

READ
LOCAL

the bridge

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

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Local discomfort around Physical Distancing Shelters

Megan Camlasaran

As Toronto continues to seek safe and supportive housing for its growing homeless population, local businesses near Physical Distancing Shelters are experiencing damaged property, open drug use and criminal activity.

In Toronto, approximately 7,800 people are homeless, according to city research. The city is temporarily leasing rooms for them in select Toronto hotels like the Novotel and the Bond Place Hotel as socially distanced shelters during the Covid-19 pandemic, instead of placing them in regular shelters where practicing social distancing is difficult.

The city is planning to retain these shelter sites until the end of the year, or until April 2022 if needed. These dates are dependent on changes to physical distancing guidance, willingness of hotel owners to extend leases, and the ongoing demand for shelter space.

“They shouldn’t be here,”

said Siva Sathasivam, a member of the St. Lawrence Market Business Improvement Area, who works at Uncle Tony’s pizzeria on Wellington street, near the Novotel. He thinks shelters should be relocated to the outskirts of the city to avoid the negative interactions that have become a “new normal” for the community.

Sathasivam appreciates the effort to provide housing support, but wishes the city would do it away from tourist areas. “We should be presenting our best selves to tourists.”

Uncle Tony’s has faced multiple challenges since Covid-19 from people coming from these shelters, Sathasivam says. During lockdown, he said, people tried to break into his restaurant through the back, where they tend to loiter. Customers who dine on the front patio often choose to move inside, out of discomfort when people from the shelter approach.

Shelter continued p8

‘It’s the wild wild west’ Shuter Street bike lanes raise safety concerns

Fiona O’Flynn

Last year’s bike lane reconstruction on Shuter Street has raised road safety concerns. Local residents report more speeding and visibility problems since the road was repaved and new lanes installed.

The bike lanes were upgraded to ‘cycle paths’ – physically separated from motor vehicles – to “enhance safety for people walking, cycling and driving,” according to the city. However, drivers entering Shuter from driveways or side streets find their vision impaired by parked

cars, making it difficult to see traffic and pedestrians before turning.

“I’ve personally witnessed cars inching forward and getting hit by a car that’s passing,” says Zaheed Alli, a Shuter Street resident. “The nose of the car needs to be into the sidewalk before they can see the roadway, or any cars going by.”

Crossing guard Matthew Hallowell has also witnessed near-misses.

Shuter continued p6



Terry Papas, manager of Patrician Grill

Photo: Sophia de Guzman

‘We’re still here’ Family-owned Patrician Grill lives through half a century and a global pandemic

Sophia de Guzman

“We’ve been here now 54 years. A lot of people call us the staple of the neighbourhood,” says Terry Papas, manager of Patrician Grill.

After immigrating from Greece, Helen and Louie Papas purchased the standalone, low-rise building at King Street East and Frederick Street and turned it into a family business in November 1967.

More than 50 years later, according to the diner’s website, “not much has changed.” From the classic menu featuring hamburgers, club sandwiches and meatloaf to the 1950s-style booths, the diner feels as if it’s

from another time. One change: hard plastic screens have been installed above booth seats to allow for indoor dining while limiting the spread of Covid-19.

The diner closed during the height of the pandemic. With many people working and studying from home, Patrician Grill was not getting the foot traffic or takeout orders to stay open. But after taking the provincial and federal small business supports along with protective gear provided by the City of Toronto, the diner was able to re-open, unlike many other restaurants.

Grill continued p8

Ontario Line sparks land grab in Moss Park

Andre Bermon, Publisher

Moss Park, a Downtown East community long impervious to change, is on the precipice of gentrification.

The historically marginalized district, nestled between several high-priced neighbourhoods, is seeing lucrative real estate deals thanks in part to the planned Ontario Line subway project. The 15.6-kilometre transit line is set to run from Exhibition Place to the Ontario Science Centre with a planned station on the northwest corner of Queen and Sherbourne Streets.

