

# THE SKELETON PRESS

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 a community. SHARE THIS PAPER! PASS IT ON!

FALL ISSUE 2019

n.2

FREE

THE

E A ^ A

T



H E P

T

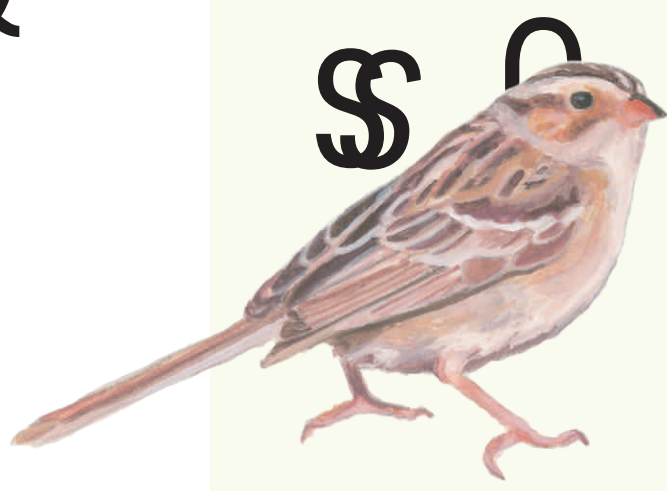
G

&

R

E

I



S

N

G



calliope collective  
 young square dancers  
 doulas of kingston  
 ponies baseball  
 affordable housing?  
 keys newcomers  
 teepee shelter  
 voice of mtl street  
 most famous store

featuring artist chantal rousseau

# con tributors



**KEYS NEWCOMER SERVICES / P. 13**

The KEYS Newcomer Services team works with immigrants, refugees and other newcomers to support (re)settlement, find meaningful employment and improve language skills while promoting inclusion and building community in Kingston.



**STEVEN HEIGHTON / P. 12**

Steven is a local writer who has lived in the Skeleton Park neighbourhood for over 20 years. His most recent books are the Governor General's Award-winning poetry collection *The Waking Comes Late* and a novel, *The Nightingale Won't Let You Sleep*. His 2006 novel *Afterlands* is now in pre-production for film. Heighton is also a fiction reviewer for the *New York Times Book Review*.



**SADIQA DE MEIJER / P. 14**

Sadiqa is a neighbourhood writer whose work has appeared in *The Walrus*, *Brick*, and *Poetry* magazines.



**HEIDI MACK / P. 14/16**

Heidi loves and contributes to the vibe of our eccentric community through street photography, loving old houses back to life, and making coffee for the 'hood.



**ALLISON CHISHOLM / P. 15**

Allison lives and writes in Kingston, Ontario. Her poetry has appeared in *The Northern Testicle Review*, the Puddles of Sky chap-poem *The Dollhouse*, *The Week Shall Inherit The Verse*, and the Proper Tales Press chapbook *On the Count of One*. She played glockenspiel in the Hawaiian-dream-pop band SCUB. Her most recent book, *On the Count of None*, was released by Anvil Press in 2018. Her photography has been exhibited in the Tiniest Gallery.



**MARK STOLLER / P. 16**

Mark is a new resident to Kingston and a researcher in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. He also designs and builds websites.



**MEREDITH DAULT / P. 4**

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



**JANE KIRKBY / P. 6**

Jane is a writer and the author of the book *Fired Up About Reproductive Rights*.



**SKOT CALDWELL / P. 14**

Skot has loved living around Skeleton Park for about 25 years. He finds it odd writing about himself in the third person.



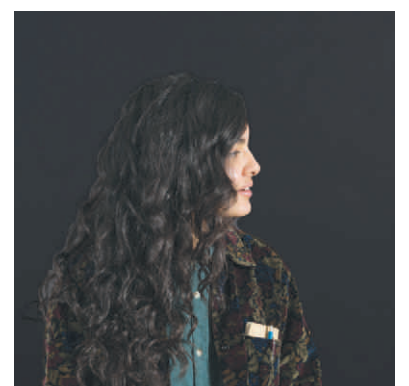
**JAMIE SWIFT / P. 10/11**

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



**ANNIE CLIFFORD / P. 5**

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



**JILL GLATT / P. 15**

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

## TAKE TWO!

We are thrilled to present you with the second issue of *The Skeleton Press*. This was meant to be our pilot project year and we couldn't be happier with how this year has unfolded.

We set out to spark an inclusive, slow moving conversation about our neighbourhood. We wanted a free newspaper that people could share with friends and neighbours while helping to strengthen our sense of place and each other.

One of the things we love most about this paper is that it is free for all readers. As you'll see this fall, affordability and accessibility are huge parts of what we think our neighbourhood wants to talk about—this issue highlights some incredible activities in our community that cost nothing at all (square dancing; art exhibits; minor league baseball; performances by the Calliope Collective), as well as some really important work being done to make sure people have access to things such as affordable housing and pre- and post-natal doula care.

We want *The Skeleton Press* to continue to be part of the list of amazing free resources in our 'hood, and to be able to keep sharing stories from many different voices about what interests our readers most.

Our next goal is to continue to bring you this paper beyond our inaugural year, and to do that, we need your help!

The Community Foundation for Kingston & Area has generously sponsored our pilot project year and their support is now ending.

We'd like to keep the paper free and full of interesting stories and art, rather than advertising, so we are now in search of patrons who can help keep *The Skeleton Press* in print for 2020 and beyond.

You can make a one-time or monthly financial donation and will receive a receipt for tax purposes. Please visit our charitable organization's website [skeletonparkartsfest.ca](http://skeletonparkartsfest.ca) and click DONATE.

Let's continue to share stories. Let's take two, three, four, five, six... and let's keep it free for all.

t h e  
s k e l  
e t o n  
p r e s  
s

## WE'D 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.

[INFO@SKELETONPARKARTS.ORG](mailto:INFO@SKELETONPARKARTS.ORG)

## THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS!

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR KINGSTON & AREA FOR PROVIDING FUNDING FOR THIS NEWSPAPER.



**Community Foundation**  
for Kingston & Area

Thank you *Tone Deaf Kingston* for co-presenting our fall issue launch party.

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

*Kingston Community Health Centres* (263 Weller)

*The Elm Cafe* (303 Montreal)

*Novel Idea* (156 Princess)

*Kingston Frontenac Public Library* (Rideau Heights & Central Branches)

*Kingston Community House* (99 York)

*Home Base Housing* (540 Montreal)

*Something Else Records* (207 Wellington)

s t a  
f f

### Editors

GREG TILSON

KATE ARCHIBALD-CROSS

### Art Direction / Graphic Design

KATHLEEN DUMAS

NEIL BETTNEY

VINCENT PEREZ

### Volunteer Proofreaders

VAL HAMILTON

MATT ROGALSKY

COVER IMAGES BY CHANTAL ROUSSEAU'S BORING BIRDS OF KINGSTON COLLECTION (TOP TO BOTTOM):

LARK SPARROW,  
WATERCOLOUR ON PAPER, 10 X 14, 2017

ALDER FLYCATCHER,  
WATERCOLOUR ON PAPER, 10 X 14, 2019

CLAY COLOURED SPARROW,  
WATERCOLOUR ON PAPER, 10 X 14, 2017

# CALLIOPE COLLECTIVE

Celebrating the artistry inspired by the changing of the seasons

BY MEREDITH DAULT

I had never imagined being a long-legged tree spirit. I had not anticipated being a stag either, for that matter, but then (lucky for us) we live in the kind of city where these sorts of opportunities come up. I was cast in both roles by the members of the Calliope Collective, a non-profit arts group dedicated to producing interdisciplinary events exploring our relationship to the land. Formed in 2016, they are best known for their fantastic summer and winter solstice performances, which generally culminate in pantomime battles between the larger-than-life Holly and Oak Kings (a nod here to Celtic mythology and other earth-based religions) duking it out for supremacy as the seasons turn.

