

Our First Issue.



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Contributors

Photos by Chris Miner



David Parker is a musician, artist, software developer and bread baker.



Aric McBay is an author and organizer. His latest book is Full Spectrum Resistance. aricmcbay.org & fullspectrumresistance.org



Jane Kirby is a writer and performing artist with a history of working with feminist and social justice organizations.



Clarke Mackey is a Canadian filmmaker, author, and educator. He is also a director at the Kingston Canadian Film Festival and Skeleton Park Arts Festival.



Armand Garnet Ruffo is a Canadian scholar, filmmaker, writer and poet with Ojibway ancestry.



Sarah Harmer is a Canadian singer, songwriter and activist. She is also a director at the Skeleton Park Arts Festival.



Kingston writer Jamie Swift has lived in the Skeleton Park area for 30 years.



Annie Clifford is a former wannabe rock star who sold out and is more useful as a lawyer.



Meredith Dault is a writer, dancer and stilt walker who moved to Kingston for grad school in 2011 and never really left.



Peja Middaugh enjoys writing and reading fantasy pretty much all the time! Currently 14, she's grown up in the Skeleton Park neighbourhood and wants to be an author someday.



Onagottay Blanchard is an artist whose work spans from traditional media, such as birchbark, horn, leather, and beadwork to canvas-based acrylics and large public works.



Susan Belyea can often be seen walking her dog all over north Kingston where she has lived for 25 years. She is active in local anti-poverty and food justice projects, and teaches about food security.

Other Contributors Include: ALLISON CHISHOLM & SARAH TSIANG

SHARE THIS PAPER! PASS IT ON!

This paper is meant to be shared. We want it dog-eared and ratty, covered in doodles and coffee rings. We want it read, revered and reviled. We want it all, we want it now. Place it in the hand of your neighbour or in the vacant seat at the coffee shop, just don't keep it for yourself.



Jill Glatt (she/her) is a French teacher, printmaker, and arts educator.

Welcome to The Skeleton Press

The Skeleton Park Arts Festival is proud to introduce the inaugural edition of *The Skeleton Press* – a community newspaper serving the Skeleton Park neighbourhood and surrounding area.

What started as an informal chat about the politics of a neighbourhood in transition led us to found this newspaper that we hope will become a free, biannual publication following this pilot project year.

We are seeking a broader, more inclusive conversation that captures the vibrancy and diversity of the neighbourhood.

We are interested in how an “old school” newspaper can communicate differently than digital publishing, and how the act of distributing the physical object can build community.

We hope tattered copies of *The Skeleton*

Press can be passed from hand to hand, sparking conversation with neighbours over the fence or at the corner store, and strengthening our sense of place and each other.

We believe in the power of sharing stories and telling a good yarn.

Please mark up your copy – tell us what you think and write suggestions in the empty space left for you throughout, write your thoughts on neighbourhood matters, ask a question, share what’s important to you about this community. Then give it to a friend or neighbour, leave it on the table at the café, drop it in someone’s mailbox or book box. This is meant to be a shared experience, a community-builder, and a conversation starter.

Pass it on!

We are interested in how an “old school” newspaper can communicate differently than digital publishing, and how the act of distributing the physical object can build community.

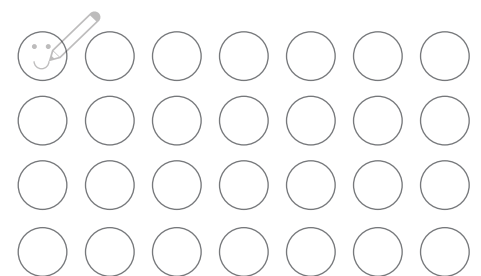
How To Interact With This Rag:

First of all, feel free to write anywhere on any page of this little publication. Make it your own and then pass it along. But if you need a little more space to really say your piece, we’ve included dedicated areas for those who like to write. Just look for boxes that look like the one below, and spill the beans.



Now, lots of us have gotten used to sharing our opinions through tiny little symbols. Nothing wrong with that; in fact, sometimes that’s all that’s needed to get a point across. It is a form of communication more associated with the digital realm, so in an attempt to recreate this modern form of communication for the printed page, we’ve included “Emoticon Article Reaction Stations” throughout these pages. Fill these fields with any doodles you like, as long as they come from the heart.

Emoticon Article Reaction Station



**WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU. IT'S THE ONLY WAY WE'LL LEARN.
SEND IN YOUR LETTERS, SO WE CAN ABSORB YOUR WISDOM,
AND MAKE THESE PAGES THAT MUCH BETTER.**

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Thank You to Our Supporters



Community Foundation
for Kingston & Area

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A big thanks to all of our distribution sites throughout the Skeleton Park neighbourhood & surrounding area including:

Novel Idea (156 Princess), **KCHC** (263 Weller Ave), **The Elm Cafe** (303 Montreal), **Kingston Community House** (99 York), **Something Else Records** (207 Wellington), **Home Base Housing** (540 Montreal)

12Cat Fosters Creativity, Community and Connection

Collective art space offers much more than your typical venue

BY DAVID PARKER

“Creativity. No ulterior motive. No profit. No judgment.” According to member Cecily Taylor, these are some of the guiding principles of 12CAT Arts Collective, a group of artists and musicians working together to create a live music venue, art gallery, and community arts space. We have been operating a large warehouse-style room in the old NGB studios building at 12 Cataragui Street (hence our name).

We initially formed because there was a lot of interest locally in creating an accessible, all-ages venue for music and art that was not in a bar or drinking establishment. Some of our collective members had grown up in Kingston going to see music at the Artel (2006 - 2016) with other youth. [The tenants at 204 Sydenham St. - the Artel - collectively volunteered to run shows and events in the common area of their house, which meant they could offer diverse arts programming without the pressure of a bottom-line or making a profit.]

“It’s important to have community spaces that facilitate creativity for creativity’s sake.”

It has become clear to us since we have been in operation over the last six months that a space like this is vital for the Kingston community.

“A lot of us essentially grew up and became adults around the Artel,” says Cecily Taylor, a member of 12CAT and former Artel member. Taylor currently organizes shows and plays in the band Greta Gargoyle. “I was 17 when I started going there in winter of 2007. My first semester of undergrad was really alienating and depressing. I didn’t jibe very well with Queen’s culture and didn’t have many friends or activities I felt comfortable doing. That winter I met some artists putting on shows at the Artel and started attending events.



Photography by Dmitry Uchitel. Art design by Cecily Taylor & 12CAT

Soon after I was participating and helping organize a series of variety shows. I remember it gave me a sense of purpose and belonging to be around like-minded individuals who were actively carving out a space for weirdness, creativity and collaboration.”

Through the Artel, Kingston musicians developed a network tying local artists into a circuit of touring and performing peers. This network of musicians and organizers was able to draw established and emerging acts from Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal and beyond to stop in Kingston on their tours and play at a low-stress all-ages venue, make a modest amount of money, and be paired with a local act. At shows like these they could meet Kingston-based artists, collaborate, and create important contacts. These connections helped Kingston’s emerging musicians find venues to play their music in and across Ontario and beyond, forging relationships that have allowed local artists to establish themselves in the regional music scene. With the closing of the Artel in 2016, that was all put on hold.

The 12CAT Arts Collective began as a group hoping to put on a series of shows in the summer of 2018. We started actively looking for a space as a group in April. In the fall of 2017, the Tone Deaf Festival put on some concerts in a big warehouse-style space at NGB Studios. We liked what they had done with the space and in the spring we were in touch with the landlord there to put on a single show in June of 2018. That concert was a success and garnered sufficient interest from our collective to rent the space more permanently. In July 2018, we opened our doors to put on regular programming, including our first fundraiser event and a host of other shows. Renting the space also allowed collective members to have a practice and rehearsal room for their own music with a long-term goal of doing recordings in the space.

“Kingston struggles with maintaining a venue like this because of ... a lack of spaces that are suitable and a group of committed people. Right now we have those things, and I love it.”

