And as Claire explains it: "I couldn't be happier to share a life experience like this, with such a supportive and open person. I always tell others not to be afraid to make the leap into this home-sharing lifestyle, because to try it is to adopt it. There is so much to learn from each other."



To find out more about this project, which promotes sharing and mutual aid, visit the website at: www.hpmirela.ca




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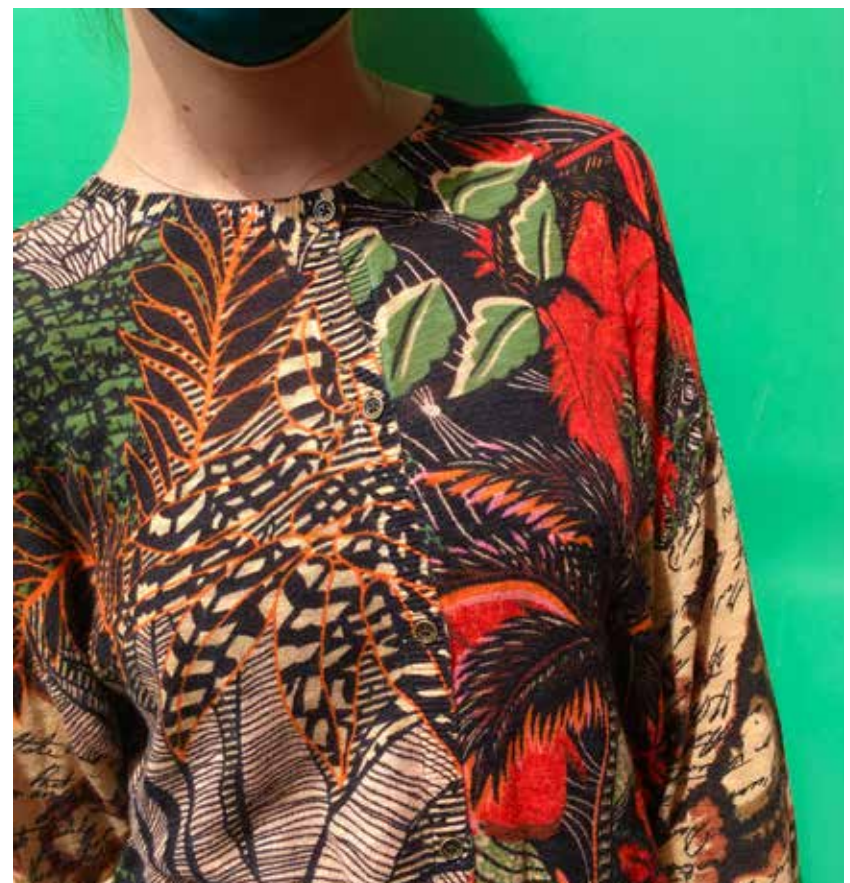
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LEE JACOBS, PRESIDENT, COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES GROUP (CAG)



LIVE, WORK, AND PLAY IN OLD OTTAWA EAST 2025

For those of us who live in Old Ottawa East (OOE), we know this community may be the best-kept secret in the City. This is an amazing place to live, work, and play. We also know that OOE is transforming physically and demographically.

We are emerging from two very difficult years of COVID restrictions that have impacted our daily lives. This is an excellent time for us to come together and create a plan for how we can make life, work, and play in OOE even better by 2025.

The Community Activities Group

of Ottawa East (CAG) in partnership with the Old Ottawa East Community Association, will be engaging the community to build a plan that focuses on recreation, arts, fitness, knowledge/learning activities and events that you want to see in your neighbourhood. We invite you to get involved and have your say.

For such a relatively small slice of Ottawa's geography, OOE really has so much to offer. Let's take a minute to take stock. We have wonderful, well-used parks (Ballantyne, Brantwood, and Springhurst) and the Forecourt Park

at the Deschâtelets building is coming soon. The Children's Garden, Lees Avenue Community Garden, the Rideau River, and the historic Rideau Canal round out the physical features of this community. Multi-use pathways snake through and along our streets (with more on the way!) as well as Main Street, our well-implemented "complete-street."

Old Ottawa East is rated as a "moderate" 15-minute neighbourhood and we have excellent transit service running through our community provided by OC Transpo, which utilizes buses and our Lees Avenue LRT station. We offer outdoor winter ice skating on both the Brantwood Park rink (thank you Louis and your amazing crew of volunteers!), and direct access (and street parking) to the largest skating rink in the world on the Rideau Canal Skateway. We have two sets of tennis courts, baseball diamonds, and a full-sized soccer field. Springhurst Park hosts an excellent new children's play structure, ping-pong tables, and public use soccer nets. Old Town Hall hosts a splash pad and a play structure. Brantwood Park has a wading pool and an extensive children's play structure.

