

READ  
LOCAL

# the bridge

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

SHOP  
LOCALGO expansion threatens Longboat vegetation  
Kayla Higgins

2

Restoring local democracy  
Tristan Schultz

4

Met Farmers' Market  
Charles Davidson

6

## 'The neighbourhood has greatly suffered'



Since the start of the pandemic, residents of Moss Park have seen a steady rise of encampments in the park space. Locals have become fed up with the amount of discarded refuse and anti-social behavior exhibited by those who have descended upon the neighbourhood. Advocates for the homeless say residents should vent their anger at the city and not those who are struggling to find a meager living. Full coverage page 5.

## Re-entering the fitness space in Toronto's East End

Emma Johnston-Wheeler

Stage 3 of Ontario's economic reopening plan took effect on July 16, spurring the resurgence of recreational fitness facilities in most of Ontario. Toronto followed the rest of the province a few days later, permitting gyms and studios to reopen on July 19.

However, these spaces continue to function at only half capacity and with social distancing still required.

Philip Cormier, owner of three F45 Training locations in the Downtown East, says he was eager to reopen the gym's doors as soon as the province allowed him to. "Since opening indoors two weeks ago, our members and trainers are so excited. It's good to be able to interact with people again and be healthy."

Under Covid-19 limitations, the business resorted to daily online classes. For indoor operations, Cormier says three options were available. He chose the F45 Circuit, having clients staying in one place with allocated equipment and alternating exercises instead of moving around the room to different stations.

"There will be no sharing of equipment at first, but you'll still get the trainer aspect of it

with a TV guiding you throughout your workout," says Cormier. His studios can house about 18 clients per class, with spots filling up quickly.

Have a Nice Day Pilates, Toronto's first black-owned Pilates studio, was a business venture that owner Jennifer Winter envisioned in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. She officially opened her studio in January of 2021, under covid restrictions. Now Winter is finally ready to invite her clients inside. She planned to reinstate indoor classes on August 3, plus virtual offerings of 13 classes per week.

"There's still a bit of uncertainty with what this is all going to look like, and our number one priority is the safety of our community," says Winter.

She anticipates some trial and error as clients return. Initially, the studio will offer

two or three Pilates classes in-house (with a capacity of five people), as well as solo and duo studio sessions.

Rachelle Wintzen owns Chi Junky, a yoga and wellness studio in Leslieville. Anticipating that her former customers are eager to return, she hopes for a surge of business to recoup her accumulated debt. But until the fall she is keeping the doors closed.

"I want to make sure that we're not going to get shut down," says Wintzen. "Because to hire and lay off for a third time in a year is pretty brutal."

Chi Junky continues to provide rooftop classes limited to four people, outdoor yoga and Pilates classes at Jimmie Simpson park, virtual live sessions and the newly launched "Chi On Demand" of 130 pre-recorded classes.

## Delayed Wellington Street project frustrates community

Megan Camlasaran

With completion of the Wellington Street project delayed until next year, businesses in the St. Lawrence neighbourhood are frustrated and asking the City of Toronto for greater accountability.

Storefronts and locals around Wellington Street East have been living with construction for almost five years, watching community ambiance fade away, replaced by stone walls and traffic pylons.

Going back to 2017, plans included replacing the aging streetcar tracks, widening sidewalks and adding street furniture and street trees between Yonge and Church Streets (where it meets Front Street) by this September. The City's second construction update from this past June says construction will resume next April and end in July 2022.

According to Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam (Toronto Centre), the City and contractor decided to stop the project

in early June to resolve design challenges and reduce disruption.

Owners of the Allan Parss hair salon on Wellington had been eager for area improvements, Vesna Parss says. The salon hasn't lost any clientele so far, she says, but worries about clients inconvenienced with the stone wall and blockages in front of her entrance.

She attributes constant noise, dust and accessibility challenges to "mismanagement" and "lack of coordination" among the City, Toronto Hydro and Enbridge. "The same hole shouldn't have to be dug up one hundred different times," says co-owner Allan Parss.

The salon owners have asked the City why construction keeps getting delayed, but the response is always the same: different contractors and departments aren't affiliated with one another.

Wellington continued p7

## A waterfront for all?

Ben Bull, Columnist

It's all happening on the waterfront. A July 2021 announcement from Waterfront Toronto brings us yet another step closer to our lakeside utopia:

'Waterfront Toronto Announces Shortlist of Proponents for the Quayside Development Opportunity'

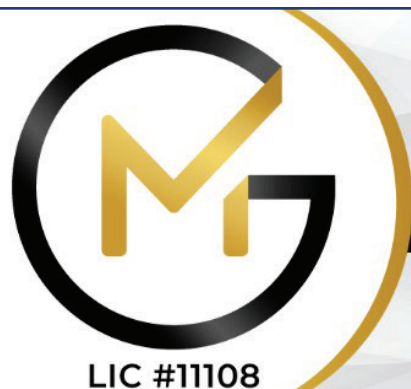
Apparently, developers will help beautify the L-shaped block of mud and rubble that runs east of Sherbourne Common on the north side of Queens Quay and down to the Parliament Slip.

This was the patch of dirt offered up to Sidewalk Labs. We all know how that turned out. This project should fare bet-

ter. A March 2021, Waterfront Toronto 'Background' offers a dreamlike vision for this derelict stretch. Referencing lakeside 'wavedecks' on Queen's Quay West, it says Parliament Slip would "incorporate harbour pools within the WaveDeck. The WaveDeck would be the anchor for a water amphitheatre, floating restaurant, canoe/kayak launch, water transportation hub and floating dock."

That sounds nice. But the dream is soured a little because Waterfront Toronto also wants to add — you've guessed it — more condos.

Bull continued p5



LIC #11108

### Instant Home Equity Loans from

# 1.25%

ALL CREDIT APPROVED - Laid Off, CERB, Self Employed Income - OK

### 855-55 FUNDS

MatrixMortgageGlobal.ca

### WE ALSO DO COMMERCIAL LOANS



# Metrolinx tree pruning plan upsets Longboat community

Kayla Higgins

Provincial transit agency Metrolinx is planning to remove trees along the Union Station East Rail Corridor as a part of the GO Expansion Program, the largest public transportation expansion in Canada's history. Trees along the corridor south of Longboat Avenue (between Lower Sherbourne and Parliament Streets) have served as a noise barrier from passing trains.