Says Taylor, “I think it’s important to have community spaces that facilitate creativity for creativity’s sake. These types of spaces are hard to keep healthy and operating under the ever-present weight of profit-driven capitalism. People get burnt out, the physical spaces are hard to find and harder to keep. It is, however, very possible and very much worth it!”

In our first season - July 1st to November 30th - we hosted acts such as Sandro Perri, The Highest Order, Nick Ferrio, Boyhood, The Famines, and Dorothea Paas. We’ve been able to support and promote an astonishing amount of local talent at each of these shows by pairing touring acts with local openers, many of whom were able to present first-time bands and projects that might not be able to get a gig

at a bar venue. We’ve hosted a clothing swap, a queer drag show, and two successful fundraisers. On average we’ve hosted one show every week.

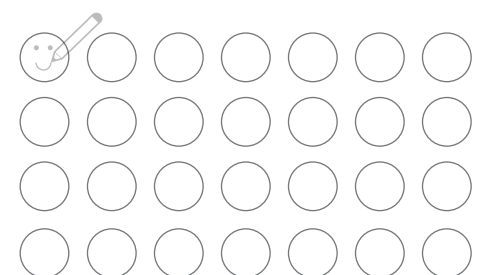
Spaces like this are vital for musicians in increasingly difficult financial times. One local band that really benefited from spaces like this early in their career is PS I Love You. They were gigging regularly at the Artel before they really broke out big.

“Kingston needs a place like 12CAT,” says Ben Nelson of Deux Trois and PS I Love You. “Things happen here in waves, people come and go. Venues like 12CAT pop up naturally in Toronto and Montreal but Kingston struggles with maintaining a venue like this because of two things; a lack of spaces that are suitable and a group of committed peo-

ple. Right now we have those things, and I love it.”

Due to heating issues, 12CAT moved out of the space we occupied in the fall and are working on moving into a different space in the same building to re-open with more programming in the spring. Stay tuned for that via our Facebook page.

Emoticon Article Reaction Station



Share time! Anything you like, throw it down here...

Kingston Shoe Repair

BY MEREDITH DAULT

Rodney Sothmann still remembers feeling surprised when he first learned that shoes could be repaired. He was 21 and had taken a pair in for work, pleased to find that he did not have to toss them out. A few years later, while living in Montreal and looking for work, Sothmann happened upon an ad looking for help at a shoe repair shop. “He wanted someone with experience, but nobody had experience,” Sothmann says, reflecting on the specialized nature of the work. “So I applied and he called me eventually.”

Sothmann had no idea the call would chart a course for his future. He now owns and operates Kingston Shoe Repair, now the city’s only downtown shoe repair shop, which he opened in 2012. “It was busy right off the start,” Sothmann recalls. “I presumed things would be slow at first, and that I would have time to get organized, but that never really happened. I never really have downtime. I just keep working.”

His small shop, anchored by a number of large machines for tasks like stitching and finishing, is the picture of organized chaos, strewn with shoes and boots in pairs and on their own, along with large sheets of leather in different colours. The front window boasts a collection of large houseplants Sothmann explains are “for his health,” though in the same breath acknowledges that he no longer smells the shoe polish and other solvents which permeate the air.

It was the “For Rent” sign in the front

window of a former clothing store on Montreal Street that played the biggest role in inspiring Sothmann to open his own business. Some years earlier, the owner of Tom’s Shoe Repair on Wellington Street, who has since retired, asked Sothmann if he was interested in buying his business. “I wasn’t even thinking about opening a shop,” he says. “I had gone in to buy something from him.”

At the same time, however, Sothmann admits that he had already purchased and stored a number of specialized machines when he saw them being sold off inexpensively. The machines allowed him to do small shoe repairs out of his home – he was then living on Quebec St. – on a word-of-mouth basis. “People would call and come by the house,” he explains. “That kept me quite busy.”

When he found the space, however, Sothmann knew he was ready to make the leap into working for himself. By then, he had developed an expertise in his trade, gleaned first at the hands of the man who had taken a chance on him as an untrained enthusiast, and then further expanded at a second Montreal shop. “I learned a lot from both guys,” Sothmann says. “All shoemakers have their own ways of approaching problems. They both had different approaches to business and style.”

Sothmann later continued his training in Toronto, taking a two-year specialized program where he learned to fabricate orthopedic bracing and prosthetics.

Orthopedic modifications remain a staple of the services he provides at Kings-



Photo by Chris Miner

ton Shoe Repair, from adding lifts to shoes and boots, to replacing laces with Velcro, widening footwear, or adding rocker soles. Standard repairs like replacing heels and soles, and putting in new zippers take up the bulk of his workdays, however. Sothmann will happily work on both high-end and inexpensive footwear, as long as the repair is worth doing.

“My rule of thumb, generally, is that the repair should be half the cost or less than a new pair, and that the repair will hold up – then it’s worth it if the rest of the shoe is in reasonable shape. If there are five or six small things wrong, then it’s time to think about buying new.”

When he is not working, Sothmann keeps busy with his three young sons and appreciates that his schedule lets him walk them to school in the morn-

ing from their John Street home. He also plays double bass with Kingston Community Strings, and has been known to blast a diverse selection of music or current affairs radio in his store while he works.

Sothmann feels confident that his decision to open his own shop was the right one. “It lets you have control over your workflow, your income and all your decisions,” he says. He is also aware of the role his craftsmanship plays in his success. “Every repair I do has an effect on whether a person will bring me another shoe.” Clearly, they just keep coming.

Kingston Shoe Repair is located at 51 Montreal Street, and is open Tuesday to Friday from 9:30 a.m to 5:00 p.m., and Saturdays from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

www.kingstonshoerepair.com

Restaurant Review

East Side Village

BY ANNIE CLIFFORD & JAMIE SWIFT



The strip mall at Division and Concession isn’t much to look at, but the run of hair salons and anger management programs is framed by two of the finest discount eateries in Kingston: Coffee Way Donuts and East Side Village. Coffee Way’s brilliance needs no explanation – if you don’t know yet how awesome it is, just stop by and it won’t be hard to figure out. We’re here to tell you about East Side Village’s vast selection of East Asian dishes.

We opt for a sit-down lunch on a sunny, cold day. The menu offers an almost unbelievable array of choices. Hard to know how they do it, but from the rhythmic chopping noise coming from the kitchen, they must be doing it themselves.

We start with soup, a deal at \$3.95. A decent-sized bowl features those fat wonton dumplings and chunks of

chicken. “Delicious,” reports Annie. I go for the egg drop soup, thick (cornstarch, I figure) and rich, spiked with a handful of scallions. We move on to shrimp salad rolls, \$6.95 for three plump cylinders stuffed with a fine cucumber julienne, rice noodles...and shrimp. The rolls come with a thick, sweet sauce sprinkled with chopped peanuts.

During lunch a stream of regulars filters into the sunny space that seats about 40. There’s a muted TV, a wooden laughing Buddha, a hokey mural of a beach scene. One couple orders immediately, without consulting the menu. Another tells the server about her daughter’s recent marriage. The tables are big enough for a comfortable meeting, and the vibe mellow enough that a few people are eating alone with their reading.

As our server arrives with the Singapore noodles and the deep-fried tofu

with mixed vegetables, she tells us that the family has been running the Village for some 10 years. A glance at the hours and a quick calculation: 75 hours a week, and that may not be counting some of the prep time. Seven days a week.

(Anyone curious about Chinese eateries in Canada should look to Ann Hui’s recent Chop Suey Nation and what she describes as a “cultural mash-up” of food that’s authentic to the experiences of chefs from all over China. From a restaurant in a Thunder Bay curling rink to a place on Newfoundland’s Fogo Island that’s run by a lone woman who cooks 365 days a year.)

The Village’s Singapore noodles (\$10.95) are fragrantly perfumed with turmeric, the vermicelli-like rice noodles mixed with sweet peppers, shredded pork and

Continued on next page...