Since their first winter solstice performance at Douglas Fluhrer Park in December 2017, the Calliope Collective has engaged scores of community members to bring their stories to life, and has performed for hundreds more. I was one of the Holly King's stags in that first show. We wore light-up antlers and fur cuffs and had an excellent time prancing around Next Church at rehearsals. At that time, we still did not entirely know what we were in for. But when the crowds starting gathering for the first winter solstice performance on that frigid December night, it was clear that the Calliope Collective magic was working. Hundreds of people turned up to mark the longest night that year, collectively honouring the ground upon which we stood and preparing to welcome back the sun (and a period traditionally said to be ruled by the Oak King).

Each non-denominational solstice performance since has been even more opulent and magical. Tricia Knowles, who serves as Calliope's artistic director, is deeply committed to creative place-making, a practice that uses art to bring growth and transformation to communities. And while the events largely draw on volunteer talent, Knowles and her collective members, Josh Lyon, Anna Sudac and Emberley Doherty (founding member Justine Scala stepped down in early 2019) are also intent on paying as many profes-

sional artists as possible, whether it's to offer supporting workshops or to perform in the show. The 2019 summer solstice performance, for example, drew on the talents of the Kingston Circus Arts troupe and the Kingston Stilts (with whom I perform), among others, while also offering workshops in mask-making and acro dance.

But Calliope's events are not simply about spectacle. By marking the changing of the seasons, they also ask us to pause, together with our friends and neighbours, to acknowledge the passing of time and our relationship to the land upon which we live, work and play. In the winter, audience members are asked to consider what it is that they want to release and make room for as the

***Calliope's events ask us to pause, together with our friends and neighbours, to acknowledge the passing of time and our relationship to the land upon which we live, work and play.***

season transitions from darkness to light. In the summer, we practice gratitude and are asked to think about those things we feel grateful for, particularly as they relate to the earth. This year, I stood atop my stilts in my role as a tree spirit and watched as the members of my community joined hands and participated in a circle dance in the setting sun to mark the longest day of the year. I felt grateful for all of it.

*This year's winter solstice events, including creative workshops, will begin on December 1<sup>st</sup> and will culminate in a performance on the night of the winter solstice, December 21<sup>st</sup>. For more information, and to get involved, visit:*

[www.calliopecollective.com](http://www.calliopecollective.com)



PHOTO BY TIM FORBES/FORBES PHOTOGRAPHER  
PUPPET HEAD DESIGN BY CALLIOPE COLLECTIVE & CLELIA SCALA



PHOTOS BY RANDY DEKLEINE STIMPSON



ILLUSTRATIONS BY FLORIANA EHNINGER-CUERVO

# BOW TO YOUR PARTNER

Young local players help keep square dancing a thriving past-time

BY ANNIE CLIFFORD



What's a square dance? Depends who you ask, but around here it means a social dance, with steps and figures based on European group folk dances, in which a caller prompts groups of two or four or eight or more dancers into patterns looping around one another. Sometimes it's called contradance, sometimes it's called set dancing, but no matter the name, it beats the prom, and you don't have to dress up.

Kingston has a healthy history of organized community dances, from the more recent Movement Market Dance Collective to established swing dance and ballroom clubs. For square dancing, both the Harp of Tara Irish society and the Limestone Dancers arrange regular dance opportunities that are grounded in deep Celtic traditions, and are open to anyone who'd like to participate. Here in the Skeleton Park neighbourhood, SPAF has been hosting "square dances" that showcase social dance traditions from a variety

of backgrounds, including Metis, American and French Balfolk. Musicians have come from out of town to play at these dances, and usually invite local musicians to join in making the music for the dance.

Recently, SPAF partnered with the Old-Time Fiddle Club at Central Public School to host a square dance where Central students

***"To have parents and professional musicians come into the school to share with the kids, and then have the fiddle group play for their community, is really something special."***

played with experienced musicians. Joshua Siegwart, a grade 4/5 teacher at Central, wrote to *Skeleton Press* about how leading the Fiddle Club stems from his involvement with music during his own school years: "Growing up, my family was unable to afford music lessons and so I

have the school music program to thank for making music and the violin accessible to me. Those early music lessons were the foundation of a life-long love of playing music. To have parents and professional musicians come into the school to share with the kids, and then have the fiddle group play for their community, is really something special."

*Skeleton Press* spoke with Simone Scala-Conley, a grade 5 student at Central Public School and fiddle club member, over some oatmeal cookies. Simone's mum Clelia was there too.

**SPAF:** Simone, you take private lessons, and you also play with the fiddle club, which is a group that plays music for dances. How are these experiences different or similar to one another?

**Simone:** In violin, it's just me and my teacher. At the fiddle club, I help teach and can follow along more. I have very good teachers in both and I have fun with both.

**SPAF:** What was it like, playing at a dance? Mr. Siegwart made your class do dances – what's it like, playing for dances and dancing in a square dance?

**Simone:** It was fun watching people dance to the music. I felt really proud to be able to share music with everyone. Dancing is fun, and it's better being partners with my friends. That includes my mum.

**Clelia:** I love that the fiddle club has given Simone... [to Simone:] can I be honest? Violin has always been a struggle, because she doesn't really enjoy practicing. I wanted Simone to learn an instrument because I think it's nice to be able to retreat into the arts, to have that thing for yourself. It gives her an opportunity to see how music can be this fun, social thing. And I like that Central has funding to buy violins for kids whose families don't have the resources to buy one.

**SPAF:** Simone, Fiddle Club's performing name is the Flaming Chicken String Band. What does it feel like to be part of a band that plays dance music?

**Simone:** Super awesome!

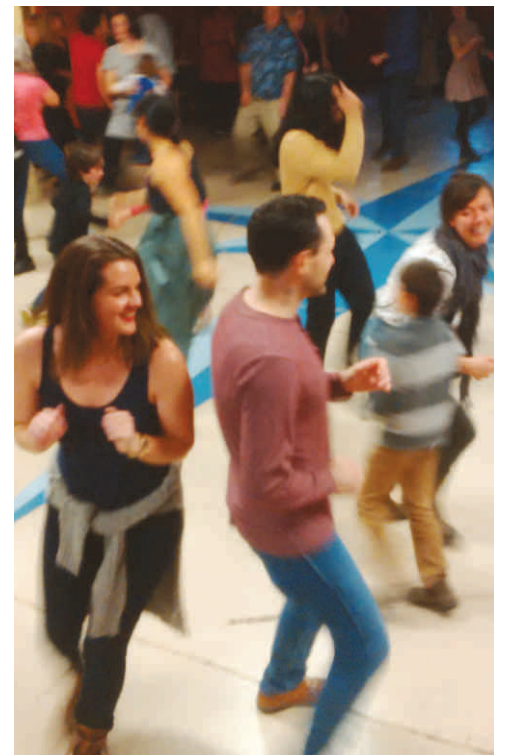


PHOTO COURTESY OF SPAF

Stay tuned to [skeletonparkartsfest.ca](http://skeletonparkartsfest.ca) for the next neighbourhood dance. Dancers of all ages and abilities are welcome. If you would like to dance, but have limited mobility or special needs, please contact SPAF at [info@skeletonparkarts.org](mailto:info@skeletonparkarts.org) and we will make sure you can participate in a comfortable way.



PHOTO BY CLELIA SCALA



PHOTO BY CADE PENTLAND-BOYCE

# You Deserve A Doula



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DOULA SUPPORT FOUNDATION

Local group hopes to make doula support universally accessible

BY JANE KIRBY

Having recently given birth to my first child, I've fielded many questions about my labour, birth, and, particularly, my decision to work with a doula: *Why did I get one? What did they do?*

Before becoming pregnant, I also had these questions. I thought that having extra support during pregnancy, birth and post-partum would undoubtedly be nice, but that doula support was an unnecessary luxury available only to those who could afford it.

Now I can't imagine not having a doula, and believe everyone should be able to have the emotional, physical and practical support provided by doulas on their journey through pregnancy and beyond.

Such is the mission behind the Doula Support Foundation: To ensure everyone who wants a doula can access one.

Started by a collective of local doulas who wanted to network and raise the profiles of doulas in Kingston, the Doula Support Foundation is a new non-profit organization that aims to make doula services more accessible in Kingston. "The more we talked about it, the more we realized that we all had this vision to be able to offer doula care to anyone who wanted it," says Laura

Pascoe, the organization's chairperson (and, incidentally, my doula).

