

# the bridge

Connecting people, places and ideas across our city from the downtown east

SE Corner Church and King **3** Bruce Bell    Reconnecting Community **6** Jesse Cohoon    Street Names & the Missing Virgin **8** Coralina Lemos

## Small businesses face slugging match during lockdown

Andre Berman, Publisher

In a winner-take-all contest, the business fight to survive against the novel coronavirus heavyweight has seen many Ma and Pa shops swinging from the ropes.

Since the March shutdown imposed by the province, economic activity has slowed to a crawl. Many businesses have closed their doors or are struggling to cope with restrictive quarantine measures. To offset revenue losses, the

federal government swiftly allocated funds in the form of no-interest loans, wage subsidies and, most recently, an agreement with the provinces that could lower commercial rents by 75 percent. But even with all these tools

at their disposal, small businesses are having a tough time accessing much-needed credit. And without policies tailored to their specific needs, some may have to throw in the towel. “I don’t know how [long] we can survive and how much we

can handle,” laments Vincent Ashkan, co-owner of Cham-sine, a halal restaurant on the corner of Queen and Sherbourne streets.

Businesses continued on p4



Lineups outside of grocery stores and other establishments have become commonplace since the lockdown began.

Photo: Tania Correa

## ‘Is this just the tip of the iceberg?’

Phil E. Roth, columnist

The COVID-19 outbreak has not only captured our attention in the news, it is evident in how we work, live and play these past weeks. By now, we have all conformed to modify

our daily lives and routines. Change that is unwanted is often perceived as a necessary annoyance and generally regarded as a pain in the anatomy. Yet it is crucial to continue to act responsibly as civic duties demand of us, whether we like

it or not. The question remains what is still to come? What other prohibitions, restrictions and sacrifices will follow? The full economic consequences have yet to be determined, however life as we know it - will be

drastically different - from the blissful one we knew before. Are we prepared for this new reality? Lamentations of cabin fever are more common than we care to admit. As spring arrives with warmer temperatures, our dis-

cipline will be put to the test. Early indications show that far-reaching change will be permanent. Many hope and look forward to an early and rapid end to the pandemic. However is that truly realistic?

Roth continued on p6



## COVID-19: Cresting The Wave

Ben Bull

As our battered city rides the crest of the COVID-19 wave, two key questions emerge: how will lockdown restrictions be removed, and when will things get back to normal? The Public Health Agency of Canada has stated that we must be on the downside of the curve before current restrictions can be removed. We must also ensure that healthcare fa-

cilities have the capacity and equipment to deal with new cases. We will also need robust testing and contact tracing to detect and contain new outbreaks. Contact tracing measures must be implemented with care. Some contact tracing apps automatically upload personal data from your phone. What happens to this data once your recent contacts have been notified? And how much data

should be captured in the first place? We will need to balance our right to privacy with the need for increased vigilance. Effective testing and the ability to manage further outbreaks, or ‘waves’, will be key to avoiding another lockdown. In the United States, a recent white paper from Harvard University’s Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics states that our neighbours to the south need to be “testing millions of people

per day to allow a significant return to the workforce.” The paper also calls for a contact tracing plan, and recommends public alerts and hot-spot maps. In Ontario, initial containment measures were unable to prevent the spread of the virus. When we do finally head back outside, our containment measures cannot fail.

Wave continued on p7



Connecting people,  
places and ideas  
across our city from  
the downtown east

## the bridge

is an independent community newspaper published monthly and distributed by a mix of delivery services to a varying readership. Over 3000 copies are circulated throughout the downtown east - Moss Park, Corktown, The Garden District, Cabbagetown South, the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood - and to community hubs that extend across Toronto.

*the bridge* strives to source up-to-date activity and diverse interests from heritage, planning, culture, development, arts and opinions that advocate a collaborative level playing field forum.

Publisher: Andre Michael Bermon

Copy Editor: Eric Mills

Designer: Patrick Lee

Photographer: Tania Correa

Questions, comments or queries?

[thebridgedowntown@gmail.com](mailto:thebridgedowntown@gmail.com)

260 Adelaide Street East Toronto,  
On M5A 1N1 Box 12

## From the Publisher

In a time of economic downturn some industries thrive while many others wane.

Print media, notably local newspapers, are especially susceptible to the cyclical nature of recessions; dependant on advertising products of businesses, when the economy falters revenue dries up.

Each subsequent slump is a new nail in the coffin. And before you know it, the familiar pages of your local periodical are sealed and buried six feet under.

This was the unfortunate case for three of the Neighbourhood Voice papers; Beach-East York, Bloor West-Parkdale, and York City-Centre each saw their final editions published in April.

David Nickle of Toronto.com reported that financial difficulties prompted the decision for their closure.

The disappearance of print over the past couple of decades goes beyond vulnerable revenue models. Technology has been at the forefront of this change, introducing new consumer habits and ways people ingest information.

Despite utterances that the future must be “smart,” virtual and instantaneous, the communal aspect of the tangible, local newspaper, a standard

medium for hundreds of years, is by no means obsolete

Tasked with collecting and circulating neighbourhood news, from Grandma’s bake sale to questioning decisions of City Hall, the community newspaper provides a ready made platform for those who wish to air out their beef.

Community journalism, like all investigative reporting, is a proven value for governance and a litmus test to the state of our democratic traditions.

But beyond the face value, there are certain nuances of picking up the neighbourhood “rag” that gives the vastness of the urban jungle a more discernable small town feel; a reminder of what makes our community unique.