Singing Through Change

Global language of music brings neighbourhood together

BY JILL GLATT

Sounds of laughter, clapping, and melodious singing filled the air at Skelton Park Arts Festival (SPAF)'s inaugural Singalong event in April of 2018. The organizing committee had imagined a musical event where people of every age, ethnicity, ability, and background could feel welcomed. Our hope was to bring together the people of Inner Harbour, which is a neighbourhood in flux; a work in progress, to say the least.

Over the past 10 years, the reputation of the area known as “North of Princess” has evolved from one associated with poverty and petty crime to that of an increasingly gentrified community. Long-time residents are finding themselves priced out of housing, and according to 2016 census data, as of 2016, 55.9% of inner harbour residents are spending more than 30% of their household income on shelter – a percentage deemed “unaffordable” by the government of Canada.

Meanwhile, the cultural and linguistic diversity of the community is expanding. 2011–2016 saw 65 recent immigrants arriving to the neighbourhood from countries like the U.K., China, Portugal, and Iran. KEYS Job Centre notes that in December 2018 they welcomed 45 people to Kingston from countries such as Libya, Somalia, Syria,

Iraq, and Eritrea. In the past two years alone, 250 refugees have arrived.

With all of this in mind, we set out to create a free event that the whole neighbourhood would enjoy. We enlisted local musicians to perform, and commissioned local artists to create interactive installations. There were consultations with Feel the Music (a Kingston choir for those who are blind and low-vision) to improve the event's accessibility.

SPAF members pulled together a committee of several other individuals to lend unique perspectives and experi-

“I didn't know the songs they were singing, but it was music – and music is a kind of global language.”

ence, including Bridget Glassco and Ru-faida Alkhabaz of KEYS, and Arabic author, activist, editor, and visual artist Jamal Saeed.

“We were really pleased that SPAF was intentionally reaching out to newcomers to participate in arts-based activities and asking them how the event could be organised in an inclusive way,” says Glassco. “Some of the stu-

dents in our English-language classes and even our job-seekers with backgrounds in the arts [had] a say in how the Singalongs were rolled out.”

Alkhabaz works with the Government-Assisted Refugee Volunteer Initiative to connect volunteers with opportunities. She liked the idea of the Singalong enough that she volunteered herself. “I enjoyed it so much,” she says. “It's the way that people were enjoying the songs, how involved they were, how interactive they were with all the songs [...] as a newcomer to this culture, I didn't know the songs they

were singing, but it was music – and music is a kind of global language.”

Saeed agrees; for him, the arts “bring together people of different cultures.” At the Singalong, Saeed showed participants how to write Arabic calligraphy. This was important to him for two reasons: “The first is to share with others my own talent, my own work, my own culture, the second is actually to see the

[reaction] of the others.” Saeed felt favourably about this reaction. “Everyone asked a question about our situation in Syria, our life, and you feel that the others are warm, are interested... you feel that you are in a big family.”

I reflected upon that statement for a while, and coupled it with my memory of the event. A vivid recollection of sights and sounds: colourful banners strewn about the walls and from the ceiling lights of Calvary United Church. Tables laden with treats, posters, and coloured markers, walls peppered with

Photo by Jonathan Barton.

welcome signs in various languages. Volunteers milling about, setting up chairs, smiling broadly, and looking just a little bit anxious.

Later, as attendees spilled into the tiny church, and Spencer Evans' jazz band strode around the pews and parking lot of the building, I could feel the energy of the crowd swell. Saeed's table was surrounded by a curious crowd waiting to try their hand at calligraphy. Seniors and teenagers alike were filing into the pews, sharing songbooks, and passing around extra chairs. Stepping outside, I watched kids with glittering, painted faces playing road hockey within a haze of misty rain, while “On the Road Again” drifted out through the swinging doors.

This event sought to bring together our increasingly diverse neighbourhood. While it's difficult to quantify our success in increasing our community's engagement and integration, in that moment I did feel a strong sense of acceptance, warmth, and enthusiasm. The group that congregated at Calvary Church consists of the people who allow us to take risks, try new ideas, and enact change in what little ways we can. Inner Harbour may be a work in a progress, but this is a good thing. We are working on it together.

Continued from Page 6...

a few shrimp. Aromatic and delectable. The tofu (\$11.95) offers up a cornucopia of vegetables that includes baby bok choy and crunchy broccoli. Steamed buns arrive, beautifully handmade, and filled with gently sweet sautéed leeks and shredded BBQ pork (\$11.95).

We are stuffed, and ask for take-out containers. Our server informs us that almost all their business is take-out, and after calculating the discount on pick-up orders and the amazing re-heatability of leftovers (Annie had steamed buns for breakfast two days running!), we can tell why. Students in



the know, from nearby Regi or otherwise, can get \$5 student lunch special: fried rice and some chicken balls with that familiar, glistening red sauce, but anyone looking for a relatively healthy, well-priced dinner would do well here.

Of course, dining in with friends is terrific, and the combination of big tables, good service, and sunshine pouring in south facing windows is pretty great. Families be warned, there's no change table, but there is the most amazing thing in the entire strip mall: a STICK-ON MUSTACHE DISPENSER. For an extra \$1, you leave with a full tummy, lunch for tomorrow, and a whole new look.

Your favourite dish?

Participating in the North King's Town Secondary Plan Working Group

BY SUSAN BELYEA

With persistence and optimism perhaps most reminiscent of Charlie Brown and the infamous football, I feel a constant pull to participate in municipal matters and the democratic process. So when the City of Kingston called for community members to sit on its newly formed North King's Town Secondary Plan Working Group in the spring of 2016, I leapt at the chance.

The North King's Town (NKT) study area includes the Inner Harbour and the Old Industrial Area – bounded more or less by John Counter Blvd., Division St., Queen St., and the Cataraqui River. The working group was created largely in response to a fresh wave of opposition to the proposed Wellington Street Extension (WSE) – a plan first formulated in the 1970s to build a north/south express route through Kingston. The southern portion of the WSE would have run along the Cataraqui River, effectively paving over Douglas Fluhrer Park, one of Kingston's last undeveloped waterfront areas. The northern portion would have run adjacent to the new urban portion of the K&P trail, heading northwest up to Elliott & John Counter.

Municipal planning is, at least in theory, guided by the city's Official Plan. Secondary plans act as another layer to the Official Plan and help to clarify issues of land use and design guidelines, transportation, services, and so on to direct the growth of a particular area. Under public pressure to expunge the WSE from the transportation master plan, council ruled that the most appropriate process would be a secondary plan.

While the Working Group's mandate includes other land use and cultural heritage issues, the most important outcome of the process to date has been a shift in transportation planning for the study area. In October 2018, the contracted transportation consultants, ARUP, declared that "the WSE does not present a substantive improvement to the road network's service," and they do not recommend that any part of the WSE be built.

Instead, transportation planning for the area has shifted to prioritize pedestrian, cycling, and transit flow over single-user vehicles. Changes will also be made to some existing roadways for better connectivity. Once the secondary plan is finalized and passed by Council, the WSE will be removed from the Official Plan and the Transportation Master Plan.

The Working Group meets every couple of months, and is made up of two city councillors, staff from the planning department (who facilitate the group with admirable patience), representatives from Heritage Kingston, the accessibility advisory committee, the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority, KEDCO, the Chamber of Commerce, Public Health, a local Indigenous group, and six "community members." Public

information/consultation sessions have been held at each major stage of the process. The secondary plan process is led by DIALOG, a consultant group contracted by the city to shepherd us through the phases of the plan.