While a basic package of pregnancy, birth and post-partum doula support in Kingston typically runs \$600-\$900, the Foundation offers doula services on a sliding scale for people with incomes under \$40,000.

"The people who right now are accessing doulas in this neighborhood are the ones who can afford it, and they absolutely benefit from that care," says Pascoe. "But the folks who, especially in a context of gentrification, are increasingly in precarious situations are those who stand to benefit the most."

Pascoe notes that doula care is linked to improved health outcomes for both the pregnant person and the baby, and that evidence suggests that doula support reduces the risk of post-partum mood disorders and improves breastfeeding relationships.

***Doula care is linked to improved health outcomes for both the pregnant person and the baby, and ... reduces the risk of post-partum mood disorders and improves breastfeeding relationships.***

Among those who might particularly benefit from doula care are those facing mental health and addiction challenges or who have faced other kinds of oppressions. "For folks struggling with those issues, you're going to get a lot of stigma and discrimination challenges in your life generally, but when you're pregnant it's a whole other gamut," says Pascoe. "A doula is someone whose primary concern is the pregnant person, rather than the baby. When someone faces mental health and

addiction challenges everyone — whether doctors or CAS — is worried about the baby. We want to make sure that the pregnant person is cared for and feels supported."

The Foundation's EMPOWER stream is specifically designed to be accessible to individuals who self-identify as facing these challenges, and to provide them with the additional support they might need. "A lot of doulas don't typically see this clientele, so we wanted to make sure we had doulas who were specifically trained to work with these issues," says Pascoe.



The commitment to providing non-judgmental support to all pregnant people extends to supporting people through all outcomes of pregnancy. The Doula Support Foundation is a full-spectrum organization, meaning they support people not only

through labour and birth, but also through pregnancy loss and termination.

Loss and termination services are provided to everyone regardless of income. "I came to doula work with a passion around reproductive justice, with a passion for allowing women and people who reproduce to have the ability to choose what happens with their bodies. And that includes when, if and how they have children. We also support pregnant folks in the right to parent their own children," says Pascoe. "So it doesn't really matter what the outcome of pregnancy is — if it's something they wish wasn't happening, we have their back."

Pascoe notes that including bereavement and loss doulas in the non-profit was crucial, because doulas doing this work undergo in-depth training and assume huge emotional burdens, but are often not compensated for their work. In fact, paying doulas rather than asking them to provide their services pro bono is central to the Doula Support Foundation's mission. "As a female-dominated profession which cares for women and gender nonconforming folks on their pregnancy and birth journey, doulas are often undervalued and underpaid," says Pascoe. "As such, it is important to us that doulas are fairly compensated for their work, while still providing care to those who cannot afford it."

Ultimately, the Doula Support Foundation aims to build a model of doula care that is both sustainable and accessible. "I want people to know that doula support is for everyone," says Pascoe. "Whether that means you need a shoulder to cry on or someone to rub your back while you are in labour, as doulas we're trying to put that power and control, that choice, back into the pregnant person's hands."

**THE LEMON BUCKET  
ORKESTRA  
&  
THE WEATHER STATION**

WITH OPENING ACT:  
*The Gertrudes*

LOCATION:

**The Spire**

82 SYDENHAM ST  
KINGSTON, ON

DOORS OPEN:

**6:30 PM**

CONCERT STARTS  
7PM



**LIVE IN KINGSTON!  
NOV 23RD**



A Benefit Concert for  
The Doula Support Foundation

# ROOT! ROOT! ROOT!

## FOR THE HOME TEAM

BY GREG TILSON

It's hard work running a baseball club. Nobody knows this better than Kingston Ponies' baseball team manager Doug Graham and his son, Ross, who is the team's player-coach.

Doug worries about the future of his team. The Ponies play in the National Capital Baseball League, and the league's wide geographical spread means that away games can often mean players return home past 1:00 a.m. following a double-header. He says, "It's tough for the players to commit to road games, especially when they have full-time jobs and families." Ross often struggles to fill the Ponies' away-game rosters and now that he's about to get married (as Doug says), he "is wondering if the game has lost the sense of fun it used to have for [him]."

across the street from The Beer Store.

It wasn't always this way. Tom Carty coached the Ponies for over 10 years starting in the 1990s, and with the help of manager John Knapp, worked hard to recruit "good young players" from Kingston men's leagues who were free to travel on the weekends.

"We played the guys who were willing to travel. We made it competitive and always travelled with at least 15 players [as opposed to some teams who traveled with only nine players]," says Carty. "We were running them like crazy, playing Ontario Baseball Association and Canadian American Association tournaments, and in both we were able to win some championships in the late '90s."

