

# Our fifteen-minute city in jeopardy

By Juliet O'Neill and John Chenier

Two major pieces of our 15-minute city disappeared at the end of 2020. The ByTowne Cinema finally shut down permanently, unable to survive yet another lockdown and low revenue because of the pandemic restriction of 50 patrons per showing. A similar absence of patrons led to the closure of Lowertown's only hardware store, Trudel Hardware at 170 George Street.

ByTowne Cinema owner Bruce White will be on a quest to sell the cinema but not yet. He's waiting until COVID19 restrictions are over and he has some bargaining power. He says he won't be re-opening it himself.

White said his optimism about staying open, reported in the last edition of The Echo, drained away when it became apparent the authorities wouldn't be allowing more than 50 patrons in the 650-seat cinema, and another lockdown was in the works.

For the moment, he's selling personal messages on the theatre's marquee



to help pay utilities and property taxes. The price is \$100 for one side, or \$150 for both for 24 hours. Email [cinemail@bytowne.ca](mailto:cinemail@bytowne.ca) to book.

The cinema has a ton of fans, who poured out their memories and love for the repertory cinema on social media when the shutdown was announced.

But White said he doesn't want them to buy messages as an act of charity to pay the bills. "I want to do it for people who want to see their name up in lights."

Charles-Antoine Bachand proposed to Stéphanie Demers on the marquee. She accepted.

White's favourite so far was from a couple celebrating their anniversary

with a pandemic joke: "Nothing can mask our love."

It's a different story over at the hardware store where continuing under new ownership is not an option. Trudel's had been a Lowertown fixture since 1925, beginning with a shop next to Ogilvy's on Rideau Street, moving from there to Besserer at Nicholas before moving finally, to the George Street location.

The closure means that people needing a washer for their garden hose or a graffiti artist looking for can of spray paint will have to take a car, bike or bus and travel at least six kilometres to the closest hardware store.

A number of things contributed to the decision to close the store. Prominent

among them was the loss of clientele as the surrounding office buildings emptied out — some permanently closed and converted to student residences, others empty as a result of work-from-home edicts as part of the pandemic. All this coincided with the expiration of the current lease and subsequently, the decision not to renew at a higher rent.

Given the value of development property in the downtown core, it will be interesting to see what the future holds for these two locations. There has been some interest in reviving the cinema, but whether a means to do this can be found remains to be seen.

It is unlikely another hardware store would locate on George Street, but Sandy Hill and Lowertown should be able to support a hardware store with a footprint similar to Capital Home Hardware in the Glebe or others in the urban areas of the city, like Little Italy and Westboro.

Perhaps the new commercial space in the Trinity development at Rideau and Chapel could yield an answer.

## Saving Lowertown

By Norman Moyer

President,

Lowertown Community Association

Ottawa City Council has just voted to spend \$129 million to renew public infrastructure in the ByWard Market. This will go a long way towards reviving Lowertown, if it is accompanied by sensible plans and regulations that favour development aimed at producing a dynamic and diversified residential, commercial and institutional community.

The City of Ottawa has also just proposed a new Official Plan to its citizens in which it boasts about the value of the "15-minute community". Why then is the City through its actions and its neglect killing its oldest 15-minute community?

A good community has many attributes: it is safe; it offers all needed services within walking distance; and it

supports its residents and its businesses to help them live and work together. In the case of a downtown community in the city's hotel district, it also provides attractive products for tourists. When that community also sits at the centre of the public transportation networks of the city, it should be expanding as a place for a diversity of retailers, restaurateurs and public institutions to operate. Lowertown/ByWard has all of these attributes but they are slowly being eroded either by design or neglect.

Lowertown is being undermined by a number of factors: the failure to protect its built heritage; the concentration of services for the homeless; the truck route through its centre; and the proliferation of bars to name a few.

The evidence shows that the Lowertown community is not safe, clean or appealing. In spite of six decades of promises, governments have done nothing to take the interprovincial truck traffic off King Edward and Nicholas.



The homeless are concentrated in a few large shelters. People dependent on illegal drugs are forced to buy their drugs from criminal organizations. In spite of its own bylaw, the City has allowed

the ByWard neighbourhood to be taken over by a monoculture of bars.

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The Echo welcomes articles, letters, photographs, notices and other material of interest to its readers in the Lowertown community. Name and telephone number of contributor must be included.

If you'd like to write articles, draw cartoons or other illustrations for stories, or take photographs on assignment, please email and leave your name and telephone number at [echo@lowertown-basseville.ca](mailto:echo@lowertown-basseville.ca). No age restrictions. The Echo reserves the right to edit in part or in whole all contributions.

L'Echo est un journal communautaire à but non lucratif dont les seuls revenus viennent des annonceurs et l'Association communautaire de la Basse-Ville. Les textes n'engagent que leurs auteurs et annonceurs respectifs et ne reflètent pas nécessairement l'opinion de l'équipe de rédaction, qui est composée de bénévoles.

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Tous les articles, lettres, illustrations, photos et autre matériel qui peuvent intéresser les lecteurs de la Basse-Ville sont les bienvenus. Leurs auteurs doivent indiquer leur nom et leur numéro de téléphone.

Les personnes qui aimeraient collaborer avec l'Echo sont invitées à envoyer un courriel au [echo@lowertown-basseville.ca](mailto:echo@lowertown-basseville.ca) en indiquant leur nom et leur numéro de téléphone. Nous apprécions la contribution de tous, quel que soit leur âge. L'Echo se réserve le droit de modifier en tout ou en partie les documents.

#### Contributors to this edition

Editor: John Chenier

#### Contributing editors:

Patricia Balcom, Steve Ball, Kelly Butler, John Chenier, Lucille Collard, Caroline Cox, Lynda Cox, Team/equipe CRCBV-LCRC, Zach Dayler, Mathieu Fleury, Jordan Ferraro, Alison Hobbs, Ilona Horvath, Kendra Hughes, Lauren Intven, Elodie Lortal, David Lu, Nancy Miller Chenier, Sandra Milton, Norman Moyer, Juliet O'Neill, Valerie Proctor, Michel Rossignol, Jessica Ruano, Fiona Sant, Joel Weiner

Copy editors: Patricia Balcom, Philippe Doyon

Photography: John Chenier, Sandra Milton, Renée Sylvain, Ilona Horvath and others

Layout: John Chenier

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Questions regarding delivery? If you live in Lowertown, the Echo is delivered free to your door. Please email if you are aware of anyone or any business in our neighbourhood who is not receiving their community newspaper.

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de la Basse-Ville. Pour vous inscrire, communiquez avec Meagan au [mgilsonlockhart@crcbv.ca](mailto:mgilsonlockhart@crcbv.ca) ou envoyez un texto au (613) 228-0842.

We are still offering our **FOOD DISTRIBUTION SERVICE** to residents of Lowertown. You must make an **appointment** by calling (613) 562-2925 before coming by.

Nous continuons d'offrir du **DÉPANNAGE ALIMENTAIRE** sur **rendez-vous**. SVP appelez au (613) 562-2925 avant de venir.





# Shopping locally

By Alison Hobbs

When asked for the secret of his success, Paul Bocuse, the legendary French chef and restaurateur, replied, “De bons ingrédients, que je choisis moi-même!” Bocuse shopped for fresh produce every day at his local market; his reputation depended on this habit.

Not only does it make for better eating to buy local produce, it makes good sense. It reduces the need for complex transportation systems, thus reducing CO2 emissions and improving the planet’s health. Rather than taking the car every time you need to stock up on perishable groceries, if you walk to the shops or go by bike, your own health benefits too.

Most important of all, at this moment the small businesses in our vicinity, hit hard by COVID 19 regulations, need loyal customers. Their appreciation of our support cannot be underestimated.

We are lucky to live in Lowertown, with a gratifying variety of shopping opportunities near home. The ByWard Market is close enough for us to go there several times a week on foot, so that we never need to carry home too heavy a

load. If for whatever reason we cannot go out, most stores deliver. Sasloves Meat Market, for example, offers a service that includes delivery of items from its neighbouring stores as well, the Byward Fruit Market, Lapointe Fish and the House of Cheese.

Make a shopping list at home and call 613 241 9266 to give Sasloves the order. (The delivery charge is \$5 if you spend \$100 or more, otherwise \$10.) This can save much time and trouble, especially since their deliveries are reliably prompt.

All of these businesses make a point of stocking foods of nearby origin, so in addition to the environmental advantages, this means fresher food.

There are small-scale businesses in Lowertown where food is prepared on the premises, such as the Portuguese Bakery on Nelson Street. Inside the Portuguese Bakery, as well as Portuguese breads and pastries, you’ll also find the Syrian Kitchen, which has its own section offering vegetarian platters, salads and wraps.

At the Moulin de Provence at the Market Mall or Le Boulanger français on Murray Street, authentic French loaves,



baguettes, gateaux and pastries come straight from the oven and are wrapped in paper or cardboard, which is more environmentally friendly than plastic.

If you’re planning on curry for supper, visit Shafali Bazaar at the ByWard

Market building; as well as curries, they cook naan bread here. Take it home buttered and wrapped in foil, and when it’s unwrapped, it is still warm and smells delicious.

You might sometimes fancy food from overseas, and you can find that in the Market, too. Wedel Touch of Europe or the Asian Fairway Trading Company on Byward Market Square, the Continental Delicatessen, the Tea Store or the Nut House around the corner, or La Bottega, within a few steps of the others, all sell unusual products from places that remind us of travelling abroad.

Wedel’s precooked sausages are handed over wrapped in butcher paper: again, that’s much better for the environment than plastic.

Help yourself to fresher food and better health while helping local businesses by shopping locally.

*Alison Hobbs lives in Lowertown and convenes an environmentalAction group.*

# Shepherds’ plans for Murray Street housing

By Caroline Cox

When I first met Tereza, she welcomed me to her home at 208 Saint Andrew St. with a hug. She gave me a hard time about why I wasn’t married yet. But then she told me a story I will never forget. Tereza came to Canada from Sudan after witnessing the violence of a war that claimed the lives of her entire family. She self-medicated with alcohol to numb the pain of PTSD and undiagnosed schizophrenia.

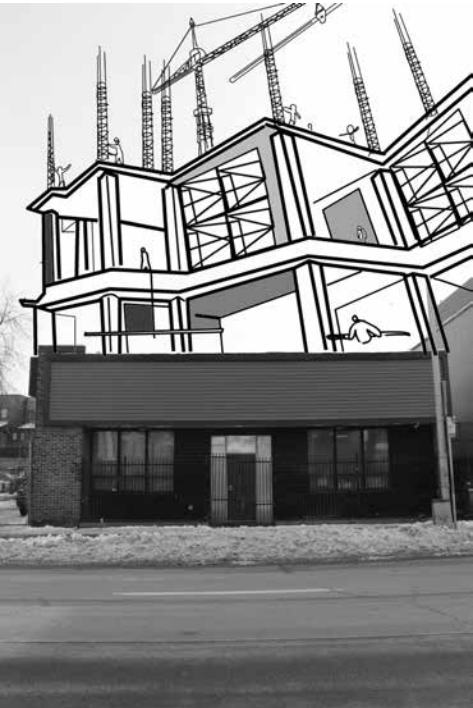
Shepherds of Good Hope helped Tereza get her drinking under control, connected her with doctors, and found her a home with ongoing supports. Without supportive housing, Tereza might not be here today to tell her story.

We know housing is the solution to homelessness, and we’re proud to be a city-wide leader in supportive housing, with nearly 200 residents. But our goal is to have more beds in supportive housing than in our emergency shelter. This year, that goal will become a reality.

We are grateful to have the support of the City of Ottawa and the federal government’s Rapid Housing Initiative to redevelop our property at 216 Murray Street, and we are excited to share some details about it with you, our neighbours.

We are planning for a low-rise mixed-use building of approximately eight storeys.

The first floor will be a drop-in program for anyone in the community, open 16 hours a day. This is a much-needed resource in the ByWard Market, where many vulnerable people have nowhere to go and little to do during the day. Additionally, it will serve the needs of Lowertown residents who struggle to make ends meet.



The second floor will house our new soup kitchen, replacing our currently aging one at 233 Murray, which will become administrative space. Relocating the kitchen will address community safety issues inherent in people travel-

ling back and forth through traffic to access meals.

The remaining floors will be comprised of approximately 40 housing units, prioritizing Indigenous individuals, and women. These will give people the stability and dignity of a home of their own, and reduce numbers in our emergency shelter.

For more information about the 216 Murray redevelopment, visit [www.sghottawa.com/216](http://www.sghottawa.com/216)

We know that stable housing, meaningful daily activity and social inclusion change lives and communities for the better. Over 90% of our supportive housing residents do not return to homelessness.

So why not build in the suburbs, where it cheaper and there are fewer negative influences? The short answer is, we are! We are soon opening up a 42-unit building in the East End, and creating 8 more units in our location in Kanata, for a total of 101. But we believe very strongly that people experiencing homelessness deserve the same level of choice about where and how they live as anyone else.

Many of the people we work with are accustomed to living in the downtown core. Everything they know, from community resources and social networks to transportation and medical supports, are located in this area. Transitioning to the suburbs can be rough, and there are

those who just do not wish to live there. They want to make Lowertown their home, for many of the same reasons you do.

Paul was one of the first people I ever met at Shepherds of Good Hope. I was shocked when he told me that he had been living at Shepherds for 10 years. I didn’t know that Paul lived in a supportive-housing program, Hope Living. When that program moved to Kanata, Paul went too. But he didn’t feel like he fit in there. He missed his old neighbourhood, so he jumped at the opportunity to move to St. Andrew’s Residence. Now he greets me almost every morning, often with his catchphrase, “It’s a Pink Floyd Blue Sky Day!”

Shepherds of Good Hope is committed to doing our part toward ending chronic homelessness in Ottawa. We want to reduce the number of people staying in our shelter, like Paul and Tereza once did, because a shelter is not a home. We want to increase their opportunities to live full, dignified, meaningful lives in their own permanent homes. We hope that you will join us in offering homes for all, community for all and hope for all.

*Caroline Cox is the Senior Manager of Communications, Community and Volunteer Services at Shepherds of Good Hope.*



# Anti-racism action in our community

By Kelly Butler

In November 2020, representatives from the City of Ottawa Anti-Racism Secretariat, the Social Planning Council of Ottawa, a committee of Lowertown youth and a lawyer who works at the Canadian Human Rights Commission made presentations to residents at a virtual community forum hosted by the Lowertown Community Resource Centre, and facilitated by the African Canadian Association of Ottawa. A summary portrait of Ottawa’s Black and other racialized communities was introduced to raise awareness of significant inequities in 28 indicators, including rates of poverty, employment outcomes, unequal distribution of income and opportunities, housing, and access to amenities.