The past six months have seen a flurry of land purchases in Moss Park as developers try to capitalize on the province’s \$10.9 billion plan by building high-rises near downtown rapid transit.

Added density is accepted by the City as a solution to the community’s longstanding social ills. High-rise development has crept eastward from Jarvis Street along Dundas Street, with a 41-storey condominium soon to gobble up the adult entertainment club Filmore’s, for example.

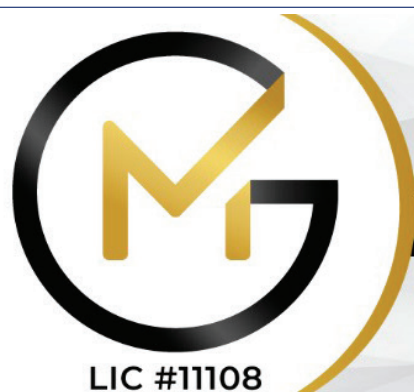
Whether such an aggressive approach to gentrification will pay long-term dividends remains to be seen, but the City continues to greenlight development projects around Queen and Sherbourne.

The Tricon-One Properties proposal between McFarren Lane and Ontario Street, two-thirds of which Tricon purchased for \$129 million in April, will add three mixed-use structures of 24, 25 and 33 storeys. Construction is likely to begin next spring.

Across the street from the proposed Moss Park station box, the abandoned but once lively Canada House Tavern has now exchanged hands.

According to Ontario Land Registry documents, the property management company Dash Inc. bought the building listed as 134 Sherbourne, which includes the Moss Park supervised injection site, for \$12,125,000 in July.

Moss Park continued p4



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Green Party leader steps down following fourth-place finish

Kayla Higgins

Incumbent MP Marci Ien secured her Liberal Party seat in the Toronto Centre riding in the September 20 federal election, garnering just over 50 percent of the vote. Ien first won the riding during a by-election just over a year ago, following former finance minister Bill Morneau's resignation in August 2020.

Green standard bearer Annamie Paul, who had run second in the 2020 by-election with almost a third of the vote, came a distant fourth with 8.5 per cent. A week later, she announced she would step down as party leader after only a year on the job.

NDP candidate Brian Chang received 26 per cent of the vote and Conservative Ryan Lester had 12 per cent. People's Party candidate Syed Jaffery got 2.4 per cent, while Communist Ivan Byard and the Animal Protection Party's Peter Stubbins each won less than half a per cent of the vote.

According to a press release, Paul will remain Green Party leader until an interim leader is appointed. She began thinking about whether to remain leader of the party, she said, after learning that a new leadership review had been launched.



Annamie Paul seen campaigning in downtown Toronto.

Photo: Green Party of Canada

"I just asked myself whether this is something that I wanted to continue, whether I was willing to continue to put up with the attacks I know would be coming, whether to continue to have to fight and struggle just to fulfil my democratically elected role as leader of this party," she told reporters at a September 27 press conference in the riding. "I just don't have the heart for it."

Paul's campaign promised aggressive climate change action and to address systemic discrimination. But she was hindered by party infighting after her key aide termed two Green MPs antisemitic and called for their defeat when they strongly criticized Israel's bombing of Gaza last May.

The election was "very difficult," Paul said, also pointing

to a lack of campaign staff and a national campaign manager. The party's national vote dropped from a record-high 1.1 million votes (6.5 per cent) in 2019 to less than 400,000 votes (2.3 per cent) in the recent election.

"I knew that we were likely not going to do well, and I knew that as the leader — even without those tools that I needed — the first person that the public would look at would be me," she said.

Ien, a former CTV broadcast journalist and St. James Town native, said she was inspired to run for office after the murder of George Floyd and other events of 2020. A Ryerson University graduate, she also served on the school's board of governors and worked as a mentor in an afterschool program.

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The blacksmith's historic home



Bruce Bell, Senior Columnist

The old building on the southeast corner of Sherbourne and Adelaide Streets exists today because it adapted to the times. Or it was just plain lucky.