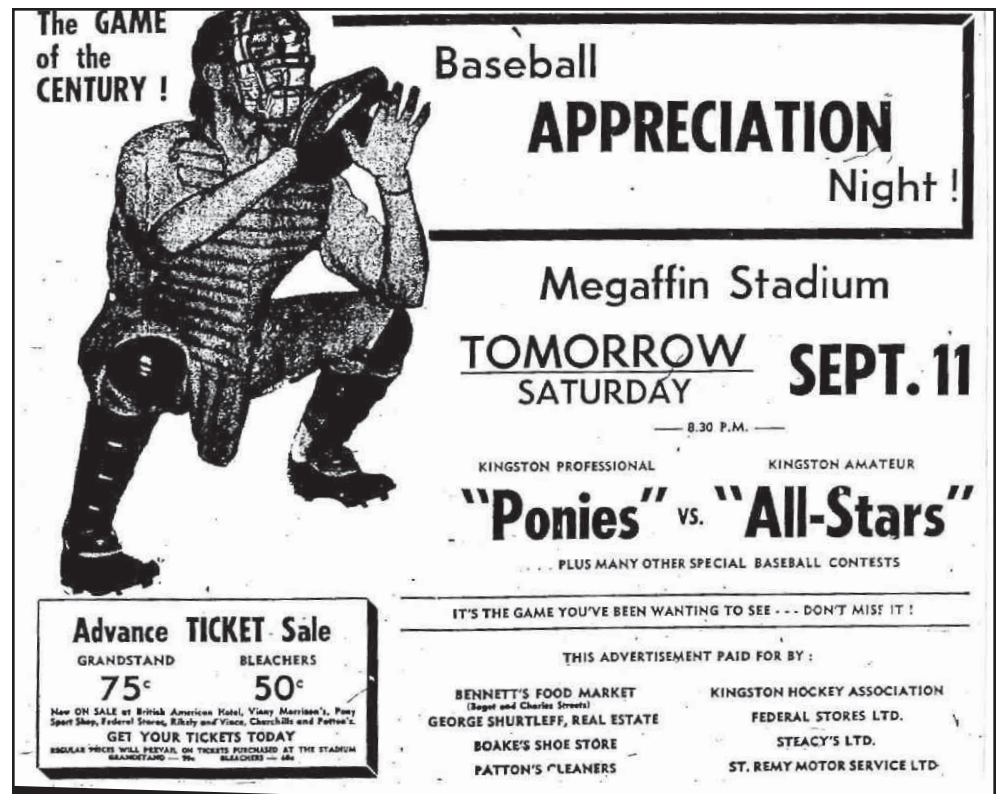


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE KINGSTON PONIES

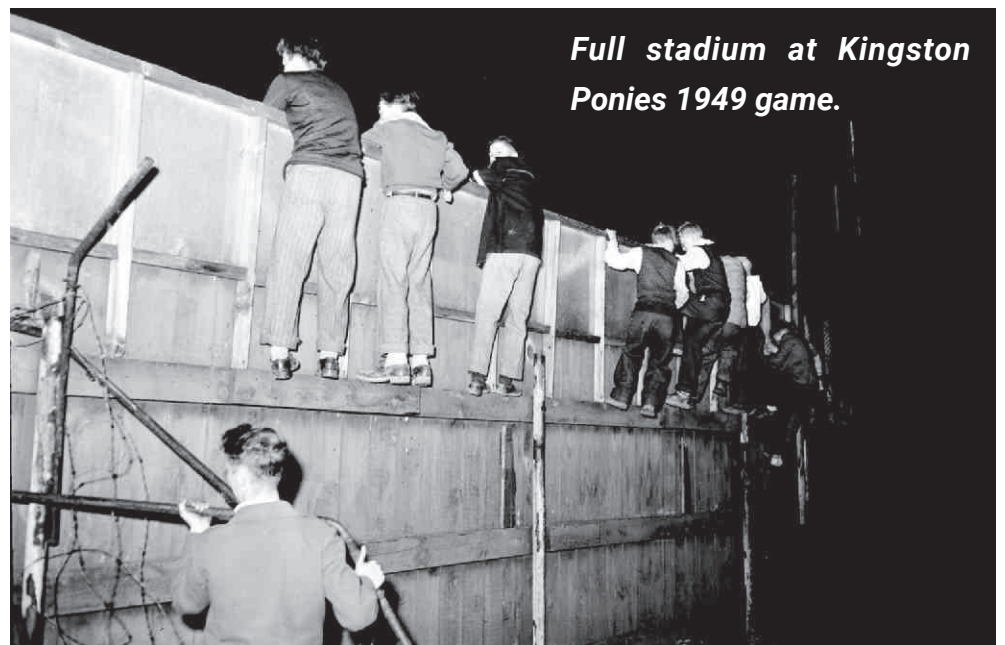
### Ross Graham with members of the Kingston Colts

Home games are not without their struggles, either. The Ponies play about 12 games per season at Kingston's historic Megaffin Field (just beyond the corner of Montreal and Stephen Street), and these are drawing only a handful of local fans these days, although you can always find a rowdy group of hecklers just beyond the centre-field fence and

Carty also remembers some home games at Megaffin Field with over 1,500 fans. "You've got to have local players who people know," says Carty. "Today there are a lot of players from out of town who also play for Queen's University, but are not as connected to the community."



ARCHIVE BASEBALL PROGRAM COURTESY OF TOM CARTY



QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES, GEORGE LILLEY FONDS, LOCATOR V25.5-8-412

Carty believes you also need a broad base of people for a successful baseball club. "Get the community involved and bring out the kids from the younger teams [like the Kingston Colts and Thunder] to see the Ponies play. Give them free food! They may want to try out some day."

Doug Graham could certainly use some more community involvement. His home-game announcer and DJ didn't even show up at the beginning of the 2019 season.

### There seems to be a general sense of yearning by players and fans for "the golden years" of Kingston baseball.

Doug is doing the brunt of the Ponies' work: filling out paperwork for tournaments, keeping stats, booking Megaffin Field for home games and practices, and communicating with patrons, sponsors and City officials.

Doug is also having trouble finding community volunteers to run the canteen (which these days consists of BBQ hot dogs, a table with Wonder buns and a couple of bottles of ketchup and mustard), take care of the field and, in general, help organize the team. Following the 2019 season, Doug intends to call a Ponies organizational meeting to assess who is still committed to keeping the team alive.

There seems to be a general sense of yearning by players and fans for "the golden years" of Kingston baseball, back when the Ponies were a farm team for the Boston Braves of the National League in the 1940s.

To help put this era into perspective, Joe DiMaggio was in his sixth season in 1941 and won the Major League MVP Award that year. Ted Williams was in his third year and finished second to Di Maggio in MVP voting. In those days, Megaffin Stadium's wooden grandstands and bleachers would regularly be filled with thousands of baseball fans who adored their Ponies, including the famous Pony pitcher, Art Cook.

The Grahams are not afraid of the hard work needed to bring back the kind of passion for Kingston baseball from decades past, but admit they can't do it alone.

*The Ponies' regular season starts after the May long weekend and wraps up mid-August for play-offs. If you're interested in volunteering for the Kingston Ponies in any way, please contact Doug Graham at [grahamdagger47@gmail.com](mailto:grahamdagger47@gmail.com). For more information about the team and upcoming games, visit [kingstonponiesbaseball.com](http://kingstonponiesbaseball.com).*

# Boring Birds of Kingston.

## An Interview with Chantal Rousseau

The Skeleton Press spoke with local artist Chantal Rousseau in anticipation of her upcoming exhibit Boring Birds of Kingston which will be at the The Elm Café (303 Montreal Street) from December 2019 – March 2020.

- 
- 

### Boring Birds of Kingston // Birds that Eat Snails with Snails

BY GREG TILSON

Chantal is a Kingston-based artist, currently living near the Elm Café. Her work has been exhibited across Canada and internationally, including Hallwalls Institute of Contemporary Art, Buffalo, Widget Art Gallery, The Wrong – New Digital Art Biennale, Canadian Cultural Centre, Paris, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston, The New Gallery, Calgary, Latitude 53, Edmonton, Mercer Union, Toronto, and La Centrale, Montreal. Her work was featured as GIF of the Day on the New York art blog Art F City in 2014.

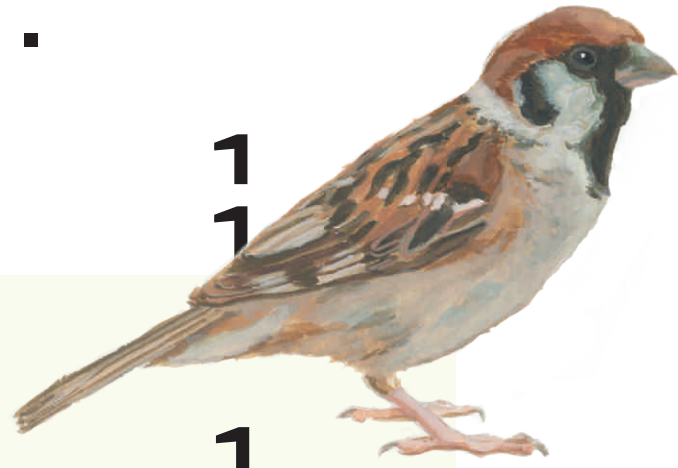
Chantal Rousseau has been involved in multiple artist collectives, including the Agitated Plover Salon, a group of Kingston-based artists who exhibited in non-traditional spaces in 2013 to 2014, as well as the Toronto-based collective Personal Volare, who were active from 2000 to 2009. She is a graduate of the University of Guelph (MFA), and Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design (BFA). For more information about exhibiting at the café, visit [skeletonparkartsfest.ca](http://skeletonparkartsfest.ca)

BIRD IMAGES BY CHANTAL ROUSSEAU (LEFT TO RIGHT):

BORING BIRDS OF KINGSTON: HOUSE SPARROW, 10 X 14, 2017

BIRDS THAT EAT SNAILS WITH SNAILS: ROBIN, 10 X 14, 2018

BIRDS THAT EAT SNAILS WITH SNAILS: HERMIT THRUSH, 10 X 14, 2018



1  
1  
1

Can you tell us about your interest in urban nature?

Having primarily lived in mid to large-sized cities, my interest in urban nature comes from a shift in thinking about nature as a place that one escapes to, to taking the opportunity to notice what is living in our neighbourhoods, and being surprised by the results.



2

What inspired "Boring Birds of Kingston" & "Birds that Eat Snails with Snails"?

In part, the series Boring Birds of Kingston was inspired by an offhand comment my mother made when I was younger. We were camping in the Rockies, and some stranger asked her if she could identify a bird that flew past—her response, without missing a beat was, "I don't do brown birds." I have always respected her decision to only take bird identification so far.

When I discovered the Check-list of the Birds of Kingston produced by the Kingston Field Naturalists, the idea for this project came together. It is in part a testament to the difficulty in differentiating similar-looking birds, but also a celebration of wildlife around us in the city, and a tongue in cheek reference to the

hierarchy of what we may consider interesting.

I started the series with sparrows, because I was surprised by the fact that there are around 17 different types that are regular to this area, and because sparrows are often dismissed as they are so ubiquitous in urban settings. For the show at the Elm Café, I am adding some small green and brown birds that practically indistinguishable, and am currently painting flycatchers.

Birds that Eat Snails with Snails came out of a small obsession with garden snails, and is ambiguous as to whether it is a peaceable kingdom moment or the moment before the predator and prey relationship plays out.





