

the bridge

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

A Lakeside Stroll **4** Christening the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood **6** Int'l Overdose Awareness Day **8**
Ben Bull Coralina Lemos Irene Reilly-Paterson (TWC)

Crombie Town residents advocating for more waterfront green space

Julia Simioni

The west side of the Toronto Port Lands looks like a set in a post-apocalyptic film. Piles of rubble and debris occupy most of the shoreline; not until you reach the top of a mound can you see the area's potential. Not long ago, Sidewalk Labs and Waterfront Toronto planned to develop this land into

Quayside, a controversial project said to be a "more sustainable and affordable community resulting from innovations in technology and urban design," according to Sidewalk Labs CEO Dan Doctoroff. However, in early May the company walked away from the project, citing economic uncertainty around the world and in the Toronto real estate market.

With no clear plans for this land having emerged, a group of Crombie Town residents want it developed into a park. Cate Stoker, an Esplanade resident who's representing the group, believes it's essential to preserve as much of the waterfront as possible for local residents and the general public. "There are more people on bike trails, more people in green spaces, and they're using

parks differently than ever before," said Stoker in speaking of the city's shortage of green space. "I hear the problem out there, but I don't hear the rumblings of a solution." At the time of writing, 770 people have signed the group's "Stepping Off The Sidewalk" petition to rezone and repurpose this waterfront land as parkland "for all Torontonians." "Imagine playing with your

kids in a beautiful park setting by the lake. Walking hand in hand with your loved ones, or taking a solitary stroll, book in hand, and breathing in the lake-side air," reads the Change.org petition to Toronto City Council.

Waterfront continued on p4

St. Lawrence heritage project hits roadblock



Photo: Stefan Blondal

Signs of life for the Ontario Line, as investigative drilling wraps up

the bridge reporter

After weeks of geotechnical drilling around the foot of Moss Park on Queen Street East, investigative work on underground conditions for the construction of the downtown segment of the Ontario Line subway is set to finish in the coming fall. Since late June, drilling crews hired by the Metrolinx provincial agency have been collecting rock and soil samples around Moss Park to determine what foundational designs and other structural plans the project needs to tunnel in this area of the downtown. Similar work has also taken place in the Distillery District, near Distillery Lane, where drilling on two site locations has been ongoing since August 5.

Metrolinx continued on p2

Andre Bermon, Publisher

The City of Toronto has been ordered to scale back its designs for a Heritage Conservation District (HCD) in the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood. In a landmark decision issued July 27, the province's Local Planning Appeal Tribunal concluded that the HCD Plan's prescriptive nature did not conform to the planning framework governing develop-

ment in the city. This resulted in amendments by the Tribunal that revised or deleted several of the plan's preservation guidelines, including sizeably reducing the HCD boundaries. City solicitors are now considering what action to recommend. Few options are available, but the real question confronting supporters of the HCD is how likely will the city take further legal action. City Council approved the St. Lawrence HCD Plan in

November 2015 after years of study and review. Concern over rapid development diminishing the area's historic character was the impetus to propose a 25-block heritage district under the Ontario Heritage Act, from Yonge and Wellington at the west, south to Front and Jarvis, and east to King and Parliament. This area includes valuable real estate and some of Toronto's most cherished monuments. A consortium of developers

led by Allied Properties REIT immediately appealed the plan to the Ontario Municipal Board, which in 2017 became the LPAT. Four years of procedural maneuvering culminated in a 14-day hearing in November 2019 that saw nine appellants and city solicitors debate the plan's binding guidelines. According to the LPAT decision, the goals of the HCD Plan's three main standards for new "built form" – specifying step-backs for buildings, street

wall heights and angular planes – would be better realized without its mandatory policies. The appellants claimed the rules' rigidity would prevent City Council from considering development proposals that met the HCD objectives in an alternative form. The LPAT agreed, ordering the step-back, street wall height and angular plane prescriptions deleted from the HCD Plan.

HCD continued on p7

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and ideas across our city
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is an independent community newspaper published monthly and distributed by a mix of delivery services to a varying readership. Over 4000 copies are circulated throughout the downtown east - Moss Park, Corktown, The Garden District, Cabbagetown South, 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.

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Help keep our local bars and restaurants alive

the bridge

The Covid-19 lockdown has been devastating for Toronto's food industry.

As if running a restaurant wasn't hard enough in the city, where exorbitantly high rent is the norm, the mandatory shut-down of all "non-essential" businesses back in March was the proverbial "nail in the coffin".

Government response in the form of aid packages have quickly come and gone. Many owners never qualified for the various wage and rent subsidies or small business loans. And those that did, say it's not enough.

The city's CaféTO program was a welcoming relief for restaurants, which created a unique outdoor dining experience very reminiscent of European capitals. But now that the inevitable change in weather is upon us, how will restaurants make the transition?

Can limited capacity inside support a business model based on turnover?

Will people's inclination to go out and spend during the "lockdown fatigue" of the summer continue in the cold months ahead?

Many tough questions remain.

As bars and restaurants continue to toil with their blood, sweat and tears; *the bridge* would like to spill some ink to mourn the places that have permanently closed in and around our community since the start of the Covid-19 lockdown.