As we continue to weather the coronavirus storm and hunker from the effects of this recession, *the bridge* will be there every month to bring the lowdown of what’s going on in the downtown east.

Of course, this can’t be done without community involvement.

Send us a story, advertise in our paper, or just say hello.

Your support is our building block to help make *the bridge* a unifying voice in the city.

*Andre Michael Bermon,*  
*Publisher.*

## flux + form

J E W E L L E R Y

wedding + custom + ready-to-wear + re-use



## Our Art. Your Story.

116 1/2 Sherbourne St. Toronto | [fluxandform.com](http://fluxandform.com)  
(416) 368-9679 | [@fluxandform](https://www.instagram.com/fluxandform)

Still available for virtual appointments.

We miss you!

# Like what you see?

# Want to contribute?

# Let us know!

[thebridgedowntown@gmail.com](mailto:thebridgedowntown@gmail.com)

**the bridge**  
Connecting people, places and ideas across our city from the downtown east

## Meals in the time of distancing Grow for the Moss Park Market

Giving food and sharing meals is the most basic and affirming thing people do. It’s a sign of welcome and hospitality around the world and opens the way to deeper relations.

You may not know that much of the produce at the Moss Park Market is donated by farmers, and some is grown by our own tiny volunteer-powered urban farm in the east end.

In this difficult spring of 2020, we can’t meet over a meal – a sore loss of fellowship. So we’re inviting you to share a meal in a different way: growing a little for the market.

We’re looking for 20 people to grow a small plot each, 1 metre by 2 (about 3 feet by 6). You might grow beets or beans, cucumbers or carrots or cilantro, tomatoes or hot peppers ... you get the idea.

If you haven’t grown vegetables before, this is your chance to develop a new skill with support from our gardener. It’s very satisfying to see a tiny seed develop into ... food for a person to eat!

Building Roots can supply seed, help with suggestions, and post photos of your developing plot. Ideally, you would bring the harvest to the market, but we have capacity to do some harvesting.

If you have grown vegetables



before, we’d love you to take on some of the trickier veggies – for example, carrots that need deep soil and constant moisture while they germinate.

To be part of this Meals in

a Time of Distancing, let us know at [www.buildingroots.ca](http://www.buildingroots.ca)

And if you have friends and neighbours who are gardeners or would like to give this a try, pass the message on!



# SE corner of Church and King



Bruce Bell, Senior Columnist

The three small buildings at 107, 109 and 111 King E have been silent spectators to almost every major event that has happened in this city since they were first built back in 1834.

They were onlookers in 1837 as soldiers marched past their doorway on their way to crush Mackenzie's rebellion and later from their upper floor windows people watched in quiet protest as the rebel leaders were hanged across the street a year later.

The buildings miraculously survived the Great Fire of 1849, which destroyed their neighbours including St. James' Cathedral; and were around when the new Cathedral, the one we have today opened its doors in 1853.

They saw the first sidewalks in Toronto laid outside their doors; the first street gaslights lit followed by electric ones; felt the roar of the first streetcars to roll by; witnessed the great tides of immigration to flood this city in the mid 19th century and were there to celebrate the 1867 Confederation.

They have survived war, fire, urban renewal, and even Andy Warhol.

The first business to make 107 King E home was Joseph Rogers' Fur and Hat Manufacturer where one of Canada's greatest painters Paul Kane, be-

fore he got famous, was hired to paint the sign that was to hang from the front door.

On November 22, 1848 fire broke out in the block that housed the Joseph Rogers store and it was there that William Thornton became the first Toronto firefighter to die in the line of duty.

The store was rebuilt, and Roger's son and later grandson stayed on at 107 King Street running the business to at least the mid 1870's.