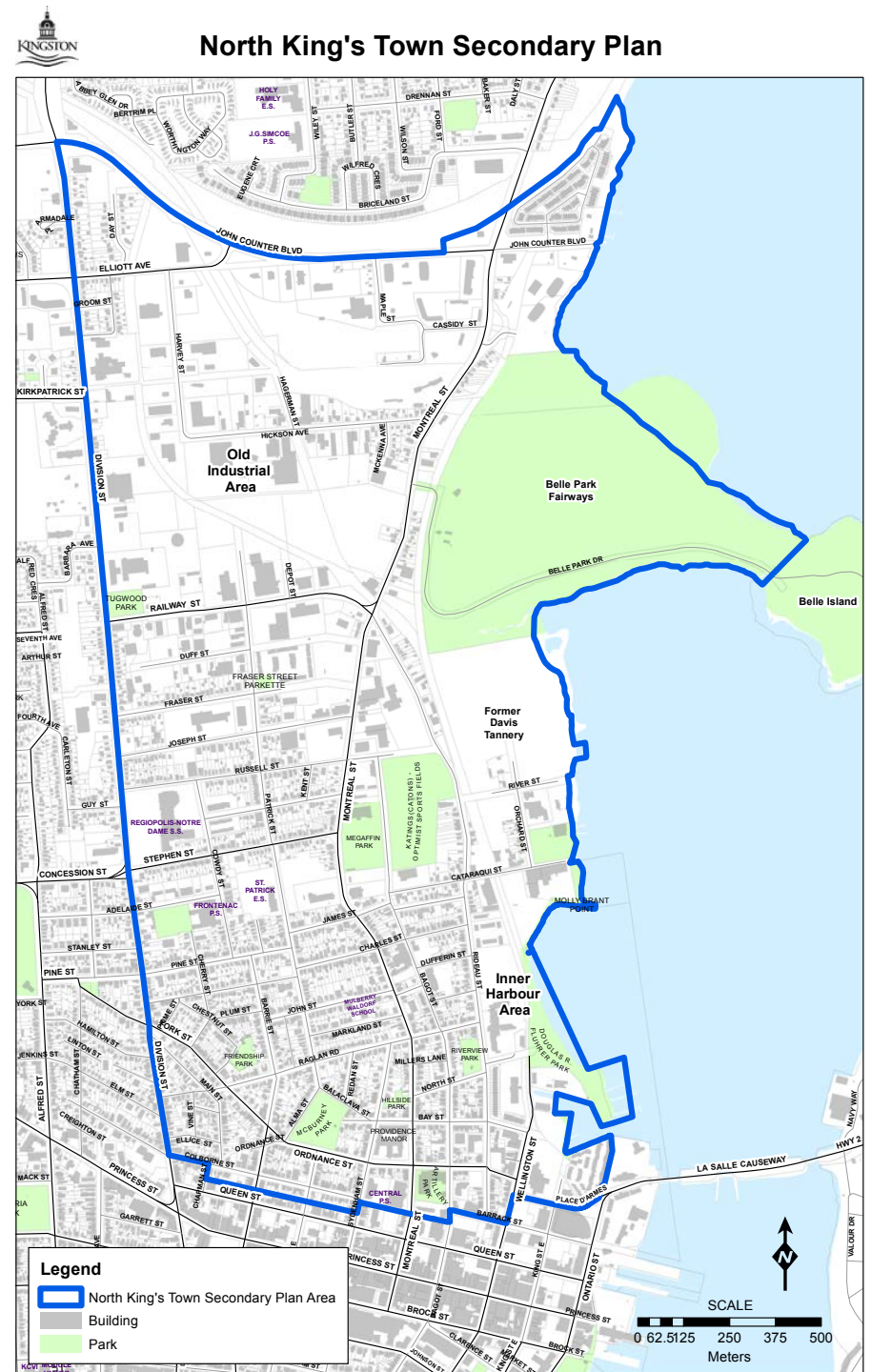
Phase one involved the creation of a community vision and preliminary market analysis. Phase two, currently underway, includes technical studies on land use, transportation, servicing, cultural heritage and financial and implementation analysis. The process has been a long and complex one and the city website gives a good overview of it to date, including a fascinating historic chronology of NKT by Jennifer McKendry.

So what happens now? Some of us came to the group with the priority of stopping the WSE. Others had different priorities in mind. While the WSE seems finally to be off the table, parks and natural spaces, affordable housing, cultural heritage, bike and pedestrian paths and other important issues remain on the agenda as we wind up the second and final phase of the plan.

The public consultation process is complicated and one that the Kingston continues to grapple with. Many are suspicious about the value of city consultation processes, and despite the success of halting the WSE, I admit to my own cynicism from time to time. At times draft material produced by the consultants has been tone-deaf to the key concerns of community members on the Working Group and to information collected at public consultations.

By its very nature, a City-sponsored group such as this has its limitations. Key topics fall outside the mandate of the group, including complex issues of gentrification and housing (in)affordability in the area. We have not done a good job including the perspectives of everyone that should be at the table, including those most affected by high housing prices and people who use the many social service agencies in the study area. The future of Belle Park and of the Third Crossing – both of which are of huge significance to the study area – have their own planning processes, and it is not clear how information about each will be integrated into a coherent plan for the area.

I also remain cynical about the group's ability to shape the look and feel of North King's Town, or to address issues of affordability and available services. We have been asked to envision streetscapes, plantings, and building designs and materials for key areas. While it's fun to think about these, I can't help but look to Williamsville as a cautionary example. Despite 2013 amendments to the Official Plan to incorporate the findings of the Williamsville Main St. Study (2012), private sector developers have consistently been able to ignore or bargain away policies related to the public realm and built form. So much for the envisioned parkettes, green spaces, building set-backs, and façade design features of the study.



The Working Group has been an interesting example of a process that works at least some of the time. We can hope that the city will build on the successes

and challenges faced by this group and work towards developing more democratic and inclusive public engagement processes for planning in Kingston.



How to Make a Poetry Video

BY CLARKE MACKEY AND ARMAND GARNET RUFFO

ART BY ONAGOTTAY

We are all familiar with music videos, but what about a poetry video?

Last spring, eight Kingston filmmakers were asked to create “poetry shorts” based on the work of Kingston poets. These works are included in a documentary about the local poetry scene called *Who is Bruce Kauffman?* Director Clarke Mackey was assigned to work with veteran poet Armand Garnet Ruffo. Even though they both worked at Queen’s University, Clarke and Armand had met only once or twice.

CLARKE: When we first sat down to discuss this project you told me you wanted to write an original poem that would feature Kingston. What you came up with, “On The Day The World Begins Again”, is a perceptive meditation on Indigenous incarceration. Creating a movie based on a poem is always a high wire act. A work that simply represents what the poem describes is boring, but you also don’t want to stray

with you, Onagottay, and other members of the Indigenous community here in Kingston: Vernon Mishiikenh Altiman, our main performer, Bernard Nelson and his beautiful tipis near Seely’s Bay, Maureen Buchanan and everyone else at the Language Nest, and all those who translated the lines into the various Indigenous languages. It is the richness and resilience of this community that I will carry with me when the movie premieres this winter.

ARMAND: The first thing I would like to add is that working with you on this video has been an inspiring experience and a pleasure. It seems to me you approached the project with complete respect for what I was trying to get across, and in lending your expertise and vision to it, you added a rich visual dimension that I hadn’t anticipated. Furthermore, the fact that you pulled in the Kingston Indigenous Language Nest group, got Mishiikenh involved, and incorporated the work of Onagot-

All in all, it was a real community effort. Everyone involved put their heart into it, and I’m thankful to all. A word of thanks should also go to the City of Kingston for initiating the *Who is Bruce Kauffman?* project. It’s a rare for a city to support this kind of a thing. Only big cities like New York and Paris come to mind. I suppose it’s good to think big once in a while. Needless to say I’m very pleased

with the result, and I’m looking forward to the premiere.

[Ed. note: This discussion took place before the film premiered at the Kingston Canadian Film Festival in March 2019. *Who is Bruce Kauffman?* will be screened at the 2019 Skeleton Park Arts Festival in June and Kingston Writers-Fest in September.]

