

Injunction halts demolition of historic Foundry buildings

Julia Simioni, Senior Reporter

A motion to temporarily stop the Ontario government demolition of the Dominion Foundry buildings was granted on Jan. 29, to the relief of community groups.

Led by the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association (SLNA), the West Don Lands Committee (WDLC), the Friends of the Foundry community group and Architectural Conservancy Ontario worked for a tireless two weeks to bring the province to court.

“The interim order validates the decision of the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association to bring the defence of our built heritage to the court,” said Suzanne Kavanagh, chair of the SLNA Development Committee and a signatory to its affidavit. “But the burden on our association is tremendous.”

(The SLNA’s annual budget is \$15,000, and Kavanagh said that they’re prepared to pay \$10,000 in damages.)

“This is a small win, but the big battle is coming up,” she added. “Still, we’re celebrating. This is a David-and-Goliath story; our campaign is growing, and we’re not backing down.”



Photo: Larry Heng

A West Don Lands resident first noticed a worker at 153-185 Eastern Ave., formally the Dominion Wheel and Foundries Company Site, on Jan. 14. The resident was told that the site would be razed by the end of March, despite no formal notice going to the city or the community.

After the province unilateral-

ly began demolition on Jan. 18, the SLNA applied for an injunction to halt it.

“When I heard the ruling there was immense joy, relief – and exhaustion,” said Franka Jean, a West Don Lands resident and member of Friends of the Foundry.

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Private security hire highlights Moss Park’s chronic social ills

André Bermon, Publisher

Opinion

The decision last November by residents of Cabbagetown South to hire private security has suddenly become the talk of the town.

Playing out in people’s minds were imaginings of a privatized police force patrolling neighbourhoods and beating up transgressors, in a dystopian scenario where government services have all been sold off.

But rather than an outcome of unbridled Reaganomics, the decision was the culmination of resident frustration over a string of break-ins, assaults and overdoses in a neighbourhood long beset by social ills. Nevertheless, both the media and politicians weighed in on the news with sensationalism.

“The question is what the role of [private security] is,

how they interact with the public,” cautioned Mayor John Tory in statement aired on CP24. “That has to be watched very carefully because we have a police service; they are excellent at what they do.”

For a mayor not known to speak on parochial issues, the need for high-profile commentary was less about the ethics of private enforcement and more about shoring up confidence in the Toronto Police Service. After all, the TPS invests a lot of time, money and human resources policing the Cabbagetown South/Moss Park corridor.

“This is the division,” Superintendent Peter Moreira of 51 Division told *the bridge*, “that make more criminal arrests than any other in the city, by a large margin.” He said eight neighbourhood officers are permanently deployed in

the Moss Park/Cabbagetown South area, “but we don’t own the solutions to these problems.”

These “problems” are as diverse and complex as in any other marginalized inner-city neighbourhood. Resource mismanagement, poor planning and willful neglect usually lead to a stigmatized and ghettoized urban poor population.

Moss Park and its environs have long endured debilitating experiments of urban renewal schemes, and a concentration of poverty and social services.

However, the advent of ever more powerful street drugs, crime and addiction have changed the neighbourhood’s cultural landscape. Prolific drug dealing isn’t just visible in the Moss Park community, it’s outright brazen.

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The St. Lawrence Market is safe to shop

Emma Johnston-Wheeler

The St. Lawrence Market has demonstrated an effective and reassuring response to positive covid-19 cases amongst market staff. While many businesses have experienced temporary or even permanent closure in recent months, the St. Lawrence is staying open and continues to host its weekly Saturday Farmer’s market south of the main building.

Samantha Wiles, supervisor of marketing, communications and events, assures market goers that as a City of Toronto operation, the market is not only following the city’s recommendations but leading by example by publishing instances of positive cases on the Market website. In all circumstances of positive cases, Toronto Public Health has advised that public risk is low.

“The majority of cases originated outside of the market, and that those who tested positive and their close contacts, are self-isolating and monitoring for symptoms,” said Wiles. Toronto Public Health has investigated each case and continues to work closely with the St. Lawrence Market to determine public risk.

According to News Releases published by the City of Toronto, six Market employees tested positive in late December, and an additional four employees tested positive in early January. The Market website publis-

hed two separate instances of positive tests, one in which an employee who tested positive last worked on January 9, before beginning self-isolation, and another as most recently published who last worked on January 21.

The City of Toronto’s online lockdown guide lists “do’s” and “don’ts” regarding essential purchases. They generally support the food industry via takeout and delivery, specifically endorsing the food vendors at St. Lawrence’s Saturday farmers market. The guide advises shoppers to attend the Saturday market alone, or with one other person if you need help carrying items.

“It’s a food source for a lot of people in the community,” said Wiles. For residents of the Older Women’s Network Housing Co-op just south of the property and other neighbours, the farmers market is the closest source of groceries. “We don’t want to interrupt people doing something that continues to make them healthy, like eating fresh food.”

Nancy Manotas has owned the Spanish and Latin grocer Manotas, on the lower level of the market’s main building, for a decade.