OOE is home to two university campuses (UOttawa Lees Campus and St. Paul University), two primary schools (Lady Evelyn and Au Coeur d'Ottawa),

two secondary schools (Immaculata High School and St. Nicholas Adult High School) and three child-care focused organizations (CAG, Rainbow Kidschool, and Riverside Montessori Pre-School). We have at least seven places of worship and one international embassy. We are home to many businesses - from bookstores to bicycle repair and sales, vegan food to pizza, dental offices, health care providers and a pharmacy - our OOE businesses make living here so much better. We also have City of Ottawa facilities in the Old Town Hall Community Centre, the Brantwood Fieldhouse, and the to-be-built Ottawa East Community Centre, which will be located in the Deschâtelets building. And we are within a short walk or cycle to the Alta Vista, Centretown, Downtown, Glebe, Ottawa South, and Sandy Hill communities. Without a doubt, Old Ottawa East has so much to offer.

So, let's think big. Let's work together to take advantage of all that our community has to offer. Let's ensure that what you want to do, and take part in, is happening in our neighbourhood! Get involved! Signup on the CAG website at www.ottawaeastcag.ca/contact and follow us on Facebook and Twitter to receive updates. More details are coming soon.

THE JAMES BALLANTYNE OOE ARCHIVES

THE SAWYER OF OLD OTTAWA EAST TAKES A BREATH

Hard work and physical exercise are the hallmarks of the village sawyers of the 1890s who earned their livelihood sawing wooden planks to length or cutting logs for fireplace use or for cooking in wood stoves.

Smoking a pipe while resting from the hard labour may not have been the healthiest complement to his job, but life was very different back then, and the pipe, along with the suspenders and brimmed hat, seem to have defined this early resident of Old Ottawa East.

We take great pride at *The Mainstreeter* in showcasing the outstanding works of Old Ottawa East photographers. Capturing the life and times of our community began with one of our founders, James Ballantyne, who amassed a huge collection of photos of his neighbourhood and the people who lived and worked here between the 1890s and the 1920s.

Throughout 2022, we will be featuring photos from the James Ballantyne Archives which the Ballantyne family donated to National Archives of Canada in 1981.



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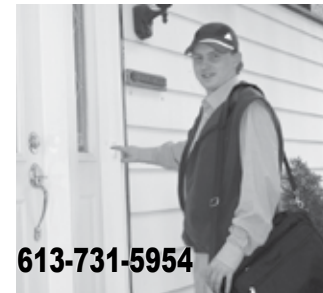
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Does urine leakage affect you?

Women's health studies now underway at UOttawa Lees Avenue campus

NADINE DAWSON

If you are still reading, either you're shocked by such an explicit question in a community newspaper and want to know what craziness follows, or else you leak urine.

Not that women call it that. It's the medical lingo for an experience that one in three women shares, and that nobody seems to talk about. Yes, we see the ads for adult "briefs." We hear whispers about Kegels while attending to our children in parks and school yards - children whom we may envy as

they hang upside down unconcerned from structures and run about playing with wild abandon. Who cares to share such intimate details of our lives, especially when the condition not only restricts our freedom but also threatens our well-being in myriad other ways? But wouldn't it be lovely to be so free again, to run without fear, to cough without embarrassment, to laugh with impunity?

Alas! Birthing children has long-term physical implications quite beyond lack of sleep and numbing fatigue. But while the condition of "leaking urine"

may be common, it is not normal, and it can be treated.

At the University of Ottawa's MFM Lab, Lees Avenue Campus, under the direction of Linda McLean, Ph.D., health care professionals, including pelvic-floor physiotherapists, are currently undertaking various studies involving women's health, including the kind of stress incontinence described here. They are actively recruiting participants for two studies relating generally to pelvic floor muscle activation and training. Sound intriguing?

Good news! You may be able to help. While there are specific eligibility criteria for each study, you may qualify for one or the other or both if you are vaccinated against COVID, female, and over 18. While neither study offers compensation or treatment, per se, both provide training and information as well as referrals that may be of personal benefit to individual participants. Furthermore, your participation will help expand knowledge of women's health with the potential to enhance the lives of women all over the world.

Participation is voluntary and confidential. For more information, please contact Silvia Saraiva, PT, at 613.562.5800 x7438 or mfmlab@uottawa.ca.

NOTRE COMMUNAUTE FRANCOPHONE

Des étudiants internationaux français

La diversité de l'Université Saint Paul ne connaît pas de frontières

ZACHARIE LANDRY

De toutes les institutions importantes du Vieil Ottawa Est, l'Université Saint-Paul se démarque comme une qui confirme le statut du quartier comme véritable flambeau multiculturel. L'université bilingue est l'endroit où plus d'un millier d'étudiants fréquentent leurs études postsecondaires. Parmi les personnes inscrites à l'Université Saint-Paul, l'école compte une population francophone importante. En particulier, il y a beaucoup d'étudiants internationaux français qui font leurs études à l'université.

Céline Nyinawumuntu est une étudiante dont l'expérience internationale va bien au-delà du Canada. Elle déclare: « Je suis d'origine rwandaise. J'ai donc fait mes études primaires au Rwanda ». Après avoir terminé ses études primaires au Rwanda, elle a poursuivi ses études secondaires en Europe, où elle a « grandi en Belgique dans la partie francophone ».