“I’ll never forget the joy in Onagottay’s eyes when we showed him those animations for the first time.”

too far from the poem’s fundamental purpose. Together we came up with the cinematic metaphor of springtime to evoke “the world begins again.” Then we imagined a lone inmate in the Kingston Penitentiary looking through bars at this spring awakening: greys to greens, the brightening sun, the gentle wind, hoped-for release.

Because of the dual themes of nature and the sacred, I suggested that we animate some of the animals in the paintings of local artist Onagottay. Many of his paintings are inspired by the famous birch bark scrolls that record and interpret Ojibway myths. It turned out you and Onagottay share the same language and are friends. I was inexperienced at animation, so it was satisfying for me to play and learn while creating this part of the movie. I’ll never forget the joy in Onagottay’s eyes when we showed him those animations for the first time.

Looking back, the most gratifying part of the whole process for me, as a non-Indigenous media maker, was getting a chance to meet and collaborate

tay really brings a sense of authenticity to the video. That you were willing to listen and figure out how to get across an Indigenous understanding of the issue really shows on the screen.

That said, a poem should never be solely about an issue per se; hence, the poem has an aesthetic grounded in imagery ranging from what I might call “traditions of creation” to grim prison reality and is structured around a series of open-ended questions. In bringing your own aesthetic to the project, as you say, you didn’t just reconstruct what I wrote visually, but added a “slant” to it, and, to my mind, this is certainly the strength of the piece. I really like the way the visuals enhance the poem’s notion of non-closure. For example, because the video is relatively short, your idea of using a prisoner gazing out beyond the prison grounds as a framing device really works well to move the poem to the subjective level. Has this all happened in the space of a couple of minutes inside the prisoner’s head? Again, it’s so interesting to see how your visual interpretation of the poem have brought another interpretative level to it.

On The Day The World Begins Again

By Armand Garnet Ruffo

On the day the world begins again
will it be the strongest animal
the swiftest bird
or the tiniest insect
that carries the news to humankind
announces rebirth in a roar
in a squeak or maybe in silence?

On the day the world begins again
will luminous light
rise from parting clouds
in unquestionable power
and refract a miraculous prism of colour
while the tallest white pine announces peace
in a sprinkling of communion?

On the day the world begins again
will those suspended behind bars
in and between grey ugliness
in their deadened shouts of protest
float beyond their circle of cigarette burns
and crude tattoos
beyond their sharp cries of where
they are and wish they were?

On the day the world begins again
will their re/imagined selves
the shape of thought
the shape of prayer
bend like molten steel
in the fire at the centre of the human heart?
Will they rise beyond themselves
and find their way home?
On the day the world begins again
will the cages open for them?



Painting by:

Onagottay

Photo-Collage by:

Clarke Mackey

Photo by:

Armand Garnet Ruffo

Welcome to *Ready, Set, Discuss*: an ongoing series intended to spark and foster in-person dialogue about issues that really matter to our readers. We have solicited diverse, thoughtful, and in-depth perspectives from some of Kingston's important writers and thinkers to allow a deeper dive into some of the topics that we see as integral to our lives – allowing more thought and analysis than we see possible via online discussions. Whether you agree or disagree with what you read in this section of each issue, we hope you will take the time to read the articles in their entirety, and that they will inspire discussion, debate, and in the end, greater understanding of the context of the community in which we live.

An Idle No More Organizer On Gentrification in Skeleton Park

BY ARIC MCBAY

Krista Flute has lived in the Skeleton Park neighbourhood and north of Princess since the 1990s. And as an Indigenous activist and mother known for her work in Idle No More, she has seen a major shift in the neighbourhood's feel and composition.

"It was more of a mixed income area in the 1990s," says Krista. The Skeleton Park neighbourhood of the time had more small businesses like laundromats, hair salons, and restaurants that many people could afford. Some working-class people operated businesses out of their own homes.

"It didn't feel like my income mattered back then," she explains. "There was a friendlier feel" for low-income people.

What has changed

But things have changed, and Krista mentions several key factors that accelerated the process of gentrification, driving low-income people out of the neighbourhood.

The 1995 election of Mike Harris was a disaster, as the new conservative government attacked social programs and social assistance rates. The child poverty rate in Ontario jumped from 12% in 1994 to 16% in 1996, according to Statistics Canada.

"We still haven't recovered from the Harris years," says Krista, who has been on and off social assistance. Adjusted for cost-of-living, social assistance rates are still only 60% of what they were before Harris (according to Tom Cooper of Hamilton's Roundtable for Poverty Reduction).

Arising student population has also driven displacement of low-income people near downtown. Queen's University had a student population of less than 18,000 in the year 2000. That number has now risen to just shy of 30,000. Ninety-five percent of Queen's students come from outside Kingston, according to Queen's own data, which means that student demand for housing has caused low vacancy rates and helped to drive up rent in Kingston. And the situation was worsened by the closure of many affordable downtown

area stores in the early 2000s, including the S&R department store, Fabri-land, and the No Frills on Bagot Street.

Gentrification now

Gentrification has excluded low-income people from spaces that used to be available to them. Stores like S&R and restaurants like the Sleepless Goat, which were used by people with many different backgrounds, have been replaced by upscale boutiques and cafes.

"My friends and I don't have a place to go hang out," Krista explains.

(This lack of space was worsened by the prolonged closure of Central branch library for renovations. That closure was preceded by a controversy over the library's proposed new Code of Conduct, which many critics called "anti-poor.")

Krista Flute argues that you can't understand gentrification without understanding racism. As the number of affluent people in the neighbourhood has grown, and low-income people have been driven out, Krista has seen both more casual and systemic racism.

"I overheard someone at the wading pool say: 'The type of people in the neighbourhood has drastically improved,'" says Krista. On other occasions, white parents have shooed their children away from playing with Krista's kids, sometimes making racist remarks. "Those kids are dirty," one white parent whispered.

This casual racism has combined with systemic racism by police, and increased police activity has been another change Krista has seen as gentrification has progressed. Often more affluent residents are supportive of increased police presence, says Krista. "It's a surveillance mentality."

That police presence often means more racism. Krista's late partner was once stopped by police after a resident called 911 to report "a native man walking down their street." She knows Black and Indigenous people in the neighbourhood who are stopped and questioned by police on a weekly basis – "carded" – simply for walking to work or doing errands.

A 2005 study showed that Kingston police were far more likely to stop Black and Indigenous people. Since that short-lived study – and the news stories about



This photo (and top right) by Susan Anderson was part of the "KISS" project that featured shopping carts from the soon to be closed NoFrills/Bennett's. Courtesy of swampwardhistory.com.

racial profiling that followed – Kingston Police stopped collecting data. Krista bought her oldest kids Queen's hoodies; when they wear those hoodies, says Krista, her kids don't get carded.

Racism and gentrification

Gentrification often worsens racism, says Krista. "Classism is still acceptable" in society, she says.

That is, you can't tell someone to leave a restaurant because of the colour of their skin. But you can price the food

so that low-income people can't afford it. And since low-income people are more likely to be people of colour, many people of colour get excluded anyway. "Classism equals racism," Krista explains.

In Toronto, for example, high-income neighbourhoods are 73% white, while low-income neighbourhoods are only 31% white, according to a 2018 Toronto Star article.

Gentrification, for Krista, is also an extension of colonialism, the process of privileged and mostly white settlers taking land and resources from Indig-

enous people. “They want the land, but not the people,” she says.

The new, affluent residents may look down on people who use social assistance. But Krista says: “People need to unpack what their wealth means. Settlers are in the biggest welfare state of all time.”

Canada’s land and resources were taken, and continue to be taken, from Indigenous people. That includes everything from the land that Canadian cities are built on to the farms, mines, and forests that provide raw resources and which Canada’s entire economy is based on. In most of Canada, Indigenous people were forced to sign treaties to give up their land but which the Canadian government has not honoured, leaving many Indigenous communities without as much as safe drinking water. And on the West Coast—where land was never ceded by Indigenous peoples—the Canadian government has used (and continues to use) police and the threat of armed force to displace Indigenous people in order to build new pipelines through communities like Unist’ot’en.