Metrolinx says the GO Expansion will "make the network better, faster and the region easier to travel in," according to its website.

The agency will advise nearby residents at least two weeks before work begins, spokesperson Nitish Bissonauth said. "Work will be conducted as quickly and efficiently as possible to minimize disturbance, but residents and businesses near the corridor can expect to hear noise caused by trucks, chainsaws, wood chippers and other equipment."

The agency plans to build new track, signals, rail facilities and electrification infrastructure, modify and build bridges, and improve crossings across the core segments of GO's rail network, especially from Union Station to the Don River, to "allow for fast, quiet, electrified, two-way, all-day



Metrolinx claims the tree canopy that overhangs Longboat Lane (pictured above) will be "relatively untouched."

Photo: Andre Berman

service," according to an official construction notice.

Vegetation control in rail corridors is essential for safe and reliable GO train service while protecting space for new infrastructure, the notice states. Metrolinx plans to remove an estimated total of 6,245 native trees from its corridors, to be replaced by more than 30,730 native trees. The replacement of the trees will be based on the Metrolinx Vegetation Guideline, a 2020 vegetation management and replanting strategy.

"Higher value trees can be diverted for different purposes, including community, ecological and commercial uses such

as local art and habitat restoration projects and interested organizations and institutions," said Bissonauth.

Metrolinx community relations officer James Burchell says the majority of trees in the Longboat area will be untouched, though several will be pruned and "very few" will be removed. "The canopy that overhangs Longboat Lane will be relatively untouched, although the depth of vegetation in some areas will be reduced," said Burchell.

Longboat community residents worry that the tree pruning will exacerbate existing noise from passing trains. The trees south of Tom Longboat

Area Residents' Association (LARA). "We were very upset and as a result we organized in order to prevent them from putting in these tracks, or if they did, to compensate by building a wall that would act as a vibration and noise barrier to homes." According to a 2018 Metrolinx community meeting document, major concerns cited by residents adjacent to Tom Longboat Lane included noise, vibration and air pollution mitigation, visual and aesthetic impact, waterfront accessibility and safety and protection of property. The agency had ultimately decided against putting in the tracks.

"The trees [have] more than just aesthetic value," Brankley said. "Some of the machines they use in order to test the tracks are exceptionally noisy, and we have no other protection. The trains are diesel, so the leaves help purify the air."

Construction is scheduled to occur throughout August, beginning at Jarvis and heading east past Cherry Street. Most work is supposed to occur between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.



## Whitehouse Meats

Established 1953

(416) 366-4465

St. Lawrence Market  
93 Front Street East  
Toronto, ON M5E 1C3

**WHITEHOUSEMEATS.CA**

## the bridge

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

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

*the bridge*

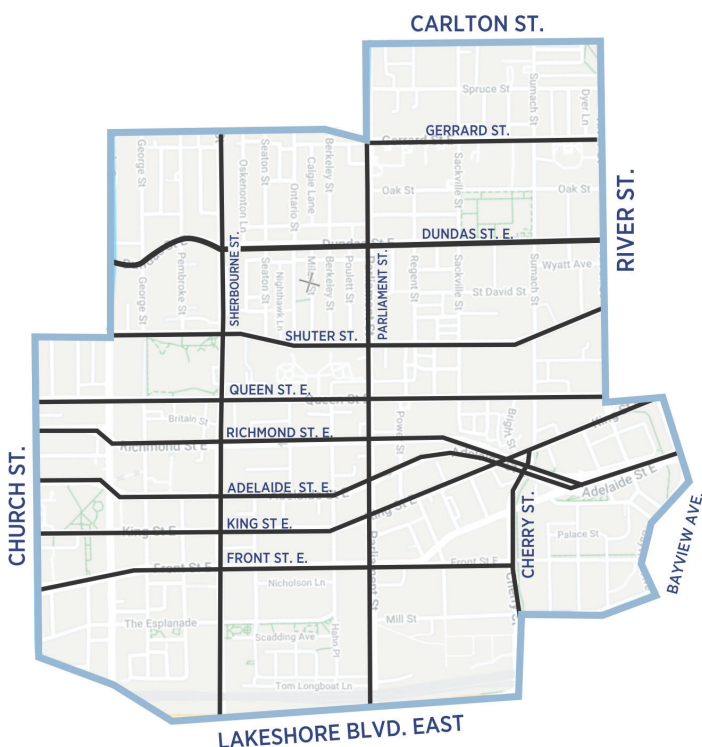
is an independent, nonpartisan newspaper published monthly and distributed by a mix of delivery services to varying readership. +7,000 copies are circulated throughout the Downtown East - Moss Park, Corktown, Garden District, Cabbagetown South, St. Lawrence Neighbourhood, Distillery District - and to community hubs that extend across Toronto.

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

Publisher/Editor: Andre Berman  
Copy Editor: Eric Mills

Senior Contributors: Bruce Bell, Ben Bull, Carol Mark, Glenda MacFarlane, Julia Simioni

Contributors: Emma Johnston-Wheeler, Kayla Higgins, Megan Camlasaran, Tristan Schultz, Dustin Stern, Kevin Costain, Charles Davidson, Courtney Greenberg, Jacob Sukhra



www.thebridgenews.ca for current  
and past editions

thebridgedowntown@gmail.com

September submission deadline: August 24

Advertise with the bridge! Contact us for rates.

Readers can find our newspaper at our newsstands: St. Lawrence Market, No Frills @ Front St. East.

## fusilli

Authentic Southern Italian Cuisine since 1988

## PATIO NOW OPEN!

Cocktail and food  
pairing night

**August 11**  
with  
**Dominic Mancuso**

Live music offered.  
Seating limited.

Reserve online  
or call  
**416.214.5148**



Take-out and Order Online  
**www.fusilli.ca**

Hours:

Monday-Saturday 5:00PM-10:00PM

Tel: **416 214 5148**

531 Queen Street East

@fusilli\_ristorante | Fusilli Ristorante





# St Paul's Basilica



Bruce Bell, Senior Columnist

A few summers ago, a tourist from Australia requested a tour of Corktown and especially St. Paul's Basilica on Power Street, where her Toronto-born father was baptized a hundred years ago.