According to the Ottawa Neighbourhood Equity Index, Lowertown scores well on access to transit, rental stock, green spaces, and pedestrian/active transportation. However, much of Lowertown’s residential area struggles with high indicators of a population experiencing a great number of inequities. An intersectional anti-racist approach and



solidarity with our Indigenous community were included in the discussion led by the Anti-Racism Secretariat. Counsel from the Canadian Human Rights Commission gave highlights of the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and explained the grounds for discrimination. The bilingual event was well attended and elicited many significant comments in the break-out sessions.

One of the outcome actions from the Lowertown Community Anti-Racism Forum held last fall was the formation of the Lowertown Anti-Racism Community Action Group by community members. The group wants to educate and raise awareness, examine the root causes of disadvantage and disparity in our community, and plan what further actions can be taken.

The Lowertown Community Resource Centre also created a youth committee with members aged 10-19 years to confront the challenges of anti-Black racism. The committee comes together to engage in empowerment workshops with guest speakers who provide participants with the tools to navigate experiences of anti-Black racism and discuss themes such as defining anti-racism, allyship and resilience. Meetings are now held twice a week with multidisciplinary guest artist, Kalkidan Assefa aka DRPN Soul, who is responsible for many vivid and brilliantly coloured murals in Ottawa. The youth are sharing their artistic talents and ideas in the creation of a new mural that will be representative of Lowertown’s diverse and rich community. There are hopes that the mural will challenge the negative narratives surrounding Black lives and encourage community resilience. The youth are taking an active role in shaping the kind of future they want to live in. This gives them the chance to grow while gaining a greater sense of personal and community identity. Check out the new mural mid-February at Loblaws on Rideau Street!

Residents are invited to join the Lowertown Anti-Racism Community Action Group or the youth committee. Please contact Alain Lutala, Community Developer at the Lowertown Community Resource Centre, at [alutala@crcbv.ca](mailto:alutala@crcbv.ca).

Here are links to the organizations mentioned in this article.

Lowertown Community Resource Centre <https://crcbv.ca>

Ottawa Neighbourhood Equity/Racism <https://neighbourhoodequity.ca/racism#data>

Kalkidan Assefa, drippin soul creations <http://www.kalkidan-assefa.com>

Anti-Racism Secretariat <https://engage.ottawa.ca/anti-racism-and-ethno-cultural-relations-initiatives>;

Social Planning Council <https://www.spcottawa.on.ca/about-us/>

Canadian Human Rights Commission <https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/eng/content/about-us>

## Fad or future? Convenience or nuisance?: E-scooters

By John Chenier

A report by city officials recommends Ottawa expand the e-scooter program in 2021. Specifically, the recommendations are to:

- Approve the continuance of Ottawa’s Electric Kick Scooter Pilot in 2021 as detailed in the report, with proposed changes to the pilot program, and a revised fee structure and procurement strategy;
- Approve the implementation of a competitive procurement process and enter into agreements with successful proponents of the process; and
- Direct staff to report back to the Transportation Committee and Council at the conclusion of the 2021 pilot project for consideration of future pilot seasons.

According to John Verbas, Co-Chair of the Federation of Citizens’ Association Transportation Committee, it



appears that the City will rely on “improved behavior through education” of users to address the issue of users parking or riding on sidewalks.

The gist of the recommendations for the 2021 season is to provide more res-

idents with reliable access to shared e-scooters, to achieve consistently safe and courteous e-scooter riding and parking, to reduce the burden of issue management and monitoring for staff and elected officials, and to improve the pedestrian experience for all road and sidewalk users, especially the most vulnerable.

The recommendations call for:

- Selecting up to three e-scooter operators through a competitive procurement process;
- Increasing the total fleet size from 600 to between 1,200 and 1,500 and widening the central deployment area where the scooters will be available;
- Exploring the possibility of a satellite pilot of up to 300 e-scooters outside the Greenbelt, to determine the use and feasibility of e-scooters in a suburban area. The 300 satellite e-scooters will be part of the City’s total fleet size of between 1,200 and 1,500 units; and

- addressing sidewalk riding and improper parking through a variety of mitigation measures as outlined in the report.

Verbas noted the downside of the e-scooter craze is the potential impact on “active” transportation. He noted that “The e-scooter share programs are taking a big bite out of bike-share programs throughout North America. The City will soon table a report on bike-share program options for the City. There has been no program here for the past two years.”

Residents of Lowertown, particularly in the ByWard Market and surrounds, seem to bear the brunt of the e-scooter craze. One can only hope that doubling the numbers of these comes with expanding the area where these are staged. Otherwise, ByWard will come to resemble an e-scooter amusement park.



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# Des Gens Comme Vous

## À la rencontre des membres du C.A. du CRCBV

Par : L'équipe du CRCBV

Ce mois-ci, l'équipe du Centre de ressources communautaires de la Basse-Ville veut vous faire découvrir des membres du Conseil d'administration, des bénévoles qui évoluent dans notre quartier et qui ont à cœur son épanouissement.

Des 11 membres du conseil d'administration, nous vous en présentons aujourd'hui trois : Herman Ntawe, Valerie Proctor et Jolane T Lauzon.

*Qui êtes-vous et que représente la Basse-Ville pour vous?*

HERMAN NTAWÉ Je me présente comme un homme riche—ça paraît bizarre, mais c'est ça. Je suis marié, père de cinq enfants et grand-père de deux petits-fils. J'ai obtenu une maîtrise en agronomie en Allemagne et après être retourné travailler pendant plusieurs années dans mon pays natal, le Burundi en Afrique, j'ai immigré au Canada en 2015. La Basse-Ville, c'est vraiment mon chez-moi. Il y a lieu de comprendre que les choses essentielles comme la sécurité, sont importantes pour moi, et je les trouve et je les vis dans la Basse-Ville.

VALÉRIE PROCTOR Je suis une enseignante à la retraite et, avec mon mari, j'ai fondé le premier magasin d'aliments d'Amérique latine à Ottawa (Mercado Latino). La Basse-Ville c'est chez moi depuis 42 ans. Ici on a un mélange de personnes, riches et pauvres, jeunes et vieilles, de partout dans le monde. Même si on a des choses à améliorer, on ne peut pas, selon moi, trouver un meilleur quartier pour vivre.

JOLANE T. LAUZON (présidente) Je suis originaire de la grande région de Montréal et j'habite à Ottawa depuis 2015. Je suis avocate au Tribunal canadien des droits de la personne. Je n'habite pas dans la Basse-Ville mais en temps normal, je la traverse à chaque jour pour aller travailler. Pour moi, la Basse-Ville c'est le cœur de la ville d'Ottawa. C'est un quartier multiculturel et accueillant pour tous les nouveaux arrivants et même moi, qui n'est pas originaire de la ville, je m'y suis tout le temps sentie accueillie.

*Pourquoi vous impliquez-vous au C.A. du CRCBV?*

HERMAN Quand je suis arrivé au Canada, j'ai été obligé de solliciter les services du CRCBV, et ce qui m'a impressionné c'est vraiment l'accueil chal-

oureux, que je n'avais jamais vécu nulle part ailleurs. Je sens une certaine dette morale envers mon pays hôte et je veux m'impliquer davantage là où je peux pour le bonheur des autres. Je suis très fier d'appartenir au C.A.

VALÉRIE Je pense que c'est le désir de faire du bénévolat pendant ce temps de ma vie où je n'ai pas besoin de travailler qui m'a mené à m'impliquer dans le CA. J'ai un désir de servir la communauté, comme je peux.

JOLANE J'avais vraiment le goût d'aider les gens directement alors que dans mon emploi ce n'est pas toujours très concret. J'ai commencé comme bénévole avec les cliniques d'impôts et après à la banque alimentaire. M'impliquer au sein du CA me permet de mieux comprendre le milieu communautaire... ça me donne vraiment une perspective différente de ma communauté. J'aime avoir plus d'impact sur les décisions qui sont prises.

*Quel impact a le CRCBV dans la vie des résidents et quelle incidence pourrait-il avoir davantage dans l'avenir?*

HERMAN Les programmes du centre répondent réellement aux préoccupations majeures des résidents. Je ne

pense pas que les résidents pourraient se passer des services du Centre. Selon moi, l'avenir du Centre passe par une plus grande implication de la part des résidents. Je crois à l'adage : « tu ne peux pas faire quelque chose pour moi sans moi ».

VALÉRIE Je trouve que malgré tous ses avantages, la Basse-Ville a une grande concentration de gens en situation de vulnérabilité. Le CRCBV, avec d'autres organismes, aident beaucoup ces personnes. J'aimerais voir les gens qui n'ont pas besoin des services du CRCBV y être plus connectés. J'ai un souhait : que le Centre fasse plus pour les jeunes entre 13 et 18 ans. Les ados d'aujourd'hui sont les adultes de demain.

JOLANE Le CRCBV est une oreille pour les gens qui ont besoin d'être entendus. Par exemple, quand les gens viennent à la banque alimentaire, ils ne viennent pas juste chercher de la nourriture, ils viennent aussi rencontrer des gens qui sont là pour les écouter, qui vont sourire, et juste jaser. Dans le futur, je crois que le CRCBV doit davantage être là pour favoriser l'inclusion, la diversité et l'équité. C'est quelque chose de très important dans un quartier qui est extrêmement diversifié.

# Folks Like You: Meet Board members of the Lowertown Community Resource Centre

By the LCRC team

This month, we at the Lowertown Community Resource Centre would like to introduce you to members of our Board of Directors, volunteers who contribute to the well-being of the community and its residents.

Please meet three of our Board members: Herman Ntawe, Valerie Proctor et Jolane T Lauzon.

*Please tell us a bit about you and what Lowertown means to you*

HERMAN NTAWÉ It may seem strange but I introduce myself first as a rich man. I am married, a father of five children and a grandfather of two grandsons. I earned a Master's in Agronomy in Germany and, after returning to my native country of Burundi in Africa to work for many years, I immigrated to Canada in 2015. Lowertown is my home. It is important to understand that basic things such as security are important for me and I live and breathe them in Lowertown.

VALÉRIE PROCTOR I am a retired teacher and, together with my husband, I founded the first Latin American market in Ottawa (Mercado Latino). Lowertown has been my home for 42 years. Here, we find such a mix of people, rich and poor, young and old, from all over

the world. Even if there are things to improve on, I can't think of anywhere else in Ottawa which would provide us with the same quality of life.

JOLANE T. LAUZON (President) I grew up in the greater Montreal region and I've lived in Ottawa since 2015. I work as a lawyer at the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. I don't live in Lowertown but in normal times, I walk or bike through it every day on my way to and from work. For me, Lowertown is the heart of Ottawa. It's a multicultural neighbourhood which welcomes newcomers. Even me, who is not from this city, I have always felt welcomed here.

*Why are you involved in the LCRC Board?*

HERMAN When I first arrived in Canada, I needed to seek out the services of the LCRC and I was impressed with the warmth with which I was greeted and supported, something I had not experienced anywhere else. I feel a certain sense of moral debt to this country and I want to give back to the well-being of others. I am very proud to be a member of the board.

VALÉRIE It's this period of my life in which I don't need to work that has led me to get involved on the board. I want to serve my community as best I can.

JOLANE I really wanted to help people more tangibly, whereas in my work, things aren't always so concrete. I began at the LCRC as a volunteer at its income tax clinic and then at the food bank. Being part of the Board has allowed me to learn much about the community sector—it has given me a different perspective on my community. I appreciate being able to have an impact on decisions affecting it.

*What difference does the LCRC make in the lives of its residents and what how can it have greater impact in the future?*

HERMAN The Centre's programs respond to resident's major basic concerns. I don't think that the neighborhood could go without its services. From my point of view, the future of the Centre goes hand in hand with greater involvement from residents. I hold to the saying « nothing for us, without us ».

VALÉRIE I feel that, despite all of its advantages, Lowertown is home to a large concentration of vulnerable people. The LCRC, along with other organizations, helps many residents in need. I would like to see other residents who may not need the Centre's help directly get involved. I have one hope: that the Centre is able to do more for kids aged 13-18. Today's teens are tomorrow's adults.

JOLANE The LCRC is like a friendly ear for those who need to be heard. For example, many of the people who come to the food bank don't come only to get a basket of food—they also come to meet with others who are there to listen, who will give a friendly smile and just chat. In the future, I believe the LCRC will be there more than ever to foster inclusion, diversity and equity. It is most important in such a diverse neighbourhood as Lowertown.



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# Coming soon: Green thumbs at work

By Ilona Horvath

One day a few years ago, I noticed sudden transformation of the area framing the front of the public library, an impressive heritage building on Rideau street. A Cinderella story! Years later, I was delighted to finally meet and say thanks to Diane Stephenson and Ursula Williams, who have volunteered their time over the years to develop and maintain the library's garden - a beautiful oasis in the midst of the hustle and bustle of Rideau Street.

It started in 2016, when Diane and Ursula, long-time friends and amateur gardeners, decided to put their gardening experience and love of flowers to public use. The library does not have a budget for plants and does not accept donations for it therefore at the start they provided all the flowers and bulbs themselves.

Later on, they received donations: the management of the Watgate building gave away tulips bulbs, friends donated plants, and once in a while someone com-



ing along the sidewalk would give them some money towards purchasing them.

They are humble with a real green thumb. When asked why they decided to start this project, they said: "For us it was a wonderful opportunity to get our hands in garden dirt, meet all sorts of interesting people (and critters!) and help cheer up a beautiful heritage building." This lovely garden and their volunteer work may be an inspiration for future beautifying projects in Lowertown.

Thank you Diane and Ursula! We hope to see you in 2021.



Diane Stephenson and Ursula Williams put their green thumbs to work tending a garden for all to enjoy as they pass by the Rideau Street Public Library. Photos by Ilona Horvath.

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# Community in the time of COVID:

## Enjoying the small things!

By Sandra Milton

As the pandemic requires us to stay at home for longer periods of time, we have begun to realize there are many “small things” to enjoy within our community.

Perhaps you are walking twice a day, taking different routes and admiring a garden, noticing a house you have never seen before, noting historic plaques en route or listening to various podcasts. Have you found yourself mulling over different recipes, trying some with success and others with less, leading perhaps to an order from a local restaurant? Are you reading more, doing more puzzles, watching more television, or engaging in lots of Zoom meetings?

Life is quieter now, although busy at the same time. It is a strange feeling, and perhaps it is time to give thanks for some of the small enjoyments.

Did you enjoy the pop-up art exhibit “Warm Hug” created by artists Kanika Gupta and Amat Kehar? It was located at Rose Park in November, hosted by Friends of Bordeleau Park, and in Jules Morin Park in December, hosted by the Lowertown Community Resource Centre. Did you appreciate your neighbours who put up outside lights to bring vibrancy and brightness to the dark evenings?