In a nutshell, Krista explains: “Canadians are living on wealth stolen from Indigenous people.”

In any case, the effects of gentrification on the Skeleton Park neighbourhood are not new. Indeed, Skeleton Park is literally built on the bones of Irish and Scottish immigrants who died fleeing gentrification and dispossession in Europe in the 1800s.

Those displaced people could go to a whole different continent. But now, says Krista, “There’s nowhere else to go. People can’t even afford to live in Rideau Heights.” And because of rising rents and stagnant social assistance rates, she says, Ontario Works staff is advising mothers with children to move into one-bedroom or bachelor apartments. “It sounds like the 1800s, with tenements and families living in single rooms. But that’s happening again, in this city!”

What to do?

Krista Flute says there are actions people can take, and offers the following advice for more affluent residents north of Princess:

Share wealth. If you have money, don’t sell second hand clothes or bicycles; give them away. Support food sharing through Loving Spoonful. Conversely, she says, “don’t use Salvation Army as treasure hunt.”

Support community gardens in northern part of Skeleton Park neighbourhood. Donate tools or space for community gardening to make sure that everyone has garden space within walking distance.

Don’t move into low-income neighbourhoods just because they are trendy. Krista says you should not settle in low-income neighbourhoods if you can afford to live elsewhere.

Pressure the City to build rent-geared-to-income housing. “Not ‘affordable’ housing,” says Krista. “That just means below market rate.”

If you own a house, consider renting out a basement flat to help alleviate the housing shortage. But don’t ask for criminal record checks or credit checks, says Krista.

If you run a business or organize community events, make sure to welcome low-income people. Have items that lower-income people can afford. Don’t require bathroom keys at restaurants or cafés, and have a place for kids to play for customers without childcare.

Don’t call the cops. If you have a problem, talk to people; and especially don’t call the police on people of colour who are just walking down the street.

Read about racism, and teach your kids about it. Understand racism and challenge it; read articles about racism by people of colour, Krista says. And from a young age, starting at three to four years, teach your kids to notice and resist racism. “Look around your home for story books. Are the majority of the characters white? Are they about kids in nice homes? Or are some of them about kids who live in the country, or in apartments?”

Make friends in your neighbourhood. One of the most important things to do, says Krista, is to make friends with people of different backgrounds in your neighbourhood, especially low-income people. “Talk to them, see what you can do, and what they want.”



Photo by Susan Anderson. Courtesy of swampwardhistory.com



FRILL community garden (2004-2009 - courtesy of Wendy Luella Perkins) on Charles Street .

Anything you would like to add? Now's the time...

In the winter of 2017, a few months after forming, Deux Trois made their first album together on the edge of the “fruit belt” in the Skeleton Park neighbourhood. The band – Nadia Pacey (vocals, drums), Benjamin Nelson (bass) and Ben Webb (guitars) recorded Health at sound artist Matt Rogalsky’s home studio. It captured the intimacy and immediacy of living above the shop, or in this case, making a record within spitting distance of home. Fueled by both collaboration and raw individual vision, the songs express a confidence and clarity free of undue outside influence.

NP: I learned to play drums as we were writing. So the way that I learned and got comfortable with doing it was by treating it like choreography, where my limbs are kind of dancing with the vocal



The Singular Sound of Deux Trois

BY SARAH HARMER

so the drums match my singing patterns. I can’t do fills, I lose confidence in my hands, so the instrumentation has to be pared down. And I think probably because of that, the vocal has room to breathe.

SH: When you were writing, were you influenced by local music or other music you’d seen live?

NP: I went through a long time where I didn’t see a lot of live music. I would say my greatest influence is probably myself, listening to myself. I crave songwriting; I just want to get it out every day. I’ll have a little tune and I’ll need to go home and listen to it to hear what it’s going to sound like as a full piece. Within the past year I think that I’ve started to see more bands because we’re playing with people and I think that has influenced it. When we played on Wolfe Island at the Oscillarium in September, seeing the bands there was really great. I feel like the sounds that I was hearing there have since influenced my writing. These past few months as well – Spotify, the discover playlist.

SH: Do you hear or feel anything of this neighbourhood in your sound?

BN: Alienation and isolation, and the opposite of those two things. Because in Kingston [even] if you want to not see anybody, it’s going to happen no matter what. You walk around town, you’re going to run into somebody you know, which is beautiful, but at the same time can be suffocating. A lot of the lyrics on Health are from Nadia’s solo stuff [Konig] that we re-interpreted into rock ‘n’ roll songs. The record’s kind of spacious and...

BW: Kind of desolate.

BN: I think the fact that we recorded in the winter helped, too.

SH: What do you think this scene is need of?

BN: I think more DIY venues. We only have one now [12CAT – see article, p. 3]

BW: More all-ages show would be great. When I was in high school we were going to Youth For Christ Centre or Next Church and you just don’t see shows happening in places like that anymore, it’s mostly in bars and it just gets kind of tiring being in bars all the time.

NP: Just one other small dingy space that has heat... and a bathroom.

SH: Since releasing Health you’ve toured in Ontario and Quebec with the Vile Bodies.

BW: I feel like they’ve become a really big influence on our music-making as well, nefariously.

NP: Their stage presence and their antics have been inspiring because they’re just ridiculous. They’re just falling all over each other just bleeding and sweating. The way that we perform, we are much more inside. I’m really excited to become a more confident guitarist

(Kingston musician and DJ Laura Kelly will be joining the band on drums this spring)

SH: Do you have plans for making the next album?

NP: It’s going to be live off the floor. I want to record it in a week. We practice twice a week for between six and eight hours. We had a moment where I

laid out as much detail I could on a big sheet of brown [butcher’s] paper and we put that on the wall. I want to have a very good idea of the track listing before we head in... so that we can get the right transitions down and make the album feel good as an album. I had a certain concept in mind for album # 2, which is gonna be a punk R&B record. We want to delve into the spectrum of genre, so go from one end to the other, and figure out how we are going to make them meet in the middle.

BN: It’s happening

NP: It’s actually happening and it feels very, very good.

SH: What do you want to do with it?

NP: I would like to travel with the music. Ideally, we could go and play it everywhere.

Health is available on Spotify and bandcamp; paper EP and 48-page cahier with download on sale at Novel Idea, 156 Princess St.

Emoticon Article Reaction Station



Re-teaching Canadian History

Local course makes exploring Indigenous histories accessible to all

BY JANE KIRBY

When it comes to Indigenous history, most Canadians don't know the truth about their country's past, nor its contemporary manifestations. When confronted with national celebrations of Canada's 150th birthday, Queen's instructor and long-time activist Bob Lovelace sought to address the widespread misinformation he saw among his Canadian neighbours by offering a free, public course exploring the history of Aboriginal/Indigenous people in Canada.

"I've been an activist, I've defended various causes within my own First Nation, but at the end of the day I am a teacher. And I thought, well, most of my neighbours don't have access to what I teach in university," says Lovelace.

The eight-week course, entitled *Understanding Canada's Indigenous/Aboriginal Histories*, explores topics ranging from European contact and initial colonization and nation-building, through to more contemporary conversations around reconciliation and self-governance. The course has been offered in rural communities surrounding Kingston, as well as in Kingston's downtown at the AKA Autonomous Social Centre, a collectively run anti-authoritarian meeting and event space.

Matt Silburn, a collective member with the AKA and a course participant, said the collective reached out to Lovelace about the course as part of its ongoing work supporting Indigenous and anti-colonial struggles. "An Indigenous ally of ours said recently she hadn't seen many events recently with Native People or decolonization as a focus, and we realized she was right," says Silburn. "A long history of engaging in solidarity work is not the same

as continuous work, and while it has remained a focus in our vision and discussions behind the scenes, the critique was valid."