Kent Breedon, co-owner with his wife of Breedon’s Maple Syrup, similarly values fellow vendors.

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Vendors and shoppers at the St. Lawrence Market.

Photo: Emma Johnston-Wheeler

Ford government looks to take over First Parliament site

Donald Higney

The Ford government has moved to seize the site of Ontario's first parliament building to build a proposed subway station.

According to the Toronto Star's Ben Spurr, lawyers representing the Metrolinx transit agency informed the City of Toronto that the provincial government plans to expropriate two city-owned properties on Front and Berkeley Streets that are on the First Parliament site. Metrolinx says the buildings are needed to construct the Corktown station of the province's Ontario Line.

A public meeting on the First Parliament Master Plan scheduled for January 21 was postponed while city representatives learn more about the expropriation.

"I am deeply concerned by the lack of collaboration by the province, and the potential risk to this important historical site and city-building project" said Councillor Joe Cressy (Spadina-Fort York) in a press release on his website.

About a kilometer away at the same time, the Ontario government started demolishing the century-old Dominion Wheel



First Parliament site, Front Street East and Parliament.

Photo: Courtesy of City of Toronto

and Foundries Company building on Eastern Avenue. However, demolition was stopped on January 29 due to an injunction filed by the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association.

"I firmly believe it is important to expedite transit expansion, but am concerned that if these lands are entirely eliminated from the First Parliament Master Plan, it may prevent us from achieving the other important city building aspirations for this site" Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam (Toronto Centre) in a press release on her website.

"While transit expansion is critical, it should not come at the expense of destroying the cultural heritage of the City of Toronto," the statement later reads. "Residents and community leaders have been engaged in the assembly of land and the design of the First Parliament Master Plan for years. In order to build complete communities, it is essential to work with impacted stakeholders, business owners, and residents as it makes for a stronger neighbourhood master plan."

The southwest corner of Front and Parliament streets was the location of the first

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Parliament Buildings of Upper Canada, after thousands of years of use by Indigenous communities. American forces destroyed the building in the War of 1812, but it was rebuilt. After Parliament moved west, the site housed a district jail and a gas plant owned by Consumers' Gas Company.

Before the Ontario Line is built, Metrolinx has promised to perform an archeological survey to discover if remnants of the buildings are still in the

ground and the surrounding areas.

"Successful city building requires collaboration between government partners, working together on shared objectives," said Cressy. "I will continue to work with Councillor Wong-Tam, stakeholders, and the public to secure the goals that our community and leaders like former deputy mayor [Pam] McConnell have envisioned for this important site."

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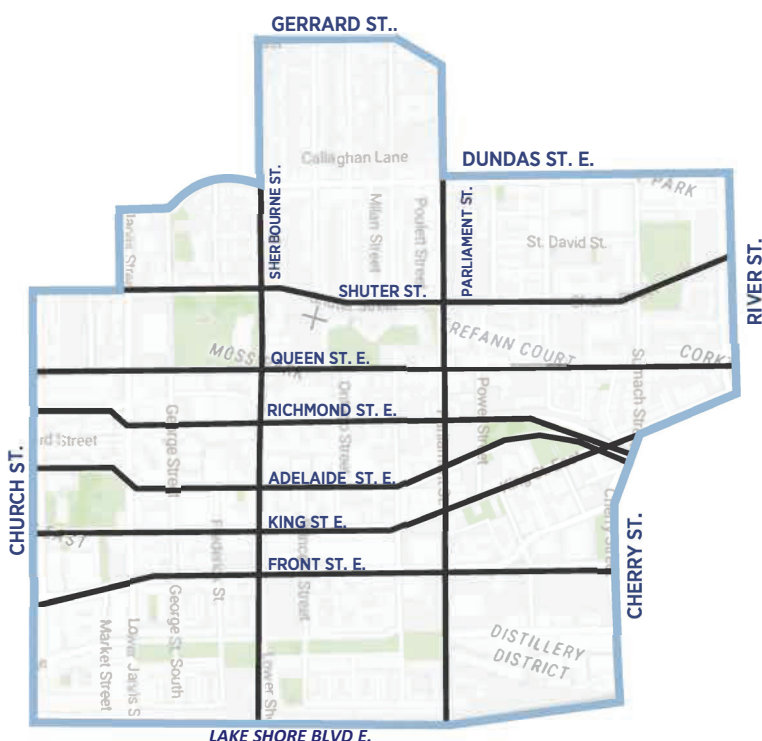
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the bridge strives to source up-to-date activity and diverse interests from heritage, planning, and development, to culture, arts and opinions.

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Canada Permanent Building



Bruce Bell, Senior Columnist

The Canada Permanent Building at 320 Bay Street (SW corner of Bay and Adelaide) with its imposing limestone exterior resplendent in rich Art Deco adornments, has caught my eye for as long as I can remember.

Built between 1928 and 1930 and designed by architect F. Hilton Wilkes (with the firm of Henry Sproatt), this 18 story building remains a standout amongst its taller more modern neighbours, the St Regis Hotel and the Bay Adelaide Centre across the street.