Although Mary had lived in Toronto as a young girl, she had never been to the great stone Catholic church off Queen Street east near Parliament. Surprisingly, considering my love of local history, I too had never visited St. Paul's. So, one hot Sunday morning last June, Mary and I went to see this glorious church.

St. Paul's roots date back to 1806, when the Reverend Alexander MacDonell, the only Catholic priest in Upper Canada, left his eastern Ontario parish in Glengarry to visit the town of York.

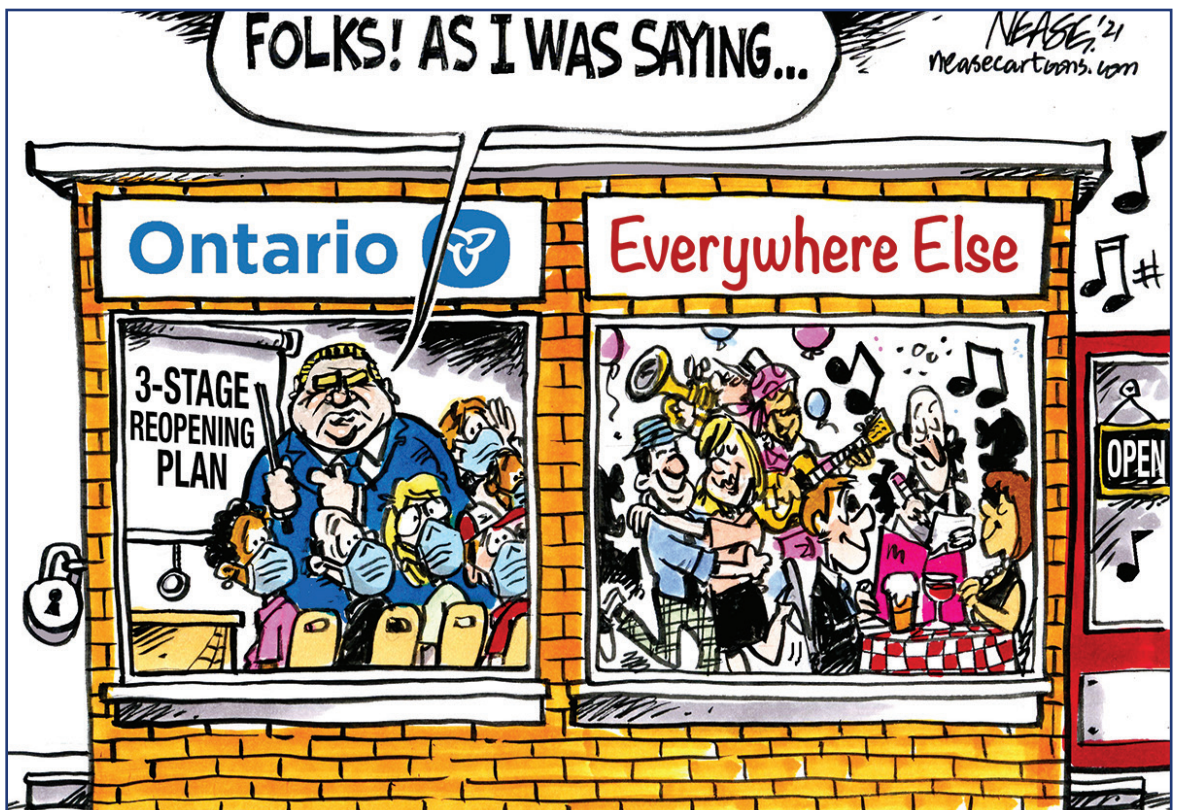
On his return he reported back to his superior, Joseph-Octave Plessis, Bishop of Que-

bec, that York's approximately 200 people included 37 Catholics, many of whom had never seen a priest.

On March 28, 1806, the Crown granted a plot of land on the northeast corner of George and Duke (now Adelaide) Streets to four Catholic trustees for the purpose of erecting a Catholic chapel for public worship. That first church was destroyed by fire after the War of 1812, and the lot went unused as services were held in the homes of church elders.

By 1822 a fifth of York's residents (now 5,000) were Catholic, so the trustees decided to sell the plot, still including the 1806 church basement, to Sir William Campbell, who in turn sold the land for the construction of the still-standing Bank of Upper Canada building (1827). The bank's foundation, completed with V-shaped artillery notch windows, is the oldest structure in Toronto – eclipsing the Island Light-house (1809).

The Catholic elders used the money from the original church lot to buy a 10-acre site in the far east end – at Queen a block east of Parliament – for the first Roman Catholic parish in Upper Canada between



Kingston and Windsor. The first St. Paul's Church was finished about 1824 on present-day Power Street.

In 1841 Pope Gregory XVI appointed Father Michael Power as bishop of the new diocese of Toronto. His episcopal seat, St. Paul's Church, immediately became a cathedral with Bishop Power presiding over 3,000 mostly French Catholics in a city with a population of 13,000.

By the late 1840s, starving Irish refugees fleeing the Great Potato Famine began to arrive in North America to escape lives of misery and suffering. Those coming to Toronto, settling mostly in the burgeoning Irish slum around King and Parliament Streets – nicknamed 'Corktown'.

From the pulpits of the Anglican churches came sermons announcing, "It is our God-given right to bring arms against the ungodly Irish and to be fearful of a papist ascendancy."

Amidst sometimes frightening confrontations between Protestants and Catholics, Bishop Power tended quietly to the sick and infirm refugees streaming into Toronto, whom he described as having been "so inhumanly cast upon our shores."

In one of the so-called fever sheds that sprouted along the Lake Ontario shore to house the growing numbers of sick and dying, Power contracted typhus. He died on October 1, 1847.

Bishop Power's funeral was held at St Paul's, but he is buried under the high altar of the larger St Michael's Cathedral on Bond Street between Queen and Shuter, which was under construction (opening in 1848) at the time of his death.

The present-day St. Paul's, built by architect Joseph Connolly starting in 1887 and dedicated in 1889, is in the Italian Renaissance style and would not look out of place on the streets of Florence, complete with campanile (its bell tower).

