

the bridge

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

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Staying home without a home; under-housed during the pandemic

One of the strongest messages from health authorities and governments during the pandemic has been to stay home. It seems simple, but what if you don't have a home? That is the reality for more than 9,000 Torontonians on any given night, never mind thousands more across the province and tens of thousands across the country.

How do you stay home when you have no place to call home? How do you self-isolate indoors when you live on the streets? You can't. Or if you do, it is not anywhere near what the authorities have in mind; perhaps it's in a tent, or a sleeping bag in a storefront or over a subway grate. These are hardly liveable or safe housing options, espe-

cially in an urban centre like Toronto, but this is the reality for a great many people.

"What about shelters?" one might ask. Toronto shelters have had to limit services when they are most needed. Many have fewer beds to offer, and when they do, many shelters don't have space to maintain the mandated physical distance of 2 metres. Fewer yet have adequate spaces for people who are unwell enough to require self-isolation but not sick enough to be admitted to hospital.

Because of such shortcomings, many people are afraid to stay at shelters and opt for tents or other makeshift alternatives. Facing legal action from housing advocates and increasing public pressure, the

city opened several new temporary facilities and secured more than 1200 hotel rooms, but this is not enough; as of May 10, for more than 9000 homeless individuals, the city had just 6764 beds – including all shelters (pre-pandemic and new), hotel rooms and other spaces – leaving more than 2000 on the streets. A distressing result of this shortcoming is in the numbers: As of Thursday, May 14, 341 people in Toronto shelters tested positive for COVID-19; 299 cases were active and two people have since died.

Even before the pandemic, our city had a serious housing crisis and alarming rates of poverty, with homelessness and substandard living conditions affecting many. With the ar-

rival of COVID-19, this crisis and its ramifications have only worsened; a sad and unacceptable reflection on our government's persistent failure to adequately address the needs of vulnerable citizens.

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Photos: T.C.

Sidewalk Labs ends smart city plans

Andre Bermon, Publisher

The controversial project to build Toronto's first smart city development has come up short as the urban design company, Google-affiliated Sidewalk Labs, walked away from the tentative waterfront deal.

Citing economic upheavals and uncertainty in Toronto's real estate market caused by the COVID-19 lockdowns, Sidewalk Labs stated in early May that it no longer seeks to build a high-tech district at the foot of Parliament Street, in the 12 acres known as Quayside. The announcement disappointed many, but has others thinking about new ways the city can approach future development.

Since October 2017, Sidewalk Labs and Waterfront Toronto, the tripartite governmental agency in charge of revitalizing the city's expansive shoreline, had committed to introducing technological innovations such as pedestrian sensors, wood-built structures and driverless vehicles in a tech-driven urban community.

However, the ambitious project's extensive data-collecting plans evoked privacy concerns from critics who insisted Sidewalk could not be trusted with public information. This became the defining issue dividing Torontonians on the smart city proposal.

"People couldn't get past the association with Google, and that just meant evil," said Jamie Cappelli, president of the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association,

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Fraught with confusion: Life after the Lockdown

Ben Bull

As the coronavirus wave reaches its peak and we take our first tentative steps outside, many Ontarians may wonder what life will be like after the lockdown.

Watching the daily briefings of the Premier of Ontario, it's clear that our journey will be complicated. Testing is not where it needs to be. Protective

equipment issues persist, and contact tracing measures are largely ineffective.

On May 19 only 5,813 tests were conducted – way below the province's target of 16,000 a day. And a recent *Toronto Star* article noted that up to two-thirds of Ontario's new COVID cases cannot be traced back to their source.

Traditional contact tracing methods take resources. They

rely on call centre staff contacting anyone who has been in close proximity to a newly infected person. However, these methods have sometimes proven problematic. Britain recently hired 21,000 contact tracers, but, as the *Guardian* newspaper notes, "People hired to contact those exposed ... and advise them to self-isolate have reported spending days just trying to log into the

online system, and virtual training sessions (have) left participants unclear about their roles."

Researchers at Johns Hopkins University estimate that the United States would need to recruit and train 100,000 contact tracers to manage their anticipated workload, the *Washington Post* recently reported.

tracing continued on p7



OPEN FOR YOU
see page 5

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and ideas across our city
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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.

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The end of cash?

When was the last time you paid with money?

Was it before the pandemic? Then you are not alone.

It's no surprise that societal changes caused by Covid-19 will long outlast the coronavirus. Months of lockdown measures have accelerated trends that might have otherwise taken years to manifest.

One quickly evolving phenomenon is where and how consumers spend money.

According to statista.com, an online portal for statistics, between March 11 and May 3 Canadian online sales of household appliances, electronics, building materials and do-it-yourself items skyrocketed by 625 percent year-on-year. Furniture sales went up 336 percent and clothing by 175 percent.

Businesses that have remained open are encouraging contactless payment, i.e., with debit and credit cards, while food courier apps and other delivery services have proliferated among grocery chains. Restaurants' online food sales have increased by 203 percent; however, their overall business has drastically declined.

Why aren't people using cash?

During the pandemic, many businesses in Toronto have

refused to accept hard currency over concerns that coins and plastic bills help spread the virus. Elsewhere, hard-hit countries like Spain have seen cash volumes plummet as much as 90 percent.

In a world already reliant on virtual exchange, Covid-19 has put considerable doubt on the long-term viability of carrying money in physical form.

What does a cashless society look like? And should we welcome it?

Gary Cohn, a former director of the U.S. National Economic Council, argues going cashless would not only diminish illicit enterprise but would help common folk better organize their taxes. (Two reasons any government would love such a system.)