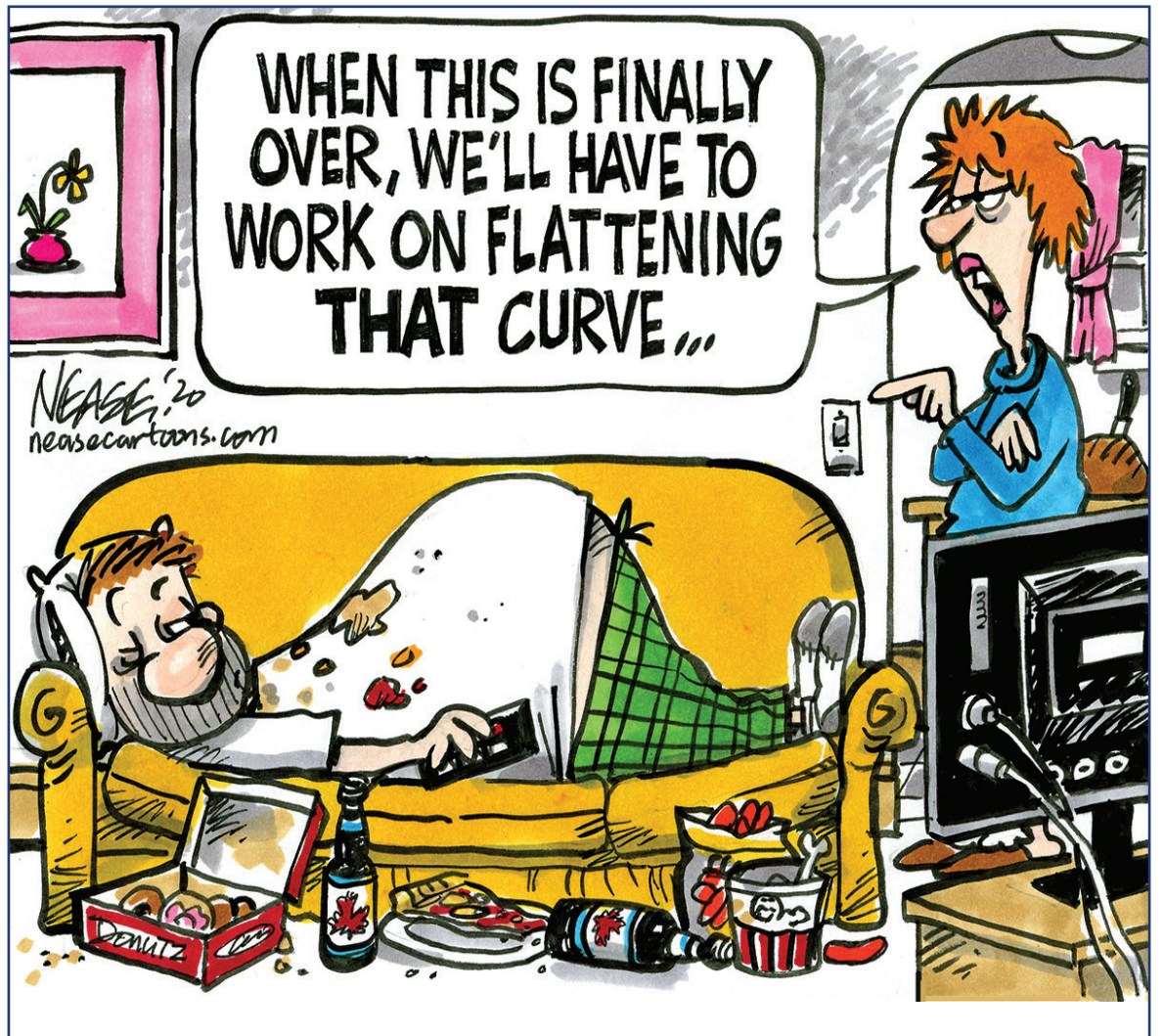
In 1891 Mrs. Gallagher's Foreign and Domestic Fruits moved into 107 King, and next door at 109-111 'The Great London and Liverpool One Price Clothing House' took up residence (presently La Maguette Restaurant). Today on the façade of 107 King you can still see the tiny remains of the iron hooks imbedded into the stone that once held Gallagher's awning.

In 1893, on its east side stood Oak Hall, one of the most impressive stores in late 19th century Toronto, the site of the present day Sculpture Garden (1981).

This gentleman's clothing emporium at 4 stories high with floor to ceiling windows and 12 Greek Goddess statues adorning the façade was sadly demolished in 1938, however it did create that terrific vista of St. James' Cathedral we have today.

After the demise of Oak Hall, King Street E started its descent into a series of 2nd hand clothing outlets, machine shops, and empty store fronts.

However, by the late 1950's the upstairs at 107 King Street E became the art studio to one of the most celebrated painters in Canada, Tom Hodgson a



founding member of the highly influential group of abstract artists known as the Painters Eleven.

This group that also included other notable Canadian artists Jack Bush, Alexandra Luke, Jock MacDonald, Kazuo Nakamura and Harold Town was formed in 1953 and by the time the group formally disbanded in 1960, Tom's King Street studio dubbed The Pit was the coolest place to be in pre-hippy era Toronto.

It would be there, in what was then a very depressed area of town that Tom would host some of the wildest parties this city had ever seen up to that time.

Local artist Don George once

told me he remembers going to the Pit one night when coldcuts were being served on the bodies of nude women lying atop the buffet table all the while naked young art students swung shamelessly from a rope across the studio's floor.

During the years (c1960-c1967) Hodgson lived and worked at his King Street E studio the people and parties, not to mention the work, kept on coming.

One of the great local myths that still abounds to this day is whether or not Pop Art icon, Andy Warhol, when visiting Toronto would spend time at the Pit (Tom the last surviving member of the Painters Eleven died in 2006).

Beginning in the early 1980's King Street East which up until then had spent the last half century in decay began its way back to recovery.

In 2003 107 & 109 King E were completely renovated by developers Michael and Anne Tippin and today the two buildings (their ground floors joined) are home to a restaurant called Score on King, and its patio facing Church Street was once the site of an elegant French styled hotel called The Edinburgh (demolished c1960).

Toronto has very few buildings that date back to our city's founding so having these three is a treasure that must be preserved for many generations to come.



Church and King today and c1900



Castillo Candle  
YIELD, Saint Augustine

**Modern goods for your home.**

**MoY**

www.merchantofyork.com  
181 Queen Street East  
647-343-6405



## Finding rent money a primary concern

Businesses from p1

Because Ashkan's family business is new in the neighbourhood, his payroll and 2019 tax records don't qualify it for the \$40,000 Canadian Emergency Business Account loan.

Others are also barred simply by the way their business operates.

Carey Pearson and two partners run the Flux & Form jewellery store as self-employed sole proprietors, a common status among smaller retailers. Because they too lack a payroll, a government business loan is beyond their reach.

"Our business dropped by 80-90 per cent since we are part of the wedding industry, and because most of our suppliers are closed," wrote Pearson in an email to *the bridge*. "We are still able to pay our rent ... for now, but with no new business it will be the months ahead when we will really need support."