With its terrific stone exterior reminding the faithful of St. Paul's Basilica in Rome, Toronto's St. Paul's was sanctified as a minor basilica by Pope John II in 1999. (A basi-

lica, a title of honour given to Catholic churches for their historical importance, is usually referred to as minor, as only in Rome is the term major basilica used.)

The standout of St. Paul's basilica is its stunning ceiling paintings depicting the life of the Apostle Paul. On entering this dazzling interior with my Australian tourist, our jaws dropped as our eyes were drawn upward to this magnificent ceiling. Although I'm not a Catholic, the desired effect was not lost upon me.

If this ceiling can still draw awe in this internet-connected jet age, what was the reaction a hundred years ago when Mary's father was baptized here?

*If you are interested in booking an Old Town Tour with me in August, email [bruce.bell2@sympatico.ca](mailto:bruce.bell2@sympatico.ca)*



St. Paul's Basilica on the corner of Power and Queen East.

Photo: Bruce Bell

## CALVINBARRY

PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION  
CRIMINAL LAWYERS

Prosecuted many high-profile cases including more than 100 jury trials.

Over 30 years of Criminal Law experience, both as a Crown Attorney and Defence Lawyer.

Defending Criminal matters and Regulatory matters.

**416-364-1224**

or our 24 hour phone line at 1-866-675-8234



262 The Esplanade  
**416-364-6996**  
**[momandpops.ca](http://momandpops.ca)**



# On restoring local democracy in Ontario

Tristan Schultz - Opinion

On May 20, Mayor John Tory and downtown Councillor Joe Cressy quietly announced plans for a new development at Richmond and John Streets: a paramedic post, 200 affordable housing units and a half-acre park to break up the Entertainment District's concrete jungle.

While charming in its own right, the plan is an obvious consolation prize to what Tory intended as his legacy: the Raildeck Park, a high-minded, ambitious idea to hoist a modern greenspace above the railway tracks from Bathurst Street to Blue Jays Way. A Millennium Park in a neighbourhood that desperately needs parks.

But on May 15 that plan had effectively been nixed when the province's Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) voted to allow the CRAFT Acquisitions Corporation to begin work on a mixed-use project on the site. Tory's Raildeck MacGuffin has gone the way

of Transit City, electoral reform, and the Johnson & Johnson vaccine – over before it began.

The LPAT was a somewhat mysterious group of planners and lawyers appointed by the province to hear appeals of city council decisions or non-decisions on land use. As of June 1 the tribunal was amalgamated with several other bodies to create the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT).

The Ontario Government says this tribunal "resolves differences on community planning issues." Local councils take too long to rule, it claims, and land too often sits vacant. In a rare show of transparency the tribunal correctly pointed out that the Raildeck Park project, announced in 2016, had yet to be funded. And the CRAFT development was further along in its planning.

This is a departure from the LPAT's 2019 decision to block development on the site in favour of a park. Since then To-

ronto has been in the depths of the Covid-19 pandemic, making city staff focus on enforcing the Ford government's hasty and often incoherent public health measures.

From a local perspective it's difficult to see tribunal back-channelling as anything other than undemocratic. Citizens vote for councillors directly, while the OLT remains provincially appointed and largely undiscussed. Premier Doug Ford doubled down on this when he reformed the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal in 2019 to reduce community input, give local councils less time to rule, and less deliberation time for the tribunal. Since then some decisions, like the Clarkes Lane development in Utterson, go right to the OLT without public consultation.

For many municipalities the Raildeck Park ruling is familiar, the latest in a long history of the Ontario government subverting local democracy in Toronto and across the province.

Notable examples:

- the 1998 amalgamation of the old City of Toronto with Metropolitan Toronto's five outer boroughs; a provincial decision foisted on the city despite overwhelming opposition in a referendum. Mike Harris' ruling Tories cited cost savings that have yet to materialize.

- the 2018 cutting of City Council almost in half during an election, Doug Ford's ostensible attempt to cut costs at the expense of democracy; a cheap shot from a vindictive former councilor trying to get back at a city and council that rightfully found him repugnant.

- the aforementioned and oft-overlooked 2018 LPAT reform; an attempt to grease the wheels at local councils that predictably put communities and elected officials in the laps of developers.

The situation could be improved in two ways, one radical and one reformist.

The radical: abolish the Ontario Land Tribunal. If the

province wants to override city councils it should do its own dirty work and put it to the Legislature for a vote.

The reformist: return to the pre-2019 framework, bring in more community oversight and allow city councils more time to make decisions.

The Raildeck Park would have been an obvious win for Toronto and the province. As Ontarians we should not accept a central neighbourhood of our capital city being devoid of green space. But for now we'll have to settle for the modest development at Richmond and John. These projects should exist independently, but because of provincial meddling we have to make do with the lesser one.

If Ontario and its cities and towns are going to thrive, we need to empower councils to make decisions on behalf of communities rather than unelected groups rubber stamping on behalf of developers. We need to restore local democracy.

## Blank Walls celebrates local history: The Wilkie Block

Carol Mark, Columnist

Often lost in the process of urbanization are historical markers of the past. Growing up in Toronto I have witnessed a massive loss of old buildings.

We also need to protect neighbourhood features such as outdoor, locally created art – sometimes even that referred to as graffiti. *WANTED BLANK WALLS* is an opportunity to offer your doorway, wall, garage door, anywhere on your property, for professional artists working with Amazing Moss Park to create a work of art for free.

Lead artist Giselle Silvestri, who has made her living creating outdoor art, describes her interests this way: "I continuously investigate the age-old struggle of good versus evil, rich versus poor, and east versus west." Dan Philips, a multimedia artist whose last solo show was at Botte Gallery in Corktown, works in a variety of media with a background in creating digital media.

Dan is the lead working on a visual mural of the Wilkie Block at 167-185 Queen St East, historically designated by the City of Toronto. The Wilkie Block was built in 1886-87 in the High Victorian style for Thomas J. Wilkie, known for his leadership of the YMCA in Toronto. Along with his brother John N. Wilkie, he contributed to the development of Long Branch as a summer resort.

The Wilkie Block represents the late-19th-century commu-



The Wilkie Block proposed mural sketch by Dan Philips.