But what really makes the Canada Permanent Building truly exceptional is that some of its eye catching decorations are a result of Howard Carter's discovery of the King Tutankhamen's (aka King Tut's) tomb in Egypt in 1923.

His discovery would usher in a worldwide phenomenon of all things ancient Egyptian, adding to the decorative Art Deco movement of the 1920s and 1930s

This revolutionary new look took ideas from classical Greek, Roman, Aztec and Navaho designs which were interwoven with geometric patterns to create buildings with a sleek, modern and contemporary feel.

From the moment you stand on Bay Street at the entrance

to the Canada Permanent Building and look up above the door, you can see hundreds of hand size Egyptian papyrus reeds embedded into the grill work above the door.

As you enter the building your eyes are drawn to the 5 brass elevator doors in the lobby, each engraved with the Greek goddess Athena (in place of Tut's Isis) holding in one hand the previous headquarters of the Canada Permanent Co. on Toronto Street (a former Masonic Hall) and in her other hand the present building. The design of the elevator doors also resembles the artwork embedded into the throne of King Tut, with the sun being prominent in both.

Step inside the banking hall and you are like Carter himself, as he first broke through the desert sand of the ancient King's tomb. As you continue to wander into the vast white sandstone banking hall you can't help but notice the beautiful arched columns holding up a vaulted ceiling of white simulated alabaster plaster.

Even the banking tables, where at one time customers would write their own withdraw slips, have miniature Sphinxes embedded into the design.

At the very top of the building is a stone head of a young Zeus the Greek god of lightning and thunder and ruler of all the gods on Mount Olympus

This great stone head of Zeus high above the street is next to the horn of Amalthea, which according to Greek legend, accidentally broke off from his nurse's head while he was in



Banking hall inside Canada Permanent Building.

Photo: Courtesy of Menkes Development

hiding from his father Kronos.

Then to add to the Canada Permanent Building's grandness, the entire building as seen from its Adelaide Street side is shaped like a massive stone throne complete with a seat, backrest and two side arms.

It's all so intricate and involved, evoking a time in our history when secrets and mystery were embedded into our buildings.

What I find even more captivating about this and Toronto's other early 20th century skyscrapers is that so much of its art is hidden high above and out of sight from street level.

This concealed art was done for a very particular effect. All an upwardly mobile businessman of the 1920s had to do was look out his office window on the 17th floor to see two lightning rods protruding from the head of Zeus to assure his own place in the hierarchy of Bay Street finance. A far cry from today where the symbols of success are a corner office and keys to the executive wash-room.

When the Canada Permanent building was first built it was the tallest in the city for a few months. Toronto was going through a massive building boom with each successive structure out doing the last.

Yet with its depictions of Zeus, Poseidon and Apollo

cate tile patterns in the marble floor.

Today this historic building is undergoing a massive restoration, inside and out by Menkes Development.

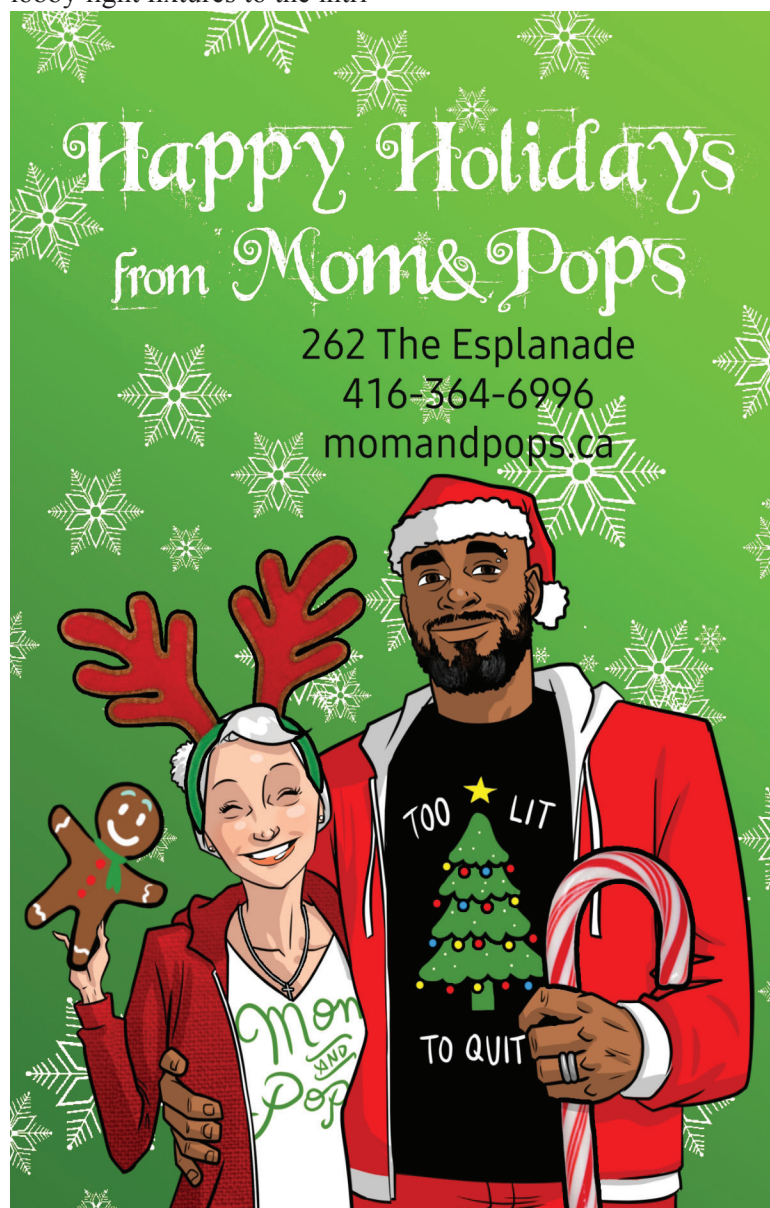
Menkes along with TD Greystone purchased interest in the Canada Permanent Building, known simply as The Permanent in 2019 and immediately began planning the renovation of the heritage building.