Club 120 and 120 Diner
Odin Café
Morning Glory
Jersey Giant
Hogtown Smoke on Colbourne
True True Diner
Golden Thai
Prohibition Gastrohouse
Moven Pick Marche
True Love Café

Here are some ways that you can help support your local eatery and neighbourhood pub:

> Refrain from relying on delivery apps, opt for take-away instead.

> Cash is King! Use it when and where you can.

> Be mindful of social distancing rules so as to encourage others to dine in.

> Leave a review online

> Buy and wear merch to support the biz and advertise the brand

Metrolinx remains on track for fall RFPs

Metrolinx continued from p1

Moss Park and neighbouring Corktown have been earmarked as two of 15 potential stations along the 16-kilometre line, stretching from the Ontario Science Centre in the northeast to Exhibition/Ontario Place in the southwest. The subway is to include six interchange stations and 17 new connections to GO train lines and existing subway and streetcar lines.

Details about the Moss Park station site haven't been released. However, one likely spot is the northwest corner of Queen East and Sherbourne at the foot of the park.

In an emailed statement to *the bridge*, Metrolinx said the crown agency remains on track to issue requests for proposals for the first two contracts this fall.

"Our strategy to deliver the Ontario Line as three separate

P3 [public-private partnership] contracts on a staggered schedule will help to mitigate market issues, including impacts from COVID-19. Ultimately, the final construction schedule will be developed by the consortiums who bid on the project."

The Ford government announced the Ontario Line in April 2019. Cost is said to be \$10.9 billion with a completion date in 2027.



Drilling crew seen on Queen Street East near Moss Park

Photo: Andre Bermon

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Harry Gairey



Bruce Bell, Senior Columnist

In late 1945 a 15-year old Toronto lad named Harry Gairey went to the Icelanda roller rink in the Spadina and College Streets area and was refused admission. The rink was for white boys only, he was told.

Harry spoke to his father, a railroad porter and a prominent member of the local Black community, who in turn went to his alderman, Joe Salsberg, who made an appointment for Harry Sr. to speak in the next City Council meeting.

The following week Harry Sr. stood in the council chambers of what is now Old City Hall and spoke as follows to the all-white councillors:

"If the powers that be refused my son admission to the Icelanda, I would accept it, if when the next war comes, you're going to say, 'Harry Gairey Jr., you're Black, you stay here, don't go to war.' But, gentlemen of the council, it's not going to be that way, you're going to say he's a Canadian and you'll conscript him and if so, I would like my son to have everything that a Canadian citizen is entitled to, providing he's worthy of it."

The next day University of Toronto students started to

picket the Icelanda rink, and a few months later a City of Toronto ordinance prohibited theatres, rinks and places of entertainment from discriminating because of race, creed, colour or religion.

There has always been prejudice in our city -- against Blacks, Jews, gays, Greeks, Italians, women, Catholics (need I go on) -- but at the same time there have always been forward-thinking people who fought against discrimination.

As early as 1842 Blacks in Toronto effectively appealed to City Council to prohibit traveling American shows that ridiculed Black people and to ban offensive songs from their repertoire. In 1894 voters put William Hubbard on City Council, making him the first Black citizen in Canada elected to any public office.

Sadly, even with these reforms racism was rampant in our city.

Up until the mid 20th century when Black performers from the United States appeared in Toronto shows, they were barred from downtown hotels and often had to either stay in Black-run hotels miles away in the suburbs or be billeted with friends or relatives.

In 1943 a group of Black American actors set to appear at the Royal Alexandra Theatre in *Porgy and Bess* (starring the great Todd Duncan as Porgy) were turned away on a cold and rainy night from the Royal York Hotel after a long train ride from New York.

Whereupon Ernest Rawley, legendary manager of the Ro-

yal Alex from the 1930s to the 1950s, marched down to the hotel and demanded that his actors be given rooms. Royal York managers said it wasn't official policy to ban Blacks, just that they didn't want to offend white American guests with the sight of Black people in the lobby.

Shocked and repulsed, Rawley said that no other company will would stay at the hotel if this ridiculous policy didn't change immediately.

The Royal York allowed Black people to stay after that incident, but not until 1954 did Ontario's Fair Accommodations Practices Act make it the law of the land.

Todd Duncan's celebrated presence in Ontario came at a

time of sweeping social change that defied long-held racial stereotypes, making it easier for an all-white City Council to hear a dad's stirring appeal for his son to be granted the simple pleasure of roller skating.

Today near Bathurst and Dundas Streets stands the Harry Gairey Outdoor Artificial Ice Rink, named in recognition of this milestone event in Toronto's history.

I am offering three different walking tours in September.

1) Old Town Toronto: Wednesdays Sept. 16, 23, 30.

2) Downtown Toronto architecture: Mondays Sept. 14, 21, 28.

3) Historic Distillery District: Saturdays Sept. 12, 19, 26.

The tours are **FREE** but gratuities are welcomed (\$10 to \$20 suggested).

RESERVATIONS ARE A MUST and all tours start at 10 a.m., reservations required. Email bruce.bell2@sympatico.ca or phone 647-393-8687 and leave a message requesting which tour and date you would like and I will send you a confirmation and meeting place info.