On the other hand, the drawbacks are immediate and far-reaching. Every digital and card purchase can be tracked and catalogued, letting consumer habits be measured and controlled by keystrokes. And those unfortunately lacking access would be excluded from commerce of any kind.

The pandemic has given digital currency a huge nudge - a disruptive shift and a leap towards a technocratic future. Society should be wary of such an outcome.

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Creativity is also contagious

Thu Nguyen, founder of
Kindness Kitchen Toronto

I host Kindness Kitchen Toronto, a monthly volunteer-run lunch where everyone is welcomed, and creative expression and generosity is practiced. For the past two years in collaboration with Building Roots, an organization building resources for social cohesion in Moss Park, we've learned the importance of creativity in community and that it is accessible to everyone regardless of socioeconomic status. Creative expression produces plenty of smiles in both givers and receivers. Here are some ideas from our events: write a wish to hang on a tree; write a letter to your younger self; paint what community means to you; sing along to your favourite songs or dance to your favourite music video; cook for someone; and use chalk to write "welcome" in different languages.

The coronavirus has brought much creativity as well as uncertainty over the past few months. Kids make signs to thank frontline workers, rocks are painted with kind words along bike paths, colourful masks are made. At Moss Park Market we see creativity expressed through donations of baked goods, food and art supplies. More than fresh gro-



Arts and crafts in Moss Park.

Photo: Courtesy of Thu Nguyen

ceries, our weekly bags also include art supplies, writing prompts and colouring pages.

Innumerable classes are offered online by dancers, musicians and artists of all kinds. Museums, galleries and film festivals also share their content. John Krasinski created a YouTube show called SGN (Some Good News) that showcases creativity emerging all around the world. Many kids have taken the opportunity to recreate SGN for their community.

Creative expression is a practice to embrace uncertainty. We don't know what will fill a blank canvas until we do it, and the process almost always includes a smile. It is heartening to see that when given the op-

portunity, creativity wants to burst out of us.

In March, I challenged myself to paint every day for 21 days. In April I challenged myself to call someone every day to say hello. In May I decided to capture a daily photo and write a haiku caption. I haven't painted or written a poem since childhood, and it's been a long time since I picked up the phone to call rather than text. I feel grateful for the chance to create positive ripples and memories.

What is the form of creative expression that wants to emerge out of you this month? What can you create and bring forth into the world that will bring a smile to your face and others?

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The Summer of Hell



Bruce Bell, Senior Columnist

The present pandemic crisis isn't the first plague to hit the streets we walk today. The first pandemic began with a fateful entry in James Lesslie's journal in June 1832. Mr. Lesslie was a druggist, stationary storeowner and in later years a municipal alderman. He wrote:

"The steamship The Great Britain arrives with 600 passengers on board – 1 or 2 sick had been put on shore at Cobourg – 2 new cases of Cholera reported in Town today – and the wife of the person who died 2 days ago it is said was seized with cholera and died shortly after being taken to the Hospital...."

By the time the cholera pandemic had finally left the Town of York in September that year, 205 deaths had been reported in a town of 6000. Today's equivalent would be 150,000 people dead in four months.

Let me set the stage of that summer in 1832. Let's say that you were a then average citizen of York, around 25yrs old, and along with your family ran a small inn near King and George Streets.

You served freshly butchered meat, and cheap but thirst-

quenching ale. A few hogs ran wild with your dogs in the streets, and you kept chickens in your front yard.

You washed laundry and the dishes in the same water you earlier used to clean blood from your butchering knife. All this water would be tossed into the street when day was done, along with potato peels and the stuff that filled your overnight guests' chamber pots.

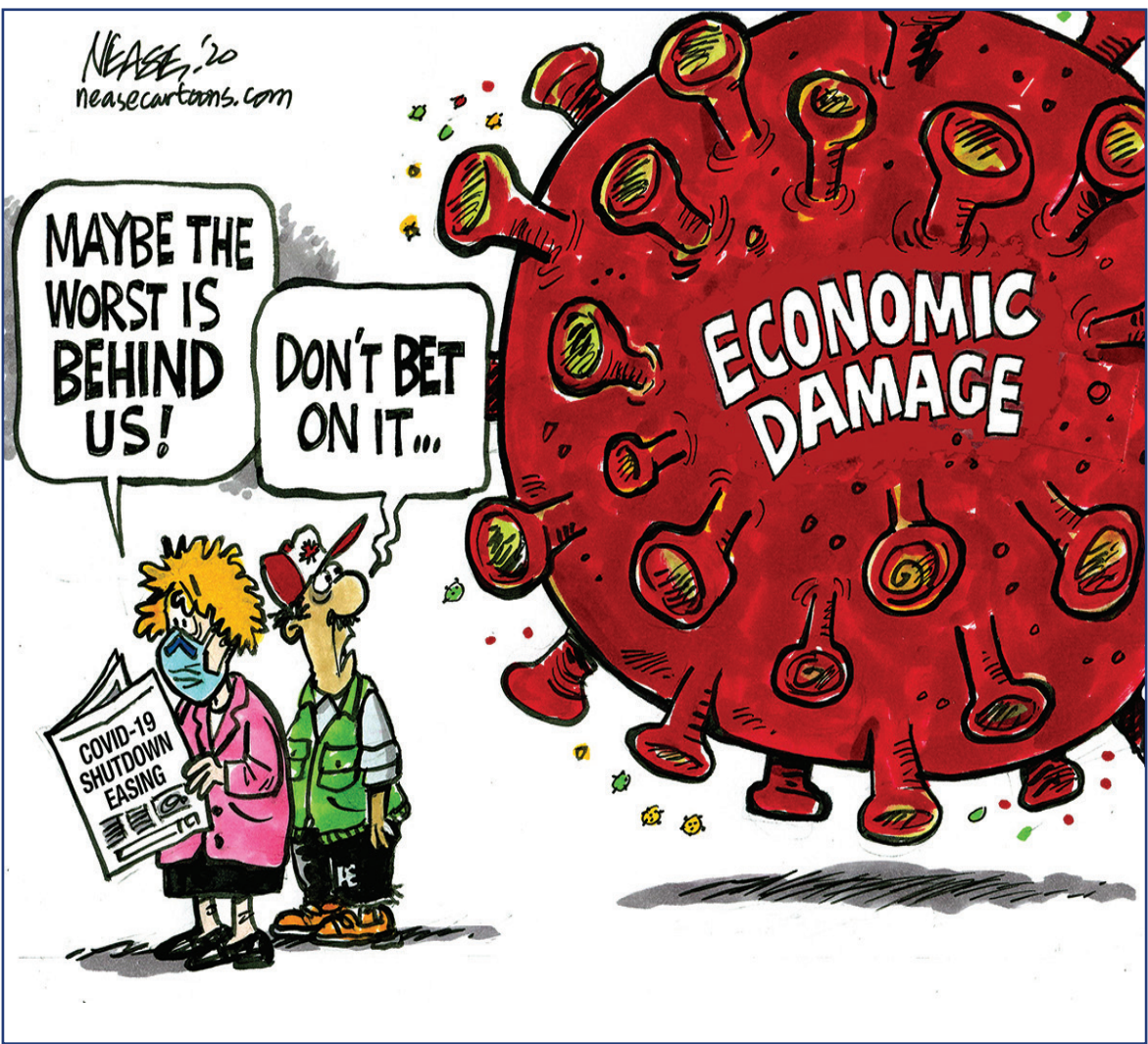
At the other end of the town, near present-day Berkeley and King Streets, was the town's manure dump, and next to that a huge mosquito-filled marsh.