Did you and your family see Santa when he visited Lowertown on Sunday December 20th? To the delight of people in Lowertown East, Santa took some time to walk around and greet people. For some little ones who were housebound due to COVID, Santa’s wave from the street was a magical moment!

When Santa and Mrs. Claus, accompanied by a German Shepherd named Tana, began their journey through Lowertown on John Cundell’s horse-drawn wagon, it was a memorable day with lots of beautiful snow falling. As Santa’s sleigh wagon made its way to the ByWard Market, young and old enjoyed the special moment. It was an amazing day: many thanks to the Market BIA for sponsoring the event.



Did you build or enjoy watching others build snow persons in the park? There are so many amazing ones this year. Or did you see children sledding with squeals of laughter even on the slightest of hills? Have you taken up birdwatching, running or walking, or enjoyed a local coffee shop and the great outdoors? Perhaps you have new snowshoes, cross-country skis, or

have found a local skating rink and enjoyed chatting with the wonderful volunteers caring for our Lowertown rinks.



Many of you have offered to pick up groceries for your neighbour, or to walk their dog. And maybe despite the masks and social distancing, you have made some new acquaintances as you walk around the neighbourhood.

We are so lucky in many ways and will get through this time of COVID. Let us always remember to appreciate the small things in our community!



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# Lowertown blockbusters: The Nelson and the Bytowne

By Michel Rossignol

For the first time in over a century, there is no cinema in Lowertown. The closing of the ByTowne Cinema will end the theatre's major contribution to Ottawa's cultural scene, but the history of the cinema which occupied the space at 325 Rideau Street before the ByTowne, the Nelson Theatre, also merits attention.

When the Nelson Theatre opened on February 10, 1947, it became one of a dozen downtown cinemas showing the newest films. Residents of Lowertown who wanted to see films could walk to the Théâtre Français on Dalhousie (from 1914 until 1961) and the Rideau Theatre at the southwest corner of Rideau and Dalhousie streets, as well as the Nelson.

They could take a streetcar or a bus and arrive within minutes at the Capitol on Bank Street, the Elgin on Elgin near Laurier, or many other cinemas. In the 1950s, the Nelson tried to attract customers while showing mostly low budget Hollywood films.

Things changed for the better in December 1959 when the Nelson upgraded its equipment to show 70 mm films (instead of the usual 35 mm) with widescreen images. It joined the ranks of Ottawa's most prestigious cinemas like the Capitol by showing the popular big-budget productions from Hollywood. The Nelson hit the jackpot in April 1960 when it started showing the three-hours-long epic, *Ben Hur*, which won eleven Academy Awards.



The Bytowne when it was still the Nelson Theatre March 15, 1974 photo City of Ottawa Archives CA024656. Via Lost Ottawa Facebook page

In the June 14, 1960 *Ottawa Citizen*, the Nelson's ad noted that 60,000 Ottawa theatre goers had already seen the film. I saw *Ben Hur* with students from Guigues and other local schools thanks to the school board, which arranged a Saturday-morning screening for the special admission price of 75 cents. The Nelson showed *Ben Hur* until October 25, 1960.

In the mid-1960s, the Nelson presented one big hit after another. On October 28, 1964, the Nelson held the motion-picture premiere of the popular

musical, *My Fair Lady*. The song about the rain in Spain was heard until July 1965, when Julie Andrews started singing in the hills in the film *The Sound of Music*.

For a full year, the Nelson was the place to go to see the classic film version of the Broadway hit. On July 20, 1966, another popular film started, *Doctor Zhivago*, but it played only until January 1967.

Five decades later, Lara's theme from *Doctor Zhivago* and the melodies from *The Sound of Music* again reverberated

within the walls of 325 Rideau Street when the ByTowne showed these films as part of its must-see cinema series.

By the mid- 1980s, many of the old one-screen cinemas downtown had closed because of competition from new multiscreen cinemas. The family of the builder of the Nelson, Hyman Berlin, sold the theatre, which in 1988 became the home of the ByTowne Cinema. Under a new name, the cinema on Rideau continued to give us wonderful memories.

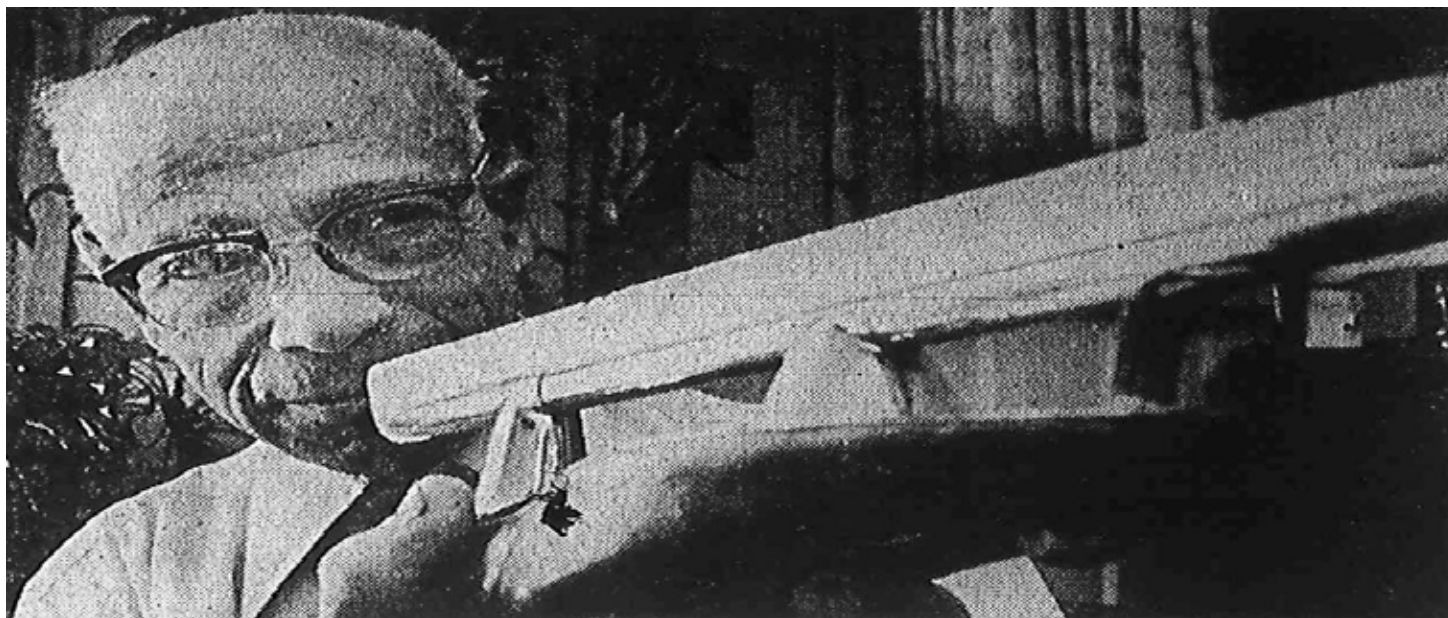
## Lowertown Legend: Jack Barber (1895-1993)

By Nancy Miller Chenier

Skating on the Rideau Canal continues to be a highlight of winter for many Lowertown residents. And in 1986, the Skateway was the site of a Winterlude speed-skating race named for Jack Barber, longtime Lowertown resident and son of Paul Barber, the first Black man to settle in Ottawa.

The Jack Barber 50-kilometer Skate Challenge was not the first honour for John Alexander (Jack) Barber. Just a year earlier, he had been inducted into the Ottawa Sports Hall of Fame with recognition for his speed skating career and for his work with local youth. His name was already in the Speed Skating Canada Hall of Fame, acknowledging his long-term involvement and exceptional contribution to the development of speed skating in Canada.

Jack motto was "You never know what you can do till you try it" so at the age of 31 years, he tried speed skating.



With this motto in mind, he went on to win local, provincial, and national championships, skating competitively until he was in his seventies.

But he never forgot the Lowertown community where he lived, first on St Joseph Street and after his marriage on St Andrew Street. Over the years, he of-

ficiated at speed-skating races at Bingham Park, and in the 1960s he pushed for a bigger oval at Anglesea Square (now Jules Morin Park). He regularly organized events that invited skating clubs from Ontario, Quebec and Lake Placid, New York.

In 1947, Jack became president of the *Ottawa Speed Skating Club* and worked vigorously to promote the sport and to encourage participation by young people. He bought skates, kept them sharpened and had them ready for any eager beginner who paid a dollar to join the club.



# Homeless men in Lowertown: a look back at Emergency Shelters

By Nancy Miller Chenier

Men drifted into Lowertown from the nearby trains, sometimes hitching rides on Market-bound vehicles, and often just walking from the jail or the hospitals. The train station, the market wagons, the hospitals and the jail are gone but Lowertown continues to be a primary site of emergency shelters for men who are homeless.

In 2006, Georges Bédard, then ward councillor, called for a moratorium on new shelter services downtown. In 2012, Mathieu Fleury, our current councillor, argued that a different funding model is needed to get the destitute out of emergency shelters and into stable housing.



Bunk room at Booth Centre, August 2018. Photo: Errol McGihon

So how did our current shelters for men get their organizational start? The Mission, now on the edge of Sandy Hill, grew out of a 1906 gathering of business and religious leaders collected together to support a Rescue Mission on George Street. A few years later, the Salvation

Army opened its first hostel on the same street. Jump ahead to 1983 when St Brigid’s Roman Catholic Church on St Patrick Street opened a shelter in its church basement during what was described as a “plague of homelessness”.

For early shelter promoters, the By-Ward Market area was the chosen location. At the organizing meeting for the Union Mission, Reverend McFaul of the newly formed French Baptist church felt that the mission should be established near the ByWard Market where, according to the Ottawa Citizen, it was most needed and where any policeman would say that the fallen congregated.

When the Salvation Army was considering a possible site, it reported that Lowertown would be the best part of the

city for such an institution. And as for the Shepherds, the fact that St Brigid’s Church was in Lowertown with easy access to restaurants and leftover fruit and vegetables determined much of the future development.



Overflow facilities at Shepherds of Good Hope

Homelessness has many causes and the early shelters enumerated them in their public statements to the newspapers. At the early Mission, they talked about the unemployed working poor, men coming from the public wards of the hospitals, prisoners just discharged from jail. Tramps were not welcome. At the Salvation Army, the focus was on transients and men who were up against it – often unemployed or recently released from prison.

By 1983, when the Shepherds of Good Hope was established, the organization was dealing with the same concerns but with increased homelessness created by de-institutionalization that left many individuals living with mental illness without community support.

All the shelters initially operated with strong Christian religious support and charitable donations, with volunteers providing significant services. The Salvation Army was noted for its “soup, soap and salvation” approach. Both the Mission and Salvation Army started with a model where the men in need paid a small sum for bed and food except in extreme cases.

They also expected the men to seek work and operated as labour bureaus, encouraging job requests from the community. The Shepherds initially

acquired a farm, hoping some clients could work there, and later in the 1980s launched an employment program.

While these emergency shelters were supposed to be places for temporary stays, persistent and increased demands led to bigger and bigger institutions in our neighbourhood. These organizations quite rightly measured their successes by the number of beds and meals and programs that they offered to men who appeared to have nowhere else to go. But the numbers were then and continue to be a measure of the failure of our community and our city to find and fund supportive housing and programs to meet the needs of these vulnerable residents.

We now know that our shelters house women as well as men. Our city has declared that housing and homeless is an emergency. Our Lowertown community continues to have front-line experience with neighbours who live at the shelters. Most residents continue to advocate for more supportive housing; many argue for more equitable distribution in our city.

Our city has supported our Lowertown shelter organizations in doing what residents across the whole city should be doing – providing homes and support to the many in need.

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# The night the war brides arrived

By Michel Rossignol

Late in the evening of December 20, 1944, a large crowd gathered in Union Station, Ottawa’s busy train station which is now the temporary home of Canada’s Senate. The most excited persons in the crowd were young men wearing army or air force uniforms.

They had returned to Ottawa during the previous weeks, after having completed a tour of duty in the United Kingdom and, together with their parents and friends, they now waited impatiently for the trains arriving from Montreal. The young women they had met and married while overseas had arrived in Canada.

Between 1943 and 1947, approximately 48,000 young women who married Canadian soldiers, sailors, and airmen, arrived in Canada. (A few women in the Canadian military married British men who also arrived in Canada during the same period.) Most of the Canadian war brides crossed the Atlantic Ocean in 1946 and 1947, but a small number

of them made the trip before the end of the war. The war brides who arrived in December 1944 were mostly from the British Isles.

Their journey aboard a crowded ship across a stormy ocean where enemy submarines still lurked under the waves was not a vacation cruise. All the passengers were happy when they arrived safely in Halifax, where they boarded trains for Montreal and other destinations across Canada. The December 21, 1944, edition of the Ottawa Citizen reported that fifteen war brides had arrived in Ottawa.

Some of the war brides carried babies in their arms, so there were many happy grandparents as well as proud fathers in Union Station that snowy December night.

Now re-united, the young couples left Union Station to go home. For some war brides, home was just a short distance from the train station because it was in Lowertown. A francophone air force sergeant arrived at his home on Dalhousie Street with his wife who came from

Glasgow, Scotland. The home of another air force sergeant and his wife was on St. Andrew Street.

The war brides who arrived in Canada during and after the war faced many challenges since they were now in a new country and their parents and friends

were on the other side of the ocean. However, on that evening in December 1944, there were many joyful reunions, heartfelt welcomes, and hopes for a better tomorrow.

## Le soir où quelques épouses de guerre sont arrivées dans la Basse-ville

Par Michel Rossignol

Tard dans la soirée du 20 décembre 1944, plusieurs personnes attendaient dans la Gare Union, la gare très achalandée d’Ottawa (où se trouve aujourd’hui le Sénat du Canada). Les personnes les plus excitées dans la foule étaient des jeunes hommes portant l’uniforme de l’armée ou de l’aviation. Ils étaient de retour à Ottawa depuis quelques semaines après avoir terminé leur période de service au Royaume-Uni.

Avec leurs parents et amis, ils attendaient maintenant avec impatience les trains partis de Montréal car les jeunes femmes qu’ils avaient rencontrées et mariées au Royaume-Uni étaient arrivées au Canada.

Entre 1943 et 1947, près de 48 000 jeunes femmes mariées à des marins, soldats et aviateurs canadiens pendant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale sont arrivées au Canada. (Seulement quelques femmes dans les forces armées canadiennes ont marié des hommes britanniques qui sont aussi arrivés au Canada.) La plupart des épouses de guerre canadiennes ont traversé l’Atlantique en 1946 et 1947, mais quelques-unes ont fait le trajet avant la fin de la guerre.