Menkes not only have cleaned and enhanced the 1930s facade but have announced new plans for a street level reimagination of the building.



Canada Permanent Building, 1930.

Photo: Courtesy of Menkes Development



Billionaires Behaving Badly

Ben Bull, Columnist

The new year is here and finally, we have something to celebrate:

Elon Musk is the world's richest man.

Why aren't you cheering? Elon is Canadian! Well, sort of – his mum's from Saskatchewan. Young Elon spent part of his teenage years working at a lumber mill out west before heading off to Queen's University in Kingston. Yes, the world's richest man is a Canadian success story, and yet we can't even be bothered to raise a glass.

I'm not surprised we're so apathetic. The billionaire backlash has been gaining momentum ever since the pandemic began. One thing we're learning, as we read about the rising net worth of the world's richest moguls, is that Fat Cats won't save us.

Billionaires are bad news. They don't like paying taxes. We learned this in 2016 when the Panama Papers shone a light on more than two hundred thousand (200,000) shell companies, many of which were used to hide money from the tax man.

Some magnates support nefarious causes. The Guardian newspaper reported in January that a billionaire-backed lobby group, The Club for Growth, has been directly funding Republican lawmakers responsible for challenging results of the U.S. presidential election.

When billionaires are not behaving badly, they're making the world a poorer place by simply doing nothing.

Fat Cats can't spend all their cash. What liquid assets they don't fritter away on Malibu mansions and another Mercedes are left idle. A dollar unspent does nothing to stimulate the economy.

Some say we should leave the billionaires alone. They work hard, they take risks. They provide jobs. They've earned their money – let them keep it.

It's not that simple. According to a 2017 Oxfam International report, a majority of the world's richest people inherited their wealth or accumulated it through industries linked to corruption and cronyism.

And the jobs they create, well – would you want to work in an Amazon warehouse?

Look at how much cash these tycoons stash: The 2,825 billionaires on the planet today have a combined net worth of US\$9.4 trillion. That's more wealth than 60 percent of the world's population.

What's left for the rest of us? Not much. Bloomberg recently calculated that 1.5 billion adults have a net worth of \$1,000 or less. The World Bank figures that 10 percent of the global population lives on less than US\$1.90 per day. This rich/poor disparity is only expected to get worse, thanks to Covid-19.

This cash imbalance alludes to our real problem as we look

towards the panaceas of herd immunity and a revived economy: income inequality.

Given current cash constraints, government borrowing and spending can only build us back up so much. So how can we buy our way back to prosperity? In a country where the 100 highest-paid CEOs make more than 200 times the average worker's earnings, how does Canada level the playing field and spread the wealth to the rest of us?

A growing movement calls for higher taxes at the top end. But taxation is a regressive revenue generation tool. After a certain point, taxes discourage innovation and hard work, and encourage people to find more creative ways to avoid them.

Another solution is to use fair work legislation. To overcome the 1930s Great Depression, Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal was aided and abetted by increased co-operation between businesses and unions. Legalized collective bargaining enabled workers to benefit from better wages and improved working conditions, which in turn helped revitalize the economy.

I'm happy for Elon and his baron buddies. It must be nice up there at the big table with more than enough to eat. But for those looking up from below, we have to find a way to stop scrambling around for scraps – and pull up a seat.

Development at Shuter and Sherbourne prompts concerns over loss of green space

Sophia de Guzman

The Moss Park neighbourhood is expecting a development facelift on Sherbourne Street north of Shuter Street. Two residential high-rises of 18 and 23 storeys at 191 and 201 Sherbourne are to be re-clad, while another high-rise is to be built between them. Also part of the Colliers International redevelopment is a new mid-sized high-rise on the Seaton Street side of the block.

The new buildings could bring more than 300 new rental units to the neighbourhood – at the cost of losing green space between the existing high-rises.

Community concerns have been exacerbated by the developer's limited attempts to reach out to the public. Projects like these are required to inform the community of their plans and provide opportunities for input.

Several area residents said only tenants of the MetCap Living buildings at 191 and 201 Sherbourne were properly contacted and able to



Massing view from the northeast.

Photo: Courtesy of Zeidler Architecture Inc.

participate in an Oct. 5 virtual town hall that the developers held. Neighbouring residents organized to request their own town hall, which they were eventually granted.