Harry Gairey and Toronto Mayor Barbara Hall, Jan 25 1996.

Photo: Boris Spremo, courtesy of the Toronto Public Library



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A Lakeside Stroll

Ben Bull, Columnist

It's a nice day so I think I'll go for a walk. But - where to? How about the waterfront? Ah yes. I haven't been there in a while.

I start my trip by entering the (area of) Corktown Common. The park is full today - joggers, dog walkers, picnickers. COVID fatigue is bringing everybody out of hibernation it seems.

This is such a lovely park. It was built on remediated industrial lands to be the centrepiece of a new emerging neighbourhood. I just wish we had more of them.

I duck under the railway bridge and step onto the Don River Trail. Cyclists are whipping by inches from my arms. I have to tuck in tight.

Multi-use paths are not safe. If only there was enough space for a dedicated sidewalk.

I head south and peer into the river. The Don is looking bereft. Driftwood, garbage and sludge are piled up on the banks like a clogged artery. There's a faint odor like rotten eggs.

As I stroll south, I think about my recent bike ride up the Humber Trail. The Humber

River is wide, fast flowing and clean. I even saw some kayakers! The trail splits apart in places, giving pedestrians a safe space to swing their arms and let their kids run free.

I reach Lakeshore and jaywalk across the road. There are six lanes here but somehow the road never seems that busy. The city has plans to beautify this stretch and re-align the bike lanes. But they won't be thinning out the highway.

In Toronto, we can always make room for cars.

I squeeze to the right and join the steady stream of traffic barrelling along the Martin Goodman Trail. It's a busy day today. Evidently one of the side effects of COVID is exercise.

I hurry past the drop-in shelter, the car park and the abandoned silo. This little slice at the foot of Parliament used to belong to Sidewalk Labs. When the smart city nerds skipped town, my neighbour suggested we lobby the city to build a park - and the 'Stepping Off The Sidewalk' campaign was born. We have over 800 signatures to date!

I turn left and head along Queens Quay. The Aquavista condos by the waterfront are

quickly taking shape. Once they're finished, we'll have a lakeside sidewalk all the way to Sugar Beach. But why stop there? Can't we have a boardwalk running all the way to the ferry terminal? There's a 3 kilometer stretch at Ashbridge's Bay and a wide swath west of Ontario Place. And here I am, walking by the lake with only one thing missing:

The lake.

I reach Sherbourne Common and watch the kids kicking up the gravel and milling about by the waterless fountain.

Sherbourne Common is another example of the many mini-parks popping up on our side of the city. The park is cute but it's plonked between ten lanes of traffic. Why can't we have more park space in our neighbourhood? In the west end they have High Park - 399 acres - and the Humber Valley. Eventually Ontario Place will be open to the public again.

Are we getting our fair share?

I walk past the new towers west of Sherbourne. So much construction... Isn't the waterfront supposed to be for everyone to enjoy? If so - why can't I see it? It's as if the city wants to hide the lake away.

families with children want more parkland

Waterfront continued from p1

Mirela Leopold-Muresan, who's lived on Longboat Avenue for over 15 years, says she's watched the vast majority of local green space be replaced with high-rise condominiums. Some of these buildings block the view from her balcony, which once featured Lake Ontario.

"I can't even see the water," she said. "If I see the Toronto Islands, I'm lucky."

More is at stake than the view. Leopold-Muresan says the community residents, many of whom are seniors and families with young children, need parkland for their physical and mental health. "[Politicians] need to think of the quality of the air we breathe and the quality of our lives."

Supporters of the petition also noted the general shortage of accessible green space available to Toronto residents and visitors. According to public health researcher Nadha Hasen, the accessibility of a park involves considering "how people can actually get into the space (whether by walking, cycling or other means of transport) and how they can move around it once they get there"

One petition signatory wrote: "It is essential that our unique waterfront remains accessible, free of charge, to every citizen of [the] GTA and remains de-



Overlooking the former Quayside site.

Photo: Larry Heng

veloped only as a park/green space."

"Too much of the lakeshore is inaccessible or entirely obscured by high-rises. Let this city and its residents and visitors breathe," wrote another.

In an email to local politicians, Stoker pointed out that many in Crombie Town live less than five minutes from the lake, yet never seem to visit it. "Why not? Because there is nowhere to go."

The group's current goal is to reach 1000 signatures. The group hopes the petition will encourage local politicians to protect existing green spaces as well as creating more.

"We're observing and we're watching the changes," said Stoker. "We're just trying to guard and protect the elements of this environment that keep us well."

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At the sugar factory, sidewalk space becomes scarce. It's single file here folks.

I walk past the Westin Harbour hotel. Brutalist is the term for this 1970's concrete slab style architecture.

That sounds about right.

At the ferry terminal I sit down by the Jack Layton statue. Jack is sitting on his bike peddling away from the

terminal.

And who can blame him? The place looks like an ICE detection center.

I haul myself up and follow Jack's lead. It's time to go west. I hear there's a whole lot of lake over there.