Combine the swill, the sweat, the summer's heat and humidity with a swamp bursting to explode with insects – and a steamship that just unloaded 600 immigrants, all of whom have been exposed to Asiatic cholera – and a summer of hell is beginning.

The pandemic began in India in 1831, and gradually moved into Europe before coming westward with a wave of emigration. Now one of The Great Britain's 600 passengers enters your premises looking for a room, and unknowingly risks the lives of your entire family.

At the time, little was known about how cholera was spread, and weird ways of preventing it began to appear.

One was to burn tar and pitch in barrels outside each dwelling. It was thought that vapours arising from the swamp caused the outbreak; disguise the smell and the sickness would go away. As a respec-



ted tavern owner, you do your civic duty and light your barrel of tar before tossing your sewage onto the street.

Another means of controlling cholera was to wash the inside of your home with sulphur, usually after someone died in the house.

No one realized that living in filthy conditions led to the spread of germs – but then no one had heard of germs, a word yet to be invented.

Like some jurisdictions are doing today, the Town of York cut itself off from the outside world by restricting travel.

Signs posted at the outer boundaries warned people not to enter.

Cholera kills fast. You can feel as fresh as a daisy in the morning, and be dead at night after a day of unimaginable sickness.

Families wrapped their dead member in a white sheet and waited for the death cart to arrive. The cart took your poor relative's body to the freshly dug cholera pit behind St. James Cathedral. If rumours are true, the 700 other victims of Toronto's cholera epidemics are still there, all piled one on

top of another.

Disturbing cholera graves might start the scourge all over again, so those bodies were left untouched, it's said. Our ancestors learned the hard way and survived.

A plaque on the Jarvis side of St. James Park honours Francis Collins, an early newspaperman who along with his entire family died in the cholera epidemic of 1834. A fitting place for a marker considering what may lie beneath the grassy slopes of St. James.

But as I say, it's just a rumour.

INDIAN CHOLERA

It is deemed proper to call the attention of the Inhabitants to some of the Symptoms and Remedies mentioned by them as printed, and now in circulation.

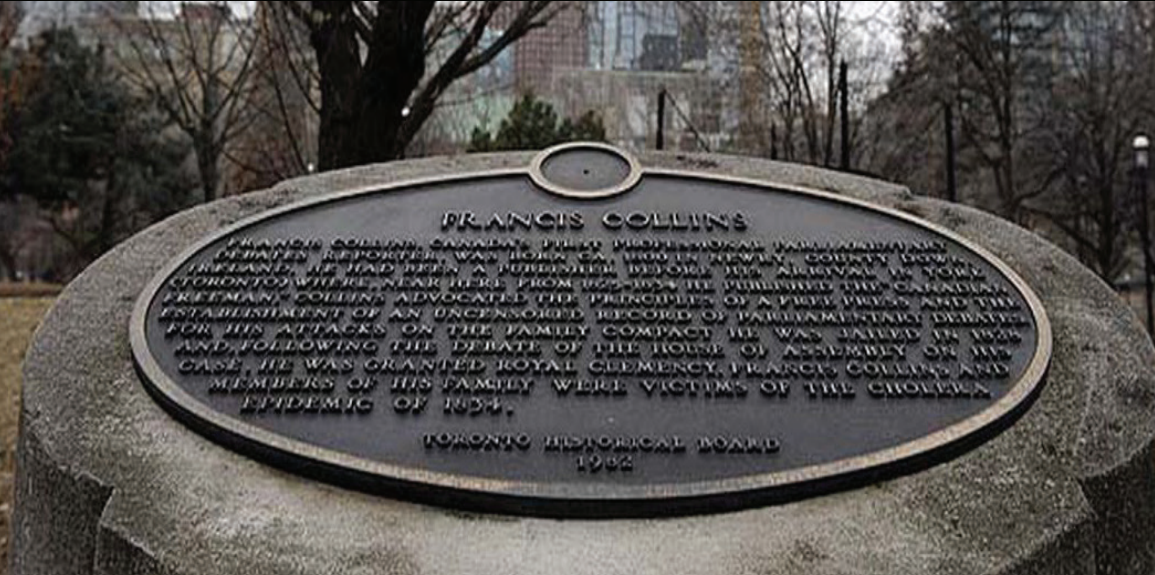
Symptoms of the Disorder;