Catherine Osborne, a Seaton Street resident and organizer for the second town hall, said, "We're invested in it as much as the people at MetCap are, because this is all part of a collective. We're not home owners and apartment dwellers – we are all meeting on all sides of the conversation."

A presentation for the buildings prepared by Zeidler Inc., architects for Colliers, promised that the existing

buildings will remain, tenants won't be evicted and that their rents won't rise. It says the Seaton Street building will be a stepped four- to seven-storey midrise with a lower profile near neighbours' homes to meet height bylaws. Current residents have been promised new indoor and outdoor amenities, including improvements for cyclists and pedestrians.

Many residents' concerns involved the loss of green space. Catherine Osborne said, "This is Garden District, meant to be an area where there are parks and areas to use as public spaces. And they're not accommodating or not building in an

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allowance for that to continue."

While new amenities have been promised, the two new buildings will occupy spaces formerly used as off-leash dog parks and green space. Despite promises to preserve the neighbourhood's character and greenery, the collective shadow cast by the new buildings will block light that nurtures trees, one resident pointed out. Increased traffic on streets is also expected.

Jelle Koersen, a resident of

an existing Sherbourne Street building, said, "If community isn't strong in this neighbourhood, there's no way that us housed neighbours can care for the neighbours who aren't housed. It's going to be a lot more 'everyone to himself.'"

The city has yet to formally approve this project. A summary of concerns from the neighbours who were not initially contacted by Colliers are awaiting review from the developer.

‘small win’ for West Don Lands activists

Foundry from p1

“It’s been an uphill battle in which the other guy seems to hold all the cards.”

A fund created by Friends of the Foundry to aid with the SLNA’s legal fees had received more than \$22,000 as of Jan. 29. The group began last October following news that the century-year-old Foundry land was among three provincially owned West Don Lands sites covered by ministerial zoning orders (MZOs), which allow the province to bypass municipal planning regulations and public input.

The province’s application will be back in court on Feb. 26 to determine whether the province’s hasty demolition violated the Ontario Heritage Act as well as a 2010 subdivision agreement between the city and the province.

In a statement released on the day of the ruling, the Ministry expressed their disappointment, stating that the Foundry site had been abandoned for over 40 years and will “allow for significant environmental remediation... and construction of new affordable housing, market housing, and community space.” However the judge ruled that demolition of the buildings should never have started.

“It appears clear that the demolition began in contravention of The Heritage Act, and in breach of Ontario’s obligations under a subdivision agreement between Ontario and the City of Toronto,” the ruling reads. The judge also said that the Heritage Act also requires public engagement before demolition.

“It should never have come to this,” said Asif Hossain, a



West Don Lands resident who spearheaded Friends of the Foundry. “We have planning legislation and heritage legislation that recognizes the value of community and municipal involvement in local planning. The actions of the province have disrespected all of us, and we hope this decision will be a turning point for the Foundry and the community.”

West Don Lands residents had high hopes for the Foundries site. Possibilities include a studio space and affordable housing for musicians, a farmer’s market, a park, and a venue for kids’ piano lessons.

“It’s our hope that, with community consultation, the Foundry buildings could be part of a multi-use site that integrates renovated heritage structures with new builds,” said Jean. “Instead of erasing our past, the Foundry site can help us embrace our history and provide a warm heart for the district.”

Building Roots BookShare

Ethan Rosenberg, Building Roots

Winter, a season of comfort. Food is richer, clothes are layered, warmth of our homes becomes all the more precious as light quickly leaves the day. This winter is undoubtedly more challenging. Time away from loved ones leaves us feeling lonely and the chance to step out for a hot chocolate or a warm meal diminishes. These challenges are hard, but not all-powerful because finding joys in little things seems to be a growing trend. Activities like baking, phone calls with friends and family, and arts & crafts are crucial; anything to bring relief and a small smile is integral to well-being, now more than ever.

Reading is a way for me to feel better. Stories transport me to another world. Books allow us to learn, to nurture and grow empathy, and in a world that feels colder than usual, distraction and compassion are vital. This is why Building Roots is grateful to give those participating in the Moss Park fresh produce pick-up/delivery program the opportunity to take advantage of our new BookShare program. Through generous donations, we are acquiring towers of books all available for free and to own.

Books are available in multiple genres from fiction to philosophy to children’s books; we are growing our collection to bring in more novels by POC and LGBTQ2S+ authors.

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Based out of: Moss Park Market (260 Queen St. E)

- Order books via form from Market in-person on Saturdays 11am-4pm

- Or email bookshare@buildingroots.ca to request form and order online, or for general ordering support

- Books available 7 days after form is submitted

BookShare Order Pick-up/Delivery details: Moss Park Market (260 Queen St. E)

- Book order available with fresh produce bags assigned for pick-up

- Book order delivery available for those on food delivery program

If forms are unavailable, Moss Park Market volunteers will jot down your name and genre of interest — your book order will be available the next week.

Building Roots is thrilled to offer the gift of stories to all who may benefit, bringing ease, comfort, and colour to brighten up this uniquely challenging winter.