Despite being relatively well-educated in the workings of colonial states, Silburn adds that the course opened his eyes to some of the horrific details buried in Canadian legislation. "Participation reinforced the notion that however much we know, there is more to learn," says Silburn. "As a settler, I have grown up with this history deliberately buried, ignored, and minimized."

For Lovelace, educating students about Indigenous histories is, in part, about helping people understand how interconnected mechanisms of colonization — for example, residential schools — are with the broader social welfare and education systems. He notes that it was changes to the English Poor Act, which turned the administration of poverty over to the state as opposed to charity, that initiated the state's taking responsibility for social order and economic stability.

This need to create economic stability is at the root of the state's oppression of Indigenous peoples. "Aboriginal people have underlying title to land and have historical memory of being attached to that land in an ecological way, and that makes them dangerous," says Lovelace. "Most of Canada's economic infrastructure, or at least the mobility of it in terms of pipelines, railroads and hydroelectric lines, run through unprotected Aboriginal territory. "Most people don't recognize that Aboriginal people are the majority of the population in two-thirds of Canada's landmass."

For Silburn, having these kinds of conversations in Kingston is particularly relevant because it was

here that so many atrocities against Indigenous people were initiated in building the Canadian state. "John A. MacDonald ordered the starving of people on the plains and was an early architect of the residential schools. If these crimes were committed by leaders in Russia or a developing nation, we'd have no problem condemning them," says Silburn. "But they happened here, in the Inner Harbour, and that creates an existential crisis of sorts. The key is, we still benefit from their crimes and we need to dismantle the systems that allow us continued benefit. That will be a lot of work because they remain foundational to settler culture."

For Lovelace, education is the first step in tackling the complexities involved in dismantling the colonial system, and providing educational opportunities like his course outside of the university system allow for people to engage without being asked to perform. "The way forward is for people, families and communities to become more aware, and to live out their morals and ethics in an informed way," says Lovelace. "We've had people march to war and absolutely not know why they are there. I know that education is going to challenge that and open up the light for a lot of people."

For more information about the AKA (the red and black house located at 75 Queen St.), drop by their Radical Library's open hours Mondays from 3:00 (ish) – 8:00 p.m. or Thursdays 5:30 – 7:00 p.m., or check out "AKA Autonomous Social Centre" on facebook. Bob Lovelace plans to offer additional opportunities to take his public course in 2019. If you are interested in future courses, send your name, email address, and phone number to AKA via facebook or at germinations@riseup.net

"Most people don't recognize that Aboriginal people are the majority of the population in two-thirds of Canada's landmass."

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR OUR FALL ISSUE!

**Calliope Collective / Square Dances /
Elizabeth Fry Society / Affordable Housing
and Kingston Ponies Baseball!**

THE SKELETON PRESS

THE PRECISE ORDER OF THINGS

BY ALLISON CHISHOLM

Aries (March 21-April 19)

Today you will accept a favourable trade for a sentimental parlour tune. Push away the chairs to make room for dancing. Raise the glasses and clear the throats. Address the room at large before slipping into the shadows.

Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Watch as your whisper is taken by the wind. Mutter your plea in a foreign language. Shout across the shore. Dip your oar into a pool of dimming light before lowering your anchor.

Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Today your boat may become untethered. Heed the lighthouse beacon. Along the shoreline address a cast of characters, a life-sized duck decoy or your breathless boredom. Consult a survival manual. Avoid your fellow castaways. Obey the downward drift or prepare for choppy waters.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You will achieve the unexpected through a revolution in science or some romantic notion. Put your house in order. Avoid sudden movements. Hide your esteem in a jacket pocket or between the curtain's creases.

Leo (July 23-Aug 22)

Do not hesitate before you cross the road.

Unfold a map.

Roll a die.

Don a scarf.

Avoid a lengthy labour. Escape a painstaking procedure. Study your lines before you speak the gospel.

Virgo (Aug 23-Sept 22)

Pay attention to the myths of ancient cultures. Reject your tea-leaf prophecy. Rearrange the precise order of things and enjoy a fruitful season.

Libra (Sept 23-Oct 22)

You can expect to move slowly and sigh deeply today. Don't dismiss a distant relative. Don't evict a notorious emperor. Sharpen your senses or risk losing everything.

Scorpio (Oct 23-Nov 21)

Make the most of your stronghold and take a sudden leap. Follow an echo through a quiet hallway. Stand below an unlocked window. Rehearse your lines and take a final bow.

Sagittarius (Nov 22-Dec 21)

Today you may decide to sequester your esteem. Consult your astrologist. Expel a weighty sigh. Watch the ripples disperse before jumping into the water.

Capricorn (Dec 22 - Jan 19)

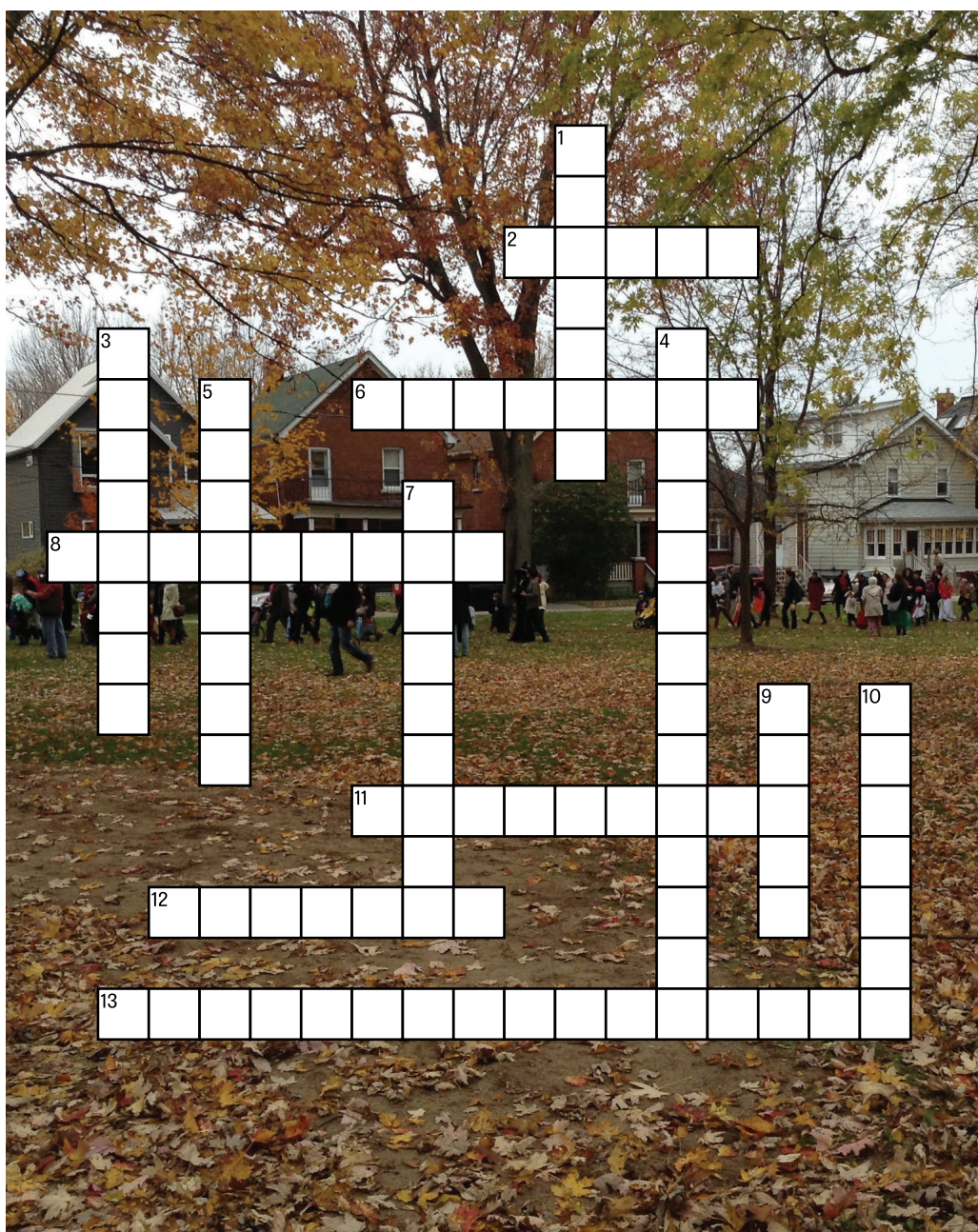
Discard old notions of a setting sun or heavy rain. Bestow a higher honour to a lesser being. Learn a new trick. Share a new song. Explore the place that may prove or overturn your hypothesis.