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the bridge event: Amazing Moss Park Art Collective Exhibit

Carol Mark

With the pandemic still in full swing, the 1st Amazing Moss Park Art Fair has relocated to a private outdoor space on Britain St. Follow the signs and chalk dots on the ground starting at George and Britain St. from 11-5 pm. Enjoy the art and music. (We will also be giving out limited artist designed face masks for free.)

Social distancing protocols will be adhered, and hand sanitizers will be provided.

Art & Music:

PEOPLE, PLACE & HISTORY - Celebrating our Heritage of the Arts dates back to 1852, when Toronto's largest art patron, George Allan of Moss Park, supported artist Paul Kane.

Artists: Giselle Silvestri, Dan Philips, Alan McKee, Melanie Billark, Michael Sillers, Colour Blots by Angela, Rachelle Soloway, Julie Amlin, Sally Kou, Willow + Wyrd, Michael Jenkins, Brian A Hawkins, Giselle Selim - Curated by Carol Mark

Musician Jamey Soucie, guitarist, vocalist and song crafter of the band Responder, offers up honest, raw, acoustic rock as a solo act. His energetic rasp and buzzing choruses leave you singing them out long after he's left the stage. He has also lent his vocals and song writing talents to emerging Ca-



nadian artists across all genres. @responderband

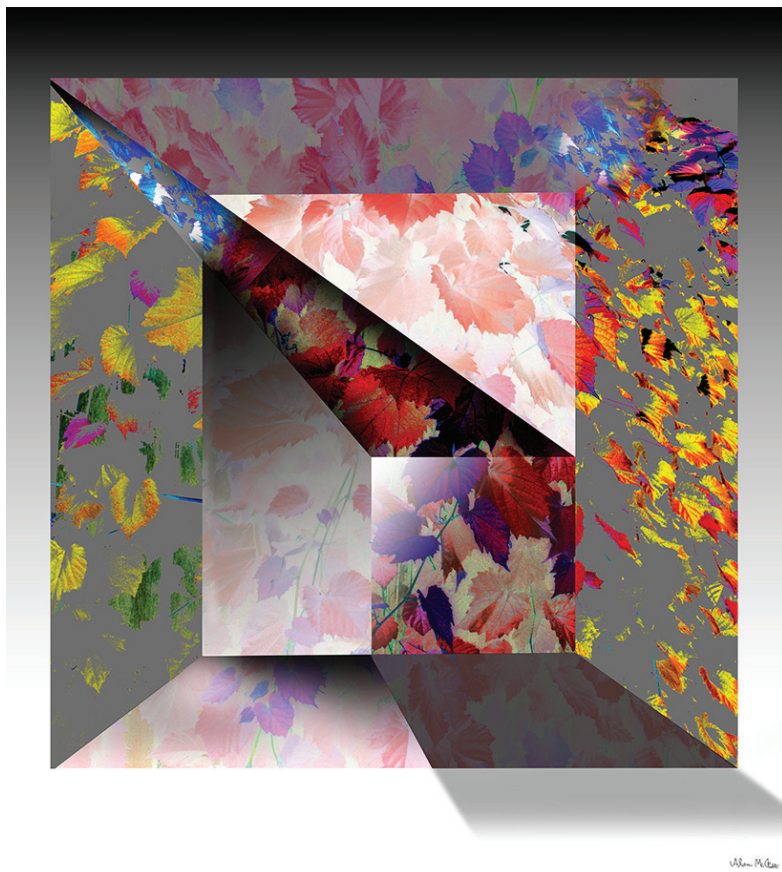
Be surprised Be engaged Be there

With the demands of an increasing population, land will be more precious as we build our massive towers. But what happens on street level is the landscape starts to disappear along with historical buildings and their markers. We are the temporary caretakers of the land and should acknowledge the

historical part of our cityscape.

For it is the neighbourhood and it's character that gives flavour and excitement to a city.

Moss Park has a long history with George St., which runs south from Front St. to Gerrard St., beginning as one of the most exclusive addresses in the original town of York, in Upper Canada. George and Adelaide Streets retain some of the early industrial buildings, including a small row of worker's cottages along the side of the George St. Diner. George St. was exten-



Pandora's Box by Alan McKee

ded to Britain St. in 1827 and marks the old riverbank buried by Taddle Creek. Interesting piece of history I discovered about Bootleggers Lane and George St: it was the site of a well in the 1850's that was a responsible for an outbreak of cholera and eventually sealed and closed up. One of the first Chinatowns was established in 1910 on George St. at Queen St. East for a short period and was known as The Chinese Empire Reform Association (CERA) with several local

businesses. This was when the Chinese population of Toronto totalled about two-hundred.

Respect the past, so we can build a proud community.

CATALOGUE https://issuu.com/theloveofteamag/docs/amazing_moss_park_artists/2www.amazingmossark.ca

No plans for Queen East have local businesses feeling left out

Andre Bermon, Publisher

Queen Street East businesses in Corktown are concerned that health and safety in the community are being overlooked by their local neighbourhood association.

Owner of the Hardknocks Boxing Club, who goes by the name Coach G, said in a statement with *the bridge*, "The corner of Queen and Parliament is being neglected."

"Since Covid, there has been a lot of issues," said Coach G, who contends with high levels of vagrancy in front of his gym and in the shared back alley way. "There are used needles everywhere. It's a free-for-all."