Giddiness, sickness, nervous agitation, slow pulse, cramp beginning at the fingers and toes and rapidly approaching the trunk, change of colour to a leaden blue, purple, black or brown; the skin dreadfully cold, and often damp, the tongue moist and loaded but flabby and chilly, the voice much affected, and respiration quick and irregular.

REMEDIES:

All means tending to restore circulation and to maintain the warmth of the body should be had recourse to without the least delay.

The patient should be immediately put to bed, wrapped up in hot blankets, and warmth should be sustained by other external applications, such as repeated frictions with flannels and camphorated spirits, poultices of mustard and linseed (equal parts) to the stomach, particularly where pain and vomiting exist, and similar poultices to the feet and legs to restore their warmth. The returning heat of the body may be promoted by bags containing hot salt or bran applied to different parts, and for the same purpose of restoring and sustaining the circulation white wine wey with spice, hot brandy and water, or salvolatile in a dose of a tea spoon full in hot water, frequently repeated; or from 5 to 20 drops of some of the essential oils, as peppermint, cloves or cajeput, in a wine glass of water may be administered with the same view. Where the stomach will bear it, warm broth with spice may be employed. In every severe case or where medical aid is difficult to be obtained, from 20 to 40 drops of laudanum may be given in any of the warm drinks previously recommended.



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New reality calls for proactive approaches to business



Phil E. Roth, Columnist

When Anthony Pronesti co-owner and partner of URBAN FRESH was asked how the COVID-19 outbreak affected his business; he replied that his customers rushed the fresh fruit and produce shop with great urgency to secure safety stock before the lockdown was to go into effect. Business boomed within hours of the



Oleg K. of Honey World. Photo: Phil E. Roth

announcements made by the federal and provincial governments in March as consumers tried to obtain stock levels that could carry them for an indeterminate period of time.

The sudden upswing of private consumer demand was quickly followed by a 90% drop in wholesale transactions, effectively shutting down delivery to restaurant clients, which were mandated to close their sit-down business. Thinking and acting promptly, Pronesti handed out business cards to his loyal walk-in customers before the impending shutdown. He offered curbside service for customer pickup, making on-line orders as easy as e-mailing URBAN FRESH. All this was well received as adding value to the customer experience, a primary business objective.

Eugene Antunes, proud proprietor of CHURRASCO St. Lawrence has served his trusted and devoted customers for the past 31 years. He has experienced major social fabric altering events such as 9/11 or the 2003 SARS outbreak. But nothing compares to the disruptive force of the present COVID-19 pandemic, he states.

The catering branch of the business, consisting of many



Eugene Antunes of Churrasco St. Lawrence.

Photo: Phil E. Roth

office deliveries was cut 100%, as office towers shut their lights and doors in order to keep their employees safe and protected. He has chosen to stay open for his regular customers for as long as possible, thus conveying a sense of normality and optimism. He is keeping his employees working and continuing to serve his loyal clients with trust and dedication, even to the point of going above and beyond in personal drop-offs.

What good could come out

of these challenging days? Oleg K. of HONEY WORLD, like many of his entrepreneur peers, has suffered a significant decrease in sales, yet he also conveys a sense of optimism.

What is truly important? What can help us stay healthy, well balanced and mentally content? Oleg K.'s reply is honey. Honey supports a healthy digestive system, fights sleeplessness, has potent antiseptic properties and contributes significantly to skin health, especially helpful for eczema

and psoriasis. Mindfulness to stay healthy for both oneself and others may be a positive outcome of the pandemic.

Businesses like MANOTAS ORGANICS emphasize health awareness at St. Lawrence Market. Customers are encouraged to wear personal protection equipment such as a face mask inside its store. When we all do our best to stay healthy, that's a win in these trying times.

Metaphorically Transformed: The Toronto Writers Collective

Erdine (Dee) Hope

My name is Dee Hope. That is what I am called here in the downtown core, where I grew up and worked for the past fifty years. Currently I am a caseworker for a mental health and addiction support agency, volunteer board member for Focus Media Arts Centre, radio host for my show Ear Candy, and a longtime community member and consumer survivor. "HOPE", my surname, is a blessing or curse depending on who you ask.

Diverse to some, Regent Park is now a gentrified community with new, shiny things that loom over the most marginalized human beings still lingering ambivalently in the remnants of their very soul and life. Coping with substance use, poverty and homelessness, they survive some of the harshest environments.

I have been called a fixture of the community, a mother of peace; my upbringing of faith personifying my last name. Vulnerability is the source of my strength. I guess you could say that words can break you or transform you. I am a writer, facilitator and trainer with the



Dee Hope is host of Radio Regent show Ear Candy.

Photo: Courtesy of TWC

Toronto Writers Collective.

Nine years ago were the dark days of my soul. The Friendship Centre, a drop-in for those with truly no place else to go, was constructively changing and trying to get rid of me. The hope and strength I provided for so many for almost 20 years was no longer a requirement for funding. In the midst of chaos and deprivation, of strategic oppression, I was still grieving the loss

of my beloved grandmother. Before she died, she said, "A woman will see your worth and be in your life." I held on to those precious words.