Photo: Carol Mark

nity that developed around this section of Queen Street, an urban townscape combining industrial, commercial and residential functions. It lines one of the city's major cross-routes and abuts the original boundary of the town of York: Queen Street, according to a city heritage report from 2019.

Over the past 130 years the block has retained its original purpose, the report says, with commercial uses at street level and with business owners living above the storefronts. The businesses were and are primarily retail, ranging from "furniture dealers, clothing stores and second hand clothes, stationary, bicycles, as well as services such as restaurants, tailors, dressmakers, laundries

and shoemakers."

The Wilkie Block has also hosted the Chinese Empire Reform Association (1912), the King's Mission (1921), and the Full Gospel Mission (1931). In 1911 a Chinese restaurant and three stores advertised Chinese goods in the Wilkie Block. European businesses became more prominent in the area throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

By celebrating the past, we hope to go proudly into the future. If you're interested as an artist or contributor of a blank wall, please email [amazing-moss@park@gmail.com](mailto:amazing-moss@park@gmail.com).

And instead of tagging the work, we hope street artists will contact us and join us in our efforts.

Check out our new website!



[www.thebridgenews.ca](http://www.thebridgenews.ca)

the bridge

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

Ginkgo Floral Design

A passion for flowers and service

222 The Esplanade  
416-640-1209  
[www.ginkgofloraldesign.com](http://www.ginkgofloraldesign.com)



Curbside Pickup Available

\*Call ahead for orders\*

**416 364 2806**

[schefflersdeliandcheese@bellnet.ca](mailto:schefflersdeliandcheese@bellnet.ca)

See us at the  
St. Lawrence Market, Upper Level  
@schefflersdeli



**KING KONG EBIKES**  
TORONTO, ONTARIO



• CUSTOM E-BIKES  
• E-BIKE REPAIR AND SERVICE

• MADE TO ORDER  
LITHIUM BATTERIES

(647) 375-6066

OR

(647) 768-7850



# Moss Park residents fed up with encampments, advocates look to the city for action

Julia Simioni, Senior Reporter

Since the start of the pandemic, hundreds of homeless people have fled shelters and taken refuge in the growing number of encampments across the city.

While encampments have become a mainstay of Moss Park since the start of the pandemic, a resident who goes by the park everyday guesses that the number of people living in the park has doubled since the pandemic began.

\*Tina, a secondary school teacher who's lived in the area with her husband for six years, says she'd be grateful if the city cleared the park encampments, as it has become "very challenging" to live in the area, especially with a young child.

"People regularly leave needles and used condoms on our yard, and it's not uncommon for people to urinate, defecate and provide sexual services there as well." Tina said the city won't come to dis-

pose of these items on private property.

"These things can happen in a more concealed area, but we're talking about encampments. That's a public park partially paid for by taxes of homeowners, yet these activities are spreading to private property."

Following the recent rise of forced encampment evictions in Toronto, on July 15 the city issued eviction notices to Moss Park residents, although at the time of writing it hadn't carried them out. Instead, the city said it has found shelter for some tent camp occupants and will continue to work with them.

"Between Sunday and end of day Tuesday, July 14, the city's Streets to Homes outreach team and partners successfully engaged with 140 clients sleeping outside at the Moss Park encampment and moved them all into temporary inside spaces including hotels," a media relations officer for the city wrote in an email to CBC

Toronto.

The city is "actively engaged in trying to secure permanent housing for these individuals and families," it added, and has done so for more than 1,300 people who were in shelters, hotels, interim housing and encampments.

Marina Stasulevich, a Moss Park resident of nearly seven years who also witnessed the rise of encampments, believes that the city has "greatly failed our homeless population."

"Allowing tent cities to exist in the state they are cannot be the answer," said Stasulevich. "While I believe that the majority of inhabitants are completely harmless and doing their best to survive, ignoring the fact that it creates issues is simply naive."

While Moss Park has always been a "tougher" area to live in, Stasulevich says, she rarely felt unsafe until the start of the pandemic. "The neighbourhood has greatly suffered."

Stasulevich said she's been physically and verbally assaulted multiple times, mainly in the last year and a half. "I've had to begin PTSD therapy to help cope with leaving the house, walking my dog around the neighbourhood and running basic errands because of the things I've experienced and witnessed over the year."

Rafi Aaron, a spokesperson for the Interfaith Coalition to Fight Homelessness, says residents should be upset with Mayor John Tory, not the people that the city has failed to house.

"Politicians like to say that [the homelessness crisis is] complicated. It's not really: If you want to build social housing, then build social housing. For me, it's very simple."

Clearing encampments is not the answer, Aaron says. "All

it does is take the people, and they scurry and hide under bridges. They go far away in ravines where we can't locate them.

It's "ripping people out of their social support networks, and it always has disastrous effects."

Both Tina and Stasulevich say they've stayed in the area because of the community connections they've made.

"I'm hoping for a solution that benefits everyone," said Stasulevich. "I'm also hoping that something changes, because I don't know how much longer I can hold out on the love of my neighbourhood alone."

*\*Name has been changed to protect anonymity.*

## A plethora of buildings block access to the water

Bull from p1

Why must we build by the lake? Why must a precious few block access for us all?

I am a member of a campaign, Stepping off the Sidewalk, that wants to stop all this lakeside construction and dedicate the waterfront land at the foot of Parliament to park space.

When we reached out to Waterfront Toronto board member and City Councillor Joe Cressy a year ago, we got no response. So we tried again. When he finally returned our calls in June, he said he'd set up a Waterfront Toronto meeting.

We're still waiting. In the meantime, plans are afoot.

These challenges prompted me to take a closer look at this tri-government agency that's filling in the shoreline.

Waterfront Toronto was formed following the 1999 Waterfront Revitalization Task Force report. Recommendations included a more accessible waterfront and more affordable housing. The task force also recommended tearing down elevated portions of the Gardiner Expressway.

Nice idea.

Waterfront Toronto's mandate is also to reduce urban sprawl, develop sustainable communities, redevelop brownfields, build more affordable housing and create parks and public spaces. It adopted most of the

task force recommendations, with a couple of tweaks.