The Corktown Resident and Business Association is a volunteer based community group that oversees local decision making in one of the city's oldest and up and coming neighbourhoods. According to the CRBA website, their core objectives include promoting small businesses, advocating for smart development and holding community events.

But the problems that have beset Queen East over the decades, which have been made worse by the pandemic lockdown, require urgent attention,

says business owners. With little place for the homeless to go and seek refuge, they congregate close to social services which are abound on Queen East. Crime and drug abuse follow closely behind.

Catherina Quezada, a longtime resident of Corktown and owner of the Balloon Queen party supply store, has experienced the neglect of the area firsthand. Being part of the strip of businesses close to the intersection of Queen and Parliament, she has seen the neighbourhood become a quarantine zone for the city's social ills.

"It's very difficult for businesses to thrive here," said Quezada. "Social services [and non-for-profits] have been allowed to grow. There is no balance."

At a Corktown Meet and Greet on August 18 via Zoom, the CRBA introduced several projects to the participants, including a proposed mural at King and River Streets funded partially by community benefit money from the city.

To the dismay of the Queen East businesses owners, no mention was made about addressing issues in their part of Corktown.

"With that money there was no talk about improving Queen

East. This is shocking," said Quezada. "We have safety concerns here. That is more important than putting up a pretty sign."

Responding to a request for comment, Aaron Binder, President of the CRBA stated in an email to *the bridge*, "In early 2020, the CRBA formed a Queen East Working Group to work with businesses and residents along this strip to build a more robust Queen East. When the COVID Pandemic began

this taskforce was put on hold to focus on the CRBA's Small Business advocacy... [The CRBA] is happy to re-launch the Queen East Working Group to facilitate and assist the specific needs of business owners and residents."

The lack of representation on the CRBA board is seen as a major obstacle to gathering genuine consensus on local decision making. A more balanced executive committee, comprising of members repre-

senting all of Corktown's main streets, would be a first step to improving relations and avoid widening the schism between Queen and King East businesses and residents.

"It should be the objective [of the President] to bring everyone up together, not specific pockets," commented Coach G. "Because in the end you can't be proud of Corktown without being proud of Queen and Parliament."

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The Christening of St. Lawrence Neighbourhood

Coralina Lemos
Corktown historian and author
corktownhistory.com

In a decision dated July 27, 2020, the Ontario Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) denied the City of Toronto its proposed boundaries for the St. Lawrence Heritage Conservation District (HCD). Part of the executive summary submitted by preservation staff read, “The St. Lawrence Neighbourhood is one of Toronto’s oldest neighbourhoods, and contains within its boundaries built, landscape and potential archeological resources that reflect the evolution of Toronto from the founding of the Town of York to the contemporary city of today.” Yet in point of fact, the neighbourhood was born 41 years ago and integrated into the Town of York historical boundaries.

Nearly five decades ago, Toronto was suffering from a housing deficit that made it difficult for people with low or moderate incomes to find affordable housing. Thus in 1973, and following revisions to the federal government’s National Housing Act, Toronto City Council adopted the Living Room report as its housing policy, with one key condition: that a site needing revitalization be found in order to qualify for the federal government’s Land Banking Program.

Months later, in 1974, the “Land Banking Proposal: St. Lawrence” confirmed that a



Mayor David Crombie poses in front of the newly built St. Lawrence Neighbourhood. (1985)

Photo: Courtesy of the TPL

land option had been secured and negotiations initiated. Totalling 44 acres of underdeveloped land, the impending district would stretch from the Esplanade (behind today’s Meridian Hall) east to Parliament Street, and from Front Street south to the railway embankment. Destined to be a new integrated neighbourhood within downtown Toronto, the redevelopment was named and designed around the St. Lawrence Market, a destination considered vital to maintaining streetscape character so as to

“create a neighbourhood that benefited from nearby historic buildings.”

By the start of 1979, ads began to run in the Toronto Star inviting people to “Come to a Christening!” of the “new St. Lawrence Neighbourhood,” along with a contest to name seven new streets. On Sunday June 3, highlights of the celebratory day included a tour of the Old Town, access to model suites and free TTC service from Union Station. Former Mayor John Sewell welcomed the crowd and announced the

winners of the street-naming contest. The completed project was to cost \$145 million and projected to house 10,000 people by 1981. As it’s evident, today the St. Lawrence neighbourhood has expanded its moniker far beyond from where it first began.

But as the heritage conservation district proposal started to come to fruition, its outlined boundaries showed conflicts with nearby property owners and neighbourhoods. This became evident in By-law 1328-2015, which illustrates the an-

nexation of 51 Police Division (former Consumers Gas Station A) from neighbouring Corktown, an area identified in the study as being of “special identity”. The overlap did not make sense as following human settlement by First Nations, the area east of Berkeley has a distinct hereditary footprint based upon the establishment of the Government Park Reserve. To make matters worse, the Corktown street sign at the northeast corner of Parliament and Front Streets was replaced with that of the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood.