Then I met Susan Turk Mozer, founder of the Toronto Writers Collective, on the coldest day that winter. "I want to start writing workshops, because everyone is a writer," she told me in the damp entrance to the Friendship Centre, clients sitting at tables

or lounging and sipping from Styrofoam cups. I was not interested in her après-ski enthusiasm. But I didn't know back then how it would change my life, my world, my words. The words, the worlds of others. Through our stories. Our fellowship.

TWC metaphorically changes lives, communities and organizations through healing, transformation, identity, inclusivity, acceptance, transparency and bravery. With support and encouragement, people grow both as writers and in other aspects of their lives. In creating a non-judgmental other, they grow; take risks, sharing stories - often told for the first time and broaden their perspectives.

We can achieve social change by offering opportunities, regardless of race, ethnicity, class, age, gender, sexual orientation or physical abilities. Inspired by the Amherst Writers and Artist Method's 50-year history of using writing to encourage authentic voice in vulnerable communities, the Toronto Writers Collective changes lives.

The TWC program nurtures and inspires our members,

giving us a chance to discover hidden talents, and cultivate or continue our gift of writing. Each workshop fosters imaginative and creative ways to share personal lived experiences and discover a deep and inner wisdom.

Over the years, the Toronto Writers Collective has facilitated 2,690 workshops, providing over 15,870 writing workshop experiences for community members, and has spread the power of language in Ontario and even to Quebec. In these changing times it has pivoted to provide virtual workshops. As well, three anthologies have been published, two this year: Front Lines: Bent not Broken and Front Lines: Until The Words Run Pure.

I am proud to have been published in Front Lines: Voices From the Toronto Writers Collective, metaphorically transformed by my experience as a single mother and community member of Regent Park. As the first participant in a Toronto Writers Collective workshop, I have first-hand knowledge and love to share the power of writing.

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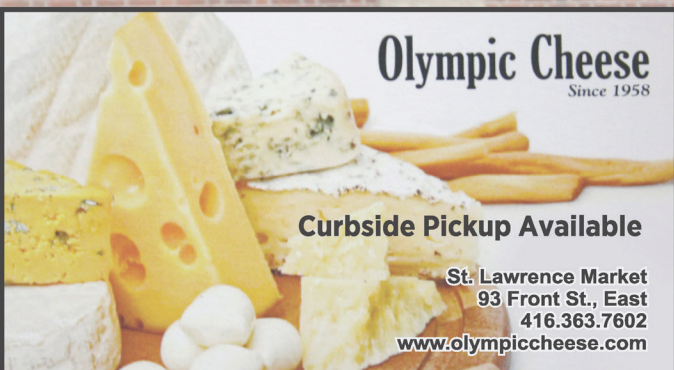
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Corktown's long-time resident, Bill McIlroy turns 90 years young!

Coralina Lemos,
Corktown Historian and Author
corktownhistory.com

Meet Bill McIlroy, so far one of the longest residing individuals in Corktown that I had the opportunity of meeting this past May, just before his 90th birthday.

Born in Toronto, Bill continues to live in the same home he grew up in on Sumach Street since 1936. Although Bill affirms it was 1932 as his parents initially rented the house, his neighbourhood residency greatly supersedes that of today's average homeowner.

The eldest of five children and the only son born to William D. McIlroy and Agnes Gordon, who emigrated from Ireland, he attended Sackville School and later nearby Park Public School. As memories unfolded, his repository of firsthand episodes includes a time in the late 1950's, when the Richmond and Adelaide Streets highway overpasses were constructed just south of his home; disjoining historic Sumach Street forever.

Back then the southside of King Street, east of Sackville Street, was populated with eclectic cottages. Bill agreed that people didn't have much money then, but local grocers would accommodate this deficiency by allowing customers to pay for groceries on credit until their next paycheck was



Photo: Courtesy of B. McIlroy and J. Moniz

received.

Another common occurrence was that children of large families were expected to contribute financially to household expenses as soon as they were old enough to work. Thus, while the patriarch of the family, William D., was employed at Eaton's, young Bill found work at nearby Canada Decalcomania Co Ltd, located at 507-511 King Street East, just a short walking distance from where he lived. Established in

1911, Canada Decalcomania began operating from its King Street East location in 1922. Canadian-owned, it specialized in window signs, name plates, and decal transfers of all sizes and ornamentation. Bill first worked in the silk-screening division and later the shipping department where, in time, he was promoted to Head Shipper. In 1968, the company moved its Toronto operations to Scarborough and Bill followed.

But life was not all about

work for Bill whose favorite pastime was 'bowling'. While pointing to a prize trophy won during a competition (for averaging 840), he mainly played on company leagues and never ventured to the "family-oriented" bowling alleys above the former Home Furniture Store, at Queen and Parliament (last occupied by Marty Millionaire). When not active in league bowling, and with little entertainment at home other than the radio, Bill frequented movie theatres. "Back then you only paid about 10 cents to see a

movie." He continued to draw a mental path of all the movie houses he went to, places like the Empire Theatre, now the Good Shepherd location, and others including the Eclipse, the Bluebell, the Parliament and even La Plaza on Queen Street East over the Don River.

I must admit that Bill McIlroy, is a life-loving guy who, despite the odd illness, awakes each morning to experience a brand-new day. Keep smiling is certainly his formula for a long life. Happy Birthday, Bill! - And may you celebrate many more.

Like what you see?