So how is it doing? Going for a spin on my bike along the shore last week, I made a few observations:

- There are too many 'pinch-points'. Consider the muddle at the foot of Bathurst Street by the airport and the unholy mess at the bottom of York Street. Different road users are funnelled full-speed towards one another and forced into too-close contact.

- Huge sections of the path are not even on the water. The shoreline under Waterfront Toronto jurisdiction runs from Dowling Avenue in the west end to Coxwell Avenue in the east. Strolling along, you don't so much hug the shore as weave around it. Ubiquitous basins are partly to blame: little U-shaped inlets dotting the stretch between Bathurst and Parliament break up your stroll. Even the wonderful HTO Park is split by a basin.

Why can't we fill them in?

- Another impediment is the plethora of buildings blocking access to the lake. Toronto loves condos, but do they have to be put right on the shore?

A 2002 Waterfront Toronto design initiative included a proposal by A.J. Diamond of Diamond and Schmitt architects to create "a continuous, public promenade that connects all of the waterside places along the lake." What a great

idea.

Why wasn't it built? Surely the one thing people want when strolling by the water is to, well – stroll by the water.

I'd love to share my observations and ideas about the waterfront, and heartfelt comments from the thousand supporters of the Stepping off the Sidewalk campaign who want to loll by the lake without a concrete shadow.

But does anyone want to listen?



**VORTECH AUTOMOTIVE**  
European Car Specialty

Repairs to  
All Makes & Models

111 Ontario St.  
Toronto, ON  
M5A 2V2

In Business for 25 years

**416-364-3718**

**CHURRASCO ST. LAWRENCE**  
"THE BEST PORTUGUESE STYLE GRILLED CHICKEN"




Show your family you care!

**CATERING & CURBSIDE  
PICKUP AVAILABLE**

**416-862-2867**

91 FRONT ST. EAST @THE ST. LAWRENCE MARKET

Patio And Indoor Dining Available

ASK ABOUT FARRELLY'S FAMOUS IRISH SODA BREAD MIX!



**GEORGE STREET DINER**

129 George Street

Tel: **416 862-7676**

Business Hours:  
Wed - Fri 8:00 am-2:00pm | Sat - Sun 8:00am-3:00pm

@TheGeorgeStreetDiner

@TheGeorgeStreetDiner



# Diverse new farmers' market at Queen & Church

Charles Davidson

The northwest corner of Queen and Church bustles this summer with a Sunday market that's "bringing the farm downtown."

A Metropolitan United Church initiative in partnership with Greenbelt Markets, The Met Farmers' Market is a food hub-style market and accessible community food space offering organic produce, meat and flowers alongside a variety of artisanal prepared foods. While strolling through the park to the sound of church bells, you'll also find fresh kombucha and paletas to quench summer thirst.

The parklands hosting the friendly vendors each week displays a diversity of passions and stories. The Food Equity Project from Erin, Ontario, aims to create sustainable food solutions for QTBI-POC groups, while Rooted in Change fuses African heritage inspirations "with a splash of western practices."

Hangar 22 Coffee Roasters, which began in Collingwood Regional Airport, developed during the Covid-19 pandemic into a small business supporting the aviation community.



Arnest Sebbumba, SARN Farms.

Hand-produced in Liberty Village, Chandler Honey is sourced from a family farm in Scandia, Alberta. And SARM Farms, an organic vegetable farm in its first year at Downsview Park, offers a rotation of fresh vegetables including zucchini flowers, golden beets and Roma tomatoes.

In the tradition of outreach at Metropolitan United, the Market is envisioned as bringing together local residents, tour-

ists, churchgoers and health-care workers from neighbouring St. Michael's Hospital.

The Met Farmers' Market runs Sundays through October 31 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The weekly schedule, including pop-up vendors and future programming, can be found on Instagram (@metfarmersmarket), Facebook, and at [metunited.ca/market](http://metunited.ca/market)

Photo: Courtesy of the Met Farmers' Market

## Toronto Writers Collective grows to become Writers Collective of Canada

Courtney Greenberg, WCC

Toronto Writers Collective announced on July 5 that it has become Writers Collective of Canada (WCC). WCC inspires exploratory writing in community, empowering the authentic voices of one and all, including traditionally underserved populations and unheard individuals nationwide. The name change and new brand reflect the charitable organization's national presence, a growing number of local chapters, and inclusion of writers across Canada and abroad.

"As WCC, we extend our reach, exploring the rich creative fabric of unheard voices. The new name symbolizes our ability to touch more lives, to ignite and free magnificent voices," said WCC Founder, Susan Turk Mozer. "At WCC we believe, as writer Toni Morrison says, 'The function of freedom is to free someone else.' As the WCC, we commit to doing just that through writing."

While the name of the organization has changed, its mission remains the same: to celebrate authentic voice using exploratory writing in workshops; building community and con-

nection through deep listening and storytelling. The workshops create an inclusive society that honours the lives of all citizens.

The new name is complemented by a new visual identity featuring a maple leaf. It is a strong Canadian symbol and the logo's design conveys the elemental experiences of a lifetime. Mozer explained: "A leaf goes from bud and branch, to riding the wind of change, both gentle and strong, ultimately making room for future growth. It is beautiful, tough, and fragile—like our human experience."

WCC was established as the Toronto Writers Collective, a non-profit corporation, in 2012. In 2018, the organization became a recognized charity. In 2020, the organization rapidly pivoted and expanded to virtual workshops and rebranded in 2021.

WCC nurtures a network of more than 250 trained volunteer facilitators and works with more than 100 partners in Canada, including leading social service, community, and healthcare agencies. WCC has touched over 4,200 writers engaged in over 25,000 workshop experiences, celebrating voice inclusive of race, ethnic-

ity, class, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental health and physical ability, with a strong focus on underserved populations and traditionally unheard voices.

Learn how to write with us, join us in our mission, or support us at [wcc-cec.org](http://wcc-cec.org).