PHOTO COURTESY OF CHANTAL ROUSSEAU

3

Are you influenced by other artists who focus on urban nature?

Dave Gordon, a local Kingston artist, had a wonderful series of watercolours up at the Elm Café. While they weren't about urban nature per se, they were incredibly beautifully observed and rendered depictions of our community, and were inspiring in their focus on the local as a subject matter.



5

4

Can you share any experiences (of yours or other residents) with birds or other urban nature in the Skeleton Park neighbourhood that relate to your work?

I've been very lucky to have a backyard for much of my time in Kingston, and the opportunity to notice the natural changes that take place over the course of the year. There are the comings and goings of neighbourhood birds, the sparrows and cardinals that stay throughout the seasons, the goldfinches that migrate away in the fall, and the juncos that seem to arrive in time for winter. A robin once nested on my front porch, a flock of grackles used the backyard as their daycare, some baby sparrows ate my lettuce, and a merlin ate some of the sparrows. In these recent works, I am interested in featuring some of these species that we share our space with.



5

Do "Boring Birds of Kingston" & "Birds that Eat Snails with Snails" relate to your other work?

Much of my work is humorous, and often depicts landscapes, animals and birds. I often work from memes, such as the gifs Meowls, Cat in a Shark Costume Riding a Roomba and Chasing a Duck, or Cat vs Chicken and Cat vs Watermelon. I am interested in how different communities use and interact with the natural world, such as Heavy Metal Landscape, a gif/animation based on footage from two heavy metal fans head banging by the fire in Algonquin Park. You can see these, and other projects, on my website:

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



# READY / SET

BY JAMIE SWIFT

As part of our ongoing Ready/Set/Discuss series, we explore why we can no longer afford the roofs over our heads

“At almost every meeting someone is crying,” says Caitlin Hannah. The former restaurant server and mother of two has been part of a new tenants’ rights organization for several months now. The Katarokwi (Kingston) Union of Tenants (KUT) aims to rebalance the local political forces that Hannah figures are heavily weighted towards property developers and landlords.

Hannah, 40, lives in a north-end high-rise where she pays \$1,250 plus utilities for a small apartment. She’s been sleeping on the living room floor there for two years. Her children, a nine-year-old girl and a boy, six, each have their own bedroom. She hasn’t opened the windows for 18 months.

“I don’t want anyone to live in housing where there are knives and drugs,” she says. The building’s owner, a massive outfit with rental properties in some 50 cities across Canada, calls the building “the perfect urban sanctuary.”

This past summer the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) published an alarming report about Canada’s rental market. It shows that the affordable housing crisis that recently gave rise to the KUT and the City’s Task Force on Housing is rooted firmly in a grim reality that so many working class people in Kingston face every time they look for shelter.

The research study, *Unaccommodating*, links Canadian rental housing costs to what people like Hannah actually earn. In Canada, the affordability red line is 30 per cent. So if you pay more than a third of your income on housing, it’s no longer considered affordable. The CCPA report calculates what it calls the “rental wage”—what workers need to earn and the number of hours they need to put in to live in an affordable apartment. It’s worth noting that the rental wages are based on full-time work, something many people mired in precarious (part-time, contract or temporary) work can only dream of.

In Kingston the rental wage for a two-bedroom apartment is \$23.08 per hour. And one would need to work 66 hours per week at the minimum wage (stuck at \$14.00 hourly) to rent an affordable place. There are no neighbourhoods in Kingston where a minimum wage worker can afford a two-bedroom apartment.

Four of Canada’s largest occupations are food servers, kitchen workers, cashiers and retail salespersons, and even people working full-time in those low-wage jobs are still shut out of affordable housing.

For years Caitlin Hannah waited on tables in up-market downtown restaurants where it’s easy to drop a hundred dollars on dinner for two. “People are living in squalor in a city where there’s so much money,” she says, recalling her volunteer work in elementary schools where children arrived without lunches, wearing ragged, unwashed clothing. She didn’t need the CCPA report to explain how Kingston typifies the savage inequalities that divide Canadians.

“The system is not workable for people like me trying to work our way out of poverty,” she says, adding that she is on “total server burnout.” She is studying for a Registered Practical Nurse certification.

As for the new tenant union, KUT, she simply shrugs. “There has to be more control of landlords.”

Kingston landlord Ben Pilon has a different take on the rental scene. He wants a faster process to get rid of problem tenants.

“It’s not good for me as the owner of the building,” he explains, describing the difference between people like Hannah and a troublesome minority. “The other tenants are good, hardworking men and women, people who are single moms or single dads. They’re having to listen to people at four in the morning who have a drug addiction

problem. They might not have the option to move.”

Pilon is working on what he hopes will be an affordable housing project at Rideau and Montreal streets. Though he wants loosened landlord/tenant regulations and is firmly opposed to government being directly involved in social housing provision, he will proceed with the project if there’s a public subsidy.

Pilon, who has multiple renovated units in the Skeleton Park area, admits he has no solution to the nagging gentrification issue.

It’s easy to attempt to deal with thorny issues of housing affordability, bound up as it is with precarious low-wage labour, by tossing out the term “gentrification.” And by blaming people with higher-wage jobs for moving into the Skeleton Park neighborhood’s overheated market. Individualistic analysis seems like a dead end.

The problem is straightforward: market failure. Unregulated capitalism is simply unable to provide affordable housing. Period. Developers will not and cannot build decent, affordable housing unless the rest of us assure their profits via the tax system.

It’s all about public policy. Between 1980 and 1993, affordable rental units made up, on average, half of new rental units. Most depended on state subsidy. Then, as



## / DISCUSS

neoliberalism—the privatization, let-the-market-decide mania—gained momentum, the money dried up.

Prominent tenants' rights and social justice activist Tara Kainer raised her three sons as a single mom in Kingston's near north end (on both Russell and Sydenham Streets). Her neighbours included many retirees and people working in retail and trucking. She's frustrated by the way things have unfolded locally.

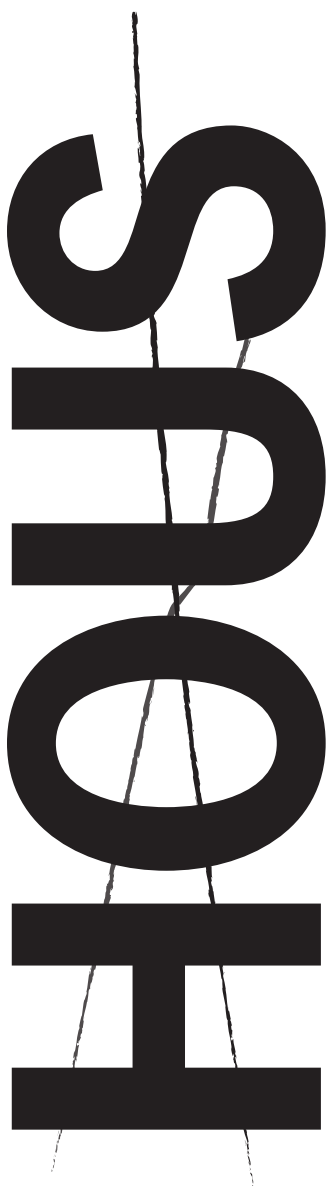
"No one seems to even acknowledge that low income people are no longer able to live in good neighborhoods," she says.

Kainer was quick to tell City Council that the Mayor's Task Force on Housing initially excluded tenants, favouring private market real estate operators. The Mayor and staff scrambled to cover up their embarrassing gaffe by appointing Kainer and another tenant to the group.

"It speaks volumes that they initially did not even consider appointing tenants," she says.

Speaking of volume, as long as the loudest voices in political discussions around affordable housing remain market actors and their political allies, the future may well reflect the recent past. But if initiatives like the Katarokwi Union of Tenants gain momentum—and federal money keeps flowing after the fall election—things could change.

*As The Skeleton Press went to press, we learned that Caitlin Hannah had managed to secure better accommodation for her family.*



## types of affordable housing

Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association, 2015.

### Non-profit housing

Rental housing for low and moderate income individuals and families, built by the province, a municipality, or by a community group. Most tenants pay rent that geared towards their income, others pay rent that's at the low end of private market rent.