This fine Georgian house was constructed in 1842 by Paul Bishop, blacksmith extraordinaire. Bishop built upon the foundations of one of the most famous manor homes of old

people he owned.

After William Jarvis died in 1817 his son cut the house and grounds into smaller sections. The house itself was taken over by a man named Lee, who turned it into a restaurant and billiard room and added a small extension.

In 1821 James Padfield rented a portion of the building and started a school. When the school disbanded in 1824, Isaac Columbus took possession of the property and converted one part into workshops and the rest into his home. In 1832 Columbus moved out and James Kidd moved in.

Effective August 1, 1834, slavery was finally abolished in most parts of the British



Paul Bishop's historic 1842 house at 363-365 Adelaide Street.

Photo: BB

York; consequently, it occupies some of the most historic land in the city.

The house miraculously survived the Great Fire of 1849, the onslaught of the Industrial Revolution and the horrors of 1960s urban renewal before being completely renovated a few years back.

In 1793, the land was still part of a great forest. In 1798 William Jarvis built a small villa in York, the new capital of Upper Canada, on what would become the four corners of Sherbourne and Adelaide. He named it Jarvis House, after himself.

The house, sitting on two acres at the Sherbourne and Adelaide area, had two barns, a root-house, a stable and a chicken coop. And, like a few of the town's well-to-do early white citizens, Jarvis had slave quarters built to house the six

Empire, including in what was now the incorporated City of Toronto.

In 1842 James Kidd sold the house to Paul Bishop on the condition that he be allowed to live there until he died. Kidd died a year later and in 1848 Paul Bishop had the old Jarvis house torn down to build upon the foundations the structure that still stands.

Bishop, son-in-law of previous owner Isaac Columbus, established himself as a

first-class blacksmith, locksmith and wheel maker. Before taking over the house, Bishop had his workshop across the street on the northeast corner of Sherbourne and Adelaide.

In 1834, a freed slave from the United States named Thornton Blackburn found employment as a waiter in Osgoode Hall. Three years later, Blackburn took a pattern of a horse-drawn taxicab known then only in Montreal and London, England, to Paul Bishop's workshop. In his shed at Sherbourne and Adelaide, Bishop built for Blackburn the first horse-drawn taxicab in Upper Canada.

In 1860, after living in the house for almost 30 years, Paul Bishop left town and disappeared from the history books.

His house then came into the

possession of Thomas Dennie Harris, one of the city's leading merchants, chief engineer of the fire brigade from 1838 to 1841 and harbourmaster from 1870 to 1872. Between 1841 and 1864 he was a warden of the Anglican Cathedral of St. James.

Harris had owned a hardware store since 1829 around the corner, at 124 King Street East, but it was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1849. Harris died in 1872 and with the encroachment of the Industrial Revolution the end was near for his home too.

The small yard and fence that surrounded the house were torn up, as were the trees. (Ironically, as warden of St. James, one of Harris's duties was to protect the poplar trees that surrounded the church.)

The great estates of the neighbourhood, like the massive Moss Park up the street, the Ridout homestead next door and Russell Abbey down the street, were being divided up and their buildings eventually demolished. Once part of a great forest, for the next century the area became a polluted industrial zone.

The historic Jarvis House was stripped of its interior ornamentation, its windows bricked up, and new doors installed. The grand memories of its former days faded away.

For the next 10 decades the home became everything from a machine shop to a garage to a flophouse – before being completely renovated back into a home in 2006. Paul Bishop's house has returned from the ashes.