Boutique Pharmacy™  
**Mister Pharmacist**  
**416-593-4000**  
 Fax 416-593-4166 [rx@misterpharmacist.com](mailto:rx@misterpharmacist.com)

**FREE**  
 BP  
 BMI  
 Oxygen  
 Weight  
 Height  
 Temperature

**HAVE YOU CHECKED YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE SINCE THE PANDEMIC STARTED??**

**116A Sherbourne Street @ Richmond E**

Open Mon-Fri 7:30am-6:30pm (Lunch 1:30-3:30)  
 Sat 10am-1pm Sun and other times-by appointment

**ACADIAN CONTRACTORS LTD.**  
 Est. 1958 Metro License B47

- Concrete
- Underpinning
- Waterproofing
- Drains
- Foundations
- Masonry Works

[acadian@bellnet.ca](mailto:acadian@bellnet.ca)  
**Tel: 416-489-4842**  
**Fax: 416-412-4790**

**MYSTIC MUFFIN**

**Too Big to Fail**  
**Too Small to Bail**  
**Too Fast to Nail**

**OPEN** **113 Jarvis Street**

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

**Wants your contributions**

[thebridgedowntown@gmail.com](mailto:thebridgedowntown@gmail.com)  
 260 Adelaide Street East, Toronto Ontario M5A 1N1

**OLDTOWN BODEGA**

**Come for the cocktails Stay for the good times**

**402 King Street East**

**@oldtownbodega for COVID hours**



# Regent Park Filipinos celebrate heritage and resilience

Jacob Sukhra

Kapwa is a Filipino word with no direct translation into English: it means fellowship, unity and solidarity with both community members and complete strangers. On July 24, the Regent Park community embodied the spirit of kapwa at the Filipino Heritage Month celebration, one of the first in-person cultural gatherings since the pandemic began.

The event, postponed a month by the pandemic, was a collaboration between Filipinos in Regent Park Community Group, Friends of Regent Park and the Filipino Program of the SEAS (Support Enhance Access Service) Centre.

Rain did not discourage almost 100 people who came to hear Filipino folktales, join traditional songs and dances, and listen to speeches celebrating Filipino heritage and community diversity. MPP Suze Morrison, Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, MP Marci Ien and Federal Green Party Leader Annamie Paul joined the festi-



Program perform the "Itik-Itik" folk dance.

Photo: Jacob Sukhra

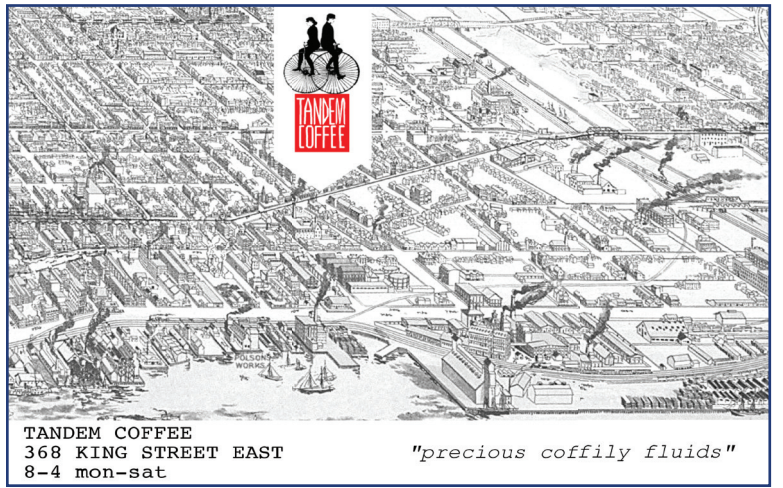
ities and addressed the crowd.

Square Circle, a non-profit organization founded in Regent Park, taught the audience to create balls from household items and juggle three or more at a time. Attendees left with a goodie bag of Filipino treats.

This event was part of Park People's Community Resilience program, which promotes

a sense of belonging, unity, mental wellness, physical wellness, and vibrancy among underserved communities.

Event sponsors also included Muslim Welfare Canada, Freshco, the Fred Victor mission, Paramount Fine Foods, the Neighbourhood Group, the Lansdowne Cone, and Who is Hussain Toronto.



## Ian McPhail Q.C.

Barrister & Solicitor

Real Estate - Wills - Estates - Small Business

info@ianmcphail.ca

www.ianmcphail.ca

T. 416.365.3300 F. 416.365.3305

207 Queen Street East Toronto, ON M5A 1S2

## LOCAL PAINTER

Looking for Small Jobs in the Downtown East Area.

**Free Quote**

Inquire at:  
pivodobre@yahoo.com

# What's the deal with the broken bike lane barriers?

Kevin Costain

You may have noticed new concrete barriers on several streets in our community. The roughly 35-inch-high protective structures have been installed in several locations around the downtown core. But lately, the triangular end pieces of these barriers have been bent or even separated. I wanted to understand more about this potential hazard and why it was happening.

Some of the barriers appear slightly pushed aside, while in other cases, they have been entirely separated from the main concrete structure. The disconnected concrete pieces are sometimes an eyesore while at other times, a serious hazard to bicycle traffic. Some have noticeably shifted, so much that they push directly into the bike lane, which is something only a strongman is capable of correcting. And this is coupled with the continued use of plastic dividers and hazard pylons.

Before the use of concrete barriers, plastic posts were put in place to keep vehicles away from bike lanes. These posts are trampled easily, and in some cases, have come off the brackets that affix them to the asphalt. Hitting one of



An example of a concrete bike barrier that has been severed.

Photo: Kevin Costain

these hidden metal-covered and black rubber brackets with anything but a sledgehammer will ruin your day. Yet the City seems slow to repair these issues – or is trying to find a better alternative.

Concrete barriers are a relatively new tool on our streets. On Bayview Avenue, the bike lane barrier is a type of small barrier you'd see at the end of a parking spot. Safer for riders but not enough protection from a runaway vehicle. Riders tend to feel most protected with a physical structure between them and the traffic. The new concrete barriers seemed like an intelligent choice.

Given that they all point inward and to the right, it's only been natural for trucks and large cars to hit them on right turns. The barriers also end long be-

fore the street does, making it easy for over-cautious truck drivers to bump into them. And since only a small piece of rebar holds the barriers, the slab is easily severed from the whole. It doesn't seem that the City accounted for this during the design process.

Bikes have been a great alternative to the lack of fitness clubs during the pandemic. In the last 12 months, the City planned to install 40 km of on-street bike lanes and many of them are now complete. Even some of the drab gray concrete on Richmond Street has been transformed by beautiful art. But our community still needs more bike lanes and continued expansion of the Bike Share Toronto program.