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

many basic needs are not being met

housing continued from p1

While this angering reality is nowhere near being remedied at a systemic level, greater understanding and empathy could help at a social level. Those whose realities are more privileged than others, and those endorsing or enforcing preventive measures, should realize that while everyone is struggling through the pandemic, each doing what they can, for many the act of staying at home is not only a luxury but difficult or impossible.

In addition to those without a place to call home, many more have barely adequate homes that present further challenges to the behavioural prescriptions handed to us. When living in a bedroom within a rooming house, a tiny bachelor apartment with no balcony, or a unit meant for one but housing two or more people, how can one physically distance or effectively self-isolate? How can one stay at home indefinitely without losing one's bearings? In a Zoom video appointment with your health care provider,

how do you maintain privacy and a sense of dignity when home is barely a home? And what if you don't have a good enough phone or computer and internet connection to support the tech platforms we must now use?

In pre-COVID times, under-resourced people had options: public libraries, cafés and other establishments and institutions offered free WiFi and comfortable spaces, but the current COVID19 reality has suspended such options. Those with space and resources can adjust to working from home rather than the neighbourhood coffee shop, but for others the challenge is nearly insurmountable in an already difficult situation.

Other basic needs are also not being met. Many food banks and meal programs closed and those still open are severely under-resourced. According to the Daily Bread Food Bank, demand has gone up 20% since the pandemic began. Thrift shops and many drop-in programs with affordable or free clothing and basic living supplies also shut

down and will only slowly re-open, which obligates those who rely on these community resources to stretch their meagre finances even thinner. Amazon, Walmart and other corporate giants have been capitalizing on heightened demand and a finely crafted illusion of decreased supplies for essential (and not-so-es-

sential) goods. Many people are driven to hoard out of fear, leaving empty-handed those whose budget can't handle inflated prices or bulk shopping.

A great many people within and beyond Toronto face these issues and their challenging solutions every day. If, as many storefront signs and positivity gurus tell us, "we are all in

this together," we must foster understanding and community building to compensate for the distance between us and the social disparities that this pandemic has magnified.

-T.C. is a Toronto-based Nurse Practitioner, with over 10 years working in urban and community health.

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Art can change the world: locally with free children's masks

Carol Mark

Now, after three months, Torontonians have been given guidelines for the reopening of the city, and the recommendation to wear masks. According to the Medical Officer of Health, there is some evidence to suggest that masks stop the wearer from spreading their respiratory droplets to others especially at times when it is difficult to maintain social distancing. Medical masks are not recommended, as they should be reserved for the healthcare sector.

After months of Covid-19 news, isolated at home, I began to wonder when it would be safe to go out and what I would need. I imagined being wrapped up in layers of plastic and a full plexi-helmet. But how safe and realistic is this? I am immuno-compromised, and I worry how I can keep myself safe. Masks are important but they are in short supply. After reading the research, I realized that not all masks are created equally.

According to research from the American Chemical Society, a mask with a combination of two layers, one of silk and one of cotton filtered 80-99% of aerosol particles with a performance close to the N95 mask. The silk layer holds a static charge and can serve as



an electrostatic barrier.

Checking my supplies, I started to sew these limited Silk/Cotton Masks with optional replaceable filter (DIY coffee, heap, or vacuum bag filter) to be sold on www.willowandwyrd.com

But more important children's masks will be offered free for our local community from the sales. It turns out that children are not immune to Covid-19. We must protect them too. The Silk/Cotton masks will have adjustable elastic for the ears. Maximum 2 per family. Limited supplies. Email amazingmoss@gmail.com

Brought to you by the Amazing Moss Park Art Fair: Willow + Wyrd Luxury designs by a creative architect & a designer in Toronto, Canada, bring beautiful art to the everyday.

Carol, the creative architect after recovering from breast cancer felt that despite being ill and nothing to fit, one needed to surround themselves with beauty. A pair of shoes, a piece of jewellery even a scarf to dress up without spending money on a new wardrobe. Alan, the designer believes that beauty itself is a form of spiritual food and healing and is inspired by nature forms.

Carol has curated the works of many national and international artists in the first social enterprise art gallery in Canada. Reaching out to war torn countries, building homes, providing healthcare and presently giving out locally. Hand Made with Conscious Love & Respect for the Earth Instagram [@artforbeautifuliving](https://www.instagram.com/artforbeautifuliving) www.willowandwyrd.com



Book Review: The Political Meets the Personal

Glenda MacFarlane

Heroes in My Head: A Memoir
Judy Rebick
House of Anansi Press (2018)

Judy Rebick's extraordinary memoir begins with an iconic scene. It's 1983, and she's holding an attacker wielding scissors at bay in order to let Dr. Henry Morgentaler enter Toronto's new abortion clinic. It was one of the political events that cemented Rebick's reputation as a women's rights activist. But the personal aftershocks from that event started her down a path of self-discovery, through memories of abuse and a diagnosis of multiple personality disorder (now known as dissociative identity disorder, or DID).

The first half of Rebick's book races through quintessential 1960s and '70s experiences. She takes acid and navigates the sexual revolution; the Grateful Dead crash at her house. She's at the genesis of the radical Weather Underground in the United States, and involved in the struggle between Canadian Trotskyist factions in the Revolutionary Marxist Group. Rebick works at a kibbutz in Israel, and travels the "hippie trail" from Turkey to India. All the while, her commitment to activism grows to encompass a wide range of issues ranging from women's rights to workers' rights to anti-racism. (A 1990 Montreal Gazette profile of her was headlined "A Rebel with Many Causes"; Rebick understood the concept of intersectionality long before it became a buzzword.)

