

The River

A HISTORY UNKNOWN TO MOST OF US

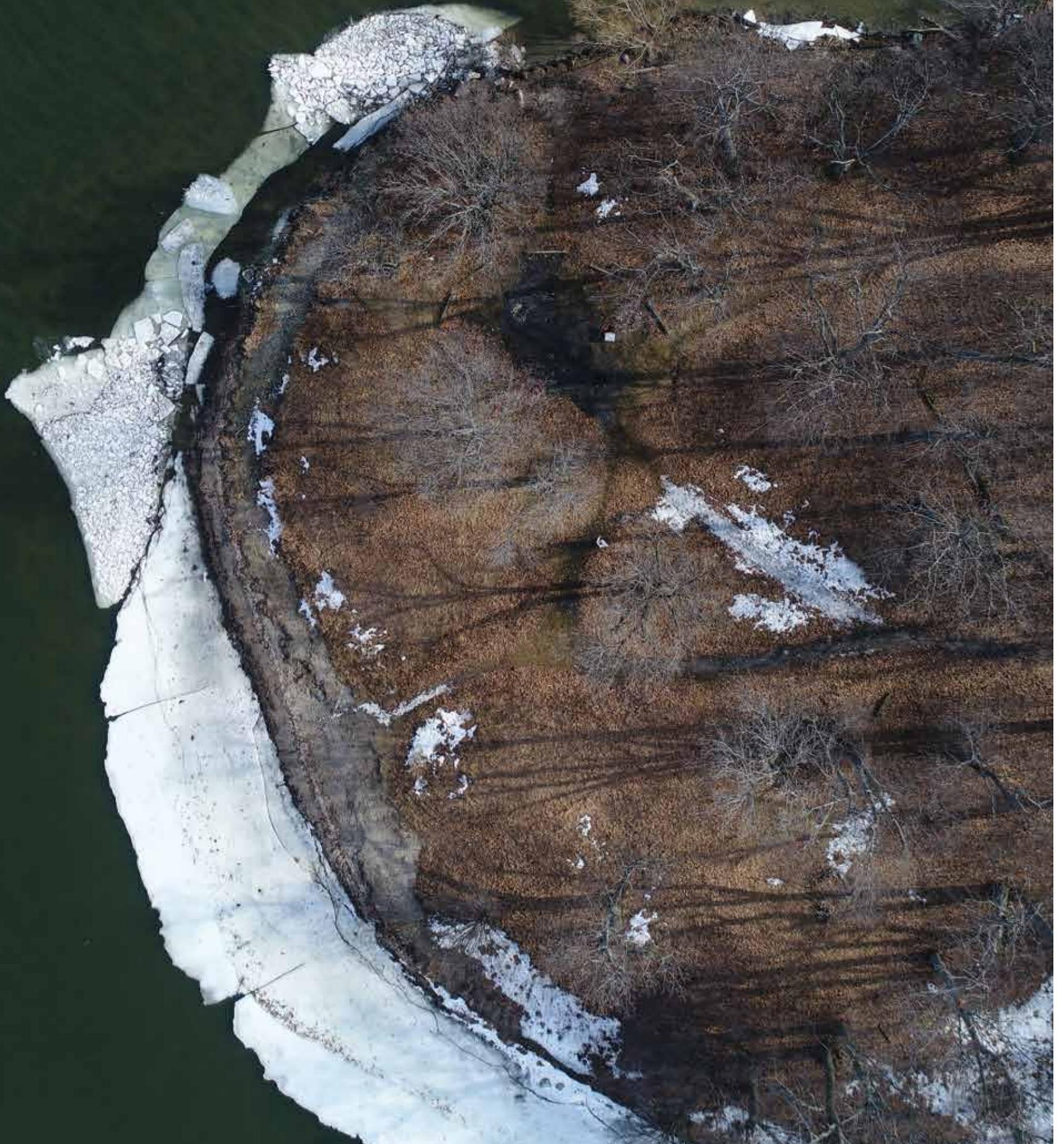
The greater story of Belle Island and its continuing cultural significance

HOW DID WE DO IT?

Lessons from stopping the Wellington Street Extension

DEVELOPMENT ON THE SHORE

Big plans for the Davis Tannery site have people talking, and asking questions



Who speaks for the river?



Since 2016, Kingston’s Planning Department has been engaging neighbourhood residents of North King’s Town in a community visioning process to be addressed in the secondary portion of the City’s Official Plan.

North King’s Town (NKT) is located just north of downtown, and includes the Inner Harbour and Old Industrial areas.

The NKT Visioning Report indicates that the community’s hope for the future is first and foremost about “the protection of, and access to, the waterfront (of The Great Cataraqui River).” However, the NKT planning process only extends to the water’s edge and does not include the river itself. Jurisdiction over the riverbed is somewhat unclear, while the river’s waters appear to lie in the hands of the federal government whose voice is mostly absent from this visioning process.

Nevertheless, it is clear that our community’s relationship with the river extends beyond the water’s edge — whether it’s the many people fishing, boating, skating, or simply the remnants of our daily lives deposited in the river through storm sewers, natural run-off, and the disposal of shopping carts and stolen bikes.

In this third edition of *The Skeleton Press* you will read about people who care deeply about our relationship with the river, and what some are doing to help speak for it.

One of the community’s initial concerns that led to the City’s secondary planning process was the negative effects of the proposed Wellington Street Extension (see pgs 8-9) originally slated for construction near the river’s edge in Douglas Fluhrer Park. Furthermore, the issues surrounding the \$66-million clean-up of the former Davis Tannery lands will certainly have an effect on the river (see pgs 18-19). Construction of the third crossing, already underway, affects the river and its natural surroundings (see pg 17). The Belle Island Caretakers Circle is working with the Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs to advocate for the protection and maintenance of this sacred Indigenous island site and its waters (see pgs 4-5). The Friends of Inner Harbour are tirelessly working to protect the river’s turtles and their habitat (see pg 7). Our relationship with the river has even led neighbouring residents to research the river’s water quality to help determine if its waters are safe enough for us to swim there (see pg 6) despite public perception of contamination mostly due to past industrial practices.