Following months of anticipation and 14 days of hearings, the tribunals’ written decision agreed with expert witnesses for the appellants stating that six character sub-areas, each with common building typologies, and four periods of significance did not align or support the objectives of the HCD. Consequently, the tribunal ordered the City to revise the boundaries and gave a detailed listing of streets in the re-drafted St. Lawrence Heritage Conservation District. And as the tribunal saw no benefit to the inclusion of 51 Division, it was excluded from the HCD plan.

As this narrative continues to unfold, Toronto’s second oldest and often overlooked historic neighborhood of Corktown continues to wait for the replacement of the street sign and its own Heritage Conservation District.

the bridge book review: Songs for the End of the World

Glenda MacFarlane

By Saleema Nawaz
Penguin Random House Canada, 2020

Reading Saleema Nawaz’s new novel about a group of people living through a global pandemic is slightly disconcerting. Nawaz began writing *Songs for the End of the World* six years ago and finished it before COVID-19 was ravaging the globe. But the novel’s situation is eerily prescient, including the spread of a coronavirus that begins in China, quarantines, shortages of N95 masks, physical distancing, CDC bulletins, and many of the other concepts we have become all too familiar with in recent months. The story, which moves backward and forward in time over the course of twenty years, centres on a handful of interconnected characters who ultimately face a coronavirus outbreak in the summer of 2020.

The novel explores the impact that the ARAMIS virus pandemic has on seven nar-

rators: Elliott is a New York City first responder, a front-line worker, divorced and bitter, with a list of friends felled by the virus. Ed navigates anti-Asian prejudice in her job at one of NYC’s trendiest bistros, until the restaurant is identified as the city’s “Ground Zero” for ARAMIS. Stu, a guitarist, and Emma, a singer who grew up on a boat circumnavigating the world, are expecting their first baby and wondering about the wisdom of bringing a child into a world where the virus is laying waste to normal life.

Keelan is an aging ethics professor, elevated by the pandemic to expert status as a TV talking head. Sarah, mother of a small child and sister to Elliott, works as a glorified intern at a publishing house where she is drawn into writer Owen Grant’s world. And Owen, who has written a prophetic novel about a plague, watches in shock as his book’s plot becomes a reality – uncannily echoing Nawaz’s own current predicament.

ARAMIS has some startling similarities to COVID-19, as

well as a few key differences. It’s obvious that Nawaz did a great deal of excellent research while writing the book, and some chapters, framed as interviews or news articles, appear to be ripped from our own headlines. It’s fascinating – if dizzying – to compare and contrast the unfolding of a fic-

tional pandemic with the one occurring in real life.

As the narrative evolves, characters are faced with philosophical questions that they once considered to be purely hypothetical, including the one most important to their survival: What responsibility do we have to one another? The cha-

acters in *Songs for the End of the World* take the question to heart. We can only hope that we will allow the current crisis to bring out our own better instincts and strengthen the bonds of community. As one of Nawaz’s characters puts it: “All we really have is each other.”

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Tribunal found proposed boundary lacked historic motive

HCD continued from p1

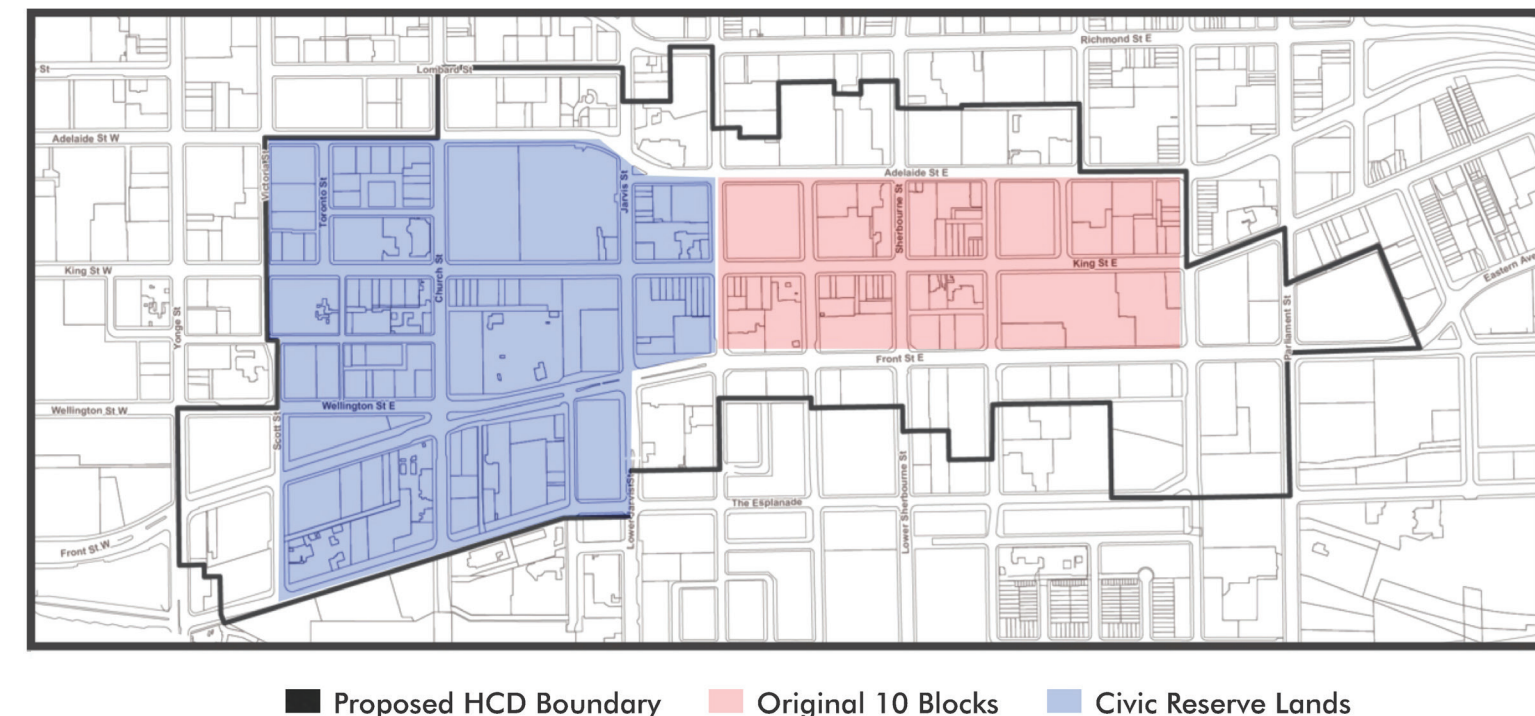
Suzanne Kavanagh, chair of the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association’s planning and heritage committee, told *the bridge* that heritage policies cannot be realized “through the lens of planning” alone. In other words, certain aesthetic nuances vital to the appearance of old neighbourhoods are hard to defend in a pedantic court-like setting.