L'adolescence de Céline a essentiellement été très influencée par la langue française. « Ayant le goût du voyage, je suis allée m'installer en Angleterre », dit Céline. C'est au cœur de l'Angleterre qu'elle a découvert son « amour pour vivre dans la langue française ». Consciente de l'importance de la francophonie pour elle, Céline avait une décision à prendre quant à l'endroit où elle allait poursuivre ses études supérieures. « J'ai choisi le Canada parce que je ne connaissais pas l'Amérique du Nord, j'avais de la famille dans le pays et le Québec était francophone », se souvient Céline. Installée au Bas-Saint-Laurent, Céline a complété son baccalauréat à l'Université du Québec à Rimouski. Alors que Céline a essayé de trouver dans quelle institution poursuivre sa maîtrise, elle a découvert que « l'université de Saint-Paul est la seule qui propose une maîtrise en éthique publiques ».

Enfin, Céline dit qu'elle n'est pas déçue « par ce programme qui offre des cours d'une grande qualité et avec un corps professoral extrêmement varié, compétent et ouvert sur le monde ». Au temps de l'apprentissage en ligne, Céline déclare: « Je pense que l'enseignement à distance est une catastrophe certainement pour les niveaux d'étude en dessous de la maîtrise ». Personnellement, cependant, elle dit que « l'enseignement à distance dans ce temps de crise sanitaire a été



PHOTO FOURNIE

bénéfique pour ma situation d'étudiante au niveau de maîtrise », car elle a su « combiner plusieurs réalités ».

Joseph Jethro Sereme vient d'Haïti, où « la langue française cohabite avec la langue créole ». Tandis que la francophonie n'a pas fait partie d'un héritage culturel pour Joseph, « il y a eu une forte place pour la langue française », dit l'étudiant. Par exemple, il dit que les enfants haïtiens « reçoivent une éducation scolaire française dès leur jeune âge ».

Avant de faire le grand déménagement au Canada, Joseph n'a pas manqué d'expérience avec le pays. Il a passé des vacances au pays avec sa famille et a commencé à aimer le Canada. En raison de la passion de Joseph pour les affaires humanitaires, il a su qu'un programme axé sur les activités communautaires serait idéal pour lui. C'est pourquoi, aujourd'hui, Joseph « continue une Maîtrise en Innovation Sociale » à l'Université Saint-Paul. Conformément à son éducation, Joseph a « créé une plateforme en ligne 'VWA NOU' [en français VOIX COMMUNAUTAIRE], pour mettre la visibilité sur les initiatives communautaires des jeunes engagés dans leur communauté en Haïti ».

En parlant d'Ottawa, Joseph dit que la ville « peut être très difficile au

début ». « L'idée qu'on a de l'extérieur est que toutes les personnes qu'on croise dans la rue peuvent aisément être adressées dans les deux langues alors que la réalité est complètement différente », dit l'étudiant. Toutefois, Joseph connaît les avantages que le bilinguisme peut apporter tout en résidant dans une ville comme Ottawa. Dans l'ère des restrictions de COVID-19, Joseph a remarqué un impact considérable sur sa vie universitaire. « On manque le contact humain qui joue un rôle important dans les méthodes d'apprentissage ». En plus de ses études qui ont été affectées, plusieurs de ses projets, comme sa plateforme médiatique d'engagement communautaire VWA NOU, ont été retardés.

Pour Maria-Gabriella Namwezi Bayoya, le français est un outil qu'elle utilise en dehors de son cercle d'origine. Elle s'est familiarisée avec la langue à un jeune âge, ce qui l'a amenée à décider d'étudier en français plus tard dans sa vie. Le Canada a d'abord intéressé Maria-Gabriella lorsque des Canadiennes qu'elle a connu lui ont raconté leurs expériences dans le pays. Maria-Gabriella dit: « Elles parlaient en français, elles avaient une dynamique bien chaleureuse et surtout avaient parlé de l'hiver canadien d'une manière différente de ce que je croyais. J'avais une idée que ce n'était pas possible de vivre l'hiver. Elles avaient expliqué le chauffage des maisons,

l'habillement etc. Pourquoi pas essayer? ».

Au moment de choisir l'établissement qu'elle allait désigner comme source d'enseignement supérieur, elle avoue avoir rencontré quelques difficultés. En fin de compte, cependant, après avoir pris connaissance des programmes et de l'histoire de l'Université Saint-Paul, « je sentais que c'était là ce que je voulais être », dit Maria-Gabriella. Au bout du compte, elle sait que son intuition ne l'a pas trompée. Maria-Gabriella attribue sa décision de rester à l'Université Saint-Paul aux relations humaines entre les étudiants et les enseignants. Alors que des moments difficiles n'ont pas manqué, Maria-Gabriella a dit: « Je me sens être à ma place à Saint-Paul ».

Dans l'ensemble, Maria-Gabriella a « eu un bon accueil à Ottawa ». Cependant, elle dit: « arriver dans un nouveau milieu c'est comme renaître à nouveau et apprendre plein de Nouvelles choses. Même jusqu'à présent, je continue d'apprendre ». Les services les plus essentiels dont Maria-Gabriella a eu besoin pour s'établir à Ottawa ont été heureusement offerts en français, mais il ya encore des moments où les barrières de la langue peuvent lui causer des situations difficiles. Les cours à distance ont certainement influencé son expérience universitaire, mais Maria-Gabriella trouve toujours des moyens de ne pas en être aussi perturbée. Le fait que Saint-Paul « a donné des possibilités d'arriver quand-même à la bibliothèque même si les cours sont à distance », par exemple, a été un avantage pour Maria-Gabriella. Elle ne sait pas ce que l'avenir nous réserve, mais elle précise que: « j'ajuste mes plans et je navigue au rythme de la COVID ».