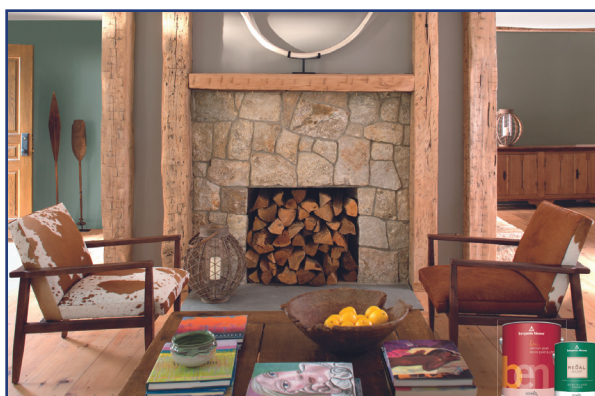


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Change is gonna come

Ben Bull, Columnist

Sometimes it feels as if nothing ever changes. After a federal election about nothing, we ended up with the same government as before, with almost the same number of seats. In the end there weren't many issues to force us further apart, and the electoral map looks a lot like it did after the last go-around.

In my forever-red riding of Spadina-Fort York there wasn't even a red candidate. The Liberal party booted him out a few days before the election, but we still voted him in. It seems that my fellow constituents really don't like those other colours.

While the country stands still, so does Toronto. The Gardiner Expressway continues to dominate the landscape down by the lake. Even when bits were falling off it a few years ago and it seemed destined to collapse, we somehow found the will to keep it erect. And it's a good job too; where would all those drivers have gone without their cross-town shortcut? Ah yes, Lakeshore...

Change might be coming further along the lakeshore very soon. Ontario Place, shuttered almost a decade ago, is to be redeveloped by a consortium of private companies selected by the provincial government behind closed doors...

I can't wait.

Change can be difficult for many of us. Motorists, for some reason, seem to struggle more than most.

Remember the King Street traffic calming plan? What a slog. The proposal called for a few modest car route adjustments - and yet it took years to thrash out. When the new layout was eventually unveiled, it seemed designed to upset as few people as possible. But did it make anyone truly happy?

Between Bathurst and Jarvis cars are still king, but only for one block at a time. Streetcars have free reign, but the traffic lights aren't timed so riders still have to wait. And while there are no bike lanes, the absence of heavy traffic can be enticing to those on two-wheels - until they reach the diagonal concrete barriers protecting the streetcar stops, at which point a passing streetcar will whip by just inches away.

As for the fancy benches the city installed, have you ever seen anyone sprawled across them?

Kensington Market is as car friendly as ever, except for a few hours on Sunday. And why not? That through traffic has to get somewhere else in a hurry somehow, so why not let them plough through the hordes of pedestrians toppling off the tiny sidewalks?

On the waterfront we are getting change all the time. Yet,

whenever a new glass condo reaches for the skies, somehow it doesn't feel very new.

Real change is coming to Toronto - it just won't get here in a hurry. The yongeTOMorrow plan is aptly named. Expanding sidewalk widths between Queen and Carlton recently obtained final council approval. This was a long-time coming, according to Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam. But the planned rollout date is 2025 so - it will also be a long time arriving.

Why so long? Do city councillors think holding back the future will make it easier for us to embrace it when it inevitably arrives? And why is the plan so convoluted? City planners seem to be falling over themselves to keep the traffic moving, even as we slow it down. Why not just close the street to traffic altogether?

Sometimes a big red marker is the only pen you need.

One thing is certain: change is gonna come. It might be scary. It might lurch towards us like a 1970s horror movie monster, gurgling and groaning as we scurry about trying to scramble out of its path.

But sometimes change can't be stopped. So we can either stand around in a snit waiting to get gobbled up - or we can get the hell out of the way.

Province's transit project will increase development pressure in Moss Park

Moss Park from p1

Dash's summer shopping spree also included neighbouring Anishnawbe Health Centre building, bought for \$6,887,000 and the building housing 1922, a marijuana dispensary and Famo sandwiches. No development proposal has yet been submitted.

At Queen and Parliament, the infamous WE buildings - empty since last year's WE Charity scandal involving Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, members of his family and resigned finance minister Bill Morneau - have been purchased for another mixed-use development. According to the CoStar News commercial real estate media, eight-properties that included 135 and 139 Berkeley Street, 329, 331, 333, 335-337 and 339 Queen East (the former WE headquarters), were transferred to Generation Capital for \$36 million. The deal closed Aug 23.