Finding rent money has been a primary concern for businesses that pay a premium to have their shops downtown.

Under the new Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) benefit, landlords can receive 50 per cent of the rent for April, May and June in forgivable loans to



Many businesses have boarded up since the March shutdown. Photo: Tania Correa

cover a rental drop of at least 75 percent. Tenant businesses would pay the remaining 25 percent.

Seen as a viable lifeline, CECRA comes with one major caveat: the landlord must agree.

"The relationship I have with my landlord is all business. There is nothing personal there," said Ash Farrelly, owner of the local favourite George Street Diner. "I am hoping that he will honour what the government says ... I don't know if he is willing to lose

that 25 percent."

The program is expected to be operational by mid-May.

Even with such benefits, concern is growing about how businesses will operate when the economy opens, in view of social distancing rules.

"How many people will be allowed into the restaurant?" said Farrelly. "Are we going to allow 25 people in and stagger them? ... Can [we] survive on 20 people every hour?"

Many more questions remain in the long fight ahead.

## Gooderham & Worts Distillery Grain Delivery

George Hume

The Distillery District has become a destination for entertainment, shopping and dining amid historic industrial artifacts and architecture. How the complex worked and prospered during its working life is difficult to understand by just strolling around. There are displays and explanations, but it can still be difficult to envisage how things worked.

Visitors often miss one such process: the ingenious manner in which the grain was delivered to the mill for grinding at the initial steps to make alcohol.

The Gooderham & Worts firm made their beverages and industrial products from sugar and water. Initially, the sugar was obtained from fermenting grain, and later from molasses. Many of the processes were highly scientific and some were crude but required highly developed craftsmanship, while some were simply crude by modern standards.

Handling the grain in the quantities being processed was done using a crude processes.

In the 1850s the company planned to build the large



A remnant of a pulley system can still be seen today.

Photo: George Hume

stone distillery that is a major feature of the site. Other entrepreneurs, railway builders, were planning the first railway from Montreal to enter the city along what is now Mill Street, the northern limit of the Gooderham property at the time, and an extension of what is now The Esplanade. But the Gooderhams convinced the railway builders to move the route south along what was then the waterfront and Good-

erham's wharf.

The revised route allowed the construction of the new distillery adjacent to both the railway and the docks, which simplified both delivery and shipping. Since the rail line had to swing north to run along the harbour, the new building was set at an angle to the other distillery buildings and to the street grid of the city.

Several tracks were eventually constructed between the

## Dixon Hall Helping All

# DIXON HALL

By Laura Stenberg, Director, Philanthropy & Communications

Dixon Hall is no stranger to providing community support. Since 1929 the organization has offered food, friendship and resources to people in need in downtown east Toronto – particularly those living in Regent Park and Moss Park. This year, the challenges presented by Covid-19 have put the strengths and history of Dixon Hall to the test. However, staff, volunteers, donors and supporters heard the call and responded powerfully.

On any given day, Dixon Hall offers more than 60 programs and services for clients of all ages and backgrounds. Although the pandemic and the challenges presented by physical distancing have meant modifications and adjustments, a large majority of these programs still operate.

All of Dixon Hall's shelters and respite sites remain open, and we are overseeing additional sites and spaces to help keep our clients safe. Even amidst the pandemic we are working towards our number one goal: helping clients access permanent housing. We have housed 15 people since the pandemic began!

Our Seniors team is working diligently to ensure uninterrupted Meals on Wheels service in Cabbagetown and other downtown east neighbourhoods. Increased demand and enhanced cleaning practices, combined

with the need for Personal Protective Equipment for volunteers and staff, have stretched our team's resources. But our clients are cared for, which is their priority. We've also started virtual programming to help seniors stay connected; so far we're seeing great results and lots of smiles.

Offering programs and supports online, our Employment Services is having some success in helping folks find employment even during these challenging times.

Young clients are also receiving programs from a safe distance. Almost all our Music School lessons are happening virtually, and our Children & Youth department offers yoga, cooking, drumming and other options online.

We're also helping ensure that everyone in need has access to food. Dixon Hall normally provides two community meals per week. At present, thanks to generous supporters, we're offering five take-away meals per week. No one leaves Dixon Hall hungry.

How we deliver programs and services might look different, but our care for the community is entirely unchanged. We hope to see you all again soon, safely, during the brighter days ahead. For more information about our programs and services, or to volunteer or donate, visit: [www.dixonhall.org](http://www.dixonhall.org)

building and the waterfront, but the track closest to the building was always a spur line to service the growing business. Records show that the distillery could store 15,000 bushels, just one week's worth of grain when the plant was working at capacity. Railway cars of the time might have carried 500 bushels each, so 30 cars per week were required to supply the mill.

To move the cars into position for unloading, the distillery employed a car-pulling winch in the southeast corner of the stone building. Pulleys that guided the cable out of the building can still be seen near the current sidewalk (see photo). This device allowed operators to pull cars without needing a locomotive each time a car had to be moved. The cable would be wound around a slowly rotating winch inside the building. Tightening the cable would make it move with the winch. Slackening it would allow the winch to turn inside the coil of cable.

Grain from the rail car was poured into a hopper below

the floor inside the building. Evidence of the access door to this hopper can be seen beside the pulleys. From the hopper, the grain would be taken to the top of the mill on a grain elevator. This elevator consisted of an endless chain or belt with wooden or metal cups, which ran continuously while the hopper was being filled. The elevator was powered from a belt run off the line shaft that powered other equipment including the winch.