But what do we really know about The Great Cataraqui River? Skeleton Park area writer and poet Helen Humphreys wonders if rivers possess some kind of complex intelligence (pg 3). With so much activity, planning, and development in the wake of industrial pollution and neglect along the river’s shores, *The Skeleton Press* is wondering “who speaks for the river?”

MANDATE

The Skeleton Press was initiated by the Skeleton Park Arts Festival to create a free print publication that captures the vibrancy and diversity of the neighbourhood. We are interested in how print media can communicate and build relationships differently than digital publishing, and in how the act of consuming and distributing the physical object can build community. We hope copies of *The Skeleton Press* will 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 are looking for your feedback!

There’s a good chance you’ve received this paper in your mailbox, which is something we’re trying on for size. We usually (and will continue to) have our papers available at local establishments and community hubs; but this time around we opted to have a copy of our 2020 spring issue sent to every doormat in the neighbourhood. We originally made this decision to increase community access to this paper, which now seems especially important as we find ourselves in these unique and trying times. Our hope that this collection of stories, essays, photos, artworks, and illustrations will help to remind you of all the wonderful things that surround us in the Skeleton Park neighbourhood. *The Skeleton Press* would love to hear your thoughts about this initiative, or anything else you find in our pages. Please send all feedback and Letters To The Editor at: info@skeletonparkarts.org. We’re looking forward to hearing from you!

VIEW OR DOWNLOAD PAST ISSUES AT:
skeletonparkartsfest.ca/the-skeleton-press

SEND EMAIL TO:
info@skeletonparkarts.org

AND TRADITIONAL MAIL TO:
The Skeleton Press
 PO BOX 222, Kingston Main
 Kingston, Ontario
 K7L 4V8

COVER PHOTO: “Honouring Belle Island”
ILLUSTRATED ICONS: Pierre Collet-Derby

COVID-19 & The Skeleton Press

The content in this issue of *The Skeleton Press* was created before the COVID-19 pandemic. Obviously, community impact and response has evolved daily, and as an infrequent, hard copy publication, we can’t reflect that changing reality here. Instead, as always, we hope to provide an engaging read (maybe some of you have more time to read right now), featuring wonderful pieces on matters of importance and interest: a snapshot of the neighbourhood before the landscape of communication changed entirely.

Please join us in protecting public health by following the current guidelines for social distancing, hand-washing, self-isolating where necessary – our community depends on all of us doing our part.

For up-to-date information on COVID-19, please visit www.kflaph.ca or call KFL&A Public Health at 613-549-1232; Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 or 1-866-797-0007 (toll-free); COVID-19 Health Canada Infoline at 1-833-784-4397. Dial 211 for general information about public services and to find phone numbers for other community agencies (regarding library and community centre closures, crisis and counselling numbers, etc).

- At press time, there were a couple of helpful initiatives in the neighbourhood:
- Mutual Aid Katarokwi was providing safe delivery of groceries, food bank boxes and pharmacy items (mutualaidkatarokwi.wordpress.com; mutualaidkatarokwi@gmail.com; 613-665-2959)
 - Lionhearts was providing free daily meals in Skeleton Park, from 6 – 7 p.m. (lionhearts.ca; practicallove@lionhearts.ca; 613-539-3735)

CONTRIBUTORS

Jan Allen, Nirosha Balakumar, Laura Jean Cameron, Laurel Claus-Johnson, Pierre Collet-Derby, Liz Cooper, David Craig, Floriana Ehninger-Cuervo, Helen Humphreys, Sayyida Jaffer, Lynette Johnson, Jane Kirby, Anne Lougheed, Jen Lundrum, Hayden Maynard, Mary McCollam, Laura Murray, Arden Rogalsky, Matt Rogalsky, Lesley Rudy, Justine Scala, Harvey Schachter, Su Sheedy, Mark Stoller, Carla Teixeira, Kate Thomas, Chantal R. Thompson, Greg Tilson, Susan Walker, Lea Westlake