Les histoires de chacun de ces étudiants offrent un excellent aperçu de la façon dont l'Université Saint-Paul, et plus largement Ottawa, peut attirer des personnes du monde entier qui sont à la recherche de scolarité. La diversité de Saint Paul ne connaît pas de frontières, et les histoires et les expériences de ses étudiants internationaux francophones sont une preuve.

[An English language translation appears on the following page]

OUR FRANCOPHONE COMMUNITY

At SPU, language diversity abounds

International Francophone students are choosing Ottawa

ZACHARIE LANDRY

Of all the major institutions in Old Ottawa East, Saint Paul University stands out as one that confirms the neighborhood's status as a true multicultural beacon. More than 1,000 students attend to their post-secondary studies at the bilingual university. Among the students enrolled at Saint Paul University, there is a significant French-speaking population, including many French international students who have travelled to Old Ottawa East from around the globe to study at the university. In this article, we profile three of these students.

Céline Nyinawumuntu is a student whose international experience goes far beyond Canada. She explains that she is of Rwandan origin and did her primary studies in Rwanda. "Thereafter, she continued her secondary education in Europe, where she 'grew up in Belgium in the French-speaking part.'"

Céline's adolescence was very much influenced by the French language. "Having a taste for travel, I moved to England," says Céline. It was in the heart of England that she discovered her "love for living in the French language." Aware of the importance of the Francophonie to her, Céline had to make a decision about where she was going to pursue her higher education. "I chose Canada because I didn't know North America, but I had family in the country and Quebec was French-speaking," recalls Céline. Based in Bas-Saint-Laurent, Céline completed her bachelor's degree at the University of Quebec in Rimouski. As she explored options at which to pursue her master's degree, she discovered that "Saint-Paul University is the only university that offered a master's degree in public ethics."

Finally, Céline says that she is not disappointed "by this program which offers high quality courses and with an extremely varied, competent and open to the world faculty body." In the age of online learning, Céline says, "I think distance education is a disaster, certainly for levels of study below master's." Personally, however, she says that "distance education in this time of health crisis has been beneficial for my situation as a student at the master's level", because she has been able to "combine several realities."

Joseph Jethro Sereme comes from Haiti, where "the French language co-exists with the Creole language." While the Francophonie was not part of a cultural heritage for Joseph, "there was a strong place for the French language," says the student. For example, he says that Haitian children "receive a French school education from an early age."

Before making the move to Canada, Joseph had no shortage of experience with the country. He vacationed here with his family and came to love Canada. Because of Joseph's passion for humanitarian affairs, he knew that a program focused on community activities would be ideal for him. This is why, today, Joseph "is pursuing a Master's in Social Innovation" at Saint Paul University. In line with his upbringing, Joseph has "created an online platform 'VWA NOU' [in French

VOIX COMMUNAUTAIRE], to put visibility on the community initiatives of young people engaged in their community in Haiti."

Speaking of Ottawa, Joseph says the city "can be very difficult at first." "The idea we have from the outside is that everyone we meet in the street can easily be addressed in both languages, whereas the reality is completely different," says the student. However, Joseph knows the advantages that bilingualism can bring while residing in a city like Ottawa. In an era of COVID-19 restrictions, Joseph noticed a huge impact on his university life.



SUPPLIED PHOTOS

"We miss the human contact which plays an important role in learning methods." In addition to his studies which have been affected, several of his projects, such as his community engagement media platform VWA NOU, have been delayed.

For Maria-Gabriella Namwezi Bayoya, French is a tool she uses outside her circle of origin. She became familiar with the language at a young age, which led her to decide to study in French later in life. Canada first interested Maria-Gabriella when Canadian women she knew told her about their experiences in the country. Maria-Gabriella says: "They spoke in French, they had a very warm dynamic and above all talked about the Canadian winter in a way that was different from what I thought. I had an idea that it was not possible to live in winter. They had explained heating of houses, clothing, etc. Why not try?"

When choosing the institution she was going to designate as a source of higher education, she admits to

having encountered some difficulties. Ultimately, however, after learning about Saint Paul University's programs and history, "I felt that was where I wanted to be," says Maria-Gabriella. At the end of the day, she knows that her intuition has been sound.

Maria-Gabriella attributes her decision to stay at Saint Paul University to the human relationship between students and teachers. While difficult times have arisen, Maria-Gabriella said: "I feel like I belong in Saint-Paul."

Overall, Maria-Gabriella "was well received in Ottawa." However, she says, "Coming to a new environment is like being reborn again and learning lots of new things. Even this far along, I am still learning." The most essential services, including Maria-Gabriella's needs to settle in Ottawa, were fortunately offered in French, but there are still times when language barriers cause her some difficulties.

Distance learning certainly affected her university experience, but Maria-Gabriella always finds ways not to be disturbed by it. The fact that Saint-Paul "allowed students access to the library even if the courses are at a distance," for example, was an advantage for Maria-Gabriella. She does not know what the future holds for us, but she specifies that: "I am adjusting my plans and I am navigating to the rhythm of COVID."