*E.g. Kingston Frontenac Housing Corporation*

### Private market condo rentals

In major cities, there has been a decline in the building of new, purpose-built rental housing.

Rental condos, owned by investors and rented to tenants, are the fastest growing segment of Ontario's rental housing sector. These units tend to be priced above purpose-built rental housing and serve middle and high-income households.

### Homeownership

Owning a home is an attractive option for many households. Options include single and multi-family homes and prices vary by location and quality. Affordable ownership options may be available.

### Secondary suites

Emerging as a private-market option for affordable housing. These units are created on the same land as a private home, perhaps in a basement, on an upper floor, above a garage, or detached from the home. The homeowner acts as the landlord and charges rent to the tenant based on the local housing market.



### Emergency housing

Provides shelter and accommodation for short periods of time and serves people who are homeless, displaced, or who are fleeing violence or abuse.

*E.g. In From the Cold & Lily's Place Emergency Shelters*

### Supportive housing

Permanent housing for people who need assistance (personal support services, medical assistance, counselling) to live independently. Supportive housing may house people who are elderly or who have disabilities, addictions, or mental illness.

*E.g. Elizabeth Fry Society*

### Private market purpose-built rental housing

Housing that's been built for the purpose of renting to tenants is called a 'purpose-built rental.' Apartment buildings are a common type of purpose-built rental. This housing is owned by an individual or a private company and may be managed by the owner or by a hired property manager. Units vary widely based on location, age and condition of the building. The owner of the property sets the amount to be paid for rent based on the local housing market.

### Cooperative housing

Provides housing for people with low and moderate incomes. Residents contribute their time towards the upkeep of the building(s) and the governance of the co-op. Some tenants pay rent that's geared to income; the rest pay market rent. Some units may be modified for seniors or for people with disabilities.

*E.g. Kingston Cooperative Homes*

### Transitional housing

Offers a bridge between emergency and permanent housing, often for a specified time period. Transitional housing may serve people leaving homelessness, people leaving the corrections system, or families receiving specialized supports.

*E.g. Dawn House*

### Rooming houses or congregate living

Residents rent out single rooms and share common kitchens, bathrooms, and living spaces. Depending on a resident's needs, this kind of housing may be permanent or transitional.

*For a comprehensive list of social housing resources in the City of Kingston, visit [cityofkingston.ca/residents/community-services/housing/social/access](http://cityofkingston.ca/residents/community-services/housing/social/access)*

# CHRISTMAS WORK DETAIL, SAMOS

BY STEVEN HEIGHTON

عيد ميلاد مجيد \*



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SPAF

## Caligraphy Artist Jamal Saeed

Jamal Saeed is an Arabic author, editor, visual artist, Arabic calligrapher and translator. He had his first art show at age 17 in Syria, and his short story collection, *Sun's Crazy Girl*, was published in 1993. He spent about 12 years in prison as a prisoner of conscience, and during that time, led activities using materials such as cigarettes boxes, olive and date cores when they were available.

In the olive grove on the high ground, facing west  
into rain, we dig graves for three men drowned  
in the straits—Syrians, maybe, dispossessed  
of everything by the sea, so there's no knowing

for sure. This much you can say for any grave,  
it's landlocked. And these men will lie a decent  
distance uphill, out of sight of the beach  
where on Sunday their bodies washed ashore

in plausible orange life-vests (ten Euros each)  
packed with sawdust, bubble wrap, rags. These rains  
haven't softened the soil, yet digging up here  
feels only right; the waves that buried them

terrified them first, and we guess, again,  
that they—like the ones the crossing didn't kill—  
were from desert towns, this sea inconceivable  
as the Arctic. And each cardboard casket,

awaiting its patient passenger, looks  
almost seaworthy after the cut-rate raft  
they fled in, and which, deflated, washed in  
after them, silent, as if shyly contrite.

It seems we've failed them, despite the safe graves.  
In a grove this untended the ground is brined  
bitter with black fruit rotting, and on islands  
nowhere is far enough from the waves.

\*--Arabic for Happy birth feast, or Merry Christmas



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ORONTES GUITAR QUARTET

# The Orontes Quartet: Music and Community of a Displaced People

BY THE KEYS  
NEWCOMER  
SERVICES TEAM

It was a beautiful June afternoon as the sweet notes of classical guitar washed over the audience at the Skeleton Park Arts Festival. Co-presented by KEYS Job Centre's Newcomer Services, The Orontes Quartet, classically-trained Syrian guitarists, were celebrating beauty on a Kingston stage through a wide range of musical styles, from classical, jazz and flamenco to romantic, blues and country.

The group was brought to Canada by the Institute of International Education's Artist Protection Fund, a grants program that connects threatened artists with host institutions in safe countries where they can continue their work and plan for their futures. The Orontes Quartet are the first Canadian-based recipients of this prestigious fellowship grant.

The festival audience was reflective of Kingston's growing diversity, with many members of the Syrian community who came to enjoy the quartet's performance.

Indeed, since Kingston was selected as a destination for Government-Assisted Refugees in 2016, KEYS Job Centre and Kingston Community Health Centres (KCHC) have helped to welcome more than 300 refugees, forcibly displaced from their homes in countries such as Syria, Somalia and Burundi. Another 150+ refugees have arrived in Kingston through private sponsorship.

Vital to the local resettlement effort are the Kingstonians who have volunteered on family support teams. The role of these volunteers is to support newcomer families through their transition and to help them with everyday tasks of life in Canada. It's a

***As these new Kingstonians settle into their homes and adjust to life in Canada, they share the economic, social and cultural assets they have brought with them.***

neighbourly role, to draw newcomers into the community and build friendships, and many residents of the Skeleton Park neighbourhood have contributed in this meaningful way.

Some of the many newcomers who have recently found community in the Skeleton Park area include:

- A young Iraqi man preparing to enter post-secondary studies in Kingston who filled numerous volunteer roles over the course of the festival.

- A mom of four whose kids played all day with their friends from Central Public School while she spent the festival selling beautiful handmade wares as part of the BAG project ([www.beginnagainingroup.ca](http://www.beginnagainingroup.ca)).

- Two Syrian architects who worked with and were mentored by established architects from the neighbourhood.

As these new Kingstonians settle into their homes and adjust to life in Canada, they share the economic, social and cultural assets they have brought with them. Research shows that welcoming refugees has a net economic benefit for host countries and communities, but more importantly, it is a moral obligation

and an issue of justice that drives the staff and volunteers of KEYS Job Centre to participate in resettlement efforts.

As the global refugee crisis rages on with more than 65 million people around the world forced from their homes and xenophobia on the rise all around us, here in this corner of the world we have the opportunity to build community and make meaningful connections across difference. We are reminded through these interactions, as through the music of The Orontes Quartet, of how much we gain when we open our hearts to one another.

## THE SKELETON PRESS

SPRING ISSUE 2020

WELLINGTON X  
PHONE BOOTHS &  
CELL PHONES  
HONOURING  
BELLE ISLAND

NORTH OF PRINCESS  
RECORDING STUDIO  
TURTLES  
BIKE THEFT  
HIP HOP CULTURE

k e e  
p a n  
e y e  
o u t

# Shelter from the Storm



## Elizabeth Fry Society to add a teepee to its comforting surroundings

BY SADIQA DE MEIJER

IMAGES BY CLARKE MACKEY

The peaceful backyard on Charles Street runs the length of three houses, and includes raised vegetable gardens, generous flower beds, chairs gathered under a maple tree, a smoking corner, and a barbecue. Soon it will also become the home of a ceremonial teepee, as well as a site for sweat lodges. This is the home of the Elizabeth Fry Society (EFS) of Kingston, and the three adjacent houses are its residential facility, administrative centre, and the community programming centre called the

WE Hub ("WE" stands for Women Empowered).

Kathryn Londry, the EFS Director of Housing Services, whose work with the organization spans 35 years, gives me a tour of each building. The interiors are bright and welcoming. We pass a private room, comfortably furnished with couches and pieces of art, where two women are immersed in conversation. On the blue chalkboard wall of the WE Hub community kitchen, people have written messages of encouragement and dignity.