This is one of the many clues that can illuminate the activities of this Victorian industrial site. There are more scattered over the site.

*George Hume is a resident of the Distillery Historic District, a retired architect and planner with a graduate degree in history of technology.*



# WE ARE OPEN

## • ST LAWRENCE MARKET •

**MANOTAS**  
THE FINEST LATIN ORGANIC FOOD



f manotaslatinfoods

i manotaslatinfoods

Try the empanadas!

91 Front Street East  
B30, Lower Level  
Toronto, Ontario, M5E 1C3  
T: 416.523.3577  
manotasorganics@gmail.com

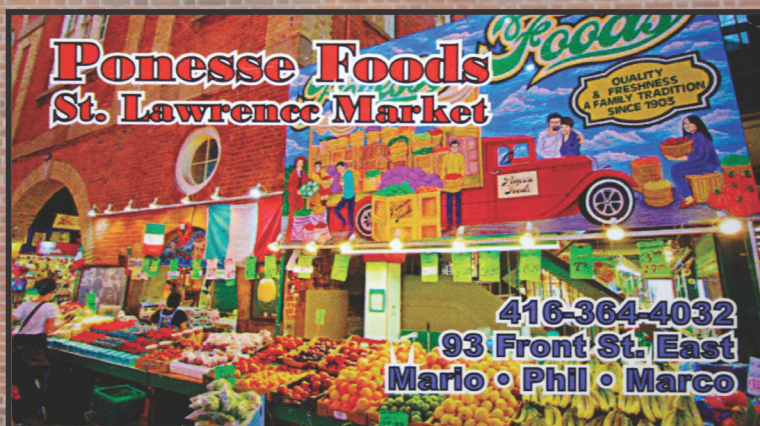
urban fresh  
produce

st. lawrence  
www.urbanfreshproduce.ca

Curbside Pickup Available

416 504 FRSH (3774)  
urbanfreshproduce@outlook.com

St. Lawrence Market  
93 Front St. E. Upper L38  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5E 1C3



416-364-4032

93 Front St. East

Mario • Phil • Marco



**CHURRASCO  
ST. LAWRENCE**

"THE BEST PORTUGUESE STYLE GRILLED CHICKEN"

**416-862-2867**

91 FRONT ST. EAST, TORONTO, ONT. M5E 1C2  
ST. LAWRENCE MARKET

**Olympic Cheese**  
Since 1958



St. Lawrence Market  
93 Front St., East  
416.363.7602  
www.olympiccheese.com

## Hours of Operation:

**Tuesday to Friday – 9am to 5pm**

**Saturday – 5am to 4pm**

**Sunday & Monday – Closed**



# Reconnecting community through writing and art

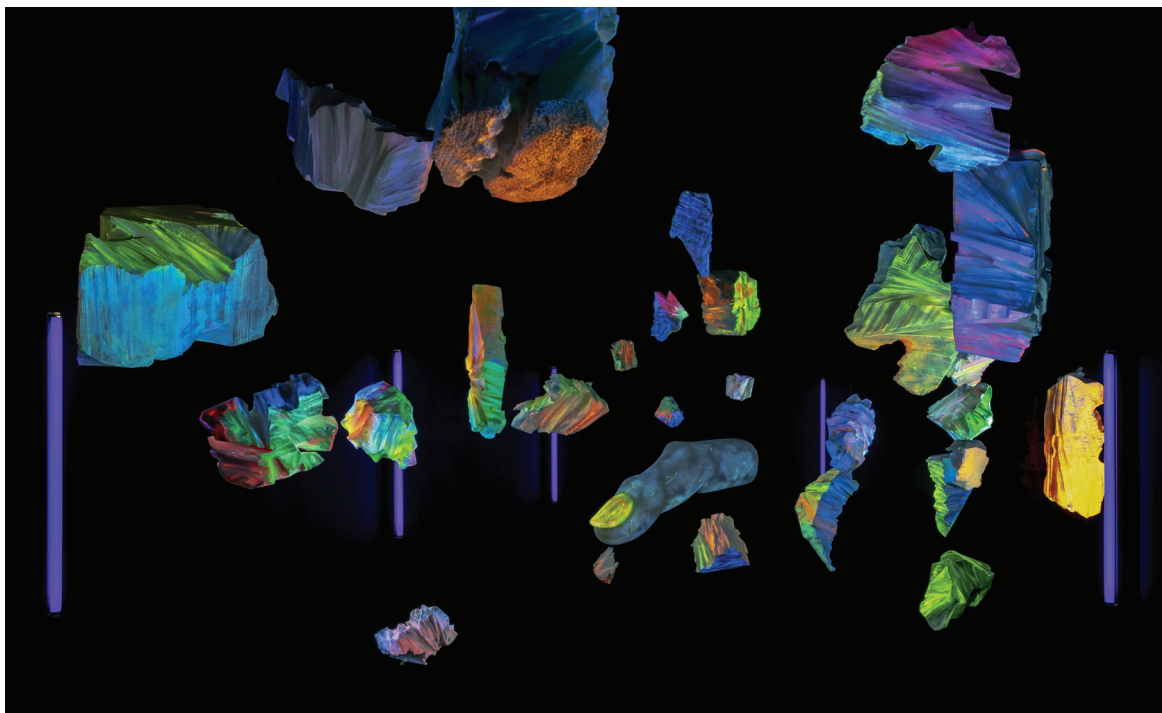
Jesse Cohoon

with material from Laura Demers  
and Doug Grundman

The Toronto Writers Collective provides expressive writing workshops to those deprived of voice in our society. Writing with others in an atmosphere of dignity and respect, participants discover the value of their own stories.