STAFF

EDITORS

Kate Archibald-Cross
 Greg Tilson

PROOFREADERS

Val Hamilton
 Matt Rogalsky

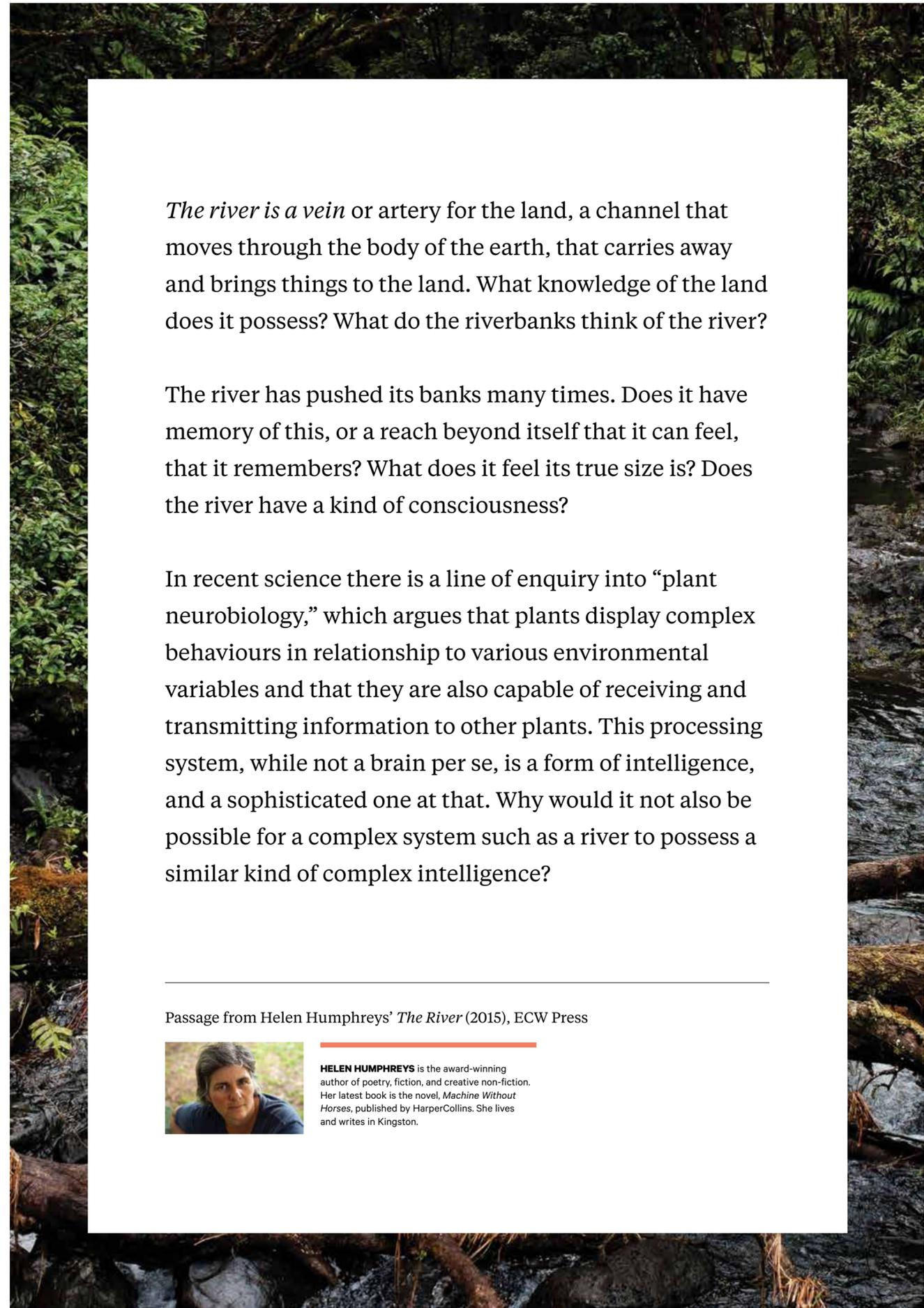
ART DIRECTORS

Vincent Perez
 Neil Bettney

Thank you to our supporters.



If you would like to donate to the Skeleton Park Arts Festival to help keep this newspaper in print, please visit our donation page at **CanadaHelps.org**



The river is a vein or artery for the land, a channel that moves through the body of the earth, that carries away and brings things to the land. What knowledge of the land does it possess? What do the riverbanks think of the river?

The river has pushed its banks many times. Does it have memory of this, or a reach beyond itself that it can feel, that it remembers? What does it feel its true size is? Does the river have a kind of consciousness?

In recent science there is a line of enquiry into “plant neurobiology,” which argues that plants display complex behaviours in relationship to various environmental variables and that they are also capable of receiving and transmitting information to other plants. This processing system, while not a brain per se, is a form of intelligence, and a sophisticated one at that. Why would it not also be possible for a complex system such as a river to possess a similar kind of complex intelligence?

Passage from Helen Humphreys’ *The River* (2015), ECW Press



HELEN HUMPHREYS is the award-winning author of poetry, fiction, and creative non-fiction. Her latest book is the novel, *Machine Without Horses*, published by HarperCollins. She lives and writes in Kingston.

A HISTORY UNKNOWN TO MOST OF US

The greater story of Belle Island and its continuing cultural significance

STORY BY MARK STOLLER



PHOTO: "Honouring Belle Island"

EDITORIAL NOTE: Throughout this article, some words (e.g. Island and Sacred Site) are capitalized to signify an earned status of respect.

"It is a labour both of love and responsibility," says Travis Canadien of the Belle Island Caretakers Circle. "Love of Mother Earth demonstrated by helping heal the land and to reconcile with our ancestors. Having a Sacred Site in our own city is a responsibility."

Belle Island is a prominent feature of the Inner Harbour landscape. It is, both geographically and historically, a meeting place, a connector between the Cataraqui and St. Lawrence Rivers, and a site with a long history and deep meaning for First Peoples in the area. As the city has expanded, Belle Island's importance — and the need for its protection — has also grown.

Randy Cadue, another of the Caretakers, remembers Belle Island before the city grew up around it. He speaks plainly about its singular importance today. In Kingston "there is no other place like it," he says. "Other parks in the city are regulated and built up. There are no places in the city that are just natural places. So it needs to be protected."

The Caretakers, a local residents' group comprised of Indigenous and non-Indigenous members, advocates to protect and honour Belle Island. Their work includes removal of garbage and debris left behind by visitors, some of whom camp out or make fires on the Island — actions that are prohibited by City bylaws, and viewed by some First Peoples as a violation of the spiritual and historic importance of the Island.

Amidst ongoing discussions of reconciliation, there has been growing public awareness of Indigenous history and presence amongst the general Canadian population. In Kingston, a city whose identity is so tied up with its settler history and heritage, ongoing Indigenous histories still remain largely out of the public eye. The work of the Caretakers, which includes reminding the City and the wider community of the need to protect Belle Island, not only fills in gaps in public history, it inspires different ways of thinking of this history altogether.

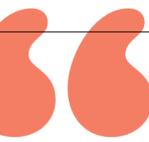
In popular history, heritage and commemoration are terms that invoke touchable, readable, seeable objects: limestone, plaques, statues. But as the work of the Caretakers indicates, it is not just a question of how history and heritage are marked, but whose history and, by extension, who determines how that history is honoured in the present.

Belle Island's heritage, like that of the surrounding region, derives from its importance as a meeting place. The Island is called Kahwennodí:io in the Mohawk language, which means beautiful island, though it was a seasonal fishing and hunting camp for Huron-Wendat many years before the arrival of Mohawk. There are also indications that Belle Island, up to 1,000 years ago, was connected via trade routes to present-day Florida.

It has also been an important meeting place between First Peoples and settlers, relationships characterized by peaceful trade, wartime alliances, and colonial dispossession. In the late seventeenth century, when Sulpician Jesuits began moving into the region, they were welcomed at Belle Island by the Iroquois/Haudenosaunee Confederacy. But the rooting of French and British traditions and histories have increasingly rendered Indigenous history — and presence — invisible to many current Kingstonians.