“That’s why we are still pushing for the 45-degree angular plane,” said Kavanagh. “It’s not that we are anti-development, it’s that, particularly on King Street East, [we want] to have some sky view ... to see what’s left of the heritage buildings and/or facades.”

An assertion supported by the city that the Tribunal was not persuaded by.

The other major point of contention was the proposed HCD boundary, which developers argued was not rationally defined to reflect cultural heritage values.

Michael McClelland of ERA Architects Inc., who provided witness statements on behalf of Allied Properties, called for the heritage district to be reduced to the 10 original blocks of the pre-1837 Town of York, centred on King Street, and the old “civic reserve lands” that contain landmark buildings such



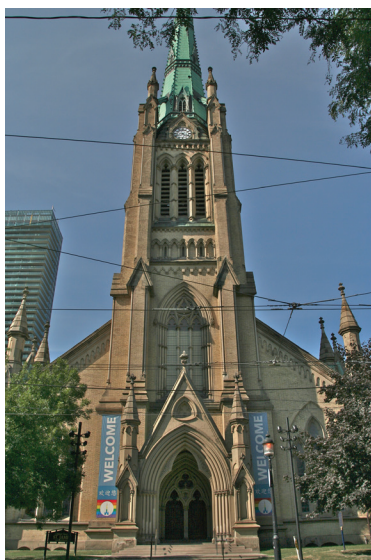
Map showing proposed HCD boundary with LPAT revisions in blue and pink.

Original image courtesy of the City of Toronto.

as St. Lawrence Market and St. James Cathedral.

This boundary revision would exclude structures such as the Consumer Gas building, now 51 Division, and 33 Yonge Street, a 13-storey glass office tower. The two buildings were added to the HCD to anchor its most easterly and westerly portions with key intersections and to envelop adjacent territory such as the site of Upper Canada’s first parliament and Berczy Park.

Appellants argued that the



St. James Cathedral.

HCD should evoke a sense of place, “based on the underlying historic organization of the cultural heritage values of the area.” They cited a directive of the City’s policy manual for heritage conservation districts that “It is not appropriate to include unrelated areas solely for the purpose of making the district larger or to extend control.”

The Tribunal found that the City’s proposed boundary lacked historic motive and or-

dered the revision based on Allied’s recommendation.

In response, Kavanagh stated, “They are trying to make it as small as possible. They knew if they gave us nothing, we would go wild. So, they gave us the bone.”

“[When] we started off with a study area, we chose the boundaries of the SLNA [as a starting point]. It’s just geography, it has nothing to do with the association...This is the third chop [the boundary] has gone through. And now it’s basically King Street ... that’s just not acceptable.”

City Council can take further legal action to defend the HCD Plan. One option is to ask the LPAT board to have another member revisit the case, as was done in a development involving the Berkeley Church.

In an email to *the bridge*, Tamara Anson-Cartwright of city planning stated, “City Planning is moving ahead with the necessary revisions of the HCD Plan ...,” suggesting that additional legal action may not be on the table.

So far, the City has spent

\$250,000 on the HCD study, while preparing for the hearing over four years and arguing the case likely cost millions of dollars.

Until it is publicly known what action the City is willing take, revisions to the HCD will be on hold until further notice.

“Is it worth it for [the City] to slow down or work faster on this?” pondered Kavanagh. “Are they going to [prioritize] this while working on other HCDs going to the LPAT? Who knows?”



St. Lawrence Market.

Photos: Tania Correa



St. Lawrence Hall.