The current status of a long-time Moss Park staple, Alfie's Bar & Grill, like the Canada House Tavern a living testament to the neighbourhood's rough-and-tumble blue collar days, confirms that the Ontario Line is expected to usher in

change to the community. The Realtor.ca website lists Alfie's building at 222 Queen East for \$2.28 - million with a description that reads "With Ontario Line Coming; Lots Of Developments In Area".

While those who know the infamous bar will likely be shocked by the sticker price, the listing reveals how significant proximity to proposed subway plans is. Inflationary speculation has made the Moss Park dive bar worth millions.

As more details emerge, the province's transit project will add to development pressures in Toronto's remaining inner-city ghetto, while accelerating land values may raise questions about the long-term viability of the area's concentrated social housing.

The Moss Park Complex owned by Toronto Community Housing, built in the early 1960s, comprises six 16-storey buildings on approximately seven acres of prime downtown real estate. Its sister site, Alexandra Park, has been approved for revitalization and construction has already begun.

The threshold has been crossed. Moss Park is bound for a dramatic transformation.

Commffest Presents: St. Lawrence

Norman Hart, VP Commffest

Commffest (Community Film & Arts Festival) founder Sandie de Freitas has also turned her eye to writing and directing her first feature film.

St. Lawrence is an endearing movie that encompasses the spirit of community, set in recent times in and around the historic St. Lawrence Market neighbourhood in Old Town Toronto. It's about a young man named Thomas who struggles to juggle his nowhere career with an ambition to save the local community film festival whilst also having a volatile relationship with a young lady named Malina, a successful software developer, plus, a friendship with Ivan, a cantankerous elderly chap.

It is a community film involving familiar faces and places and similar problems that helps make the movie so appealing. It was shot over twelve days and involved several local actors, crew members and locations including the St. Lawrence Market, Mom & Pops Restaurant and the Performing Arts Lodge.

Canadian award winning



St. Lawrence Photo: Norman Hart

Filmmaker Dale Hildebrand, who had previously screened his work at Commffest, is the director of photography and the title song *Just Getting By* was composed by Sandie de Freitas. PAL resident Alan Cohen arranged and recorded the theme song with local singer Tracy Gallant.

The film *St. Lawrence* will have its premiere screening as part of the 16th annual Commffest community film and arts festival on October 27th at 7:30pm in the Scotia Bank Cineplex on Richmond Street and again on the 28th at the Imagine Cinema Market Square with limited seating.

As this is a hybrid festival most of the films will be online.

For further updates and information go to:

www.commffest.com



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No traffic lights between Parliament and River Streets

Shuter from p1

"Just the other day, a gentleman came out in his truck, and he's looking left because that's where traffic is coming from," says Hollowell. "Two kids are in the eastbound bike lane going west, and he doesn't see them. I thought they were going to die."

The reconstruction also involved replacing the asphalt surface and road base, which was uneven and pothole-ridden. The new, smoother road has resulted in cars driving noticeably faster, according to multiple residents. They report that it's not uncommon to see cars driving at double the 40 km/hr speed limit, particularly at night.

"It's the wild wild west," says Hollowell. "You would think that the speed limit on Shuter, east of Parliament, is 70 or 80 kilometres an hour some days."

The reconstruction reduced street parking on Shuter Street. Residents report that delivery vehicles and school buses often block the bike lanes, forcing cyclists into the roadway.

"A big problem with all bike lanes in Toronto is the total lack of police enforcement to keep cars from obstructing cyclists,"



Shuter Street facing west near Sumach Street.