Heroes in My Head is a book where the political meets the personal. Rebick is candid about her family: her mother's close-knit Jewish clan, her supportive younger brother, and her angry father, whose sexually abusive

behaviour catalyzed Rebick's dissociative identity disorder. The second half of the book centres on Rebick's struggle to come to terms with her DID as she rose to prominence as the president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.

With the help of a therapist, Rebick began working to integrate the nine "alters" or distinct personality states that had arisen to cope with the trauma of her childhood sexual abuse – an emotional and exhausting process. Although she might have been expected to step back from political activism at this time, instead Judy took on the presidency of the NAC, Canada's largest feminist organization. During her tenure the organization committed to diversity, and was at the forefront of national issues like the constitutional debates, poverty and racism, and lobbied for consent to be built into rape laws.

After confronting her aging father, Rebick's "alters" began to reintegrate, each disappearing in turn. Rebick perceives the alters as a brilliant defence mechanism that helped protect and shape her; she feels that the "heroes in her head" also made her a better activist.

After a lifetime of championing causes, Judy Rebick's candid and engaging account of her journey with mental illness breaks down stigma and prejudice – another act of activism in a life dedicated to it.

Highly recommended.

questions over how info will be used

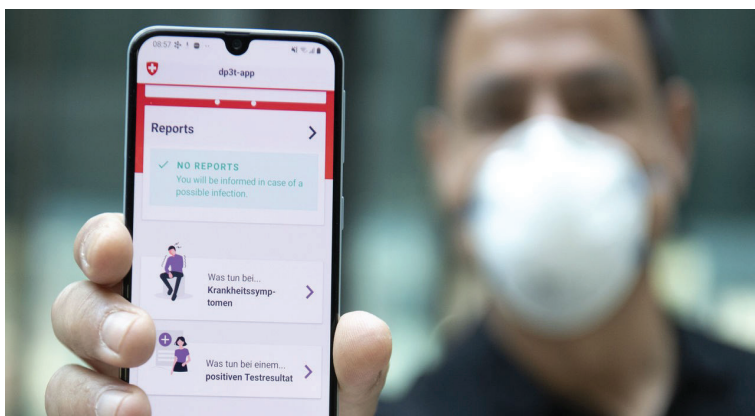
tracing continued from p1

Five days after Premier Doug Ford announced the first phase of Ontario's re-opening on May 14, new case numbers surged past 500. Given that it takes five to seven days for symptoms to appear and a few days to process tests, medical officials have suggested that Mother's Day gatherings (May 10) might have been a source for many new infections.

So how can we effectively track the source of each outbreak, alert those affected and hold back the next wave of infections?

Many cities are supplementing traditional contact tracing with automated tracking. Mobile apps, which use cellphones' Bluetooth and GPS to identify where you've been and who you've been with, are being rolled out across the globe. When a positive test is reported, the app alerts the infected person's contacts. But some apps centralize the collection of healthcare data, leading to questions about how this information will be used, who can access it, how secure it is, and when the data will be purged.

Alberta's Privacy Commissioner is reviewing the province's ABTraceTogether app



Contact tracing apps are being rolled out across the globe.

Photo: EPA

after concerns were voiced. The University of Calgary also recently looked into a number of contact tracing apps.

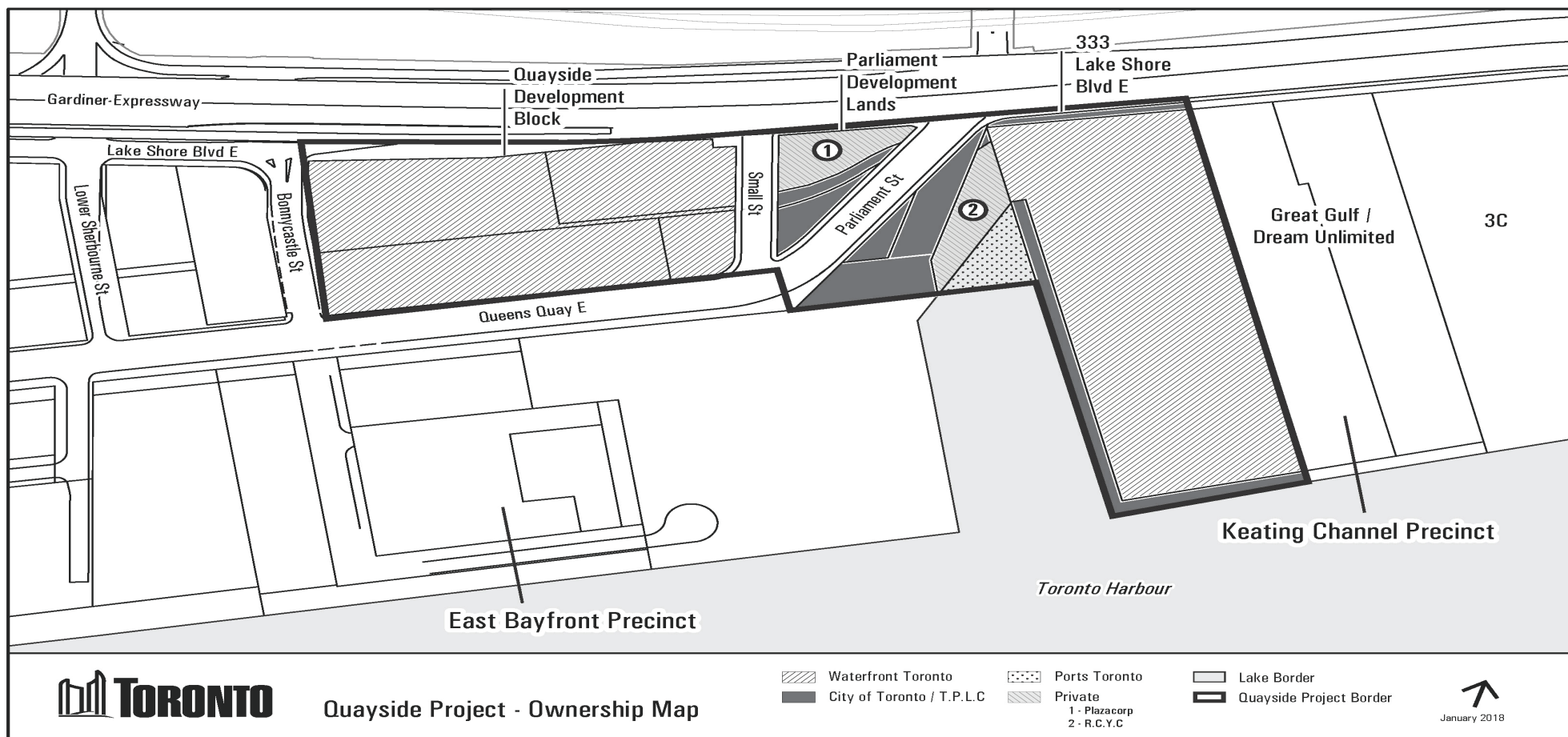
"None of the apps have convinced us that they were actually privacy conserving," stated the director of the university's National Cybersecurity Consortium, Ken Barker, the Calgary Herald reported. "In fact many of them have purposes that went beyond contact tracing. None of them had any real plans about how they would go about managing and looking after the data that they had been collecting."