After workshops were put on hiatus at over 30 locations in mid-March, the TWC pivoted to find new ways to connect with writers through virtual workshops. In only a few short weeks, this created ways to reach out to a diverse group of writers from Toronto, Mississauga, Ottawa and Montreal. Several regular workshops are now available Monday through Friday using Zoom.

Doug Grundman, Co-Executive Director of the TWC explained: "Confronted by the new reality of self-isolation, we faced a challenge. The irony was not lost - an organization that meets the needs of the vulnerable and intellectually isolated was given the opportunity to reach out to a larger, literally isolated, community. We realized we could leverage that platform to convene writers. Jesse Cohoon, Director of Programming, and Siobhan Lant, Outreach and Communications



Naufus Ramirez-Figueroa, *Asymmetries*, 2020. Installation view The Power Plant, Toronto, 2020. Photo: Toni Hafkenscheid

Manager, put together email lists of participants, facilitators and supporters and established a community database of over 600 individuals. Within the first week of government-encouraged self-isolation, we launched our first virtual workshop. Week two found us offering three public workshops as well as our first 'in-house' session with Dixon Hall, where I was broadcast into the centre, with writers seated and spaced safely throughout their meeting room. Through social media, we add new writers weekly."

Community groups, health

care and arts organizations are joining the grassroots growth. Several locations that previously held workshops on-site are now hosting virtual workshops for their members and clients. Other programming is being developed for a range of existing and new host organizations.

As art institutions continue to seek ways to engage their audiences during this time of isolation, The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery (Toronto) is excited to partner with the Toronto Writers Collective to offer a series of virtual writing

workshops. Facilitated by award-winning author Susan Ksiezopolski, the workshops will provide opportunities for both emerging and experienced writers to think about the connections between visual art and the written form. Using quotes and images of artworks as writing prompts, participants will gain insight into the artists' creative processes, and the contemporary issues with which they grapple in their work. Featured artists include Rashid Johnson, Naufus Ramirez-Figueroa, and Dawit L. Petros. The first four writing sessions,

which will take place online every two weeks during the months of May and June 2020, promise to bring community members together through the act of creating, and to generate uplift for those seeking to share their work with others.

Information is available at: <http://thepowerplant.org/ProgramsEvents/Programs/Other-Programs.aspx>

In times of crisis, opportunities appear. Travel, a significant financial and logistical issue for many, is no longer an obstacle to participation. Some feel safer within a format that offers them an opportunity to participate from their own homes.

The TWC is looking forward to returning to writing tables across the GTA, but this pandemic has compelled it to establish new ways to deliver programming that supports and encourages voice wherever there is a need.

For more information about the TWC and its workshops, contact: <http://torontowriterscollective.ca>.

Jesse Cohoon has been working with the TWC since 2015, currently as Director of Programming. His faux autobiography, *Out and Innuendo*, will be published posthumously in 2050 after most of the main characters are either dead or forgotten.

## Preparedness now a term floated daily

Roth from p1

Vaccines are forecast late into the year at the earliest, which seems like decades away as time moves slowly. But prolonged shortages in supplies of key medical products to fight the health crisis demonstrate the opposite. If frontline medical workers are presently fending for personal protection equipment and pharmacies are forced to reduce prescriptions or cancel them for lack of supply, that makes clear that we must prepare for major adjustments over an extended period of time.

The state of the economy is the greatest long-term concern. With lay-offs in vital service industries already hitting record numbers, the restart will be slow and arduous. The hotel/travel/hospitality and retail sectors were instantly affected. Successful employment in other branches of the labour market will be substantially more difficult to retain or attain.

The federal government's response has come efficiently, quickly and without great bureaucratic hurdles. Yet monies do not grow on trees as the saying goes and come at a cost, if not today, guaranteed by

tomorrow. Future federal deficits will spawn increased existing or new taxes.

Preparedness is a term floating in daily vocabulary more frequently than in recent years. That in itself is not bad, and it perhaps will lead to a bit of a paradigm shift in how we live, envision and execute future plans.

The uninterrupted abundance of our truly privileged lives in the northern hemisphere has come to a sudden unplanned stoppage. The disruption will become less of an inconvenience as we are called to muster up to new challenges. Those who have travelled extensively in sub-Saharan Africa know that we have enjoyed more of everything than any other generation in human history. The personal and civic sacrifices that will be asked of us are much smaller than the majority of the world's population makes daily without grunting and heaving.

The world as a whole is gravely affected. This global village is and has become intrinsically more interdependent. Perhaps we are involuntarily forced to look long and hard into the mirror and to realize that community lives next door to us. Our neighbors become

the extended arm, when family lives out of town or even in another province.

The need for help will steadily grow in one way or another; helping hands are never rejected by the ones - who truly need and depend on them. You are invited to extend yours, if and when you are in the position to do that. You will not regret it. The rewards of giving often outlast the receiving of gifts to us.

We never know when the call for assistance can become a

matter of life and death in these trying times. It is good to know that we can actively count on each other. As the Swedish proverb says, "Shared joy is double the joy; shared sorrow is half the sorrow." Community living is an action word.



Phil E. Roth, columnist



# Virus makes future hard to predict

Wave from p1

So what does a successful exit strategy look like? Ontario has recently released a road-map but there are few specifics. Other provinces and countries are further ahead.