Photo: Fiona O'Flynn

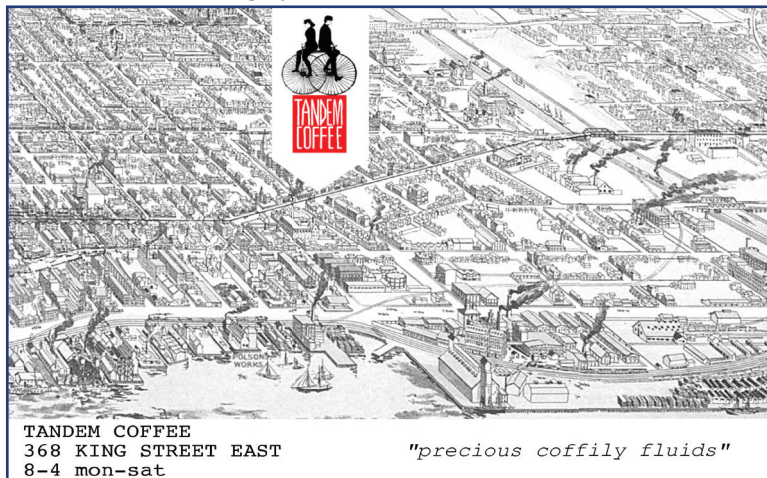
says Shuter Street resident Bill Eadie.

Some residents have reported an increase in traffic on Shuter Street, which has no streetcars, and no traffic lights between Parliament and River Streets. "People use it as a bypass, whether they're trying to avoid Queen or Dundas," says Alli.

Shuter Street residents are calling for action to improve road safety in the neighbour-

hood. The east end of the street has an elementary school, community centre, sports fields and a park.

Hollowell suggests lowering the speed limit on Shuter to 30 km/hr, and heavily enforcing traffic laws to keep pedestrians and cyclists safe. Others suggest introducing traffic calming measures such as four-way stops, speed bumps or traffic lights.





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the bridge: Book Review

Glenda MacFarlane, Columnist

Five Little Indians
Michelle Good
HarperCollins, 2020

Commemorating the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation at the end of September provided Canadians with an opportunity to reflect on the traumatic legacy of residential schools and to consider the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action. An estimated 150,000 Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families and communities and transferred to residential schools.

In addition to the commission report, many books describe Canada's residential school system and the resulting destruction of Indigenous societies. Memoirs and non-fiction books such as *Up Ghost River* (Metatawabin), *They Called Me Number One* (Sellars), *The Education of Augie Merasty* (Merasty/Carpenter), and *They Came for the Children* (TRC) detail the horrific experiences of residential school survivors and the great personal costs to generations of Indigenous families. Fiction can also help us to understand, and books such as Richard Wagamese's compelling *Indian Horse* have contributed greatly to the national conversation.

Five Little Indians by Michelle Good is a recent must-read work of fiction dealing with residential schools and their lasting impact. This award-winning novel centres on five friends who leave a residential school in British Columbia in the 1970s. By turns painful, joyful, and touching, the interwoven stories explore the life journeys of these very different residential school survivors who try to come to grips with trauma and move forward.

At 13, Kenny manages to escape from the school, eluding the authorities and finds his way home ... only to find that years of separation from his mother have taken a toll on their relationship and her mental health.

Maisie tries to return to her parents after leaving the school but finds that "No matter how hard I tried, this place, their house, was no longer home, and these people, though kind and loving, were like strangers pretending to be family." Traumatized by a priest's sexual abuse, Maisie ends up in Vancouver, where she turns tricks and eases her pain with heroin.

Lucy, released from the school at 16 with a bus ticket to Vancouver, a prayer card and \$25, goes to stay with Maisie. Working as a cleaner in an East Van flophouse, Lucy dreams of training to be a nurse, but instead discovers purpose in motherhood.

Clara channels her rage about the abuse she experienced into activism, becoming involved with the American Indian Movement. After trying to smuggle guns to activists during the FBI siege at Wounded Knee in South Dakota, she is injured in a car accident as she flees police. Clara encounters Mariah, an Indigenous healer, and begins to reconnect to traditional spirituality.