Les épouses de guerre arrivées en décembre 1944 venaient des Îles britanniques. Sur un navire bondé de passagers, la traversée d’un océan agité par la houle alors que des sous-marins ennemis se faufilaient encore sous les

vagues n’était pas une croisière de vacances.

Tout le monde était soulagé lorsque le navire est arrivé sain et sauf à Halifax où les épouses de guerre ont pris des trains pour Montréal et d’autres endroits à travers le Canada. Comme l’a signalé le Ottawa Citizen dans son édition du 21 décembre 1944, quinze épouses de guerre sont arrivées à Ottawa dans la nuit. Quelques-unes portaient des bébés dans leurs bras, donc il y avait à la Gare Union cette nuit d’hiver de nombreux grands-parents heureux en plus de fiers papas.

Maintenant réunis, les jeunes couples ont quitté la gare pour se rendre à leurs domiciles. Quelques épouses de guerre sont arrivées dans des maisons dans la Basse-Ville, à quelques pas de la gare. Un francophone, sergent dans l’aviation, est arrivé à sa résidence sur la rue Dalhousie avec son épouse qui venait de Glasgow en Écosse.

Un autre sergent dans l’aviation et son épouse sont arrivés dans leur maison sur la rue St-André. Les épouses de la guerre qui sont arrivées au Canada juste avant ou après la fin de la guerre ont fait face à de nombreux défis car elles étaient maintenant dans un nouveau pays alors que leurs parents et amis se trouvaient de l’autre côté de l’océan.

Cependant, le soir du 20 décembre 1944, il y avait de nombreuses réunions joyeuses, un accueil chaleureux et l’espoir d’un monde meilleur.



**On December 4, 1944, In London, England, a Canadian war bride, Mrs. R.H. Whitmore, makes last minute preparations before the trip to Canada. Photo: Lieutenant Charles Richer, Department of National Defence. LAC-BAC, PA-128181.**

**Le 4 décembre 1944, à Londres, une épouse de guerre canadienne, Mme R.H. Whitmore, se prépare pour son voyage au Canada. Photo : Lieutenant Charles Richer, Département de la Défense nationale.**

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<https://lowertownecho.ca>



# Memories of Lowertown Rinks

By John Chenier and Members of Facebook Group I Grew Up In Lowertown

Lowertown's rinks continue to be the creators of memories. Now memories are made at the Winterfest celebrations with games between Lowertown youth and the Ottawa police on the large hockey league size rink at Jules Morin Park (formerly Anglesea Square). And maybe some residents will have stories of the Bingham Cup competition between the USA Embassy and the Parliamentary Press Gallery at Bingham Park.

Both rinks have a long and active history. At Bingham, speedskating competitions dating from the 1920s drew upward of 2000 competitors and spectators. In the 1950s, ice carnivals at Anglesea brought out as many as 3000 people. The 1940s and 50s were the era of the "Skate to Music" programs and on selected nights, both rinks were filled with singles and couples gliding around the oval rinks.

Hockey ruled the ice over the years with reports of players cheered on by scores of fans. In the 1960s, broomball events were sponsored by local businesses and Jack Barber was pushing to make Anglesea the site of a 440-yard oval speedskating rink.

As the Facebook site - I Grew Up in Lowertown Ottawa / J'ai grandi dans la Basse-ville d'Ottawa - reveals, the rinks elicit multiple memories for current and past residents. The smells, the sounds, the feel of the rinks and some of the people who supported them are easily recalled in these snippets from people who are now adults. Thanks to Danielle Gagne for reviving these recollections and to the following people who shared them.



Patricia M. Gauthier - Un beau cadeau de Noël quand j'étais petite c'était de recevoir une paire de patins (blanc avec les petites coches à l'avant). J'allais après souper patiner sur le grand cercle au carré Anglesea. Il y avait de la musique et une petite cabane



Rene Latreille, Michel Richer, Robert Latreille

pour se réchauffer avec un poêle à charbon ou bois et l'on déposait nos mitaines de laine pour les faire sécher ça puait le diable. L'on patinait jusqu'à être frigorifié. De retour à la maison l'on mettait nos pieds sur la fournaise à l'huile. Que de beaux souvenirs.

Guy Carisse - What a delightful thing to be able to remember "olden" days. Do anyone of you remember Friday night skating at Anglesea Square during the winters - skating hand-in-hand with young ladies to the classical sound of La Valse des Patineurs and lacing up on long wood benches in the old shack with its wooden stove?



Marie Longtin - La patinoire Bingham c'était pour moi une passion. Tout les soirs après souper. Je partait en patin allé rejoindre mes amies on faisait le tour après tour. et en couple on dansais avec la musique. Henri Lacombe et son père était en charge du Parc en l'hiver et en été, c'était M. Lemay. Il était grand je crois 3/4 de la rue Bolton jusqu'à la ruelle qui partait de Dalhousie et la rue Cathcart.

Mike Richer - Wow, what can you say about Anglesea Square, so much fun to be had, I can still remember the sounds, the smell, and the frozen toes, the friendships to be made, some skating hand in hand, the spills and the tears, the sounds of joy made by boys and girls playing, going inside the little shacks to get warm, the smell of the stove that toasted many mittens, some things you never forget, this little spot in Lowertown has so many memories for so many, it has a special place in my heart.

Hélène Caron - Je me souviens très bien du temps où je m'empressais après l'école pour aller patiner au Carré Anglesea, là où j'essayais de faire comme Barbara Ann Scott. Je me suis fait quelques foulures au poignet et à la cheville en essayant de l'imiter. Il y avait une cabane pour se réchauffer si on avait trop froid. La cabane était composée de deux côtés, un côté pour les garçons et un côté pour les filles avec une fournaise au centre des deux côtés. Lorsque 18 h arrivait les lumières de la patinoire clignotaient, soit en même temps que les cloches de l'église Ste-Anne sonnaient, pour avertir les jeunes que c'était le temps de quitter pour le retour à la maison. Que de beaux et bons souvenirs que je retiens dans ma mémoire à tout jamais.



Carole Fortier - A little history of speed skating. I started renting skates from Jack Barber for ten cents. Eventually we had competitions at Anglesea Square winning ribbons and then in 1963 competitions were held at the park. The group that started with Jack Barber was Gerry Cassan, Michel Rivet, Francine Aspect, Linda Landry and myself. Eventually other skaters started to join our club, Ottawa Speed Skating. We trained during the week for at least one hour a night. We had the rink to ourselves. We travelled all over Ontario and the States competing. My hero was Jack Barber being there for me and showing me the sport I loved the best.

Joanne Pharand - Oui je me souviens, c'était beau avec la musique... mais, juste à me rendre au rond à patiner mes pieds étaient gelés déjà avant d'arriver, je pense qu'on mettait trop de bas dans mes patins, ça arrêta la circulation... et le shack avec son poêle à bois ne réchauffait pas trop... je me souviens d'arriver à la maison avec les pieds gelés et de pleurer quand ils dégelèrent.

Ron Lavigne - My mom played broomball for a team of nurses from the General Hospital...my dad also played with Red, Tinouc, Lassy, Niger...1930-40s boys from Cathcart...my dad's nickname appearing on a jersey was 'Picolo'...loved watching them play late at night.



Winter Carnival 1953



# Rencontrez votre voisin: Gontran Bolduc

Par Joël Weiner



**G**ontran Bolduc est un enfant du Saguenay. Jeune, il aidait son père dans toutes sortes de travaux, notamment dans la construction d'une maison. Il ne le savait pas encore, mais il a acquis, ce faisant, des habiletés qui lui serviront ultérieurement. En effet, 30 ans plus tard, ses talents acquis à l'adolescence lui permettront de restaurer la première de plusieurs maisons de la Basse-Ville et de s'adonner à un passe-temps autant agréable que lucratif.

Gontran travaillait au ministère fédéral des Communications à titre de spécialiste des radiofréquences. Il décida de quitter la ville de Québec pour s'installer à Gatineau avec sa famille en 1985 puis de s'installer seul à Ottawa en 1992. Avec les fonctionnaires de la

propriétaire d'origine qui vivait à l'arrière de la maison et qui tenait une boutique à l'avant.

Pour un homme avec un budget limité, à la recherche d'un logement bon marché, la maison Rathier était toute une trouvaille mais, en contrepartie, elle était en fort mauvais état. Il y emménage tout-de-même, se retrousses les manches et pose la première pierre de ce qui deviendra son patrimoine.

« Son état était lamentable, » Gontran se rappelle. « Il m'aura fallu huit ans pour la restaurer. » Il travaillait le jour au fédéral et le soir à sa restauration et demeurait au rez-de-chaussée et louait l'étage pour être capable de financer les travaux.

Ses efforts ont porté fruit., Gontran se rend compte qu'il prend plaisir à restaurer des bâtiments historiques et que cela génère même des petits profits. Donc, en 2000, 8 ans après l'acquisition de la maison Rathier, il devient propriétaire d'une autre propriété qui, elle aussi, remonte au milieu du XIXe siècle. Il s'agit de la maison Foisy (1860), du nom du ferblantier qui en fut le premier occupant. (La façade de la maison secondaire de Foisy est exposée au Marché By, sur un mur dans la cour entre les rues York et Murray.

« Cette maison aussi était en mauvais état » dit Gontran. « La caisse populaire



**La maison Archambault (1875) fut achetée en 2005. Je prenais ma retraite de la fonction publique et je devais avoir un projet significatif. Son état était lamentable. La restaurer demanda beaucoup de connaissance et d'énergie. Pictured in 2005 above and as it is now below**

Le risque et les efforts ont finalement porté fruit, et ce de deux manières. Premièrement, la fille de Gontran est maintenant propriétaire des deux maisons et elle en occupe une. Deuxièmement, la Ville d'Ottawa a reconnu l'excellence de la restauration de la maison Foisy par la remise d'un Prix d'Excellence, en 2010, présenté par le maire Larry O'Brien. On y lit, « Ce prix récompense la restauration minutieuse de la façade avant et des éléments intérieurs de la maison Foisy, un bâtiment désigné de la Basse-ville construit en 1860. »

Gontran a mis ses travaux de restauration « sur pause » quand il a rencontré Rosi Kohn, qui était venue à Ottawa de Calgary. Ils se sont vus pour la première fois lors d'une fête de quartier sur la rue Bruyère. Quelque temps plus tard, Gontran emménage chez Rosi, devant l'historique caserne de Pompiers numéro 5, et, évidemment, ils l'ont achetée lors de sa mise en vente en 2001.

« La caserne fut un poste de pompier, puis le centre communautaire Armand-Pagé, » explique Gontran. « La ville l'a vendue car sa maintenance devenait trop dispendieuse. Il a eu une première vente à la famille Cloutier,

puis je l'ai achetée. Son état était passable, la rénovation par le précédent propriétaire avait été interrompue, elle devait reprendre. J'en ai pris charge. J'ai fait une recherche aux Archives du Canada pour retrouver les plans originaux, puis j'ai reconstruit le parapet avec l'aide de mon garçon qui est maçon. »

Aujourd'hui, l'ancienne caserne de pompiers est la résidence de Gontran et de Rosi, et elle a repris sa place comme point de repère dans la Basse-Ville, même pour les piétons et les automobilistes qui circulent sur l'avenue King-Edward. En fait, elle est plus qu'une simple résidence. Les propriétaires y ont accueilli différents événements, notamment le tournage de 3 films et plusieurs expositions de peintures et de bijoux, pour venir en aide à des artistes émergents. L'aide aux artistes ne s'arrête pas là. Gontran a aussi siégé, pendant plusieurs années, au conseil d'administration de la Nouvelle Scène et il a été président de la compagnie de théâtre La Catapulte. L'ancienne caserne a également été un lieu de réunion du Magnetic North Theatre Festival.

Le projet suivant de Gontran était de restaurer la maison Archambault de



**La maison Rathier (1863) fut la première que j'ai achetée. Son état était lamentable. Il m'aura fallu huit (8) ans pour la restaurer. Je travaillais le jour au fédéral et le soir à sa restauration. Je demeurais au rez-de-chaussée-de-chaussé et louais l'étage pour être capable de financer les travaux.**

ville, il s'impliquait dans la préservation du patrimoine bâti (Patrimoine/Heritage Ottawa). On parlait alors de la perte de plus en plus fréquente de vieilles maisons. On rapportait ces pertes dans les journaux mais le problème continuait. C'est alors qu'il a dit, « Il faut les acheter, les restaurer et les louer. » Ses propos n'ont pas trouvé d'enthousiasme au comité.

« Il prit donc la décision de passer de la parole aux actes. Il emménagea au 195, rue Cumberland. Il s'agit de la maison Rathier (1862), du nom de son

avait repris la maison et elle était à vendre, mais personne ne voulait l'acheter. Les sans-abris l'avaient récupérée, puis abandonnée. Lorsque je l'ai visitée, il n'y avait que quelques chats qui couraient à l'intérieur. La caisse populaire m'a dit : « Si tu l'achètes, ne nous demande pas de la financer. » J'ai dû hypothéquer la maison Rathier pour l'acheter et payer la caisse. Ma fille et mon garçon sont venus m'aider. Je pense que cette expérience les a influencés tous les deux. »







**La maison Foisy (1863) fut la seconde que j’ai achetée. Son état était pitoyable. La caisse avait repris la maison, elle était à vendre mais personne ne voulait l’acheter. Les sans abris l’avait récupéré, puis abandonné. Lorsque je l’ai visité, il n’y avait que quelques chats. La caisse populaire me dit “ si tu l’achète, ne demande pas de la financer”. J’ai du hypothéquer la maison Rathier pour l’acheter et payer la caisse populaire. Pictured as it was built, and then 1980s and today. Below the renovated firehall that once served as the Armand Pagé Community Centre**

1875. C’était un duplex aux 221 et 223 rue St-Andrew quand il l’a achetée en 2005. « Je prenais ma retraite de la fonction publique et je devais avoir un projet significatif », dit Gontran. « Elle était aussi en très mauvais état et la restaurer demanda 18 mois et beaucoup de connaissances et d’énergie. » Évidemment, comme vous le voyez sur les photos, le résultat est impressionnant.

En 2016, Gontran et Rosi ont acheté la propriété au 231, rue Bruyère. « Je l’appelais la maison la plus laide du voisinage », dit-il. « C’était le genre de propriété qui, lorsque tu ouvres un mur, tu découvres encore plus de travaux à faire. Ce fut la dernière que j’ai restaurée avec l’aide de mon garçon et de ses amis. Maintenant, c’est le temps de me reposer. J’en profite pour remercier ceux qui sont venus m’aider. Je ne serais pas rendu où je suis sans leur support.»  
*All photos contributed by Gontran Bolduc*



# Hoteliers Have Heart

Ottawa Gatineau Hotel Association members are here for the community during these unprecedented times. Our hotels are an essential service and will be open for business to accommodate traveller needs, rooms for our health care workers when necessary, and to provide accommodation for those required to isolate for 14 days. And we will continue assisting by providing shelter during the cold winter months to some of our city’s most vulnerable. We encourage all Ottawa residents to maintain their charitable giving at a time when the demand has never been greater.