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Youth services organization Friends of Ruby opens new location on Dundas East

Jayne Kitchen

Friends of Ruby, a youth services organization with a transitional house on Queen Street East, recently moved into the Dundas East area. A second residence opened at 257 Dundas Street (near George Street) in December, and residents have begun moving in.

Friends of Ruby offers in-house mental and physical health services, and personal case managers who help LGBTQI2S youth work towards empowered, independent lives.

Founded in 2014 as Egale Youth Services, Friends of Ruby's mission responded to Egale Canada's "Not Under My Roof" study showing disproportionately high rates of homelessness among LGBTQI2S youth. The service went on to open a Youth Centre as well as the Queen Street housing facility.

The name comes from a friendly connection between a young person who once frequented the service and an elderly golden retriever named Ruby. The relationship between the two came to symbolize the



The new facility at 257 Dundas Street East

message of community that Friends of Ruby offers.

The Covid-19 pandemic has worsened the housing crisis, but Friends of Ruby continues to offer virtual services while restricting the number of people allowed into the new facility.

A Friends of Ruby representative told *the bridge*, "Our approach at both the Youth Centre and at the Friends of Ruby Home is comprehensive, involving mind, body and community – we support LGBTQI2S youth wherever they are on their personal journey."

On the recent expansion to Dundas East, Friends of Ruby

said they were fortunate to be working with the City of Toronto and the Toronto Community Housing Corporation, which helped procure the location.

Friends of Ruby also stated that the group has worked closely with the Garden District Residents Association during the move and has received a warm welcome from neighbours and the community.

Organizations like Friends of Ruby are invaluable pillars of a vulnerable community that is inordinately affected in times of crisis. The group's services and programs are listed at FriendsOfRuby.ca

Photo: Courtesy of Friends of Ruby

Decades old problems persist

Moss Park from p1

The destructive effects of drug consumption are hard to ignore. This was true long before Covid-19, whose health restrictions and lockdowns have exacerbated street-level social problems.

Society's once-hidden underbelly, complete with trauma victims, addicts, prostitutes and the homeless, is now bare for the world to see – much to the annoyance of homeowners and small businesses.

Concerns from residents in adjacent neighbourhoods like Cabbagetown South are by no means novel. Only a worsening situation convinced a young couple to solicit money from neighbours to finance a private security service they perceive will boost community safety.

This indicates not the hardening of NIMBYist attitudes towards the downtrodden – although they are no less prevalent – but a response to chronic social ills that have challenged the Moss Park community for decades.

Since solutions have not been forthcoming, the "official unofficial policy" is simply to confine the poor and vulnerable to where the inevitable machinations of crime and violence can proceed without troubling affluent and established neighbourhoods.

Common to these transient and disjointed districts is lack of a stable voting base. If there is no meaningful constituency, how can a community develop and express political will for change?

Moss Park is unique as Toron-

to's last inner-city "ghetto" at a time of unprecedented development. People are waiting to see if condo buildings force a transition the city otherwise has been unable to conceive.

But can we have our cake and eat it, too? Can we gentrify without alleviating the regressive conditions of the neighbourhood?

Covid-19 will one day abate, but the problems on the streets of Moss Park will persist, as it has since many of us can remember.

the bridge: Book Review

Glenda MacFarlane, Columnist

Relax, Dammit!: A User's Guide to the Age of Anxiety
By Timothy Caulfield
Penguin Random House, 2020

As you can tell from the title, *Relax, Dammit!* is a light-hearted antidote to the anxiety rampant in today's world. Timothy Caulfield, author of *Is Gwyneth Paltrow Wrong About Everything?* and host of the television series *A User's Guide to Cheating Death*, is a renowned scientist who has been the Research Director of the Health Law Institute at the University of Alberta since 1993. One of Caulfield's life's missions is to help us sort through the many misconceptions we have about science and health, and in this book, he focuses on the ways that we make choices about ordinary activities. We are bombarded with health and safety information from a variety of pop culture sources -- and having a little bit of knowledge can make us prone to fret about things we don't really need to worry about, asserts Caulfield. By walking us through the activities of a single day, the author is able to shine a spotlight on a number of different issues that cause stress, and to expose how facts are misrepresented, misinterpreted, or ignored.

Caulfield examines a variety of questions: What kind of bristles should my toothbrush have? Should I let my kid walk to school? Do vitamins work? Should I have a cup of coffee? Should I eat gluten? To floss or not to floss? How should I deal with that constant stream of emails? How much water should I be drinking? Should I be working now? What kind of wine should I buy? Do I need a fitness tracker? Is the five-

second rule real? Toilet seat up or down? Hand dryers or paper towels? Boxers or briefs? Many of us experience anxiety over these types of choices or we make false assumptions about them. Caulfield provides facts based on scientific studies that give us permission to chill out about a number of these scenarios.

The author also examines why we have so much stress and so many wrong ideas about issues pertaining to everyday activities. The multi-trillion-dollar wellness industry bears a lot of responsibility for exaggerating small differences or promoting certain products; many people are fooled by vague phrases or unsubstantiated claims. And unsurprisingly, it turns out that the same social media sites that are feeding political misinformation have an influence on our thinking about health and safety, too. The final section of the book provides a guide for how to unlearn some of the most persistent misinformation and to sort truth from the fiction.