This invisibility has also had physical ramifications for Belle Island. Maps of the Island, overlaid with French and English names — L'Isle aux Récollets, then Isle au Pere and McLean's Island — have marked it for the settler population. What is now Belle Park, adjacent to Belle Island, was once marshlands before becoming city dumping grounds in the 1950s. From 1974 to 2017, the park operated as a nine-hole municipal golf course, with the fourth green and fifth tee box located on Belle Island's northwest side. Moreover, water levels have been raised and lowered for the St. Lawrence seaway, threatening erosion along Belle Island's shores. Each year, runoff from an estimated 2.9 million tonnes of garbage beneath Belle Park leaches into the waters of the Inner Harbour.

The stewardship of the Island undertaken by the Caretakers works towards the renewal and healing of the Island. Their actions provide a different way of honouring history, a history in which the past, present, and future are held together through practices of restoration and renewal. Belle Island's history cannot be written on a plaque. To think of this history as only existing in the past is to presume that these relations of custody, care, and renewal are no longer in place.



Belle Island cannot speak, at least not in the way we think of, for itself, Canadien explains. It falls on us to be the Spokespeople and Caretakers for the continued stewardship of the Island.

Recently, steps have been taken by the City to restore the Island's physical integrity, and to acknowledge its significance as a heritage site. By the terms of the 2013 Belle Island Accord, the Island is officially co-owned by the City of Kingston and the Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs. The Belle Island Management Principles, which follow from the Accord, govern this relationship and provide guidance for the renaturalization of the Island, which includes protecting Indigenous plants, promoting biodiversity, protection from erosion and high water levels, and safeguarding the Island from invasive plant species. The Management Principles also call for the restoration of the creek that separates the Island from the mainland, and for setting aside a part of the Island for ceremonial use by Indigenous people.

The Accord and Management Principles represent a significant step in relations between local First Peoples and the City, which views the arrangement as a means for improving relations with local First Peoples. The Accord's broader significance, however, remains to be seen in light of ongoing development plans for Belle Park, which have included replacing parts of the golf course with pickleball courts, disc golf, parking lots, and recreational trails. More promising for the preservation of the Island have been proposals for a wooded area along the peninsula that connects the park and Island, which would act as a buffer for the latter. But planned construction of the third crossing, and development of the Davis Tannery lands, add new pressures for increased public use of Belle Park. The possibility remains that new visitors will simply see the Island as an extension of the park, and overlook the Island's meaning as an ongoing historical Sacred Site.

"Belle Island cannot speak, at least not in the way we think of, for itself," Canadien explains. "It falls on us to be the Spokespeople and Caretakers for the continued stewardship of the Island."

Re-envisioning the Island's management through the Belle Island Accord and Management Principles is part of the process of healing the Island. It also highlights why the stewardship of Belle Island should matter to non-Indigenous people in Kingston. The Island's physical and spiritual healing involves restoring its autonomy; that is, in distinguishing it from the surrounding park and the mainland. It also means building new relationships — in a sense, restoring the Island's importance as a meeting place that requires new and renewed relationships in twenty-first century Canada.

But if Belle Island is to be a meeting place between Indigenous and settler peoples, it will require ongoing efforts of understanding from non-Indigenous residents and newcomers to Kingston. If there is to be meaningful reconciliation, it must come from a place of respect for difference, from a commitment to seeing things in a new way, and from an open mind.

"We would hope the non-Indigenous peoples of Kingston walk softly on Belle Island's grounds and show the respect that befits a Sacred Site," says Canadien.

The Belle Island Caretakers meet several times each year to clear the Island of debris and to provide stewardship for Belle Island. To follow the Caretakers or learn how you can become involved, visit the Honouring Belle Island Facebook page.



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

Testing the waters

Ever wondered what the water quality is like around here?

STORY BY GREG TILSON

When I moved to Kingston over 15 years ago, I used to jump off the PUC dock into Lake Ontario after late summer night baking shifts at The Sleepless Goat Cafe. I told customers and fellow workers about my swimming escapades and they would often be shocked. “I’d never think of swimming in the lake,” they’d say; “the water is not safe for swimming.” Fast forward to 2020 (following shoreline improvements as well as public education and engagement) and the Gord Edgar Downie Pier, Canada’s first urban natural swimming pier, is enjoyed by thousands of swimmers every year.

Last summer, some neighbours told me about a late night swim off Molly Brant Point in the Catarqui River (by the Woolen Mill) and I must admit, I was shocked. Surely that old industrial river water isn’t safe for swimming? Some neighbourhood residents are — literally — testing the waters, and folks north of Princess Street might be able to enjoy a good swim sooner than you think.

The following is a discussion between *The Skeleton Press* and Queen’s professors Laura Thompson and Chris Omelon who recently bought a house on Rideau Street.

SP: Tell us about your decision to move close to the Catarqui River.

C&L: A big part of our decision to move to Rideau Street was access to water. Having lived in East Vancouver, where we could walk to waterfront beaches and dog parks, it seemed like living so close to the river would provide similar opportunities to enjoy public green space with a beautiful view all year long.

SP: How did you become interested in the river’s water quality?

C&L: Shortly after moving to Kingston, we visited the Gord Downie Pier and were amazed at the facility. We thought it would be nice to have something like that in our neighbourhood as well, but quickly learned that past industrial practices along the Catarqui River resulted in contaminated lots such as the Davis Tannery lands. This got us thinking about the legacy of pollution and how long it persists in our environment, and so we started talking to people about the history of the area.

SP: How did you feel when you learned more about the history of contamination of the river, from metal smelting and processing, the leather tannery, waste landfills, and outlets for the City’s aging sewage system?