# Let's Talk Real Estate: SURPRISE, SURPRISE!!



By Lynda Cox

During this time of COVID lockdowns, when our thoughts cannot safely turn to vacations, large family gatherings, reunions, big weddings etc. , many Ottawans are finding themselves dreaming of much needed renovations to give them more space for home offices, or possibly a recreation room for their cooped-up kids or perhaps even a new and expanded kitchen which, during this time of “Stay at Home” orders, is running at maximum capacity with more storage and counter space needed.

If you are into DIY you might have already started your project. If not, I'm sure you are surfing the net for design ideas and watching every home-make-over show you can find.

If this is your plan, I have a suggestion for you. Leave your mark. Leave a surprise. Leave a memento of your time in the home for the next owner to discover. What do I mean? There are many stories of Canadians finding treasures behind walls, under floorboards or in basement or attic crevices. Yes, some have been worth lots of money but more have been worth a value of a different sort, a value that cannot be measured.

Here is what I'm suggesting. It could be as simple as a zip-lock bag or shoe-box with a few items like before and after photos, newspaper clippings, a letter, a few labelled family photos etc. from your years in the home OR it could be a USB stick filled with the same items. If you are artistic, how about painting a mural or some messages on the basement walls before the new drywall goes

Lowertown UpdateNovember 9th to January 24, 2021

(Note that these months are generally the quietest of the year.)

Residential		
Active Listings	7	Prices ranging from 489,000 to 1,699,000
SOLD	8	
Sold over list price	1	(sold \$53K over asking price)
Condominium		
Active Listings	27	Prices ranging from \$315, 000 to \$2,988,000
Conditional Sales	3	
SOLD	29	
Sold over list price	4	(selling from \$100. To \$50K over list)

up or under the new flooring? Handprints, pawprints..... Get creative.

Consider it your time capsule. The next owners/renovators will get such a happy surprise, and they'll tell all their friends. Your effort might even get a mention in the local newspaper. I'd love to hear what you have already found OR what you are planning to leave. Drop me a line at [lynda@coxhometeam.ca](mailto:lynda@coxhometeam.ca)

Now for an update: December 2020 was a record year, surpassing 2019 in the number of sales and sale prices.

Residential home prices were up 20% and condominiums 19%. Compare that with 2019 where increases were approximately 9%, and 2018 from 3 to 5% and 2017 from 3 to 7%. “We feel that Ottawa is just coming into its own as a national capital city” commented the president of the Ottawa Real Estate Board. Combine that with low interest rates and low inventory and it is indeed a good time to sell.

Lynda and son Jim Cox form the COX HOME TEAM with Royal Lepage Performance Realty

## A new By-Law governing short term rentals: what does that mean for condos?



By David Lu

With winter in full grip and COVID-19 still raging, the summer and the usual Ottawa tourist season seems a long way off. One initiative that the City of Ottawa announced in late 2019 was that bylaws are in the works to regulate short-term rentals like Airbnbs. The by-laws were supposed to arrive in 2020. Of course with the pandemic, this issue is likely not at the top of the City's priority list. However, there has been a recent new development on this front.

In an article about Airbnbs and condominiums a few years ago, I wrote that a common method for condominiums to prohibit Airbnbs was to pass a rule restricting the length of time an owner could rent out their condo unit. Common restrictions we see are requirements for residential tenancies to last a minimum of 4, 6, or even 12 months. Such arrangements would still be useful once the municipal by-law comes into

effect. In other words, the municipality is not expected to prohibit short-term tenancies in this way. but condominium corporations can still consider passing their own rules to achieve this, if they wish.

In November 2019, City of Ottawa staff issued a report outlining some of the steps the City might take to regulate short-term tenancies. Among several other things, the report recommended:

A registration system for short-term rentals along with permits and fees. [Note: With respect to permits, there was a proposal that hosting permits would not be issued if a condominium corporation had registered an objection with the City.];

A principal residence requirement that would prohibit people from renting out a unit solely as short-term rental accommodation; and

An enforcement team that would be established for an initial period of three years to make sure people were following the rules.

It appears that the City is about to start implementing some of these recommendations. In particular, the City recently published a proposal to amend the City's zoning by-law to temporarily regulate short-term rentals in the City for a three-year trial period.

For condominiums, the City's key proposed provisions in relation to short-term rentals appear to be as follows:

- A short-term rental is a rental of the entire residential unit for a period less than 30 consecutive nights;
  - The purpose of the rental is to provide temporary rental accommodation for the travelling public;
  - A short-term rental is only permitted where the rental premises serve as the principal residence of the landlord; and
  - It cannot be a bed and breakfast, hotel, cottage rental or vacation apartment.
- We had hoped the City might include a provision stating that “in the case of a condominium, the short-term rental must be permitted by the governing documents of the condominium.” The City hasn't yet included such a requirement, but perhaps, following consultation, we may see such an inclusion.

In my view, condominiums considering short-term rental restrictions or prohibitions should continue to consider amendments to their governing documents. This would be the case even once the City's by-law on the issue comes into effect. After all, each condominium community has its own specific needs and the City's by-law may not provide adequate clarity or protection in every situation. If your condominium is thinking about amending its governing documents to deal with short term rentals, consider consulting a lawyer on the matter as they would be best equipped to provide comments on what wording would work best in your community.

David Lu is an Associate at Davidson Houle Allen LLP, a boutique Condominium Law firm serving Eastern Ontario.

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# The Byward Market Public Realm is official!



Mathieu Fleury  
Councillor, Rideau-Vanier

The Byward Market’s full potential is finally about to be realized.

Council unanimously approved the Byward Market Public Realm Plan on Jan. 27 – and I couldn’t be more pleased this day has finally come. Eight years in the making, I am happy to say over this

time, the plan has taken shape. There is no need to point out all the great things about this space – we know them, love them and embrace them. And the areas which required some more attention, their time is now.

As we all know, the push to make changes in the Market first began by commissioning New York-based consultants People for Public Spaces to conduct a visioning exercise to imagine the best outcome for our Byward Market. It was this process that defined the vision for Ottawa’s most important and historic district.

The development of this plan would not have been possible without the collaboration with City staff (Jillian Savage, Court Curry, Kim Copeland and many others), local stakeholders (Lowertown community association, Byward Market BIA, Ottawa Markets, NCC, Ottawa Tourism, Ecology Ottawa, Hotel Association etc) and consultants, resulting in highlighting specific areas

within the Market to improve and ensure the important spaces are used to their full potential.

The comprehensive public spaces plan leaves no stone untouched in the public spaces of ByWard Market District. It establishes a vision and defines the Market’s character. It also guides principles that include public art, accessibility, paved areas, greening and landscaping, retail and patio zones and specific character desires.

And although this plan may not resolve local farmers’ fresh produce, shelter concentration, housing, addictions & mental health, safety, truck route, and business diversity concerns – it does set improvements and beautifications goals for the area. I can confidently add these serious concerns are not being ignored. Rather many other City initiatives such as the Housing and Homelessness Plan and the Safe Supply expanded pilot begin to address the challenges we face as a large City.

The detailed plan – which I encourage all of you to review on my website, [Mathieufleury.ca \(https://mathieufleury.ca/renewed-hope-the-byward-market-plan-forges-ahead/\)](https://mathieufleury.ca/renewed-hope-the-byward-market-plan-forges-ahead/)– has many encouraging elements such as beautification, traffic calming, an outdoor market strategy, access throughout the Market, and future governance of the area.

This type of detail is integral to ensuring this plan is more than just an overview of what could be or should be – but what will be.

Without a doubt, with the approval of this plan and the launch of its investments, all ages will once again enjoy our ByWard Market District year-round – just as it should be, the iconic gem we all know and love.

My role now is to prepare the ByWard Market for its 200th market season for 2026. Over the next five years we advance funding and construction to ensure the plan is in place for this important year.

## Approuvé et porteur de progrès : Le domaine public du marché By est officialisé

Le marché By est finalement sur le point d’être exploité à son plein potentiel.

Le 27 janvier, le Conseil a approuvé à l’unanimité le Plan du domaine public du marché By, et je ne pourrais être plus heureux de voir que ce jour est enfin arrivé.

Le plan a réellement pris forme au cours des huit dernières années.

Nul besoin de nommer toutes les choses qui rendent ce lieu exceptionnel, car nous les connaissons et les aimons déjà. Et pour les zones qui nécessitaient une plus grande attention, l’heure est venue.

Comme nous le savons, les premiers efforts visant à apporter des changements au marché ont consisté à demander à Project for Public Spaces, un organisme de consultation new-yorkais, d’entreprendre un exercice de visualisation dont le but était d’imaginer le meilleur avenir possible pour notre marché By.

Ce processus a permis de définir une vision pour le quartier le plus important et le plus riche en histoire d’Ottawa.

L’élaboration du plan n’aurait pas été possible sans la collaboration qui s’est établie entre le personnel (Jillian Savage, Court Curry, Kim Copeland et plusieurs autres), les intervenants locaux (l’association communautaire de la Basse-Ville, la ZAC du Marché By, les Marchés d’Ottawa, la CCN, Tourisme Ottawa, Écologie Ottawa, l’association des hôtels etc) et les conseillers. Celle-ci a permis de repérer certains secteurs particuliers du marché qui devaient être améliorés et de veiller à ce que les es-

paces importants soient exploités à leur plein potentiel.

Exhaustif, le plan couvre tous les angles possibles du secteur du marché By. Il établit une vision et définit le caractère du marché. Il oriente également des principes tels que l’art public, l’accessibilité, les espaces pavés, le verdissement, l’aménagement paysager, les zones destinées au commerce et aux terrasses, ainsi que les aires à caractère distinct.

Et bien que le plan ne règle pas les problèmes concernant les produits frais des agriculteurs locaux, la concentration des refuges, le logement, la dépendance et la santé mentale, la sécurité, les itinéraires pour camions et la diversité des entreprises, il fixe des objectifs

d’amélioration et d’embellissement pour le secteur. Je peux ajouter en toute confiance que ces graves préoccupations ne sont pas laissées de côté. En fait, de nombreuses autres initiatives de la Ville visent à répondre aux besoins énoncés, notamment le Plan décennal de logement et de lutte contre l’itinérance et le projet pilote élargi d’approvisionnement sûr.

Le plan détaillé, que je vous encourage à consulter sur mon site Web, [Mathieufleury.ca \(https://mathieufleury.ca/un-espoir-renouvele-le-plan-du-marche-by-va-de-lavant/\)](https://mathieufleury.ca/un-espoir-renouvele-le-plan-du-marche-by-va-de-lavant/), traite de nombreux éléments importants comme la modération de la circulation, une stratégie sur les marchés extérieurs et l’accessibilité dans l’ensemble du marché.

Ces détails sont essentiels pour veiller à la réalisation de ce plan, plutôt qu’à le limiter à un aperçu des possibilités. Je n’ai aucun doute qu’avec l’approbation du plan et le lancement des investissements, les personnes de tous âges pourront continuer de profiter à longueur d’année du marché, ce joyau emblématique qui nous est si cher.

Mon rôle consiste maintenant à préparer le Marché By pour le 200e anniversaires du marché en 2026. Au cours des cinq prochaines années, nous allons travailler sur le financement et la construction afin de garantir la mise en place du plan pour cette année importante.

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Lucille Collard  
MPP, Rideau-Vanier

2021 has started with more challenges and restrictions, but also with the hope that the COVID-19 vaccine deployment brings. May we all continue to do the right thing to keep each other healthy and safe. Our sense of mutual support is our best ally in keeping up the fight to get through this pandemic.

When the pandemic forced us to declare a state of emergency in the province, almost a year ago, I had just been elected. As the spirit of collaboration with the government at Queen's Park was wearing out, it became necessary to demand more support in areas that needed it.

Long-term care homes, people on the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), local businesses, education and the environment have been suffering from the lack of investments by the government.

While I have found alternative ways to reach out to our community, there is no equivalent for in-person conversations and community events to be able to connect with you. That is why I want to invite you to reach out to me and my office to let me know what and how the government needs to do better. Your stories and experiences provide concrete evidence-based arguments as I head back to Queen's Park to communicate those requests on your behalf.

In the meantime, together with the City Councillors and our Member of Parliament in Ottawa-Vanier, we are committed to continue working on the issues that matter to Ottawa-Vanier.

As always, thank you for doing your part in fighting COVID-19. Please reach out if you need help or if you want to share your story. My team remains available to help. Please feel free to give us a call at 613-744-4484 or send us an email at [lcollard.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org](mailto:lcollard.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org).

\*\*\*\*\*

2021 a commencé avec plus de défis et de restrictions, mais aussi avec l'espoir que le déploiement

du vaccin contre le COVID-19 apporte. Continuons-nous tous à faire ce qu'il faut pour nous garder en bonne santé et en sécurité. Notre sens de l'entraide est notre meilleur allié pour continuer à lutter pour traverser cette pandémie.

Lorsque la pandémie nous a obligé à déclarer l'état d'urgence dans la province, il y a près d'un an, je venais d'être élu. Alors que l'esprit de collaboration avec le gouvernement de Queen's Park s'épuisait, il est devenu nécessaire d'exiger davantage de soutien dans les domaines qui en avaient besoin.

Les foyers de soins de longue durée, les bénéficiaires du Programme ontarien de soutien aux personnes handicapées (POSPH), les entreprises locales, l'éducation et l'environnement ont souffert du manque d'investissements du gouvernement.

Bien que j'aie trouvé des moyens alternatifs pour rejoindre notre communauté, il n'y a pas d'équivalent pour les conversations en personne et les événements

communautaires pour pouvoir jaser avec vous.

C'est pourquoi je veux vous inviter à communiquer avec moi et avec mon bureau pour me dire ce que le gouvernement doit faire et comment il doit faire mieux. Vos histoires et expériences fournissent des arguments fondés sur des faits vécus que je peux utiliser alors que je retourne à Queen's Park pour communiquer ces demandes en votre nom.

Entre-temps, ensemble avec les conseillers municipaux et notre députée fédérale d'Ottawa-Vanier, nous nous engageons à continuer de travailler sur les enjeux qui comptent pour Ottawa-Vanier.

Comme toujours, merci de faire votre part dans la lutte contre le COVID-19. Mon équipe demeure disponible pour vous aider. N'hésitez pas à nous appeler au 613-744-4484 ou à nous envoyer un courriel à [lcollard.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org](mailto:lcollard.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org).