The stories of each of these students provide insight into how Saint Paul University, and Ottawa more broadly, can attract people from around the world who are seeking tuition. The diversity of Saint Paul knows no borders, and the stories and experiences of its French-speaking international students are proof positive.

POLITICAL PAGES

JIM WATSON MAYOR, OTTAWA

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HELPING OUR BUSINESSES REBOUND ONCE AND FOR ALL

February was nothing short of a nightmare for the people of Ottawa, especially for those living, working and running businesses in the downtown core. I want to take this opportunity to thank them for their patience and resilience during that time.

A special thanks also goes to the Ottawa Police Service and the officers from other law enforcement agencies from across the country that worked in lockstep to carry out a measured and effective plan to restore peace and reclaim our streets in Ottawa's downtown following a weeks-long occupation. And to all the frontline workers, first responders and City staff who put in countless hours and tireless efforts during a long month – thank you.

With that said, businesses in the downtown core were some of the hardest hit over the last few years, following several pandemic-related lockdowns in Ontario and then the many weeks of closure as a result of the occupation.

While municipalities in Ontario do not have the ability to provide direct financial assistance to businesses, Council passed various motions at a meeting last month that will give them a leg up in the coming weeks and months. These include:

- A deferral of interim 2022 property taxes for affected businesses in the areas impacted by the occupation;
- Providing a total of \$450,000 to affected Business Improvement Areas, Business Associations and the Ottawa Markets Corporation;
- Approving a funding contribution of \$50,000 to the Ottawa Music Industry Coalition to deliver an expanded City Sounds outdoor concert series in 2022;
- Expanding no-charge transit to include service on O-Train Line 1 until March 27; and
- Approving free parking at downtown City-owned surface lots and garages through March 31.

In addition, I want to thank the provincial and federal governments for their business relief funding to cover some costs incurred during the demonstration. While this is a good first step, I continue to urge both levels of government to also cover lost wages for employees who were significantly affected during this period.

I know these measures are just a starting point to encourage residents and visitors to return to our downtown core to enjoy our vibrant neighbourhoods and experience the beauty of our nation's capital. As we begin to see restrictions lifting across the province, I want to thank all those who continue to follow advice from our public health experts to keep ourselves and our neighbours safe. COVID-19 is still present in our community, and while we still need to be cautious, we must also find a way to learn to live with the virus.

For details related to the business support package, please visit www.ottawa.ca.

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ADVOCATING FOR A LOVED ONE IS NOT A CRIME

Earlier this week, I helped a Peterborough family defy a trespass order. The action was significant, and the stakes were high.

Diane Tamblyn had been issued a notice of trespass from St. Joseph's at Fleming long-term care home. The home alleged Diane had "harassed staff" and would be limited in how and when she accessed the home where her father John lives.

John had been living at St. Joseph's since he moved out of Diane's home last August. He needed 24/7 support and was up six to seven times per night. Diane and her husband Dave could no longer manage on their own.

I met Diane through advocates we had worked with to pass Voula's Law at the Ontario Legislature in March 2021. That work saw all MPPs in Ontario agree that trespass orders should not be used when family members make reasonable complaints about the living conditions of loved ones in care homes.

Prior to this week, Diane had made several reasonable complaints about her father's living conditions. She saw staff working unmasked in her dad's room during the height of the Omicron wave of COVID-19. She had video recordings of staff stepping over her father after he fell in his room, making no effort to help him up. Diane began noticing John had many bruises and was frequently refused baths.

When she raised her concerns with St. Joseph's management, no serious action was taken. So she contacted Ministry of Long-Term Care officials and discovered that others had done likewise. St Joseph's has had six critical incident inspections and five complaints-driven inspections in the last two years.

Diane also attended the Family Council at St. Joseph's to raise concerns, only to be refused an opportunity to speak. One meeting ended after only a few minutes - the meeting convenors turned the lights off and left the room. The trespass order forbade Diane from attending any future Family Council meetings.

So Diane asked me to accompany her to a Family Council meeting this week in defiance of the trespass order. I agreed, as did Maria Sardelis (the Ottawa resident whose story inspired Voula's Law).

We entered the home and signed in with COVID-19 protocols. Another family caregiver met us and walked us into the meeting room. Present were four families, all of whom had concerns.

After some discussion, a management representative appeared at the door. We were asked "if we needed anything", and family caregivers responded by saying "we need you and staff representatives in this meeting."

The management representative refused, claiming she was meeting with "Health Ministry officials" upstairs. She said "the Family Council meeting had been cancelled."

The families were irate. "You were given 30 days notice to attend this meeting", they said, "and now you back out at the last minute?"

Bemused, the management rep turned on her heels and left. Discussion continued, and I heard disturbing stories of harassment, assault, and disrespect in this home.

Advocating for a loved one is NOT a crime. Folks worked hard to establish Voula's Law in Ontario, and we are not going backwards. We will hold this ground.

That is what Diane Tamblyn did this week, and that is what we must do in the weeks, months and years ahead.