A couple of students on placement are at work in the classroom-sized space, where tasks include organizing the Friday communal lunch, as well as coordinating the take-away food program. I ask them what they would like people to know about the centre, and their response is one I will hear again from others, including Londry herself: the EFS serves all women. The organization's range of housing, food, personal and

**[Elizabeth Fry Society's] housing, food, personal and professional development, mental health care, and spirituality services are not reserved for those who have been in conflict with the law.**

professional development, mental health care, and spirituality services are not, as is often assumed, reserved for those who have been in conflict with the law. Under the current realities of Kingston's housing crisis, profoundly inadequate rates of social assistance, and a minimum wage that the Ontario Living Wage Network confirms is below the living wage, this resource is important community knowledge.

Furthermore, the idea of service is multi-directional in this space; clients speak of the meaningful difference the organization has made in their lives, while volunteers and students describe the effect on them in

the same words. The atmosphere strikes me as one of mutual respect.

The soon-to-be constructed teepee is envisioned as a safe and culturally appropriate place of healing for Indigenous women. This will be a significant progression in the EFS offerings, as the majority of current clients are Indigenous, and there have been fewer opportunities for ceremonial gatherings since the loss of the Katarokwi

Native Friendship Centre in 2015. Although the teepee itself is based on Cree practices and teachings, the site will host ceremonies from various Indigenous cultures, reflecting the diversity of Kingston's community. Examples include a strawberry ceremony, in honour and remembrance of the thousands of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, as well as moon and water ceremonies, drawing variously on Ojibway and Kanien'kehá:ka traditions.

*The project will begin this fall, and gives all the more reason to pay the EFS a visit. Whether you are looking to engage with the center as a client, volunteer, donor, or some of each, their doors are open.*

*They can be reached at 613-544-1744, info@efrykingston.ca, by Facebook or in person.*



PAINTING BY HEIDI MACK

Sometimes I think that the gravitational centre of this neighbourhood is, not Skeleton Park, but a lawn chair on the corner of Montreal and Markland. You probably know the one I mean. In it sits Kathleen Chepizak, ultra-neighbour. I'd like to tip my hat to her.

Aside from several months of snow-imposed hibernation, Kathleen can be found sitting out front, sporting a wide-brimmed sun hat or a kerchief and scarf. She might, on a given day, be enjoying some cheese puffs or ice cream, but much of the time she sits and watches, greets and chats. Next to her is a second chair, in which a passerby might settle. Kathleen is a one-woman social media platform—that "media" being good old face-to-face human interaction. If that particular engine in your life needs some revving, you could do worse than a pit stop at Kathleen's Corner.

Kathleen has lived at this address her whole long life. Her father, "Mike" Chepizak, arrived in Kingston from the Ukraine in the '30s and worked in the shipyards. His boss had a family connection in Manitoba's large Ukrainian population. In the way of things, he wrote to them saying he might have a prospect for their daughter. "So my mother came all the way from Manitoba and met him and they married!" A photograph of that wedding prominently graces Kathleen's shelf.

Mike worked through the war in the shipyards and the family lived for a time on the farm in Teulon, Manitoba before he saved enough to secure the little house that Kathleen now sits in front of. His plan, to run a shoemaker's shop and live upstairs, saw them through decades. "He put us

through school with that shoe repair shop." An article on her wall from the 1980s profiles Mike, by then well-known in the community. She tells me that following the war her father, having confirmed his parents were still alive, sewed money into the sole of a pair of shoes and sent it to the Ukraine. Kathleen never met these grandparents. It's hard to capture Kathleen's voice in print.

Her stories flow in extended exclamations unobscured by passing traffic. When asked about changes to the neighbourhood, she rhymes off, "That" (the plaza across the street) "was Jack Robinson's Service store! And that" (a few houses down Montreal) "was Mrs. Hughes' boarding house, and that was McCain's grocery store" (on the corner of John) "and down there was McDonald's Shoe Store and they sold clothing too!" And of course, the Blaneys at Raglan, still here and still good neighbours to her. "I got to know all the neighbours," says Kathleen, "Because I canvassed for cancer for ten years. People would say, 'Are you the shoemaker's daughter?'"

But Kathleen's real currency is the present. If you pass by regularly, she will get to know you or your children, the news of your days and weeks and years, and let you know who else is celebrating or ailing, moving or marrying. She will feed your "doggie" a treat (don't bother resisting). Your news will enter her stream and the neighbourhood's—not as gossip but as messages of genuine caring.

Kathleen wears her church-learned values

***Kathleen wears her church-learned values without pretense or exhortation: look out for people; take care of and rely on each other; be thankful.***

without pretense or exhortation: look out for people; take care of and rely on each other; be thankful. Along with our neighbours, Kathleen has shared the triumphs and trials of our lives with interest and compassion. Many times she has dropped off a card from her extensive supply when she hears there's a birthday or illness or as a thank you for some help. (Several neighbours have had to resort to anonymously clearing her snow in the dark so she didn't immediately trudge up the uncleared street to drop off a thank-you card). Her legs trouble her these days, so more likely she'll shout you down as you go by.

Kathleen lives outwardly. She has amplified for us the richness and the responsibility of living in a neighbourhood. We are left thankful for this place and for her. Her example might nudge us all to step over the lines that make us "strangers," to raise our eyes to the folks around us and ask,

"HOW ARE YOU?"

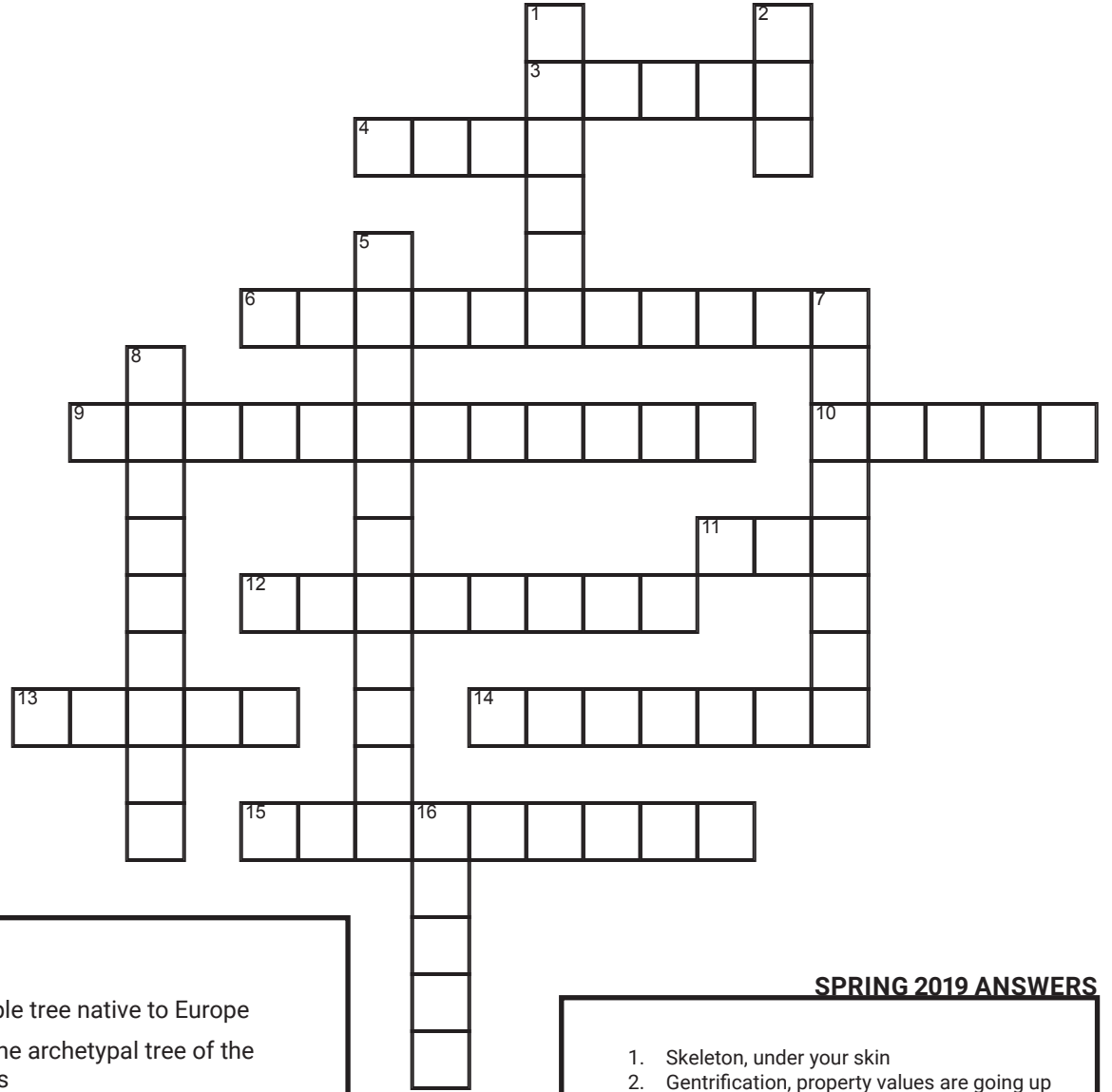
## Why Kathleen Chepizak is an "ultra-neighbour"