# City staff is tasked to investigate the delays

Wellington from p1

The St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association (SLNA) decries what it calls a lack of urgency and accountability from the City on yet another incomplete construction project in Toronto.

"There is significant weakness in the current management and coordination process for large independent infrastructure projects," says SNLA president Stewart Linton. "Nowhere is this clearer than in the complete failure to bring the Wellington Street reconstruction project to completion in a timely and cost-effective manner."

Walter Hryshko, who has lived in the St. Lawrence neighbourhood almost 20 years, says "Construction is just destruction in the city, and it's never going to end." As a client of Allan Parss, he has encountered problems with parking, getting a cab, and accessing the entrance.

"They should be aware of the underground infrastructure, especially because some of it goes back years," says Hryshko.

The City is not only tak-

ing time to resolve the underground infrastructure issues that caused the delay, but is working with the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Business Improvement Area (BIA) to ensure more restaurants in the area can participate in CafeTO as Covid-19 restrictions are lifted.

Wong-Tam says the CafeTO program offers businesses an advantage while they await the completion of construction work. "Operating a successful patio this season is critical, and it could mean the difference between staying in business or shutting doors forever."

City staff is tasked to investigate what factors led to delays, assess what could have been done better during this project, and recommend improved strategies for utility and construction management in the 2022 work plan. By September 14, the City Infrastructure and Environment Committee will meet to report to city councillors on what work remains on Wellington Street East, a timeline for individual pieces of work, and possible options to finish before June 2022.



# Together again at the Moss Park Market

Dustin Stern, Director of Operations, Building Roots

This summer, you can find the Building Roots team in full force every Saturday at the Moss Park Market. Safely distanced and masked, we are on the ground finding ways to make the best of this second pandemic summer.

For Building Roots, when I say 'team', yes, I am referring to the amazing group of committed individuals that I am grateful to call both my colleagues and friends.

For Building Roots, 'team' refers to a large and growing, beautifully inclusive community of contributors. This definitely includes City Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam as well as Leona Lowe – our long-time Community Leader.

On the heels of Building Roots' biggest year of impact and organizational growth, it is truly a joy to reunite under the sun with residents, com-



Councillor Wong-Tam joins the Moss Park Market team.

Photo: Courtesy of Building Roots

munity partners, donors, artists, volunteers and other folks with whom we extend the most sincere gratitude, as well as full acknowledgement of their support enabling us to achieve such impact amidst the unprecedented tragedies that arose this past year.

We invite you to come say 'hi'! Come for the pay-what-you-can fresh food bags, and stay for the incredibly rare live music and art showcases throughout the summer Saturdays from 12:00-2:00pm.

Market hours will remain 11:00am to 4:00pm.

## the bridge: Book Review

Glenda MacFarlane, Columnist

**Scarborough**  
Catherine Hernandez  
Arsenal Pulp Press, 2017

News that the film version of Catherine Hernandez's first novel, *Scarborough*, will be shown at TIFF this fall makes this the perfect time to read or revisit this iconic book. In this widely praised, award-winning novel, Hernandez portrays the city through the eyes of several of its citizens who are connected to a literacy centre in a Scarborough elementary school.

Hernandez, a queer woman of Filipino, Spanish, Chinese, and Indian heritage, has had an impressive career in the theatre, and her story has the feel of a drama unfolding before us. She also has a playwright's ear for the voices of her large cast of characters, who represent a wide range of nationalities and ages. We come to care for each of these characters, many of whom are children. These are children with difficult lives: Sylvie lives in a shelter with her determined Mi'kmaq mother, her injured father, and her special-needs brother; Bing, a queer and brilliant Filipino-Canadian boy, is cherished by his salon-worker mother, but bullied at school; Laura is a kindergartener whose angry ex-skinhead father struggles to provide basic necessities. The community's children and their caregivers intersect at the literacy centre, which is run by Hina, a savvy Muslim woman who fights an intractable and uncaring bureaucracy while trying to ease the children's problems without injuring their parents' pride. Hina is a touchstone for the novel's characters, with most of them connected to her in one way or another. Other

characters include Michelle, the shelter manager, who has seen many families come and go; Victor, whose wrongful arrest ruins his chance at higher education and a career as an artist; Mr. George, a kindly elderly man; Winsum, a local grocery store owner, and many more.

*Scarborough* is beautifully-written, its characters drawn sharply yet economically, their moments of triumph, sorrow, and connection with one another crackling with emotion. The sense of place is palpable, and issues of power and privilege, race and class, are made plain. These characters live in a world where hunger is common, struggle is constant, and people from everywhere collide, collaborate, and clash. Hernandez observes this world through a clear lens, and with compassion. She is unafraid to explore the prejudices, the desperation, and the despair of these characters. But she is also able to conjure moments of transcendent joy and hope for them.

If you haven't yet read *Scarborough*, put it on your reading list. It's a tough read, raw with emotion and filled with stories of children and their families who are falling through our safety net. But it is also a rewarding read, with unforgettable characters and a message that we all need to hear.

Glenda MacFarlane is a writer and editor. Glenda's writing includes the rural community-based collective creation *Railroaded*, the historical drama *Duel at Dawn*, and two non-fiction books. Glenda has also had many dramas produced by CBC Radio, including the award-winning *D-Day tribute The Final Hour* (co-written with Dave Carley).



WRITERS COLLECTIVE OF CANADA

**wcc-cec.org**

Join a free Virtual Writing Workshop!

For more information, please check our **website calendar** (updated on Saturdays), or contact: **info@wcc-cec.org**

\*previously Toronto Writers Collective (TWC)

EVERYONE IS A **WRITER**

SHARE YOUR **VOICE**

TELL YOUR **STORY**

Exploratory writing in community

Supportive feedback

ALL ARE WELCOME

Writing together, we change the world

**Sunglass Sale**  
**20%-50% OFF**  
selected models

**TO's "Hippest" Eyewear Store**  
Est. 1997

**NOW OPEN**

Glasses + Sunglasses  
+ Eye Exam CONTACT Lenses

33 Jarvis Street @ Front  
**416.362.3937**

THE  
**OPTIC ZONE**  
INC.