C&L: It was fascinating to learn about the industrial history of Kingston, as well as the proximity of the Belle Park Landfill Site. It became readily apparent that the economic activities within the Inner Harbour have grown beyond its industrial focus. And while it was disconcerting to learn about the legacy of contamination, it also brought home the fact that these kinds of industries had to occur somewhere, and that this was an important part of Kingston’s history. We therefore felt motivated to learn about past studies into pollution in the area, and explored the idea of assessing current conditions.



Students in the lab at the Beaty Water Research Centre at Queen’s University / PHOTO: Beaty Water Research Centre

SP: The Beaty Water Research Centre at Queen’s University has helped by conducting water tests. How do you feel about the results?

C&L: We think the results are promising within the context of pursuing opportunities for swimming in the Catarqui River. There will certainly be times when swimming is not favourable — e.g. when bacteria counts are high — but this is a reality for all swimming areas in the Kingston region. So, accepting the fact that there will be times that swimming is not allowed will only mean that there will be plenty of other times when it will be possible, and that is a far better scenario than we currently have in our neighbourhood.

WE THINK THE RESULTS ARE PROMISING WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF PURSUING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SWIMMING IN THE CATARAQUI RIVER.

SP: Tell us about your vision for improving the river’s water quality. What are the best next steps?

C&L: We need to continue to monitor the Catarqui River’s water to better understand how the quality changes throughout the seasons. This includes understanding what environmental conditions encourage high populations of bacteria, as well as assessing how events such as rainstorms flush contaminants into the water from paved surfaces. In addition, we should investigate a suitable location for swimming — Molly Brant Point seems a popular choice — but there may be others that should be considered in terms of accessibility.



GREG TILSON is a community organizer in Kingston, specializing in cultural programming. He is the co-editor of *The Skeleton Press*, and the Artistic Director of the Skeleton Park Arts Festival, a year-round charitable organization that coordinates neighbourhood art projects.

FOR MORE: cataraqui.river.swimming@gmail.com

Turtles, turtles, everywhere

Studying turtles in the Inner Harbour

STORY BY LESLEY RUDY

ILLUSTRATION BY HAYDEN MAYNARD

They were always there, but it took me years to see them. Although I am a biologist, an avid naturalist, and a regular visitor to Douglas Fluhrer Park, I did not realize that the park was full of turtles. Once they were pointed out to me, I could see many basking on logs in the water off the shore and nesting right in the park.

I became involved with the Friends of Kingston Inner Harbour (FKIH) in 2016, a grassroots group which, among other things, collects data on turtle sightings and covers turtle nests to prevent predation. Mary Farrar, president of FKI, explains why this project is so important: “[Turtles] are such totally amazing prehistoric creatures — actually the planet’s most endangered vertebrates — and they are at serious risk of global extinction due to habitat loss (from the continuing development of wetlands) and road mortality.”

Over time, FKI has been able to hire seasonal staff to intensify the project, allowing us to protect more nests. As we worked with the turtles in the park, it became clear that there was a lot we didn’t know about these turtles: why some hatchlings left their nests later than others, the impact of environmental factors, and demographic details of the turtle population at the park.

I was intrigued by these questions, and decided to embark on a more formal research project. Dr. Steve Loughheed, a neighbour and Queen’s biology professor who had been a valuable resource to FKI, agreed to be my supervisor for a Master’s thesis. I started my degree in January 2019, but had already begun a pilot research project in the spring of 2018.

My project is focused primarily on Northern Map Turtles. The Inner Harbour is also home to Painted Turtles, Snapping Turtles, and Musk Turtles. All four of these species are considered “at risk” by the federal government. Not long ago, Blanding’s Turtles (now an endangered species) were also found here, but are no longer present in the Inner Harbour.

As part of my investigation into environmental factors that may affect hatchling emergence time, some nest cover boxes are left on all year in order to allow me to observe them over time. In the spring and fall, I check them a few times a day to see if any hatchlings have emerged. I hope to learn how often they overwinter, if some combination of environmental cues causes the hatchlings to emerge from their nest when they do, and the survival rate of nests. The results will be compared to studies done further south and in rural areas to see if the turtles behave differently in different parts of their range.



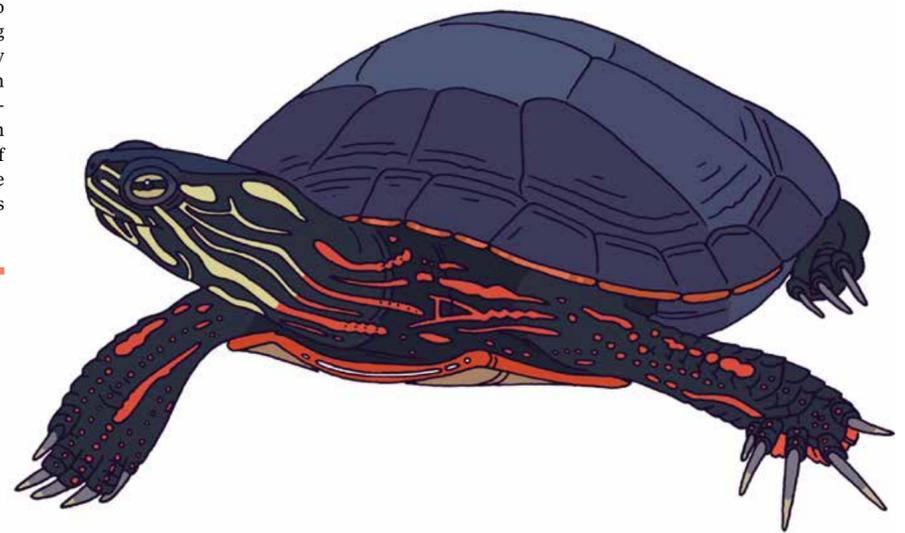
LESLEY RUDY has lived in Kingston since 2008 and in the Skeleton Park/Inner Harbour neighbourhood since 2012. She is a biologist pursuing a MSc at Queen’s, with a background of working with government and not-for-profit organizations in a variety of roles. She also operates a gardening business, volunteers with a few different community groups, and is an avid cyclist and runner.