Relax, Dammit! was published last year before the pandemic had truly taken hold. In April of 2020, Caulfield was appointed to the governmental task force which deals with our response to Covid-19. While the book's recommendation about handwashing is solid, Caulfield may be currently rethinking the sections on handshaking and hugs! Still, the book offers a lot of solid, reassuring advice in an entertaining manner; Caulfield's contribution to this conversation is both informative and fun.

Glenda MacFarlane is a writer and editor. She is currently the Series Editor for Scirocco Drama, an imprint of Winnipeg's J. Gordon Shillingford Publishing. She also teaches Writing for Actors at the Toronto Film School.

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Art, Community & Children

Carol Mark, Columnist

Art has always held a special place in my heart. My immigrant family didn't have much use for art, but I loved it. Now I know that art brings creativity and relaxation, and studies show it is important for critical thinking.

I was distressed to read of the rise of anxiety among children and young adults during the pandemic. When you cannot be with your friends or peers or channel your energy, art can be an expressive media – especially now.

Partnering with one of our artists, Melanie Bellark, amazingmosspark.ca is sponsoring Grow Your Own Secret Garden, a free virtual art event on Sunday Feb. 21 from 1–2 p.m.

Grow Your Own Secret Garden is a free mixed-media project for children of all ages. Through illustration, drawing, painting and collage, we will explore what can be in our personal gardens. We will talk about what you would want to grow, the animals you would want to see there, and any other secret elements!

Suggested materials:

Sheet of cardstock, cardboard or thicker paper; scissors and glue stick; markers, pencil and eraser; construction, patterned or scrap paper; tis-

sue paper; yarn; images from magazines and calendars (optional); mixed media or computer paper; watercolour paints, brushes and a water container

Instructor Melanie Billark is a multidisciplinary Toronto-based artist with a diploma (2011) at Sheridan College's Craft and Design Program for glass in Oakville. After a year's residency at the Mississauga's Living Arts Centre, she studied sculpture and installation at OCADU, obtaining her BFA in 2016.

Melanie has participated in shows across the GTA and elsewhere, including at Toronto's Pearson Airport, Lonsdale Gallery, Canadian Sculpture Centre, Gladstone Hotel, Xpace Cultural Centre, and Treefort Music Fest.

Passionate about art education, community development and creating art opportunities, Melanie has years of experience facilitating courses and workshops, creating programming and presenting lectures across the GTA for people of all ages and skill levels.

Website: melaniebillark.com

Instagram: [@melanie.billark](https://www.instagram.com/melanie.billark)

Register for Grow Your Own Secret Garden at amazingmosspark.ca.

A Zoom link will be sent to you.

New opportunities at the Centre for Social Innovation

Denise Soueidan-O'Leary,
Community Manager - CSI

The Centre for Social Innovation (CSI) has called Regent Park home for the past eight years, building deep connections with the community from the third floor of the Daniels Spectrum building on Dundas Street East. We have worked with the Social Development Plan and the Community Civic Engagement Collaborative, curating the Regent Park Community Newsletter, running the Regent Park Potluck, starting Regent Park Open Mic nights, and partnering in many neighbourhood initiatives. We are committed to making this vibrant community stronger every day.

Last October we launched the Every One Every Day: Toronto Our Neighbourhood Project, modelled after the British Participatory Cities framework for resident engagement. The purpose of the project is to grow, build and connect social ecosystems – especially important during this time of physical distancing and increased social isolation. Building social capital and linking with social ecosystems is the foundation of strengthening any community, and it is particularly true in Regent Park.

Our Neighbourhood Project's first phase ran from October to

December, with more than 100 residents signed up. With community partners like Art Heart, Green Thumbs Growing Kids, Just Vertical, WOSEN and others, we ran 30 workshops in six weeks that engaged 130 participants in community mural painting, hydroponic growing, cooking together, yoga, tree planting and even entrepreneurial journaling! We were able to do a few workshops in person, observing social distancing, but also successfully moved much programming online to respect Covid-19 restrictions.

The second phase is currently under way. We have released four new project starter kits into the community: Our Neighbourhood Pollinates, design pollinator gardens to support natural ecosystems; Our Neighbourhood Reads, sharing

books and stories and creating story installations, story walks and book exchanges; Our Neighbourhood Blooms, planning and planting beautiful gardens in public spaces; and Our Neighbourhood Stories, building a living tour of Regent Park to connect neighbours and collect their stories.

We would love to have you join the project! For more information and to sign up, check out the Every One Every Day: Toronto project on the Centre for Social Innovation website: socialinnovation.org/offering/everyoneeverydayto/ Send questions to everyoneeveryday@socialinnovation.ca.

This opportunity is open to everyone, of every age and demographic, as long as you are living or working in Regent Park. Registration is open until the end of February.