Community Newspaper



Lowertown *echo* de la Basse-ville

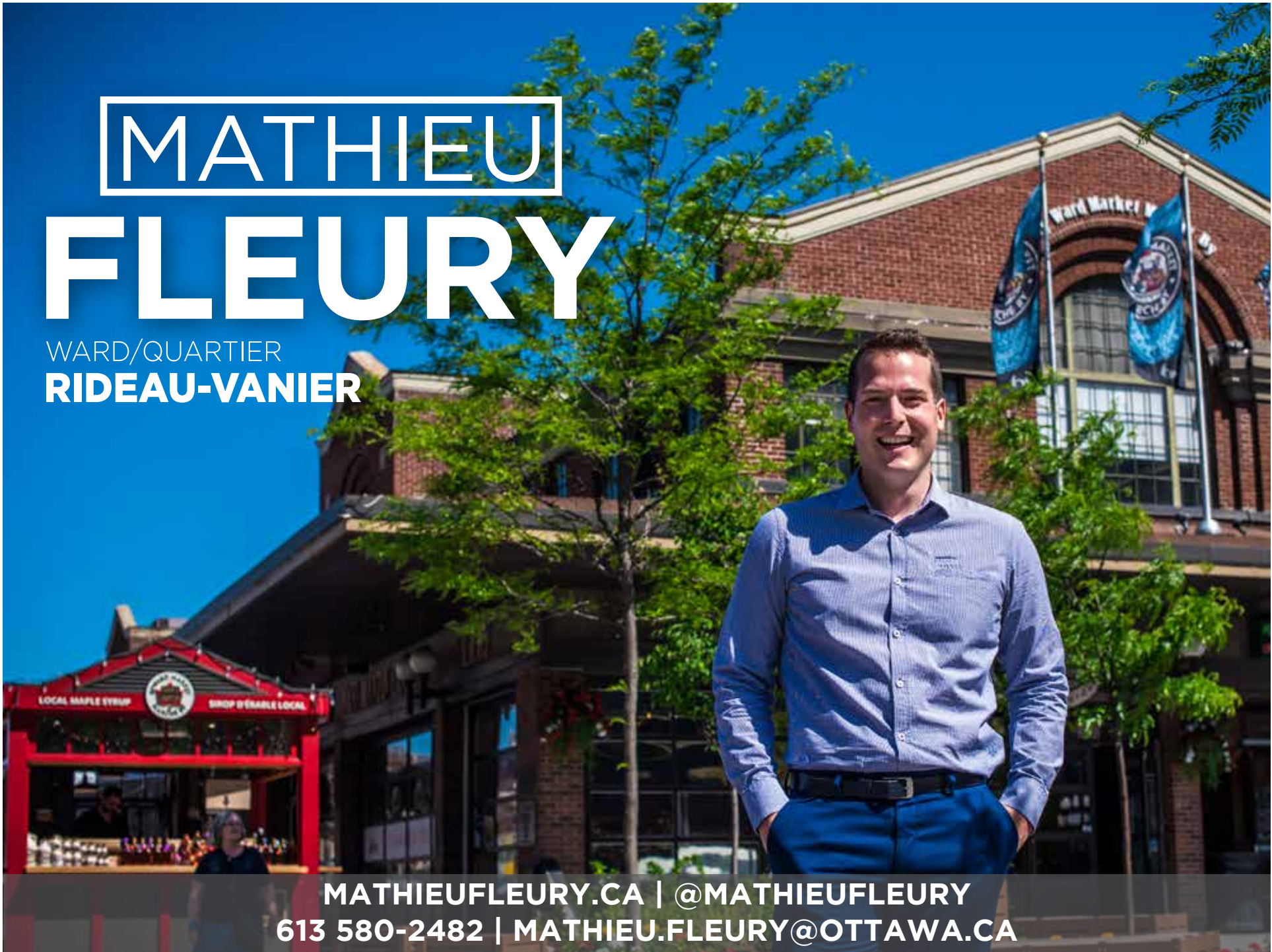
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# Calling all interested vendors!

By Zachary Dayler

Marchés d'Ottawa Markets operates the ByWard and Parkdale Public Markets. This involves serving as a host to outdoor vending, including farmers, microprocessors, Canadian wholesalers, authors, artisans and crafters as well as select importers. We also work to animate the Public Markets with buskers, events, promotional activities and community markets.

Our team is in full recruitment mode for our outdoor markets' program in 2021! As we collectively work to build back ByWard, recruiting and welcoming a new generation of vendors is vital. One of our primary focuses as we eye the future is to grow our vendor roster so we can continue to offer a curated and dynamic experience.

To support our work, and hopefully illustrate to the community that we are serious, Marchés d'Ottawa Markets has introduced two new initiatives, our **Farmers First Policy**, and the **Black, Indigenous, Peoples of Colour (BIPOC) Farmers' Initiative**. We will also be launching a new weekly producer-only market at ByWard, welcoming back our farming community. More to come on this soon!

The Farmers First Policy aims to support the region's farmers and primary producers who sell at our markets, as well as the provincial and domestic food production sector as a whole. This policy includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Farmers are scheduled at the Market before all other vendors;
- Farmers are given priority stand allocations over all other vendors;
- Farmers receive preferred pricing for stands and are further offered a tiered pricing scale that is designed to ease the start-up costs to new farmers;
- Farmer applications to vend are accepted year-round;

Marchés d'Ottawa Markets requires microprocessors and street-food vendors to use locally or provincially sourced egg, meat, honey, maple syrup and liquid dairy farm products;

Microprocessors receive discounts on their stand permit costs when they demonstrate sourcing products directly from local farms;



Ottawa Markets is committed to programming and activities that highlight and promote local farm products;

- Farmers have the exclusive right to use product adjectives such as "home-grown," "hand-picked," "just picked," "grass-fed," "pastured," when this claim is 100% accurate; and
- Ottawa Markets offers priority space allocations for local farmers to use as Community-Supported Agriculture pick-up hubs; some limitations may apply.

We are also proud to launch the BIPOC Farmers' Initiative. Recognizing the institutional and systemic racism experienced by BIPOC communities in Canadian agriculture both historically and currently, Marchés d'Ottawa Markets goal is to help remove barriers that prevent BIPOC farmers, growers, gatherers, hunters and fishers from participating in our markets and accessing clientele in Ottawa.

Marchés d'Ottawa Markets' BIPOC Farmers' Initiative is open to Black, Indigenous and Peoples of Colour, including those who identify as trans, disabled, queer, or have marginalized religious identities or share lived experiences as first-generation farmers or makers by offering a free seasonal market stand at the upcoming York Street Farmers' Market set to launch in May 2021. The conditions are as follows:

- Applicants shall identify as Black, Indigenous or Person(s) of Colour;.
- Applicants shall meet Farmer's definition in Marchés d'Ottawa Markets Operational Procedure No.

- 2;
- Applicants shall reside within 150 kilometres of 55 ByWard Market Square;
- The initiative covers one season and one stand per applicant;
- Priority shall be given to applications received before March 1<sup>st</sup>;

Twenty farmer subsidies have been allotted for 2021.

We hope the community will help us spread the word as we work towards creating a welcoming market that is a showcase of Canada in one spot and

creates a positive economic opportunity for budding businesses!

Applications are available at <https://www.ottawamarkets.ca/vending>

The application includes a section for the BIPOC Farmers' Initiative.

*Zachary Dayler is Executive Director of Marchés d'Ottawa Markets.*



## Echo Dog Carrier of the month

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# Build it and they will come?

By John Chenier

For many months during 2020, the halls of the Rideau Centre and the streets of the Lowertown shopping district were deserted. The absence of office workers and tourists, and the reticence of local residents to leave the safety of their homes placed considerable stress on these areas as restaurants, shops, salons and spas struggled to find the means to pay their bills.

But COVID has only emphasized what had become a growing problem for some businesses in our community — the decline in patrons, especially daytime shoppers.

For much of its history, the Market was a vibrant shopping district for all during the day and mainly a hang-out for locals at night, but over the past four decades, the tide has steadily shifted. During that period, many stores that had served the nine-to-five shoppers closed and were replaced by restaurants and bars serving a noon-to-midnight crowd.

An article in the November 2019 issue of the Echo noted farmers' concerns over the steady decline in the number of shoppers at their market stalls. Concerns over the decline of the ByWard Market area is the driving force behind the new multi-million-dollar Public Realm Plan just approved by City Council.

As we move into a post-COVID era, local businesses are concerned about if and when patrons will return. Creating an environment and experience that will attract people back to Lowertown is the main challenge for three organizations, the two BIAs — the ByWard Market Business Improvement Area (ByWard) and Downtown Rideau Business Improvement Area (DRBIA) — as well as Marchés d'Ottawa Markets (MOM).

## DRBIA



*Peggy DuCharme  
Executive Director  
Downtown Rideau BIA*

The DRBIA includes the shops in the Rideau Centre as well as all the businesses along the Rideau Street corridor. Peggy DuCharme has been its Executive Director since 1994. Ms DuCharme has seen many changes to her domain since then, including at least two major overhauls of the Rideau Centre, the construction of the LRT and the never-ending makeover of Rideau Street.

With the destruction/construction cycle and “years of dealing with dust and debris” now behind it, Ms. DuCharme affirmed that now is the time to make use of the new infrastructure.

In the aftermath of COVID, the future of downtowns has once again become a topic of global discussion or concern. Downtowns usually depend on a daily influx of office workers. Will they return, or will working remotely become the way of the future? For the businesses in the DRBIA, federal office workers and tourism represented their lifeblood.

DuCharme notes that her colleagues in suburban BIAs have hardly noticed a change in their areas.

“Success in a downtown core is built on socializing and gathering,” she said. A key ingredient to success is a core that is pleasant, clean and safe. Creating the proper environment requires cooperation, which is easier to achieve when you are able to build relationships with your partners. But building those relationships is her organization’s biggest challenge.

Many members of the DRBIA are multinationals which can have a steady turnover of store management. Turnover is even more of a problem in her dealings with the City, where staff turnover is compounded by the contracting out of many services on which the DRBIA depends. Then there are silos; people know something isn’t their responsibility but are often unable to tell you whose responsibility it is. The bottom line is this: providing a clean and safe environment is a challenge when it can take months to have things replaced, repaired or rectified.

Ms. DuCharme has ideas for what the DRBIA can do to make Rideau Street a destination. She is mulling over the possibility of sponsoring a huge block party to celebrate the completion of Rideau Street. She is also looking for ways to develop a sense of community among residents in the condo towers along Rideau Street. Since many of these residents are students, she has developed a working relationship with the radio station at U Ottawa, CHUO.

The closure of the Beer Store on Rideau has stripped condo residents of a convenient place to return their bottles. She is thinking of organizing a major bottle collection with the proceeds going to a local charity.

Her most potent resource may be the 12 new FX poles along Rideau Street. These can be programmed to project all kinds of things, from light shows to videos. DuCharme is exploring the possibility of promoting local musicians by inviting them to prepare audio/video material which could be broadcast as mini concerts on these FX poles. She is also considering other uses of spaces such as Ogilvie Square or William Street Plaza for public gatherings or other events.

“We are not in this alone,” says DuCharme. “Some of the best minds are wrapping their heads around the challenges.”

## ByWard



*Jasna Jennings  
Executive Director  
ByWard Market BIA*

Jasna Jennings has been in her post as Executive Director of the ByWard Market BIA since 2006. Much has changed over her 14 years at the helm. She said: “There was no social media when I started. Social media has changed how we communicate and organize. What you do hasn’t changed much. How you do it has.”

Given how busy our lives can be, it is important to record and organize the relevant information, share memories and make your final wishes known to your loved ones.



### The Beechwood Personal Memory Book

can help you have the conversations that are needed and ensure that everyone can be aware of what your wishes are ahead of time.



Owned by the Beechwood Cemetery Foundation and operated by The Beechwood Cemetery Company



Her highest high was in 2017 when the Market was the scene for many of Canada's 150th birthday celebrations. Her lowest low was the changeover from Market Management to Marchés d'Ottawa Markets. The ByWard BIA and Market Management had shared staff, space, budgets and ideas for years. The new Marchés d'Ottawa Markets' team ended all of that along with shared programming like the summer student Market Ambassadors program. The ByWard BIA was forced to move to new offices where they felt isolated.

Happily, the relationship is on the mend under the new Executive Director at Marchés d'Ottawa Markets, Zach Dayler.

Jennings has been on a roller-coaster of stress and anxiety since the first COVID lock-down last March. "I haven't had a good night's sleep since," she said. Fortunately, the ByWard BIA had launched a major Digital Main Street project months before the first lock-down. This has helped many of her businesses sell their goods on-line while their stores were closed. However, it should be pointed out that BIAs derive their revenue and raison d'être from having shops on the street in their area.

Jennings can point to some good things that came about as a result of COVID. She has more money to spend on member-sponsored events and has been able to have events such as Bark-it run for longer than they had in the past.

The ByWard BIA also ran a Holiday Box promotion where they sold 100 boxes for \$100 each. They filled each box with items purchased from local businesses. Jennings said everyone profited from this. The businesses sold their goods at volume-discount prices, which benefitted the purchasers. The boxes sold out in no time. The BIA is considering a repeat in April.

There has been some bad news, like Mother Tucker's and the Fish Market closing their doors for good. More recently the Starbuck's Reserve, which depended on workers from government and hi-tech offices is also closing. But Farouz has opened its new restaurant, and a new coffee house, Opulence, has taken over where the Bluebird was. And the owner of Zak's Diner, John Borsten, will be opening a new restaurant/bar where the Fish Market used to be.

The fact that there is no Winterlude this year has meant the ByWard BIA has time to work on new projects and clean up their website. The new communications person, Patrick Narcisse, is very tech savvy. As a result, there will be a new arts walk, mapping out the public art and the many galleries in Lowertown. The popular historic walking tour is also being up-dated. Both initiatives will hopefully attract people to the Market and take them further afield than before. Other plans to make the heritage aspect of the Market more interesting to visitors include more historic images on traffic boxes and possibly regular heritage days.

Like her counterpart Peggy DuCharme at DRBIA, Jennings is concerned about upgrading and maintaining cleanliness and security in the Market. This was identified as the main strategic priority by the new ByWard BIA Board, and its Safety and Security Committee has expressed concerns about the implications of the continued expansion of social services in the community. As with the DRBIA, Jennings is frustrated by the time and effort it takes to get a street-light bulb replaced and to have it the same colour as the rest of the bulbs on the street.

Jennings is already thinking about the 200th anniversary of the Market and hopes that much of the Public Realm Plan will have been implemented by then.

# MOM and apple pie



*Zachary Dayler  
Executive Director  
Marchés d'Ottawa Markets*

**Z**ach Dayler is the Executive Director of Marchés d'Ottawa Markets (MOM). He started in the job last March and had only been in the position for two weeks before the COVID lock-down. He showed his resilience by stitching together an arrangement that kept a few stalls operating from June to December. Now the hard part of his job begins.