North American Range of Northern Map Turtle

Please feel free to ask me questions if you see me checking boxes or marking turtles in the park — I am always happy to talk about turtles! Special thanks to Mary Farrar, Dr. Steve Loughheed, Kenny Ruelland, Matt Keevil, Katie Walker, Dr. Gregory Bulte, Jean Clipsham, Vicki Schmolka, City of Kingston Parks Planning staff, contributors of turtle boxes such as neighbour Rory Skelton and Amherstview Public School.

[TURTLES] ARE SUCH TOTALLY AMAZING PREHISTORIC CREATURES — ACTUALLY THE PLANET’S MOST ENDANGERED VERTEBRATES... DUE TO HABITAT LOSS... AND ROAD MORTALITY.

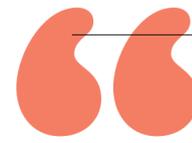


FOR MORE: friendsofinnerharbour.com/turtles

Lessons from stopping the Wellington Street Extension

How did we do it?

BY SAYYIDA JAFFER, ANNE LOUGHEED, MARY MCCOLLAM, LAURA MURRAY, AND JUSTINE SCALA



... YOU HAVE TO LEARN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES AND THE PLAYERS IF YOU WANT TO WIN. PROTESTS AND PARADES WON'T DO IT.

In 2014, when community awareness that a road might be built through Douglas Fluhrer Park started to grow, the story from City Hall was relentlessly consistent. The Wellington Street Extension (WSE) was deeply lodged in all the planning documents; the plan had cleared all the hurdles; it was “necessary.”

But five years later, guess what? Kingston City Council voted in May 2019 to take the WSE south of the Montreal/Rideau intersection out of the Development Charges bylaw as well as the Transportation Plan for the North King's Town Secondary Plan — which means it will also come out of the City's Official Plan, its Transportation Master Plan, and future financial plans. In other words, the southern section of the WSE will not be built: in this one instance, at least, community and environmental priorities have prevailed against developer and business interests.

How did this happen? As members of Wellington X, a group that came together to stop the WSE, we have been asked to reflect on our five-year campaign. Are there lessons we and others can take into other organizing and activist projects?

Here are a few we can think of:

BUILD A TEAM.

A campaign needs a small core group of people with complementary skills. Go for quality, not quantity: some participants may only be able to offer an hour a week but still be the perfect fit. It's best if the team represents diversity of backgrounds, networks, politics, and personality. Don't worry if it takes a bit of time to gel. You know you have a healthy team when members spell each other off when one is too busy or tired; represent collective rather than individual positions when speaking in public; are happy to see each other; and carry through on ideas, rather than just coming up with them.

INFORM AND CONSULT WITH THE BROADER COMMUNITY.

However obsessed and informed you may be, remember that most people will never have heard about your issue — or they've forgotten, or don't see why it's a big deal. A blog provides a “one stop shop” for the history of an issue, what the stakes are, and where things are at. Making use of other social media, op-eds, flyers, TV interviews, holding public meetings, and showing up at festivals and other public events is also important for disseminating information. One of our favourite tools turned out to be neighbourhood canvassing. Going door-to-door, we met people living near the route of the WSE who had missed our other outreach endeavors. Canvassing gave us confidence that we were representing more than a vocal minority, which helped both our own motivation and our credibility at City Hall.

DO FUN STUFF.

Tired of studying engineering drawings, we rented a bunch of pylons and, with measuring tape in hand, marked the eastern edge of the right of way for the proposed road — which at some points turned out to be the very edge of the river. This activity proved that the road and park simply could not coexist, but also offered a chance for people to meet each other and enjoy an afternoon in the very space we were defending (see Irina Skvortsova's video at <https://youtu.be/iY8ergmDGhA>). On other occasions, we invited folks to collage a giant map Nancy Douglas made. We had great times screening T-shirts with Barb Danielewski and then selling them. We staked out the K&P Trail opening and gave out free lemonade, leading to conversations with everyone from kids to cops. Getting labelled “NIMBY” (“Not In My Back Yard”) or just negative is a real political liability: it's important to show that you are for something, not just against things. And frankly, without fun events, you won't have the stamina to keep going.

GET BORED AND BAFFLED.

Have no illusions: the essential heavy lifting is often behind the scenes and the opposite of fun. We were super lucky to have some team members who were willing to read through thousands of pages of city policy or draft policy, and flag anything suspicious or relevant. We went to countless City Council meetings and other consultations, which are often both tedious and confusing. But you have to learn the decision-making processes and the players if you want to win. Protests and parades won't do it.

GET HELP.

We got to know City Councillors and sought out experts on city planning, traffic engineering, environmental policy, ecology, and law. This helped us know what we were talking about. We also reached out to those on “the other side,” which was informative and helped to change the dynamic. And we learned things from following similar struggles in other places.

FOCUS.

Each group member had and continues to have concerns about other issues: cycling infrastructure, lack of affordable housing, and destruction of habitat, for example — not to mention capitalism, colonialism, sexism, and racism! Often these other concerns informed our work with Wellington X, and sometimes they competed for our energies. But in our work together we tried to keep the focus tight because, frankly, we wanted a win. Sometimes we think, jeez, that was a lot of work to stop one small road in one small city, and only part of it at that. But we hope that success in stopping the WSE will inspire or enable future activism by us and others.

Take these tips and run with them!