Howie, incarcerated for striking back against his residential school abusers, struggles to find meaning in his freedom after being institutionalized most of his life.

Good, a retired lawyer and activist from the Red Pheasant Cree Nation, is the daughter and granddaughter of residential school survivors. *Five Little Indians* is a powerful tribute to those who survived, and to those who didn't.

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Be on the lookout for fake Apple products

Kevin Costain

Can you spot a fake? Last month I learned the hard way how difficult this is.

Using Kijiji – an online marketplace considered a 'grey market' for new and used items – I bought what was billed as a brand-new Apple Watch Series 6. This \$699 watch was posted as sealed in the box and offered at \$450, a price I haggled down to \$420. Comparable products on Kijiji range from \$550 or more to \$400 for slightly damaged watches.

Selling fake Apple Watches is common – they appear to be flooding the community – but the work made to present this product as legitimate was impressive.

My transaction started like any other. I made an overture to meet the Kijiji seller calling himself "Christian." Kijiji users commonly employ aliases, and Christian's response was to offer a street address and mention he'd "be right down in 2 minutes" when I arrived, as if to indicate that he lived above the address, a bank building. But when he arrived, 10 minutes later, he was walking up the street, not out of the apartment complex in front of me.

Christian had the watch in a cream-coloured grocery bag. His confident walk, dark button-up shirt and khakis made me think he was well off. His easy-going nature and smooth speech patterns spelled innocence. He asked how I was, and seemed to genuinely want



Watch dials, side view. Fake on right.

Photo: Kevin Costain

to know.

Anticipating my first move, Christian grabbed a receipt from his grocery bag and handed it to me mid-stride. The paper was thicker stock than usual, though it did not make me hesitate as receipts are printable at home. The name on the accurate-looking Apple receipt was "Shane Benard" so I asked Christian if this was his real name. He said yes somewhat hesitantly and that his uncle purchased the watch for him as a gift.

I asked when it was bought. "November 2020," he replied.

Indeed the receipt said "November 2020." What I missed was that it also said "Return Date." I felt it was odd that a sealed product had been purchased, but not opened since November of last year.

"Can I open the box? I have the money here." Handing Christian the cash, I noted that Christian did not count it as he looked at me.

I removed the shrink wrap, opened the box and examined the contents. The charger seemed okay. The watch face looked lighter than expected, but I hadn't seen one in a long time. Being cautious, I searched

Apple's online warranty check service at checkcoverage.apple.com. and noted a legitimate serial number and model. I did not question what I saw.

"I don't mind you looking at it, but I have to get back to work," said Christian. This nudge worked perfectly. Creating a bit of urgency allows a fraudster to keep things moving while motivating you to look less closely. I perused the rest of the package quickly and let Christian walk away, excited to be the owner of a new Apple Watch.

Two hours later I opened the box and attempted to pair the watch with my phone. But it wasn't possible (fakes can't replicate Apple-integrated functions). I tried to reach Christian, but there was no reply from Kijiji messages, and his phone number was suddenly "not in service."

As I sat in a Sherbourne Street cafe, the sophistication of this scam started to sink in. I reported this both to Kijiji and the Toronto Police. Given the increasing quality of fake goods, it's wise to be cautious if you buy in the grey market.

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Councillor Wong-Tam calls disorder ‘unacceptable’

Shelter from p1

Notifying police on multiple occasions of disturbing behaviour and illegal activity doesn't prevent problems the next day, Sathasivam says. Toronto police tell him to continue filing complaints.

The Bond Place shelter is operated by Dixon Hall and supervised by Haydar Shouly, the agency's senior manager of Shelters and Shelter Programs for housing services. Toronto Police, corporate security and the city's housing administration work together to improve safety measures around the area for both patrons and local residents.

At the Novotel shelter, four guards and two community safety team members employed with Homes First offer support inside and around the property's perimeter. As well, surveillance cameras around the property are monitored.