Some apps go beyond simple notification. In India, the state of Maharashtra's mobile app, MavaKavach, creates a virtual perimeter around an affected user's home and alerts authorities if the perimeter is

breached.

Adoption rates for mobile contact tracing apps have been low. Singapore's TraceTogether tool is one of the more widely adopted apps, but just 27% of the population use it. An Oxford University study found that a rollout rate of 60% is required to be successful. And with different apps proliferating, people not using the same tool as those they came into contact with will not be alerted.

So what will happen once we are all outdoors and the rollercoaster curve starts heading upwards again? Will we be sent back indoors? Or will a more robust contact tracing method roll out? Given our current contact tracing and testing challenges, the post lockdown world is likely to be fraught with confusion.



Map showing Quayside Project boundary and neighbouring waterfront properties.

Courtesy of City of Toronto

Sidewalk's departure leaves Quayside up for grabs

sidewalk continued from p1

one of the community stakeholders solicited by Waterfront Toronto. "I find Toronto generally lags [behind] other cities ... [and] this was first time I was like, oh boy, we are going to lead on something. Great!"

Much fanfare had surrounded experimenting with technology to solve the city's many social needs, like affordable housing. Sidewalk had spent over \$50 million (U.S), with a large portion to publicly promote its innovation plans, but according to Cappelli the company was never able to escape the mire of privacy worries.

"We should remind everyone that it was just in the very early stages. They did not have a design in place. Nothing was approved."

A leak in early 2019 published by the *Toronto Star*

exposed Sidewalk's intentions to expand its footprint beyond Quayside to develop more than 190 acres of the city's Port Lands. Backlash from the public was swift, prompting Sidewalk to reverse course months later.

Thorben Wieditz, an organizer for the protest movement #Blocksidewalk, told *the bridge* that the leak was a "formative moment" for the group, bringing in like-minded individuals and organizations with "an interest in protecting Toronto's waterfront from a takeover attempt by a large corporation."

Sidewalk Labs "failed until the very end," Wieditz concludes, "to demonstrate why we would actually need digital solutions to find [answers] to these pressing urban needs in the city ... It seemed like a project trying to grab a whole lot of mostly publicly owned

land ... and to roll out digital solutions in order to stack up a lot of data that would otherwise not go to Google."

Sidewalk Lab's departure leaves the prime waterfront property up for grabs. Going back to the drawing board means deciding what kind of development Torontonians expect on the 12-acre site.

The current pandemic has heightened the need for affordable and sustainable communities, leading some to suggest replicating the St. Lawrence neighbourhood model. But could a large mixed-income development with co-ops, subsidized housing and condo buildings be feasible in today's real estate market?

"I think it is dreaming in Technicolor if anybody thinks they could reproduce the St. Lawrence neighbourhood," commented Mariana Valverde, a criminology and sociology

professor at the University of Toronto. "But you could do something [that] at least meets some of the same goals."

Valverde pointed to a recent City of Toronto announcement that it would spend \$47.5 million on 250 prefabricated modular units as part of a pilot project to house homeless people. "There is going to be a big push to provide even more of that," she added, saying such a scheme would be an interesting use of innovation.

"Given the current crisis, just providing affordable housing without any bells and whistles or any controversial things about data collection would probably seem a more reasonable use of that land ... I can't image City Council being keen to go with some fancy smart city proposal with all sorts of unprecedented untested technologies."

For over two years the Side-

walk affair dominated headlines as the push for a renewed waterfront garnered enthusiasts and opponents of a futuristic development by a major American corporation. The heat of the debate revealed a conscious effort by many Torontonians to have a say in such a monumental decision.

"Whether you supported Sidewalk or not," Spadina-Fort York MPP Chris Glover wrote to *the bridge*, "there is now an incredible opportunity to create a neighbourhood in Quayside that provides affordable housing and public space along the waterfront while building with environmentally friendly construction techniques. Waterfront Toronto needs to work with the community to establish goals that would capitalize on the opportunities and address the challenges that such a rich site presents."

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