Saskatchewan will be “turning the dimmer switch up gradually,” according to Premier Scott Moe. Their 5 phased re-opening begins May 4th with the first wave of businesses to include dentists, optometrists, physical therapists, opticians, podiatrists, occupational therapists and chiropractors. Gatherings will be limited to 10 people for the time-being.

In Denmark, day care centres and schools have already reopened. These were closely followed by some small businesses, including hairdressers and dentists. Further changes are on hold until new case data can be assessed.

In Germany and Austria, kids are going back to school and small businesses are opening. However, physical distancing and travel restrictions remain.

New Zealand, which recorded only 12 deaths by mid-April, has re-opened some



Because of the ongoing lockdown playgrounds remain closed across the city.

Photo: Tania Correa

businesses and schools, and eased restrictions on local travel. Gatherings of up to 10 people are allowed.

In South Korea, where aggressive testing and contact tracing negated the need for a full lockdown, COVID-positive residents are required to use a contact tracing app

to alert their recent contacts. Designated treatment centres are being used to isolate people who test positive.

None of these measures would bring us fully back to normal; they are just a first step. Indeed, the nuances and unknowns of the virus make our future hard to predict.

A recent article in the New Yorker magazine cited challenges with developing an effective COVID-19 vaccine and concluded, “It’s possible ... that COVID-19 could be a virus that proves resistant to vaccination.”

Given Ontario’s healthcare capacity, it’s likely we will

start to unlock sooner than many countries. But what help should we offer to others? As a resource-rich country we must surely show the same spirit of cooperation that saw Alberta ship excess protective gear (PPE) to other provinces and Albania send 60 nurses to Italy. Stories of pregnant women in Uganda dying on their way to a clinic due to local travel restrictions remind us to look beyond our borders when offering help.

Here in Toronto, aftershocks from the pandemic will be long lasting. Shops will be shuttered, some of us are already looking for work, and many will have lost significant income.

While preparing to take our first steps outside, we must be mindful that the health emergency is not over. We need to continue to be cautious and help one another, but we must also hold our politicians to account. To fend off another wave and start putting our lives back together, effective containment measures and ongoing protection for front-line workers is paramount.

## Reigniting the conversation about Toronto’s housing crisis

Glenda MacFarlane

House Divided: How the Missing Middle Can Solve Toronto’s Affordability Crisis  
Edited by Alex Bozickovic, Cheryll Case, John Lorinc, and Anabel Vaughan  
Coach House Books, 2019

In his introduction for House Divided, John Lorinc presents some startling statistics about housing in the city of Toronto, where “absurd real estate prices and runaway rents” are destroying neighbourhoods and contributing to homelessness and income inequality. The book’s thesis is that

zoning laws, particularly those in the “Yellowbelt” areas of the city, prevent us from creating desirable mixed-income neighbourhoods by limiting the types of housing that help to build neighbourhood diversity. The essays that follow elaborate on the history of Toronto housing, identify what the problems are, and propose some imaginative solutions.

Among the historical perspectives are chapters about the 1905 fight to build Spadina Gardens, the origins of Rosedale low-rises, and the building of the visionary Garden Court complex in Leaside. Alex Bozickovic’s detailed account of

Seaton Village in the middle of the last century paints a vivid picture of the virtues of greater population density.

We also get “snapshots” of today, with comparisons to other jurisdictions around the world as well as essays on women’s right to housing, the benefits of the multigenerational home, the housing squeeze experienced by downtown millennials, and housing challenges for low-income Torontonians. Gentrification is another focus, with an account of Parkdale’s 2017 rent strike and a meditation by Diane Dyson on what is lost when neighbourhoods become homogenized.

One of the book’s highlights is artist-writer Daniel Rotsztein’s illustrated chapter, which features sketches and biographies of some of the city’s notable mid-rise apartments.

Essays on the genesis and nature of the “Yellowbelt,” an area within Toronto more than twice the size of Manhattan that is zoned exclusively for single-family dwellings, zero in on the problem and advocate for duplexes, triplexes, low-rises, laneway houses, “cube” apartments, and walk-ups. An interview with the architects of the innovative 468 James project in Hamilton and an essay by Matti Siemiatycki on

the meaningful partnerships behind the Red Door project demonstrate what can be done when obstacles are overcome.

House Divided is comprehensive, covering a wide range of topics and providing extensive appendices and source documentation. It’s also eminently readable and should be of great interest to all of us.

It is devastatingly clear that there is a housing affordability crisis in Toronto, and the current pandemic has only emphasized how severe the problems are. House Divided is a valuable contribution to the discussion about the changes we badly need to make.



TORONTO’S FIRST POST OFFICE  
260 Adelaide Street E.

operated by the Town of York Historical Society

Monday –Saturday: 10am–4pm

CANADA POST OUTLET  
MUSEUM

MADE-IN CANADA GIFT SHOP

TownOfYork.com

Town of York  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



TORONTO’S FIRST  
Post Office





# Old Town Street Names & the Missing Virgin

Coralina Lemos,  
Corktown Historian and Author |  
corktownhistory.com

Street Names, can we live without them? It seems we give little thought to these monikers, embossed on metal, and yet what would a regular day be if we didn't have them to keep us on track and stay connected to people, places, and everyday life events.

The earliest record of street names along King, east of Ontario Street, was recorded by Reuben Sherwood, in 1819, while surveying the southern portion of the Government 'Park' reserve. He did so following councils' decision to sell these and other lands in order to raise money for the construction of a 'proper' hospital.