According to the city, Homes First staff at the Novotel are trained on de-escalation of conflict, conflict resolution and crisis prevention, intervention and management.

The city said they are “working” to provide more paid-duty officers to secure and patrol both hotels.

Dixon Hall employees at Bond Place have been working with the community since the beginning of the pandemic. Dixon Hall holds bi-weekly meetings run by the Community Liaison Committee.

The CLC is made up of rep-



The Bond Place hotel is currently used as a physical distancing shelter. Photo: MC

resentatives of the community including condo boards, resident's associations, and local businesses who meet to address questions, share updates and discuss concerns.

City Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam acknowledged that “the disorder is unacceptable” to affected communities. Many residents in the St. Lawrence area in particular are “not used to seeing complex social issues, and it is very new to them.”

Whenever a new shelter is introduced to a community, the city invites residents and businesses to learn more about the need for homelessness services to dispel stigma, according to a city statement.

Shouly, from Dixon Hall, said, “as a community we need to understand and offer support to those who need it. We have to do it somewhere. Accessing resources is a major piece of the work we do... we need to integrate people into society and live with them in the same neighbourhoods, in places we

can help and work together.”

Wong-Tam added that Toronto needs more housing, mental health and addiction recovery commitments from all governments because, “no city can address these issues on their own, especially since they generally fall outside of the municipal purview.”

Toronto is considering opportunities under the federal government's rapid housing initiative to build new housing on city-owned land, transform non-residential buildings to permanent housing and purchase homes in need of repair to return to affordable rental housing.

The city and its partners engage with the community when sites are confirmed, funding is secured and negotiations to purchase are completed, according to the City of Toronto. More information on the Shelter Infrastructure Plan will be shared with City Council in October from Shelter, Support, and Housing administration.

Area has changed since the Patrician Grill opened in 1967

Grill from p1

Today the diner is run six days a week by Terry Papas, his brother-in-law Chris Slifkas and a small staff. In some ways, Papas says, business is better now than when the diner started. “People spend more,” he says while taking two coffees to a couple who just sat down, “but now, everybody's got their little niche.”

Gesturing to a space beside the coffee machine, Papas says that in the 1970s and '80s, he had a line of styrofoam cups pre-filled with sugar and cream to get them to customers faster. Styrofoam cups now sit still in their plastic packaging, tucked behind the machine.

“We used to sell, maybe 40 or 50 cups a day, take-out! Now, we're lucky if we sell 10.” Papas points to several newer coffee shops in the neighborhood as the reason. As one of a few family-owned businesses remaining in one of Toronto's oldest neighbourhoods, Papas says, the small diner keeps its own kind of historical record for the area.

Since the Patrician Grill opened, the area has changed from a bustling commercial area to a much more residential one. The opening of George Brown College's St. James campus in 1976, only a block away, marked an important moment in this transition. And while the increased foot traffic is great for business, Papas still thinks the neighbourhood is going in the wrong direction, “I

understand [the condo growth] a little bit, but I think it's gone too far, too much. It's going to create more traffic and more people, and I just don't think the neighbourhood can support it.”

As in much of the city, increased new condominium development has reshaped St. Lawrence Market neighbourhood, where Patrician Grill calls home, increasing property and rent prices. Little more than a 10-minute walk from Patrician Grill was the now-closed Canary restaurant. The former neighbourhood staple served its last meal over ten years ago after the Bayview extension closure. Terry Papas remembers when six family-owned diners were within walking distance; now, Patrician Grill and the George Street Diner are the only ones.

Two older men sitting at a booth at the back of the diner for most of the morning call Papas over by his first name. As they continue a friendly debate about the election, the diner has started to get busy, with families and single patrons spilling in from the street. When the two ultimately leave, they again thank Papas by name, and crack a joke on the way out. This is Terry Papas' favourite part of the job.

“We have some sense of home, I guess you could call it. Home away from home. We do what we do and I think some people like how we make our food and enjoy the fact that we're still here.”

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