His mandate at MOM is simple, reversing the trend of the past 20 years and bringing back the glory days of the Market.

He has an idea of what it will take to succeed in his quest, and much depends on the community. In his own words: "The area has been subject to lots of experiments but little follow-through. This has led to a loss of energy in the community. There is a need to rejuvenate the spirit of the community. I will need to work with everyone to find better, more affordable solutions."

His plan, which can be seen in more detail in his column elsewhere in this issue, is to rebuild the whole Market experience. This will take a mix of farmers, crafters and social enterprise operating on a Fair-Trade basis to provide a unique shopping experience, one worth coming to the Market for.

Dayler hasn't deluded himself about the challenges he faces in transforming the Market and making it a welcoming, exciting place to shop.

Homelessness and drug use are a serious concern.

So too is the volatility of the Market core, with its high rents and currently low revenues. How or whether these realign have a large role to play in determining the make-up of the market.

Dayler faces a lot of competition in attracting the right sort of vendors—farmers, crafters or social enterprise—unless he can get customers to return to the Market to buy their wares.

For the 2021 spring and summer seasons, people will still likely wish to

avoid crowds and use public transit only when necessary. Shoppers will need to feel comfortable and confident COVID protocols are in place.

Dayler also knows that if and when the Public Realm Plan is implemented it will mean noise, dust and upheaval for everyone. However, he says if everyone is better prepared than merely putting up a "Still Open" sign, it can be managed.

It is appropriate that for the Market it comes down to a question of: "Which comes first the chicken or the egg?" To lure consumers down to the Market we need the producers. To lure the producers, we need to ensure they have consumers.

Find your stories  
Read your paper  
@ the new Echo website  
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Trouvez vos histoires  
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# Find all that you need for your Valentine's Day (and every other day)

Find all that you need from the ByWard Market for a special stay-at-home Valentine's Day celebration. Here are some of the businesses in the ByWard Market which are ready to take your order. Ces entreprises sont prêtes à vous aider pour votre Saint-Valentin.

## Sweets/Sucreries

Aux-Delices Bakery  
Moulin de Provence  
Cupcake Lounge  
Mantovani 1946  
Rocky Mtn Chocolate  
Quelque Chose Patisserie

## Grocers/Épiceries

La Bottega  
International Cheese & Deli  
ByWard Fruit Market  
Wedel Touch of Europe

## Dinner/Dîner

Das Lokal  
Play Food & Wine  
Oz Kafe  
Luxe Bistro  
... and more!

## Jewelery/Bijoux

AJ Horton Goldsmith  
Disegno  
LA Pai  
Marigold Design Studio  
Market Goldsmith

## Flowers/Fleurs

Fleurissant Floral Design  
Flower To The People

## Wine/Vins

ByWard Wine Market  
Fairouz



## Connect with us for some virtual Winterlude goodies!

This year, Winterlude is going virtual, and the ByWard Market is here to share the winter fun with you. Follow us for Covid friendly activities that you can do right from your home. Restez branchés afin de profiter du Bal de Neige virtuel!

Follow us & stay informed!  
byward-market.com





# Saving Lowertown

*Continued from Page 1*

Lowertown has frequently seen the demolition of heritage buildings that had been neglected and bylaw control did not enforce property standards, creating a sense that Lowertown's heritage is not worth saving.

Three recent examples of the thinking from the City illustrate how lost we are. The draft new official plan for the City makes no commitment to dealing with the truck route through Lowertown. The proposed new official plan would create a special district for the By-Ward Market focused on cultural programming, patios, nightlife and commercial activities, but it has no proposed policies to encourage the farmers' market, to support small retailers or to respond to the needs of residents. By creating large patio zones to be rented at very low rates, the City is basically providing a subsidy to businesses like bars and restaurants that can use patio spaces, while small retailers cannot.

The concentration of services for the homeless in Lowertown is not good for the community or those experiencing homelessness. The Shepherds of Good Hope provides an essential service to the homeless in our City. They need a new kitchen and space for day programs. The Lowertown community supports their plans for those new facilities, but government-financing requirements have forced them to add 40 supportive-housing units. The City needs more supportive housing, but no one would agree that people at risk should be housed right beside the area where the city's drug traffic is concentrated.

Here is what the city, the province and the federal government should do to save Lowertown and to make sure that its investment in new public infrastructure is not wasted:

- Establish a vision and a governance model for ByWard that balances the interests of businesses, residents and institutions;
- Get the truck route out of the centre of the City;
- Commit to development that is compatible with a vibrant residential presence across Lowertown;
- Revive the ByWard Farmer's Market. It is a strategy that supports food security, helps the

farmers in the region, provides quality food for residents and is a proven tourist attraction;

- Increase the commercial diversity of Lowertown by supporting small retailers, especially those selling Canadian products;
- Take advantage of the Canada's new cannabis laws by a careful and regulated introduction of safe retailing and use of cannabis products while establishing and enforcing reasonable distances between cannabis retail outlets.
- Expand supportive housing and affordable housing across the City and reduce the shelter population in Lowertown, Sandy Hill and Vanier. The poor and homeless come from every community; they should be provided for in every community;
- Implement fully the 2008 City bylaw establishing minimum distances between bars and nightclubs;
- Charge commercial rates when the public realm is rented to private businesses; and
- Reduce illegal drug dealing and use by expanding the availability of safe drugs to known addicts and help these people to lead lives free of crime.

*Norman Moyer is President of the Lowertown Community Association*

# Responding to the housing and homelessness emergency

*By Lauren Intven*

In January of this year, the City of Ottawa announced that four new housing projects had been approved under the federally funded Rapid Housing Initiative. These projects, with three non-profit partners, will create 109 new affordable- and supportive-housing units. While this is positive news, much more needs to be done to address the over 12,000 households in Ottawa currently on the waiting list for affordable housing. The City's refreshed 10-Year Housing and Homeless Strategy estimates 300 to 570 new units are required annually. While tackling such needs may seem daunting, other cities nationally and internationally are making progress, and we can look to them for inspiration. Here are some effective strategies:

## Intervening early and partnering with the private sector

Kehilla is a non-profit housing agency championing affordable housing initiatives for the Jewish community in Toronto. Their Rental Assistance Program (RAP) supports 290 households who pay no more than 35% of their gross income on rent. The RAP is funded by private donations, a large percentage of which come from real estate developers.

## System reform

Medicine Hat Alberta redesigned its system serving the homeless, using a centralized assessment process, triage, case management and a housing-first approach, effectively ending chronic homelessness in 2015. Permanent housing and supports are provided to anyone who spends more than 10 days in a shelter or on the streets.

## Supporting people to remain housed

Outcomes from British Columbia's modular supportive housing (a home with access to on-site supports) have found 94% of residents remain housed and report improvements in access to employment, income, education, addiction mental health and life-skills support. A 2018 study also found that every dollar invested in supportive housing saves four to five dollars through decreased use of government services and increases in neighborhood well-being and local spending.

## Using all the tools at the city's disposal

Vancouver's empty-homes tax resulted in a 25% reduction in the number of vacant properties between 2017 and 2019, and \$61.3 million in revenue for the mu-

nicipal government to support new affordable housing. The City of Ottawa is currently studying their power to impose such a tax. An inclusionary zoning bylaw, a law for the right of first refusal and a rental-replacement bylaw are other tools to be considered.

## Seeing the opportunities

In Lisbon COVID-19 has severely impacted the tourism industry and left more than 20,000 tourist flats largely vacant. The city, seeing an opportunity, has offered owners a flat fee to take over the units and sublet them to locals who qualify for affordable housing for a five-year minimum period.

Do you want to know more? Do you care about your neighbours and yourself having access to affordable and appropriate housing? If you do, join the Lowertown Community Association's Housing and Homelessness Committee ([housedLCA@gmail.com](mailto:housedLCA@gmail.com)) and join us in pressuring your elected officials for the changes you want to see.

*Lauren Intven is co-chair of the Housing and Homelessness Committee of the Lowertown Community Association.*

# Bridge over troubled waters: The Alexandra Bridge

*By Jordan Ferraro*

Majestically straddling the Ottawa River, this 1901, steel-truss bridge began as a Canadian Pacific Interprovincial Rail crossing, serving as the mercantile and architectural gateway to and from the nation's capital. The Royal Alexandra Interprovincial Bridge was outfitted with an energy-efficient electric trolley for passengers and was acclaimed for having Canada's longest centre-span cantilever construction. That achievement received official historic designation by the Canadian Society of Civil Engineering in 1995.

In 2019, a federal budget provision was passed, based on data submitted by Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC), which provided the funding to decommission and deconstruct the Alexandra due to "unsustainable ongoing repair and maintenance costs". A new bridge was to be rebuilt within a 10-year timeframe as a vehicular, pedestrian, and active-transportation entity in keeping with its purpose since the mid

1950s. The execution of the provision was passed to the National Capital Commission (NCC) with the aim of garnering public input to achieve a broad future vision to satisfy that aim.

At a well attended virtual meeting of the Lowertown Community Association in December, 2020, it was overwhelming decided that there was no adherence during the Phase 1 consultation process to retain the heritage component and that the repurposing of the bridge's function contravened multigenerational, post-COVID realities of present-day society. The bridge presently serves 9% of vehicular traffic and has been seasonally closed with no apparent strain on the four remaining interprovincial bridges.

To date, there is no evidence that an Heritage Impact Assessment was performed and no firm timeline for deconstruction has been announced. Nor has there been a projected cost analysis done on deconstruction and rebuilding, including billing incurred by third-party contractors. The PSPC website is slated

to go live with further information in the immediate future. More concrete NCC findings regarding a sixth bridge crossing study would further help define the outcome of the Alexandra.

A call to action by active-transportation lobbyists, environmental groups, civil engineers, historic preservationists, conservationist architects, former politicians, and the general population for further study of the plan has been gaining momentum. The focus is on the elimination of vehicular traffic and promotion of active transport, as well as re-instituting a tourism trolley which would connect museums, and let passengers enjoy scenic vistas, and drop them in the newly revitalized ByWard Market. Upon constructive re-examination, a winning post-COVID scenario seems to be within the tangible grasp of all concerned parties.

*Jordan Ferraro is co-chair of the Transportation Committee of the Lowertown Community Association.*



# November - December Quiz

There were no entries with all the correct answers to the last quiz. However, since it was Christmas and we had lots of prizes to give away, we decided to hold a draw from those who had submitted nine correct responses.

**First prize consisting of:**

- a Manicure from Smudge Beauty Bar at 223 Dalhousie Street (\$35),
- a virtual cooking class from C'est Bon cooking school (\$35),
- a ByWard Market BIA shopping bag containing: a ByWard Beer Glass, an Echo coffee mug and coupons for a free Beavertail and a Zaks milkshake-to-go went to Lucie Dorais.

**Second prize consisting of:**

- a gift certificate (\$25) from Carlos Graphics at 70 George Street,
- a ByWard Market BIA shopping bag containing a ByWard Beer Glass, an Echo coffee mug, and coupons for a free Beavertail and a Zaks milkshake-to-go went to Elodie Lortal.

**Third prize consisting of:**

- a gift certificate (\$25) from Shoppers Drug Mart 70 George Street,
- a ByWard Market BIA shopping bag containing a ByWard Beer Glass, an Echo coffee mug, and coupons for a free Beavertail and a Zaks milkshake-to-go went to Diane Lamoureux

Thank you to all who participated in the quiz. And a special thanks to our local businesses, Shoppers Drug Mart, Carlos Graphics, C'est Bon, Smudge Beauty Bar, Hookers, Zaks that contributed prizes and a very special thanks to the ByWard Market BIA for the new shopping bags stuffed with goodies.

The next quiz will be in the April issue of the Echo. Get ready to play!Any who wish to donate a prize should contact the echo at [info@lowertownecho.ca](mailto:info@lowertownecho.ca).

## New Arts & Culture Committee: Calling all arts and culture lovers

By Kendra Hughes and Fiona Sant

Lowertown is a place for arts-and-culture lovers. Our neighbourhood is home to galleries, performing-arts theatres, art schools, public art and murals, writers and publishers, painters and sculptors, fabulous restaurants, culinary arts, and creative residents with diverse cultural backgrounds.

In an effort to continue to enhance, promote and revive Lowertown as a vibrant and lively destination for arts and culture for both residents and visitors, residents have formed a new Arts and Culture Committee as part of the Lowertown Community Association. Current members are Kendra Hughes, Fiona Barbaro Sant, and Drew Bernard.

**Expanding the Arts and Culture Committee**

Are you an advocate for arts and culture? Are you interested in organizing and promoting arts-and-cul-

ture activities in the neighbourhood? We invite residents who are passionate about the arts to join us as we expand our committee and work together on our goal of enhancing Lowertown's image as a cultural hub.

**Building an Arts Network**

We also invite artists, creatives, performers and organizations in Lowertown to share their contact and social media information with us as we build and foster a network of creatives in our community. We are excited to hear about what you're working on and any events you're planning. Through the network, we'll share Arts and Culture Committee announcements, calls for artists and invitations to networking events in our community (when it is safe to gather again).

Be in touch, we would love to hear from you:

[lcaartsandculture@gmail.com](mailto:lcaartsandculture@gmail.com)

## Nouveau comité des arts et de la culture: appel à tous ceux qui aiment l'art et la culture

Basse-Ville est un lieu pour les amateurs d'art et de culture. Dans notre quartier, on trouve des galeries, des théâtres d'art, des écoles d'art, des œuvres d'art public et des peintures murales, des écrivains et des éditeurs, des peintres et des sculpteurs, de fabuleux restaurants, des arts culinaires et des habitants créatifs aux origines culturelles diverses.

Afin de continuer à améliorer, promouvoir et faire revivre la Basse-Ville en tant que destination artistique et culturelle vivante pour les résidents et les visiteurs, les résidents ont formé un nouveau comité des arts et de la culture dans le cadre de l'association communautaire de la Basse-Ville. Les membres actuels sont :Kendra Hughes, Fiona Barbaro Sant et Drew Bernard.

**Élargissement de la Commission des Arts et de la Culture:**

Êtes-vous un défenseur des arts et de la culture? Souhaitez-vous organiser et promouvoir des activités artistiques et culturelles dans votre quartier?

Nous invitons les résidents passionnés par les arts à se joindre à nous pour élargir notre comité et travailler ensemble dans le but d'améliorer l'image de la Basse-Ville en tant que centre culturel.