BY SKOT CALDWELL



# CROSSWORD

BY JILL GLATT



**CROSSWORD CLUES**

**ACROSS**

- 3. Leaves that are generally egg-shaped, with the broader portion towards the base.
- 4. The oak is the sacred tree of this Norse god
- 6. This deciduous conifer is the archetypal tree of the southern bayous
- 9. Another name for the juneberry/saskatoonberry tree (2 words)
- 10. A small group of trees
- 11. This native tree species shares a name with a cafe on Charles St.
- 12. Smaller leaf units which form a compound leaf
- 13. The fruit of the oak tree, a smooth oval nut in a rough cup-shaped base
- 14. Leaf margins with continuous, sharp, forward-pointing teeth, like the blade of a rip saw
- 15. This hickory tree produces bitter, inedible nuts (2 words)

**DOWN**

- 1. A variety of maple tree native to Europe
- 2. This conifer is the archetypal tree of the southern bayous
- 5. This tree's latin name is juglans nigra. Its fruits are commonly eaten as a nut (2 words)
- 7. This tree's name is derived from the greek term sukomoros, from sukon 'fig' and moron 'mulberry'
- 8. A tree which sheds its leaves annually
- 16. The main body of the tree

*Find these answers in our upcoming Spring Issue!*

**SPRING 2019 ANSWERS**

- 1. Skeleton, under your skin
- 2. Gentrification, property values are going up
- 3. Swamp, an area of low-lying, uncultivated ground where water collects
- 4. Festivals, period of celebrations
- 5. Halloween, ancient celtic harvest festival
- 6. Bones, you have 206 of these
- 7. McBurney, haunted park
- 8. Cholera, also known as the blue death
- 9. Balaclava, a garment that covers the head but not the face
- 10. Ordnance, mounted guns
- 11. Resurrectionists, a criminal ring that sold bodies to med students
- 12. Obelisk, a stone pillar, typically having a square or rectangular cross section
- 13. Porches, places to hang out and watch the neighbours.

# THE PRECISE ORDER OF THINGS

BY ALLISON CHISHOLM

**ARIES**

Your stars align when you peer into the well. Call to your reflection, wait for the response.

**TAURUS**

Today your deck will shuffle. Watch for the sleight of hand. Barter your winnings before you up the ante.

**GEMINI**

Obstacles may stand in your way. Toil in the field. Labour in the sun. Bring your harvest to market. Revel in your bounty.

**CANCER**

You will find yourself woven into a poem. Uncover the hidden narrative tucked between the pages.

**LEO**

Be discreet in your business dealings today. Consider trading your possessions For a dose of curiosity a heavy sigh a long reprise.

**VIRGO**

You may be faced with a problem you did not expect. This is the eye of the storm. Unknot the knots. Reverse a spell. Breathe helium. Speak your truth.

**LIBRA**

Trade and bargaining on are the horizon. A bright future is in store. Don't be shy. Make your voice heard. The day itself is made for celebration.

**SCORPIO**

The pace of change is speeding up. Try your hardest when the stakes are low. Despite overwhelming odds, your victory is assured.

**SAGITTARIUS**

While stars clamour around on this side of the world an unexpected voyage unfolds.

**CAPRICORN**

Avoid close encounters with a distant relative. Glance in both directions. Be prepared for things to worsen before they improve.

**AQUARIUS**

Today you will move slowly and sigh deeply. Tip your hat those who look on. Iron your shirt and hem your pants. Collect each misplaced coin. Place them in your misplaced pocket.

**PISCES**

Embrace a fallen neighbour or a misplaced narrative. Slip into a lengthy labour or a life of crime.

# CLOSE & IN-BETWEEN

The Store Famous fulfills a need like no other place can

BY MARK STOLLER

"Every convenience store is different," says Paul, owner of The Store Famous at Barrie and York. "Every store has its own story."

If you're a regular at The Store Famous, you probably know Paul's friendly smile and his name, and he probably knows yours.

"It's always nice to call them by name," he says. "That's important for a convenience store."

There is a feeling of continuity to stores like Paul's; a place where as a kid you might stretch a dollar into an afternoon's worth of candy, freezies, and gum. But continuity requires change, a reality that links The Store Famous to the evolving tastes of Skeleton Park. As Paul explains, what places like The Store Famous are contending with are changing ideas of convenience itself.

"It's not always easy," he says. "With stores like this, you have to change, but not too quickly. You try to find the balance between bringing in new things, but also keeping those that you know regular customers want."

Change is part of the longer history of the location at 406 Barrie. Over the past 100 years, it's been a shoe repair shop, a dry goods store, a sporting goods store, a women's clothier, an upholsterer, and a fish market. It has also been Tozer's Grocery, Campbell's Grocery, Albert's Grocery, and Joana's Grocery. The Store Famous has been there since 1989-'90.

Paul is the third owner of the store, and even since taking over in 2012 he has seen the neighbourhood evolve.

"When you say community, the whole place has changed now," he says referring to the growing numbers of students and faculty from Queen's who are living north of Princess. "There are more youngsters buying property and all that. So things are changing."

**"You have to change, but not too quickly. You try to find the balance between bringing in new things, but also keeping those that you know regular customers want."**

Many of these changes have brought small grocers into closer competition with places like Metro,

Loblaws, and Shoppers Drug Mart. Larger stores used to be closed on Sundays, he explains, but are now open 24 hours, 7 days per week.

"These are all usually family stores, so in the past the money would go into the family," Paul also notes. Fewer stores are family-operated than before.

Mostly, Paul has noticed changes in people's tastes and product purchases. Declining cigarette sales, especially, but also the rise of sugar-free drinks are among these. Yet like many small grocers, Paul has limited control over a property that he does not own. Having only one store means he is also limited in his ability to purchase in bulk, or to move product between stores. This limitation is a main reason why the model of convenience stores now



PAINTING BY HEIDI MACK

favours outlets like Circle K, which operates numerous locations around Kingston.

Paul hopes to be able to sell beer in the near future. "That's a big thing," he says. Adding beer is mostly a matter of creating fridge space and requires no major changes to utilities. "Of course, there are so many varieties of beer, and it is important to get a good price. But this is definitely a good option for convenience stores."

Small grocers are also situated between those who want to one-stop shop at larger retailers, and those who will pay for the added convenience of home delivery and ordering online, something he says many new students are accustomed to.

"People will buy a burger and pay extra to avoid line-ups," he says, citing the popularity of delivery services like UberEats and Skip the Dishes. "That's how things are now." Changes around the community present challenges that

Paul contemplates all the time. For the many people who pass The Store Famous each day, what would it take to make stopping in a part of their routine? But he also knows that many continue to value the personal interactions, particularly as places like Metro and Loblaws move to automated check-outs.

"That's one of the best parts of the job," he says of seeing familiar faces. "At the end of the day, they want to support you."

"Every year is a challenge," he says, smiling. "But I like the challenge."

*The Store Famous is located at 406 Barrie. It is open Monday to Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 9:30 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. – 9:30 p.m.; and Sunday, 9 a.m. – 8 p.m.*