Wellington X timeline

Items in **ORANGE** are steps along the way to victory

- SUMMER-FALL 2014**
- City proposes to tear down Bailey Broom building to make way for WSE; **citizens stop it**
 - first meeting of group concerned about WSE
 - intensive study of policy, history, politics related to the WSE
 - blog launch: wellingtonx.wordpress.com
 - “Mark the Park” event to show width of Right of Way
 - meetings with municipal election candidates, attending All-Candidates' meetings
 - Wellington X public meeting

- WINTER 2015**
- meetings with new mayor, councillors, developers
 - second Wellington X public meeting
 - Councillor Rob Hutchison moves to cancel WSE; Kingston Homebuilders Association threatens legal action; motion withdrawn
 - **Council passes motion to explore alternatives to WSE and halt expenditures on southern section**

- SPRING-FALL 2015**
- study and meetings re: Master Transportation Plan revision, Official Plan revision, other city reports. **Some success in advocating for green infrastructure, active transportation.**
 - **Council votes to start secondary plan process for North King's Town (NKT), rather than a new Environmental Assessment focusing on the WSE alone**
 - bike ride of Old Industrial area, dance party at the Grad Club, BBQ in Fluhrer Park
 - canvassing

- 2016**
- **Council approves K&P trail construction partly on route of proposed WSE**
 - third Wellington X public meeting, spring wildlife walk in Douglas Fluhrer Park
 - monitoring and critiquing idea of moving Outer Station into Fluhrer Park
 - screenprinting T-shirts, launch of community collage map, “Sound Walk” in Inner Harbour
 - monitoring & participation in NKT process

- 2017**
- Monitoring various issues re: traffic, transit, development
 - plant swap in Fluhrer Park, festive stakeout of K&P trail

- 2018**
- critique of Patry Tannery development proposal that “required” WSE
 - monitoring draft Active Transportation Master Plan, third crossing project, Belle Park
 - **during election, Mayor Paterson announces he no longer supports southern section of WSE**
 - research and advocacy against northern section (which would ruin K&P Trail)

- 2019**
- **Council declares climate emergency**
 - **Council votes to take southern WSE out of NKT Transportation Plan – with promises to take it out of Official Plan, Transportation Master Plan, 15-year capital forecasts, etc.**
 - northern part of WSE remains in play – and so does Patry development, third crossing, etc. — which pose many of the same environmental problems and affect the same ecosystem as the WSE would have done



WELLINGTON X was founded in 2014 with the goal of stopping the construction of the Wellington Street Extension and defending quality of life in the Inner Harbour.

Oh, how the Mighty has risen

Haviah Mighty's ascendancy brings new attention to hip-hop in Canada

STORY BY LYNETTE JOHNSON

In September of 2019, the Canadian music scene turned its attention to the 14th annual Polaris Prize. With a genre-diverse shortlist full of stiff competition, it was anyone's guess who would take home the \$50,000 prize.



Haviah Mighty, a Toronto-born and Brampton-bred rapper, won the prize with her debut album *13th Floor*, making her the first rapper and first Black woman to do so. (It should be noted that while many credit her as the first hip-hop artist to win, Kaytranada is arguably that. He won in 2016 with his genre-bending 99.9% that can be firmly placed within the tradition of hip-hop producers; additionally, it should also be noted that the 2017 Polaris Prize winner Lido Pimienta identifies as Afro-Colombian.)

13th Floor is a testament to Mighty's experience as a Black woman in Canada and layers references to institutional racism, gender discrimination, and pride in her identity. Executive co-produced by A Tribe Called Red's 2oolman and featuring production from OBUXUM and Mighty's brother Mighty Prynce, this album synthesizes many aspects of the lesser-known Canadian hip-hop experience.

Mighty's win is notable within the Canadian music scene, both because she is one of two self-identified Black winners ever, and because the Polaris Prize has been publicly criticized for a lack of genre diversity. Hip-hop artists have been sparsely represented in the prize's 14-year history, despite the genre's popularity and growing presence as a defining sound in many parts of the country.

Aside from obvious things like the so-called Drake effect — financial growth in the GTA due to his massive influence in the music industry — one can argue that many of the most famous Canadian exports are hip-hop and R&B artists. With hip-hop being named the world's most-streamed genre in 2018, many have questioned the constant lack of representation in Canada.

Institutional support for hip-hop has long been a stumbling block for artists, promoters, and fans alike in Canada. Major granting bodies such as FACTOR (Foundation Assisting Canadian Talent on Recordings) and OAC (Ontario Arts Council) have recently diversified their judging panels after criticism that their recipients aren't diverse enough, and awards like the JUNOs have faced similar controversies. Booking hip-hop shows can be challenging even in larger cities like Toronto, where artists and promoters note the entrenched racism experienced at venues. Nightclubs in Toronto have been criticized for dress codes that seem to target Black men in particular, and festival organizers have noted heavier police presence at their events.

Smaller cities like Kingston have long suffered from lack of support for hip-hop, despite a large student population that would presumably attend shows. Low turnout for indie hip-hop acts, combined with an absence of shows by larger out-of-town artists, means that hip-hop is sparse here. Those interested in organizing hip-hop events have specifically noted the frustration with trying to get people out to smaller shows, making it risky to invest resources and time. Larger promoters in the city seem to focus on booking rock and pop acts, creating a feedback loop.

With Mighty's Polaris win this year bringing national attention to hip-hop in Canada and sparking a larger conversation about culture and representation, one hopes that increased support for the genre will follow.

LYNETTE JOHNSON is a DJ, activist, and mom living in Kingston. She was a long-time CFRC host, and has DJed in the community for many years. She can be found on Twitter most days (@postmorebills) and loves to talk music, politics, and food.

PHOTO: APA Agency

Haviah Mighty on finding her voice

The Black Canadian female changing the face of hip-hop

STORY BY NIROSHA BALAKUMAR

Haviah Mighty performs at Skeleton Park Arts Fest 2020

Haviah Mighty: say it loud and say it proud. This is a name that will go down in history books, one to be remembered, honoured, and celebrated. On September 16, 2019 history was made. Haviah Mighty became the first hip-hop artist and Black female to win the Polaris Music Prize — a renowned achievement awarded to the best Canadian album of the year.

Haviah Mighty is powerful and unconventional. Through her authentic and intimate album *13th Floor*, she has invited her audience into conversation about critical topics such as sexism, racism, and slavery. Using her platform to educate and empower, Haviah Mighty is a force to reckon with.

13th Floor encapsulates many narratives that are constantly dismissed and minimized. We subconsciously overlook the absence of the 13th floor in tall buildings, and, Mighty draws parallels from this to experiences she has faced as a Black Canadian woman. Observing her existence as her resistance, Mighty reclaims this space by speaking her truth and sharing her experiences.