**Création d'un réseau artistique:**

Nous invitons également les artistes, les créateurs, les interprètes et les organisations qui vivent, travail-

lent et se trouvent dans la Basse-Ville à nous faire part de leurs coordonnées et de leurs informations sur les médias sociaux pour nous aider à créer et à entretenir un réseau de créateurs dans notre communauté. Nous serons ravis de savoir sur quoi vous travaillez et quels sont les événements que vous prévoyez. Grâce à ce réseau, nous partagerons les annonces de la Commission des Arts et de la Culture, les appels aux artistes et les invitations aux événements de réseautage dans notre communauté (lorsqu'il sera possible de se réunir à nouveau en toute sécurité).

Au plaisir de vous lire au [lcaartsandculture@gmail.com](mailto:lcaartsandculture@gmail.com).

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# MASC on the job

By Jessica Ruano

Unless you're the type who enjoys cross-country skiing or snow shoeing during the winter months, the best way to spend your days inside your cozy home with a mug of hot tea and maybe some leftover holiday baking. The radio can be good company, but sometimes the blitz of bad news can feel overwhelming. If you're looking to relax and reconnect with your local community, why not tune in

LOWERTOWN VIRTUAL CONCERT SERIES

Tuesday afternoons 3 - 4pm  
Music, Dance, and Storytelling  
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To attend by phone, RSVP with Hussain 613-789-3930 ext 304

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Mardi après-midi 15h-16h  
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Daniel Richer

Feb. 2 février

Le H. Proulx

Feb. 9 février

Colleen Andros

Feb. 16 février

Nice Atangana

Feb. 23 février

Louis Marlier

Mar. 2 mars

Brad LaFortune

Mar. 9 mars

Sébastien Lamy

Mar. 16 mars

Mehdi Cayenne

Mar. 23 mars

Twin Flames

Mar. 30 mars

with Multicultural Arts for Schools and Communities (MASC)?

Over the next couple of months, MASC, in partnership with the Lowertown Community Resource Centre, Le Patro d'Ottawa, Ottawa Community Housing, and Le Centre de services Guigues, with funding from New Horizons, is hosting two series for residents of Lowertown.

The first is the Lowertown Concert Series, featuring music, dance, and storytelling over Zoom with bilingual MASC artists every Tuesday afternoon.

You can also check out the Storytelling-Over-The-Phone series on Wednesday afternoons. You'll receive a call on your phone and be connected in a group call with one of MASC's engaging storytellers, either in English or French. Once connected, just sit back and listen as the stories unfold!

Storytelling has this magical quality of being able to transport you to another time, to another place. Hearing certain

stories may remind you of your childhood, or bring back memories of travel, or love, or time spent in nature. Other stories may offer a perspective you've never considered, or introduce you to someone you never thought you'd meet. Either way, a good storyteller can make you feel like the story they're telling is just for you.

Perhaps you've heard the old story about a small village where there was a storyteller, but no television. One day, a visitor arrived with a television as a gift for the community. For a week or so, the villagers were glued to the television, utterly fascinated by this new piece of technology. But then they lost interest and resumed spending their evenings with the village storyteller. The visitor, confused, asked one of the villagers, "But doesn't the television have so many more stories than your storyteller?" And the villager replied "Yes, the television knows many stories, but these stories are for us."

STORYTELLING OVER-THE-PHONE WITH MASC ARTISTS!

Wednesday afternoons 3 - 4pm  
To attend by phone, RSVP with Hussain 613-789-3930 ext 304

CONTES PAR TELEPHONE AVEC LES ARTISTES MASC!

Mercredi après-midi 15h-16h  
Pour y assister par téléphone, appelez Hussain 613-789-3930 ext 304

Daniel Richer

27 Jan. English

Daniel Richer

3 fév. Français

Jennifer Cayne

10 fév. English

Mahave

17 fév. Français

Louis Marlier

24 fév. English

Sébastien Lamy

3 mars Français

Sébastien Lamy

9 mars Français

RSVP [latifa@retraiteenaction.ca](mailto:latifa@retraiteenaction.ca) or to attend by phone, call 613 789 3930 ext. 304.

Storytelling-Over-The-Phone takes place Wednesdays from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. until March 9. To sign up, call 613-789-3930 ext. 304.

The Lowertown Concert Series takes place Tuesdays from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. until March 30.

For more information about MASC community programming, visit [www.masconline.ca](http://www.masconline.ca)

## Le théâtre pendant une pandémie

Par Elodie Lortal

Dans un contexte de pandémie mondiale où l'importance de la santé mentale est au centre des inquiétudes de nombreux Canadiens et Canadiennes, il est normal de s'interroger sur l'impact de la fermeture temporaire des théâtres sur notre santé mental.

Il est normal de se poser les questions : que deviennent nos artistes? Quels plans mettent en place nos théâtres pour survivre à la crise? Nos artistes, directeurs artistiques et producteurs font preuve de créativité et tentent de faire surgir un peu de lumière au travers de la noirceur de nos fils d'actualité.

**Quel est le futur pour le théâtre et les arts vivants de la scène?**

Les compagnies théâtrales ont dû faire preuve de créativité et d'imagination pour se réinventer et maintenir un lien avec leur public, toujours avides de spectacles. Quand la pandémie a éclaté, en mars 2020, cela a constitué un choc pour la planète entière et certains secteurs, notamment celui des spectacles, ont été plus touchés que d'autres. Le théâtre est, par définition, un art vivant, un art qui se joue, qui se ressent,

qui se vit. Comme le précise Pier Rodier, directeur artistique et général de la compagnie Vox Théâtre, il a fallu faire « un deuil temporaire » de la scène, en personne, telle qu'on l'a toujours connue.

**Peut-on espérer un retour des spectacles en septembre 2021?**

C'est encore trop tôt pour le dire. Si tous les Canadiens sont vaccinés d'ici septembre 2021, comme l'a promis le premier ministre Justin Trudeau, on peut espérer retourner dans les salles de spectacles, en personne, à l'automne 2021. Cependant, ne nous réjouissons pas trop vite, les retards dans la livraison des vaccins ne sont pas rassurants. Il va falloir être patient. Les compagnies théâtrales font preuve de créativité. Un exemple de projet virtuel est le spectacle Gaston Klaxon (Vox Théâtre) dont une version en direct en présentiel (si cela est possible) ou en virtuel sera diffusée du 28 avril au 2 mai 2021. Le thème de l'hypersensibilité y ait abordé. Pier Rodier mentionne réfléchir à d'autres formes de diffusion des arts comme, par exemple, des ateliers, cet été, dans les parcs?

**Comment maintenir le contact avec les artistes?**



Pier Rodier indique que les compagnies sont en contact réguliers avec leurs artistes que ce soit pour des projets virtuels tels que le projet « Au creux de l'oreille » ou que ce soit pour des rencontres amicales 5 à 8 via la plateforme virtuelle Zoom. D'autre part, chaque samedi, Vox Théâtre, en partenariat avec l'École secondaire publique De La Salle, a développé l'atelier « nos samedis dans les arts ». Cela permet aux étudiants d'exprimer leur créativité et de continuer à se développer. Pier Rodier a remarqué que la plateforme virtuelle comporte des avantages : « certains étudiants qui sont parfois timides en personne, se sentent plus à l'aise derrière la caméra ».

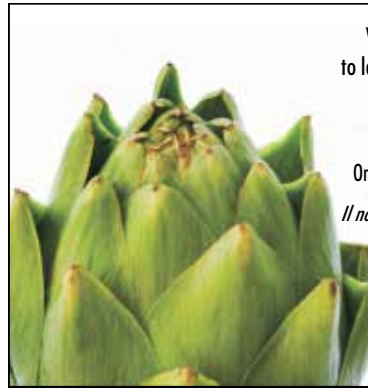
**Quel est la réaction du public?**

Le virtuel est un autre médium de diffusion. Certains apprécient et d'autres préfèrent les arts en personne. Cela dépend des préférences et des sensi-

bilités de chacun. L'offre est proposée, c'est aux spectateurs de la découvrir et de l'approprier. Cela présente d'autres avantages : les personnes ayant du mal à se déplacer ou les personnes n'ayant pas les ressources économiques pour se permettre d'assister aux spectacles y ont désormais accès.

### Remerciements

Un grand merci à Elyse Enright, responsable des communications et du développement des publics à la Nouvelle Scène pour m'avoir répondu rapidement et pour m'avoir mise en contact avec Pier Rodier. Un grand merci à Pier Rodier, directeur artistique et général de la compagnie Vox Théâtre, pour son temps et pour avoir répondu à mes nombreuses questions. Sa passion et son optimisme sont contagieux. Merci à toutes les personnes qui, par leur courage et par leur dynamisme, contribuent à la vitalité et à la pérennité de la scène théâtrale : Martin Cadieux, responsable du développement et du marketing du théâtre Catapulte, Pierre Antoine Lafon Simard du Théâtre du Trillium et Geneviève Pineault, directrice artistique du Théâtre de la Vieille 17. Malheureusement je n'ai pas eu de réponse de la part du Ottawa Little Theatre pour cette édition de l'Écho.



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# Books by or about Lowertowners

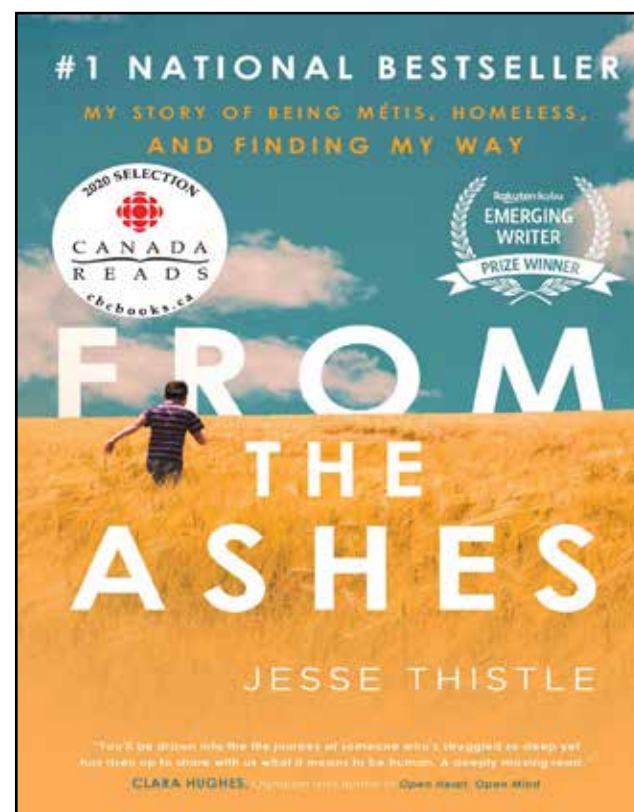
Jesse Thistle's memoir *From the Ashes* is a disturbingly honest account of one man's journey from losses in childhood to a destructive cycle of addiction and crime to time in a Lowertown shelter and eventually to life as a respected academic. His personal story delves into the consequences of inter-generational trauma in Indigenous communities.

The brief descriptions of the life of an addicted homeless man in Lowertown are truly haunting. After jumping the fence at Harvest House Rehabilitation Centre, he arrived at the Shepherds of Good Hope shelter and immediately re-entered the world of drug and alcohol abuse. He fished change from the Centennial Flame fountain on Parliament Hill. He shoplifted and sold the stolen items to cab drivers in front of the Rideau Centre. He sometimes slept in one of the park-

ing garages in the Market. He begged store employees to use their washrooms and when refused, suffered the humiliation of soiling his clothes.

Finally, in despair, he decided to jump from a half-completed building on Rideau Street. Salvation came in the person of a "soup kitchen lady" who recognized him and talked him down from peril.

The book started with Jesse's memories supplemented by narratives from family, friends, police officers, social workers, shelter workers and probation officers who knew him during his turbulent life. It turned into scholarly doctoral work on Indigenous homelessness. Jesse once lived among us in Lowertown and the book reveals much about the desperate daily world of our shelter neighbours.



## Project Cold Days: Stories of resilience

By Valerie Proctor and Juliet O'Neill

A man sits on a bench gazing at the open sky over the icy Ottawa River, a bottle of beer wedged in the snow by his feet. As fine music soars, the camera pulls back to show Parliament Hill behind him. It looks like the world might be his oyster, but the reality is dramatically different.

In fact, he's one of the many street people who struggle to survive the frigid Ottawa winters in the neighbourhoods of Lowertown and Vanier. The bench is one of his safe spots.

He looks tough. But Stephen R. Coleman, the director of the documentary film *Project Cold Days*, invites us to get to know this man and other street people so well that their humanity shines through. That is the aim of the film. Coleman goes deep and doesn't hurry his subjects.

teers. "I wanted to do some good in the world and try to make a difference," he said in a [clip](#) for the 2020 Ottawa Canadian Film Festival. "Especially now," he added, "it's great to have stories of resilience and triumph of the human spirit."

Coleman and Fernando won the confidence of their subjects, capturing a close-up look at the pain and loneliness of their harsh lives, facing challenges of depression, addiction, and trauma. The youngest and most articulate of them, Zack Fairbairn, explains how, although he was a good student, he got into drugs when he was depressed and developed an opioid addiction. After he tragically died two years ago at age 28, the filmmakers released a [segment](#) on their Facebook page, saying Fairbairn was "one of the most beautifully heartbreaking stories we heard on the streets."

The film also introduces community workers from such organizations as the Shepherds of Good Hope,

not all dire; some of the people in the film have recovered and found housing since they were filmed.

Coleman doesn't sugar-coat the reality or offer solutions or advice beyond greeting street people kindly. He has called film an art that is "a powerful method to educate and inspire."

The film isn't easy to watch. It moves slowly. Cold exudes from almost every frame. At points the Ottawa architecture looks bleak and rejecting. The film makers say the 75-minute documentary was crafted from 100 hours of film.

[Project Cold Days](#) is so powerful that it should be seen by every legislator in the country and distributed widely in theatres, schools, community centres, NGOs and government offices, as well as film festivals.

A 44-minute version of the film has been shown several times on CBC in the last couple of years, and the documentary was featured at the Ottawa Canadian Film Festival in November 2020. The filmmakers are searching for a distributor for an international audience. *Project Cold Days* should not be allowed to sit on the shelf.




The [original musical score](#), composed by Benjamin Wright, is intended to amplify the narrative and contains such tracks as "Shooting Up" and "Hopeful". Coleman [said he was inspired](#) by the belief that everyone has the "desire to love and be loved, to not be abandoned, to not be left alone in the cold."

Producer Sterlin Fernando, a Lowertown resident, got involved when Coleman put out a call for volun-

The Mission, The Salvation Army and Ottawa Inner City Health, who operate in the streets, contending with major difficulties: lack of funds and affordable housing, and people with severe mental health and other problems.

An iconic scene in the film is an older man pushing his belongings and his dog in a grocery cart, fitted with an umbrella, through the winter streets. But it is



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**W. Thomas Leroux**  
 613-241-7137  
[darnernmedia.com](http://darnernmedia.com)  
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