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International Overdose Awareness Day

(Courtesy of the Toronto Writers Collective)

The International Overdose Awareness Day is a global event held on 31 August each year and aims to raise awareness of overdose and reduce the stigma of a drug-related death. It also acknowledges the grief felt by families and friends remembering those who have died or suffered a permanent injury as a result of drug overdose.

By Irene Reilly-Paterson

To my TWC Ohana, I share these words to bring awareness to the Opioid Crisis. Monday, August 31 is International Overdose Awareness Day, and it is with a heavy heart that I relate to you that the Overdose Crisis is at its most dire peak, compounded with the COVID 19 isolation and poisoned street supply of opioids laced with Fentanyl. It was a Fentanyl overdose that stole my son Roger's life. He was in recovery, hence his tolerance for street drugs was low. One night when the pain of living and loss of a dear friend overcame him, he self medicated in a parking lot at Queen and Jarvis. He passed away. While my heart breaks, I strive to raise awareness. I advocate with Moms Stop the Harm for harm reduction and a safe supply.

Roger grew up on the Big Island of Hawaii. I laid his ashes at rest in the ocean at Mauna Lani Bay, where he played as a child and surfed as a teenager. The ocean swell picked up our Kayak when we sprinkled his ashes. Roger caught a wave.

I met the artist who painted this image called "Surfer Silhouette" at Huggo's on the beach in Kona the day after

Roger's memorial. I saw the print and bought it. Later, when I contacted him for his permission to use his art on my son's memorial page, I asked if I could buy the original. He had sold it, but he asked me for a picture of Roger and painted me an original. It epitomizes Roger's spirit on the wave at sunset.

I wrote this Ode to Roger, adapted from the Elizabeth Fry poem "Do Not Weep."

@RogersOhana

Aloha - Ode to Roger

Do not weep

I do not sleep

I am the gentle breeze that blows across the surf at Mauna Lani

I am the diamond glints on snow-capped Mauna Kea

I am the sun on ripened papayas

I am the gentle rain.

When you awaken in the morning's hush

I am the swift uplifting rush

of the Pueo in circled flight

I am the bright stars that shine in the Kohala night sky

Do not cry

I am here with you always

I caught a wave on Mauna Lani Bay - hanging ten in the big surf of heaven

by Roger's mum, Irene Reilly

This year, Mayor Tory raised the International Overdose Awareness Day Flag at City Hall. It was followed by a candlelight vigil at Roundhouse Park to honour loved ones at Toronto's iconic CN Tower illuminated by purple at dusk to commemorate Overdose Awareness Day.

Moms Stop the Harm, www.momsstoptheharm.com, is a network of Canadian families impacted by substance use related harms and deaths.

Building Roots through Social Justice

Danielle Collrin, Building Roots

Through this challenging year of the devastating Coronavirus, Building Roots continues to work with the Moss Park community to create a grassroots network of nourishment and compassion. As an organization, we tackle socio economic issues with food justice, music and social justice, and justice for children

Food Justice

It all starts with food. Whilst food banks are a lifeline for many, often they mostly provide canned and non-perishable items. We think every human should have the right to chose fresh food. So our pay-what-you-can market of fresh food is for anyone in need.

Music and Social Justice

Representation matters. Women, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour), and LGBTQIP2SAA+ (lesbian, gay, bi, trans, questioning, queer, intersex, pansexual, two-spirit, androgynous or asexual) people are grossly underrepresented in the live and electronic music scenes, despite there being no shortage of great performers.



Photo: Joshua Best

There are as many expressions of music as there are people, and promoter bookings should reflect that. We all deserve the richness and full spectrum of musical experience. To redress the imbalance, Building Roots exclusively books women, BIPOC, and LGBTQIP2SAA artists and performers for our weekly Mini Social Distance Concert Series.

Justice for Children

Children have the right to play, creatively express and access educational and recreational resources. This is why we have created a weekly art

zone, and toy/book giveaway for kids.

In a system rife with inequality, injustice and marginalization, it can be difficult to know how to support change. Starting "small" – working with what we find valuable and necessary to maintain social harmony and equity – has shown some success in social empowerment. Starting small can seem insignificant, but to some it is immeasurable. In many cases, it's best to work at the local level, close enough to hone in on a community's desires and direct needs.

We advocate to end substance use related stigma, harms and death. We call for an end to the failed war on drugs through evidence-based prevention, treatment and policy change. We support a harm reduction approach that is both compassionate and non-discriminatory for people who use substances. Our vision is that people who use drugs are not criminalized and that their rights are respected. It sees health care as the way to equitably provide for a

safe supply of substances and diverse pathways of support for all those affected.

Families for Addiction Recovery, www.farcana.org, is a volunteer run Canadian registered charity founded by parents whose children have struggled with addiction from their teens. Our goal is long-term recovery for those with problematic substance use and their families. FAR provides support for families, education about addiction and advocates

for evidence-based treatment and drug policies that protect our families.

Irene Reilly-Paterson is a non-fiction writer enrolled in the University of Toronto's School of Continuing Studies Creative Writing Program. She is a member of, and volunteers as a creative writing facilitator for, the Toronto Writers Collective. She is currently writing her memoir: *Love and Grief in the time of the Opioid Epidemic*.

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