POLITICAL PAGES

SHAWN MENARD COUNCILLOR-ELECT, CAPITAL WARD

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LOTS OF NEW CITY PROJECTS SUPPORTING OLD OTTAWA EAST

As the weather begins to turn, and spring is upon us, so too is construction season. This year, we have a plethora of important projects in Capital Ward, including a number in Old Ottawa East

Brantwood Tennis Courts

This fall, we expect to see the reconstruction of the tennis courts at Brantwood Park. We have heard from park users since the courts have fallen into disrepair, and we know how well they are used.

Our office is funding the upgrade through \$305,000 in cash-in-lieu of parkland funds to move this project forward and make it a priority.

Some factors that complicate the project are the presence of potentially contaminated soils, which will be investigated this spring, while City contractors continue to catch up on projects that were delayed due to supply chain issues resulting from the pandemic.

Construction should take about 6 to 8 weeks to complete. It will occur on both courts simultaneously.

Deschâtelets and Forecourt Park

We are so pleased that we will see the new Old Ottawa East Community Centre in the Deschâtelets building at Greystone Village and the construction of a brand-new park. There will be three zoom consultations on the construction of the Forecourt Park and design of the Community Centre held at the end of April. Each session will be bilingual, with a short presentation and opportunities for questions. The consultations will also cover questions of bus (and potentially other vehicle) access to the fire lane in front of the building. They will be hosted through Engage Ottawa, with opportunities to submit questions and comments both before and after the session. You should be able to see the sessions populated by early April by going here - <https://engage.ottawa.ca/community-centre-en>

Affordable Housing in Old Ottawa East

The community centre and new park are significant for our neighbourhood, but we have also been pushing to see affordable housing in our community.

We are working with the French Catholic School Board (CECCE) and Ottawa Community Housing (OCH) to expedite affordable housing for seniors in the upper two floors of the Deschâtelets building. Both OCHC and CECCE are committed to ensuring the successful delivery of the housing and as this year advances and designs are refined, they will be able to provide updates on scope and scheduled delivery of the new housing units.

Greenfield-Main-Hawthorne Reconstruction

This is a big project that will affect the major transportation links through the neighbourhood. Sewer reconstruction in the Main Street and Colonel By Drive area has now been completed and staff have most of the watermain in on Echo Drive and Main. Road closure extensions until June are required to facilitate a safer intersection at Main and Colonel By. In the coming months, staff anticipate that they will complete watermain installation and testing, install the traffic plant at the northeast corner of Main and Colonel By, and reinstate temporary granular/cold patch asphalt where needed.

Thermoplastic signage, final pavement markings and full functionality of the intersection for pedestrians and bikes will be completed once the adjacent cycle and pedestrian facilities on Main Street are built as part of the upcoming multi-year construction contract, which is scheduled to be tendered within the next few months.

There are significant but necessary infrastructure works over the next couple of years for Greenfield, Hawthorne, Concord, Echo, Harvey, Montcalm and Main. Some disruptions will result, but we are committed to mitigating them. Once completed, we will have safe, more inviting and more accessible streets for all to enjoy.

YASIR NAQVI MP, OTTAWA CENTRE

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STANDING UP WITH UKRAINE

Over the last few weeks, we have seen the situation deteriorate in Ukraine. Nonetheless, Canada's support for Ukraine, for democracy, and for human rights remains unwavering. Our government proudly stands with our allies and partners to support Ukraine.

Already, the federal government has committed more than \$150 million in humanitarian and development aid to Ukraine, including support for emergency health services, water, food, and shelter. We also committed to match up to \$30 million in individual Canadians' donations to the Canadian Red Cross for its Ukraine Humanitarian Crisis Appeal. To help Ukrainians get to safety, we are also creating two new immigration streams for those fleeing the war who want to come to Canada temporarily or permanently. There will be no limit to how many Ukrainians that Canada is willing to accept. We are urgently issuing travel documents to Canadian citizens and permanent residents who are currently in Ukraine, and their immediate family members. We are also prioritizing immigration applications for Ukrainians who want to come to Canada.

To deter Russian and help end the illegal invasion of Ukraine, we have imposed economic sanctions on hundreds of Russian and Belarussian individuals and entities involved in this unjustifiable aggression, including Vladimir Putin, his inner circle, Russian oligarchs and critical Russian industries. Our government is also committed to the removal of Russian banks from the SWIFT payment system, paralyzing Russia's ability to use its international reserve assets to finance its invasion of Ukraine. We are also banning Russian crude oil imports into Canada. Furthermore, Canadian airspace is now closed to all Russian aircraft operators.

In addition to the previous three shipments of military equipment, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced that Canada is sending additional military equipment to Ukraine in response to Russia's invasion. Canada stands ready to send another \$50 million in specialized equipment, including Canadian-made cameras for surveillance drones, to help Ukraine defend itself against the Russian invasion.

Our government has taken tough and immediate action to support Ukraine from the beginning. Through economic, and political sanctions, investments in humanitarian, and development aid in Ukraine, our government stands united with our allies and partners to end this aggression. Our community in Ottawa Centre will be there to support the Ukrainian community. As a reminder, my office remains available to assist with any individual cases related to the situation in Ukraine and can provide further information on the new measures if needed.