Women Speak Out, a leadership program

Rana Khan

In 2014, I was fortunate enough to participate in Women Speak Out, a leadership program offered by Working for Change (workingforchange.ca). This charitable organization, one of the earliest to champion social enterprises, provides education and employment opportunities for people disadvantaged by systemic barriers.

On January 15, 2021, I listened to the stories of 11 amazing women as they graduated from the same WSO program – but this time I was involved in delivering it. What a privilege it was to be connected, along with program manager Lubna Khalid, with women who felt empowered in the same way I had felt six years ago.

From its inception in 2011, the Women Speak Out program had as its lead facilitator the late Pat Capponi. Until her death last April, Pat had relentlessly advocated for the rights of marginalized people, especially those with mental health challenges. Pat and Lubna envisioned a program offering holistic training in leadership, including political advocacy and community engagement, plus gender-specific workshops on violence against women, and on women's legal rights, housing and health issues.

Women Speak Out participants, ranging in age from 23 to 69, have come from diverse backgrounds. Some have experienced years of poverty and homelessness, domestic violence, mental health challenges and/or addiction. Others are refugees or newcomers to Canada from various parts of the world.

This rich diversity allows the women to learn from one another and to form bonds across generational, ethnic, class and racial divides. Sharing experiences has been among the most valuable aspects of the program, as understanding the struggles of other women encourages participants to speak out on their common issues.

As members of Working for Change's speakers' bureau, WSO graduates are available to speak from a woman's perspective on poverty, mental health, newcomer integration and immigration, domestic violence and other topics involving marginalized communities.

In 2017 I embarked upon another rewarding association, this time with the Toronto Writers Collective (torontowriterscollective.ca), an organization that has brought joy and empowerment to many through free writing workshops. Since the pandemic began, the TWC writing workshops, like the Women Speak Out program,

have been held online.


Women Speak Out graduates this year include Christina Walsh, who's long been +++associated with Toronto Writers Collective, and Kate Yee and Ambreen Malik, two writers I introduced to TWC in my role as a volunteer creative writing facilitator.

I believe writing can be both therapeutic and inspiring. I'm sure that these future authors, along the other Women Speak Out graduates, will continue to engage with the community and provide leadership in their chosen careers.


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Oil on canvas. GOODBYE 2020 - HELLO 2021 by Karel Vondra

Photo: Rasmus Groth

Pandemic has brought vendors closer together

Market from p1

The Breedons are now earning the majority of their income outside the market presently, making it unnecessary to attend the Saturday farmer's market, but they consider it a team effort. “If some merchants stop going,” he said, “the market isn't as good for the customers, and then the customers aren't going to come.”

Rachel and Kay Rhee are father/daughter owners of Korean grocer Phil's Place, which has occupied its present market location since 1982. The store offers a large quantity of local produce when in season.

Rachel Rhee believes that the pandemic has brought market vendors closer together. More dependent than before on one another to bring in customers, vendors give more neighbourly support, like trying other's food and recommending it, referring customers to other vendors who supply products Phil's Place doesn't, said Rhee.

In Manotas words, “The merchants are the keepers of the market,” but customers keep the merchants afloat. It is a system of trust involving market vendors and organizers alike.

The regular market continues to operate Tuesday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday from 5 a.m. to 4 p.m. for curbside pickup and delivery. The building has a maximum capacity of 175 people, half the original capacity as per provincial regulations. But most of the time under 10% of regular capacity is used, said Wiles.

The Saturday farmers market is temporarily hosted at 125 Esplanade from 5 a.m. to 3 p.m. While customer traffic is continuously monitored, visitors are encouraged to physically distance and to wear masks in all areas of the St. Lawrence Market complex.

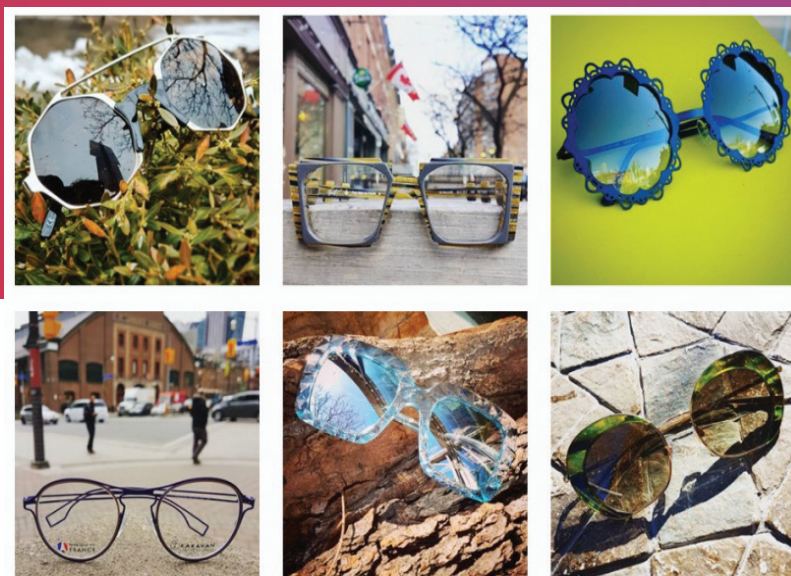
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