Aquarius (Jan 20 - Feb 18)

Today you will receive a hearty applause from a sleepy crowd. Pursue a higher cause. Heed your inner voice. Analyze the patterns of fish in a bowl. Obey your calling or take the bait.

Pisces (Feb 19 - March 20)

Today you would be wise to hire a decent stand-in. Before your next move allow the earth to shift and waves to crash. Drink deeply from the grail of perpetuity. At daybreak salute the sky as the first songbird sings her morning chorus.



SKELETON PARK CROSSWORD

BY SARAH TSIANG

Across

- 2 You have 206 of these
- 6 Proper name for a popular park
- 8 Ancient Celtic harvest festival
- 11 A garment that covers the head but not the face
- 12 A stone pillar, typically having a square or rectangular cross section
- 13 A criminal ring that sold bodies to med students

Down

- 1 Also known as the "blue death"
- 3 Mounted gun
- 4 Property values are going up
- 5 Under your skin
- 7 Periods of celebration
- 9 An area of low lying ground where water collects
- 10 Places to hang out and watch the neighbours

Answers in our upcoming Fall Issue!

Urban Forest School - Some of the things we might find!

A B R L T P S P R I N G E S C
 U P I W I M U D W V Q G S T I
 M L S R K C P D X I A R N O G
 O A D C D S H M D B N Q O R A
 N S G O M B N E R L S D W Y R
 S T B L U U Y A N N E E D L E
 T I O D S G G G F H A S O E T
 E C J F H L F M O S S P G A T
 R B T E R A W L A I O R P V E
 P A R K O S D B U K N O O E B
 C G E T O S E E D H S U O S V
 E I E V M W I N T E R T J O T
 H D S N M C S H E L T E R V T
 L S K E L E T O N L P N R S Z

A Forest School in the Skeleton Park Neighbourhood? Who knew?

Regardless of weather, the Kindergarten classes at Central Public School venture outdoors to Skeleton Park, Doug Fluhrer Park or City Park to learn about nature and to build empathy for our natural environment. Returning to the classroom, they reflect on their experience through stories, drawings and imaginative play.

The concept of Forest School originated in Scandinavia in the 1800s and was adopted by philosophers, naturalists and educators in Europe and the UK in the early 1900s. Today, it is widely adopted world-wide for its many benefits including the promotion of self-esteem, the connection between healthy body and mind, love and respect for nature, and the teaching of resiliency and risk-taking.

Shelli Campeau is a long-time neighbour, resident and kindergarten teacher at Central Public School.

Spring	Mud	Lichen	Story
Park	Shelter	Wind	Garbage
Skeleton	Seed	Bird	Cigarette Butt
Doug Fluhrer	Trees	Bug	Plastic Bag
Seasons	Snow	Monster	Dog Poo
Winter	Leaves	Mushroom	Sprout
Cold	Moss	Puddle	

A Home for Everyone

BY PEJA MIDDAUGH
 ILLUSTRATION BY HOLLY GILMOUR

The dragons had absolutely nowhere to go. The world had been cruel to them, taking away what little home they had and replacing it with absolute emptiness. It wasn't something they could live on, and out of self-preservation they had been forced to flee.

The small family was comprised of two parents and two children. They descended from a line of noble beasts: unicorns, griffons, phoenixes and the like. The sad thing was that the magical line was trickling away like sap in the winter and soon there would be almost none of them left. They were going extinct.

The dragons had flown halfway across the world, even the littlest one, whose small green wings wobbled as he flew. But everywhere they went, the humans would yell and scream and make such a racket that they would fly off again. There wasn't a mountain, nook or cranny that the humans hadn't taken over, and there was definitely not a civilized home for a small family of dragons.

They were beginning to lose all hope when they flew over Canada. From the other countries they had visited, they had started to gather that this country was nicer than some. Apparently they were polite and welcoming, and the dragons were hopeful as they descended into the country.

Unluckily for them, as kind as these Canadians were, they were still human, and humans were always scared of the unknown. They fussed and screamed and made just the same amount of racket that drove the dragons away before.

They were just about to leave when the youngest dragon, the one who had such a hard time flying, pointed out a small neighbourhood in the city of Kingston.



"That looks peaceful," he said quietly, fluttering his sparkling green wings. "Maybe... maybe this'll be the right home for us." His parents were doubtful: from the outside there seemed nothing different about this particular neighbourhood, but it couldn't hurt to try.

Stretching their wings, they dove down to the neighbourhood.

"It has a park!" was the first thing the children announced. In fact, the park looked like the main hub of the area, sidewalks ran out of it like spokes on a wheel, and all the houses nearby faced onto it.

The dragons internally winced as they landed, and they stood ready for the attack that always came upon their arrival. But the attack wasn't sudden.

The first door to open revealed a small family like their own, except comprised of humans instead of dragons. They looked scared, no doubt about that, but also curious.

More and more doors and windows opened. Curtains were thrust aside and curious eyes peered out of cars.

The dragons stood in a clump, friendly smiles on their faces as they hopefully

glanced around.

"They're not yelling," remarked the eldest child in a whisper.

"They're not fussing," said the youngest. "And they're definitely not causing a racket" said the parents together.

There was a long, still moment before one of the humans finally spoke. It was a child-human, with wide blue eyes. He couldn't have been over the age of eight, but his words were firm and loud.

"You're dragons," he said. "You're dragons from the books, why are you here?"

The dragons looked at each other; this was the first time humans had done anything but yell at them.

"We're here hoping for a home," said one parent, "We've been searching for months now and no place has offered to take us in. We have nothing to offer, but we're a family just like you and we need a home."

The boy stepped forward, out of the doorway of his home and out onto the sidewalk where the dragons were.

"You're not scary like the dragons in the books. You're just a family." He said it almost as a question to himself as he studied the family in front of him. He looked at them closely and then said, "This is our neighbourhood, and we accept families, no matter where they come from."

His words opened a fountain of sound. The neighbours rushed from their doors and their cars to welcome the new family. They were different, and they had definitely traveled a long way. But here it made no difference; they were families like everyone else and they deserved a home.

SPAF!



The **Skeleton Park Arts Festival** is a charitable organization that organizes a free annual summer solstice celebration held in and around Kingston's historic McBurney Park, popularly known as "Skeleton Park" due to its 19th century history as a cemetery. The multidisciplinary festival showcases artists from Kingston and around the world, in addition to a variety of family and heritage activities.

We're also a year-round, non-profit organization that aims to increase appreciation and access for the arts in Kingston by providing diverse multi-arts programming. Skeleton Park Arts Festival strives to bring together artists from a range of disciplines to present unique and collaborative artistic experiences in a variety of alternative venues while helping to increase community engagement and neighbourhood pride.



Skeleton Park Arts Festival's year-round events take place on traditional Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee territory. We are grateful to be able to live and celebrate art on these lands. The Ka'tarohkwi Indigenous community continues to reflect the area's Anishinaabek and Haudenosaunee roots.



Clockwise from top left:
Witch Prophet, Burundi Drummers, Skeye Projects,
The Rheostatics, Anishinaabe Hoop Dancer Nimkii Osawamick
Porch Jazz Parade and What Cheer? Brigade

Photos by Jonathan Barton. Photo of The Rheostatics by Michael C Duguay.