Additionally, following the unlawful demonstrations that took place in downtown Ottawa, Greg Fergus, MP for Hull-Aylmer and I wrote a joint letter to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs to request a review of the Parliamentary Precinct, with a view to expand it. This will protect the safety of our downtown residents and businesses, bring peace to our communities and ensure that MPs and their staff members can continue their work free from harassment and intimidation. These preventive measures will ensure that the unlawful occupation of downtown Ottawa never happens again.

Also, I am pleased to be appointed to be a member of the Special Joint Committee on the Declaration of Emergency. As a member of the Committee, I will ensure that this is a procedurally fair process and that the perspectives of our community in Ottawa Centre are heard.

We have gone through a difficult time and once again our community has come together to support those in need. Please do not hesitate to reach out to my office if there is anything we can assist you with by emailing Yasir.Naqvi@parl.gc.ca or call us at 613 946 8682.



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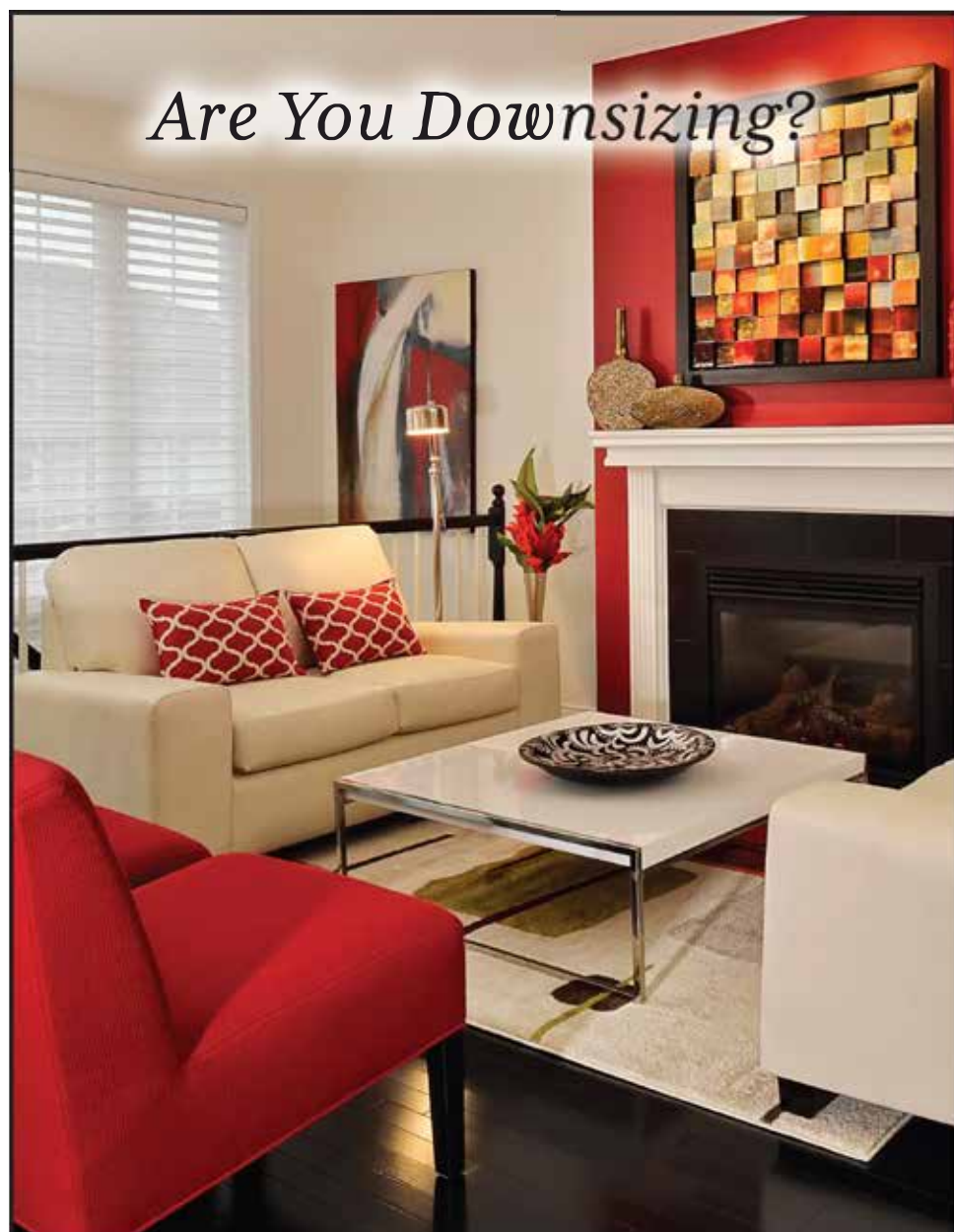
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Aging in place in the community

What comes next?

MAURA GIULIANI

Drat! I am getting old (“No, Mom,” my kids would say, “you are old.”).

I am only in my early eighties and reasonably healthy, but I do worry because I am alone. How long will I be able to get the kitchen floor washed each week, hang up my laundry and drag that vacuum around? Will I be able to stay in my house, tend my garden and walk around this neighborhood forever?