While King Street is an inherited corridor, extended eastward from the former Town of York, it's worth noting that 'Sumach Street' is the oldest name in Corktown, and reminds us of when this tree species flourished within the woodlands of the 'Park' reserve.

By 1830 the district was re-surveyed and as commercial enterprises were established, the area's settlement pattern evolved. As a result, new street names were added to city directories by virtue of land registered plans or City Bylaws. Early markers would have been made out of wood, metal or stone.

Following the arrival of a



Virgin Place sign has been missing since June, 2019. Last seen next to 507 King Street East. Photo: Coralina Lemos

new millennium, in 2002, local neighbourhood groups gathered to discuss a new branding approach meant to place Toronto's historic vicinity in the spotlight. With support from Councillor Pam McConnell, and City of Toronto Economic Development Department, funding was secured.

The main objective was to inform locals and visitors about the 'Old Town' area. Subsequently, it was decided that neighbourhoods, including special district areas like the St. Lawrence Market, and Moss Park (listed under the moniker of Historic Queen East), would be added to the "1793 Old Town Toronto"

marker. Thus, each and every word is meant to inform, educate, and convey direction. While 1793 was the year Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe arrived, Old Town Toronto assures pedestrians that they are in the historic section of the city. Each and every street sign is identified with a coloured strip distinct to the neighbourhood or district, followed by the street name. 'Kelly Green' is the colour that identifies Corktown's location, while Moss Park was metallic Arium.

Unfortunately, changes to City Street Sign Policies has resulted in the abandonment of the initial aim to maintain

our 'Old Town' branding. It's also unforgiving that in some instance's signs have been auctioned online rather than recycling them in the event a replacement is needed.

As this account goes to print, one of Corktown's most intriguing street signs under the 'Old Town' signage initiative has been missing since June of 2019. Located between 501 and 507 King Street East, Virgin Place acquired the legal right, as a street moniker, 145 years ago following the purchase of two lots just east of Sackville Street by Samuel Virgin. He and his spouse, Ann McCulloch, settled in Corktown and in time raised eight

children. Earning his income as a general labourer, his passing was deeply lamented by friends and colleagues who remembered him as a devout Methodist and founding member of a church that once stood on the northwest corner of Bright and King Streets.

Upon hearing of the missing street sign, family descendant, Dr. Garry Virgin, commented:

"I was saddened to say the least. It would be a shame to forget about it, and just throw the issue into the bin of lost Toronto history. Samuel Virgin, for whom the street was named after, was a native of Huntingdonshire, England. He was my great-great grandfather. Arriving in Upper Canada c1830 he was one of the early inhabitants of Corktown. He was an active member in the community and resided there for most of his life until his death in 1899. Active in the church, Samuel Virgin was best known for his establishment of the first Methodist Church in the east end of Toronto, the King Street East Methodist Church, which still survives today albeit under a different name. In its day the church was an important meeting place for the local citizenry."

**Street Sign Updates:** There's no denying that much of Corktown's history lies within its street names as a result, communication on this missing street sign has been initiated with City of Toronto officials.

On a favourable note, this spring "Myer Willinsky Lane" will be Corktown's newest street sign to be located behind the row houses that line Queen Street East, between Parliament and Trefann Streets. Myer Willinsky ordered the construction of the IDLE HOUR, Corktown's first purpose-built theatre that opened in 1909. An article on the theatre is posted on my website (corktownhistory.com), and further story details are available in my book: Corktown: The History of a Toronto Neighbourhood and the People Who Made It.

## Home Sweet Home



Carol Mark

We hope that by elevating art to a more personal level at this time of self-isolation readers will ask themselves, what makes a home sweet? If we are looking at four blank walls and there is nothing to stimulate our soul, we go stir crazy.

Art can bring joy- either by hanging your own creations or by having a favourite artist's work brighten up your day. Many people don't look beyond cheap, utilitarian

things to fill their living spaces. I have several small pieces of art, less than 12 X 12 inches, around my home from the time I first started to collect art. They still bring a daily smile to my face, and like a remembered aroma from the past flood my mind with memories.

Why not start your own visual memories? Our two featured artists Julie and Angela bring their own distinctive touch to creative work starting at prices you can afford.

Julie Amlin is a Toronto-

Julie Amlin working

based artist whose practice includes and mixes the disciplines of drawing, painting, ceramics, print-making and fiber art. Amlin's current work explores the significant way that colour is connected to our emotions and can encourage the emergence of the innate explorer in us all. She believes there is wisdom within the practice of mindful observation. Her work pulls from personal nostalgia and the palpable essence of tradition in textiles, colour palettes, pattern, and materials

to create sensory playfulness. Through her vibrant textural landscapes, Amlin seeks to create a space where the viewer is encouraged to forage through detail and experience how physical form calls forth pleasurable internal dialogue. Instagram @julieamlin.art

Angela of Toronto-based Colour Blots Creative is passionate about bringing colour and wonder to your world! Each piece is hand-made and unique. Once it's gone, it's gone! Colour blots creative by Angela

is the work of an emerging artist, launching in 2018. Previously, the artist has utilized mixed media but her current work is focused on acrylic painting with various techniques including acrylic pouring. This technique involves layering paint and allowing colours of different densities to separate, causing unique cells and shapes to form. Acrylic pouring is a practice in patience and letting go of expectations — one can never precisely predict the final outcome! Instagram @colourblots www.colour-blots.square.site