I know most of my neighbours, and almost everything I want is close by – the Rideau River, the Green Door, and Brantwood Park. I can still drive, but that might not last. If I really want to stay here, I should probably be looking into the possibility of getting help. Even though I enjoy shopping for food, grocery stores will deliver.

In truth, I don't know what help might be available if my health deteriorates. What if I broke a hip? That has happened to friends. Will Public Health offer something? Can I afford a private agency? I realize that I need to think about these things before I truly need them.

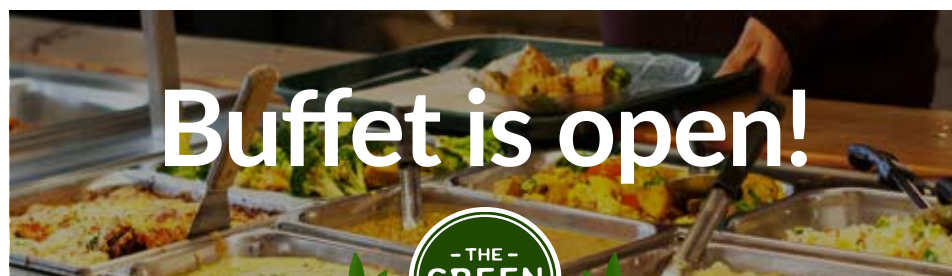
Senior Watch Old Ottawa South (SWOOS, a committee of Old Ottawa South's community association) has recently formed a small group to look at the availability of in-home services for older adults in our area who want to age in place. It's not an ideal time, with resources skewed by COVID. Many of the established private agencies are experiencing staff shortages, as are public health services. But the group is determined to get started.

SWOOS has started to solicit informal information from seniors in central Ottawa about their in-home aging experiences. Some of the questions they hope to get answered include: In the last couple of years, have you been able to find the help you need to avoid moving into some form of assisted living? How did you go about it? Were your experiences negative or positive? What advice would you offer to others?

[Maura Giuliani is a member of SWOOS and resides in Old Ottawa South.]



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Make way Loch Ness Nellie, move over Kraken...

Here comes the amazing Amphibex!

JOHN DANCE

The annual spring migration of the exotic and ungainly Amphibex to the shores of the Rideau River is one of the sure signs of the arrival of spring in Old Ottawa East and its neighbouring river communities.

The Amphibex is not a rare, winged creature that birders anxiously await but rather a massive and unique vessel from northern New Brunswick. With its crew of two and back-up support team of four, it slowly creeps upstream from Rideau Falls, chomping away at the thick ice cover, breaking it into bits so that an ice dam won't form and cause severe flooding in the low-lying Brantwood Park neighbourhood and elsewhere.

The Amphibex - short for Amphibious Excavator - starts its work after City staff have done the initial ice-clearing work which begins at the end of January. This involves "cutting keys," which are long narrow slices of the ice surface, and then blasting the adjacent ice so that rather than having giant slabs floating to Rideau Falls just south of Sussex, much smaller pieces are able to readily get through the sluice gates and fall into the Ottawa River.

The operations of the Amphibex are mesmerizing as the operator uses the machine's backhoe to break off and then smash large pieces of ice. The craft has two large stabilizer pontoons so that the rocking of the craft does not make it capsize. It also has a massive engine that powers the backhoe's hydraulics and the propeller that allows the Amphibex to pursue and destroy large floes that escape the initial smashing efforts.

The crew takes about six weeks to break up the ice all the way to Bank



FRANCES WOOLEY PHOTO

The Amphibex, a massive ice-munching vessel seen here on the Rideau River near Brantwood Park, is a sure harbinger of spring.

Street. When they are done, their ECO Technologies' craft is transported by a flatbed truck to other locations in eastern Canada where it is used for dredging operations.

Before the arrival of the Amphibex in 2002, all of the Rideau River ice-breaking activity was done by blasting which has greater risks of affecting the river ecology and is more labour-intensive and dangerous.

The ice-breaking effort is just one part of the City's 'spring freshet planning and flood preparedness.' "The term freshet is commonly used to describe a large increase of water discharged in a river during

spring months due to snow melt and sometimes rainfall," notes a press release from the City.

As is evident on the City's "GeoOttawa" site, much of the area around Brantwood Park is part of the Rideau's flood plain and in the spring much of Brantwood Park is often submerged. The neighbourhood to the west is protected by the berm below Onslow Crescent. In the event of flooding, the City provides sand for sandbags.

In 2019, the Rideau River Conservation Authority installed a "stream gauge" to measure the river level at Brantwood Park. Unfortunately, at this writing, the gauge was not working. "The sensor may have been permanently damaged during the cold snap in January,"

the RVCA's Justin Robert says. "I am unable to replace the sensor at this time as it is anchored at depth to the bottom of the river."

The good news is that, based on current weather forecasts, RVCA's "model calculations indicate that flows are unlikely to exceed 300 cubic metres per second this year (i.e., well below the threshold associated with flooding in the Brantwood Park region)."

In 2019, the City installed a "staff gauge" at Brantwood Park and this allows validation of readings from the stream gauge and can be viewed easily by anyone.



JOHN DANCE PHOTO

Pictured here against the backdrop of the LRT and UOttawa Lees Campus, the Amphibex is safer and more ecological than blasting.

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