Acknowledging the systemic racism entrenched within our social structures, she recognizes the significance of her Polaris and other achievements and the value that has been newly placed on hip-hop. As a Black woman in hip-hop, Mighty is shifting the dialogue. "I've always been the type of artist that doesn't fit the typical image of a rapper," she says. "It has been difficult for others to brand me, but I have found comfort in the person that I am and my ability to share my ideology as a Black woman."

13th Floor also alludes to the U.S.A.'s 13th amendment and the abolishment of slavery there, and Mighty situates and navigates her Black Canadian identity within a complex of whiteness, shedding narratives that are constantly dismissed and raising awareness of the microaggressions and forms of oppression that are faced by many in the Black community.

Mighty notes, "I can see these changes happening in my lifetime and I am a part of that change. It is still a new space and takes work, effort and shifting for us to be on the same page." Using the power of her words and depths of her experiences, Mighty recognizes that she has a say as to what representation in hip-hop can look like in the Canadian context. Haviah Mighty is here to shatter the glass on the 13th floor and she is not giving up until each of us walks through that door.

When I asked how she channels her experiences into her music and whether it has been a space for healing, she said that the confidence and assurance she feels now hasn't always existed. Mighty explained that many of her feelings and experiences of sexism and racism were not validated by her peers growing up, therefore she adjusted what she wrote and who she wrote for. There was a lack of willingness from others to discuss and engage in such topics which, in part, shaped the art she produced. But as time passed and she lived in several places she realized, "that there were certain things that would never go away."

In all that she faced, Mighty explained that she never lost sight of who she was as a person. "I began to understand the concepts and feelings I had when I was younger and became more conscious of the hardships that were affecting me. When you're raised in an environment where you are constantly dismissed, you really have to navigate who you are. I've tried to understand how to share without being confrontational, but rather allow for more room for conversations." On her album's first track, "Women in Colour," Mighty raps, "Hmm, yeah I'm darker than my friends/And finally they see it and they start to get the trend/I gotta do 2 times more to get 4 times less/But it's cool 'cause I'm sharper in the end/Still let's talk about it."

She invites her audience into a conversation and expresses her intentions to educate, share, listen, and learn. Mighty has seen growth and refinement within herself as she now writes from a mature place to a more mature audience. She knows that her art is multi-dimensional, as for some it's exposure to new stories, and for others, it's the validation she had once been seeking.

She notes that remaining true to who she is as a young Black woman has been what people are most responsive to. Seeing value in her life and the dismissed conversations she reignites, she recognizes that this is the person people gravitate to. "I have never been so clear on the things I want to say, than [I am] now," shared Mighty. In finding her voice, Haviah Mighty has defined her art as a catalyst for change.

NIROSHA BALAKUMAR is a 22-year old activist, advocate, and artist. She completed her undergraduate degree at Queen's in Global Development and Gender Studies, where she focused on anti-racism work and cultural awareness on campus. Nirosha has performed in four countries for large and high-profile audiences. She uses her poetry as both an outlet and a platform and has been recruited to write for Plan International Canada, UN Women, and was published at Dokufest. Nirosha sees poetry as a tool to educate, empower and engage others by fostering space for intergenerational dialogue.

Existing without phones

How not having cell phones helps our family appreciate interdependency

STORY BY LAURA JEAN CAMERON, ARDEN ROGALSKY AND MATT ROGALSKY

How do you exist without a phone? In our family, we've each been asked that question enough now that we thought maybe we should try to formulate a collective response.

We seem to exist okay, so far. Really okay, and maybe that is getting more surprising over time, even to us. We believe though, that being “okay” has a lot to do with the fact that the youngest of us (born in 1999) was agreeable to not having a mobile phone at the time his friends started getting them during his Grade 7 year.

We also recognize that our ability to be without is supported by our continued landline, and fast internet at home and in our institutional and professional spaces. Or the fact that so many other people do have phones including friends willing to lend in a situation of need. Or, in a pinch, access to public payphones.

Everything really is interconnected and we know there is no high ground here elevating us above what has become “normal” life for so many. The parents in our triad presented the idea of not having mobile phones as a family experiment: how long could we exist without them?

We saw other parents using their phones to constantly check up on their kids. To us that meant conveying a strong message that children aren't trusted to make good decisions, and that they weren't getting enough experience dealing with everyday situations on their own. Unimpressed by this emerging culture of surveillance, we were, at the same time, struck by suggestions of being bad parents or bad friends by not equipping the young one with a device that could save a life in a threatening situation, or make us accessible to offer empathy any time, anywhere.

Strangely, we've come to think of the “smart phone” as a device that actually erodes trust and empathy. There's a lot to love about not having a phone, beyond having freedom from a persistent source of distraction. For us, not having phones can be a freedom to be truly more present for each other.

Yet, as already noted, we do occasionally find ourselves in a pinch and rely on others for the use of a device — so it was alarming to see this sign posted at a nearby corner store: “No Borrowing the Phone!!!”

When we asked the store owner about it, he explained his difficult situation. Public phones are going extinct in the city, save for a precious few like the payphone that continues to operate beside his store on Division Street. Bell has stopped paying him for the electricity it draws from his store, so he covers the cost himself as a public service to the community. Yet the people that need the payphone don't always realize that it is just outside or are short on money, which leads to many requests for his phone inside. The store owner is happy to lend it in urgent situations, but the sign is there because borrowing has now and then resulted in unexpected long-distance charges. Although initially off-putting, his sign is not unreasonable and his role in our community is vital, as his actions regularly assist vulnerable people struggling to communicate.

Not having something “everybody has” can be revealing. While we feel more connected in certain ways without mobile phones, we believe public access to phones is a vital and common concern. But this is a matter that extends beyond the phone per se, whether it be personal or public.

Through the family experiment we also recognize and grapple with our deep human (and non-human) interdependency. Of the people existing without phones in this community, there are those who do so more precariously when it comes to electronic communications, without landlines or easy access to internet, but also without a sense of choice or supporting social fabric. And it is one's relation to that fabric that remains the real matter of existence: connection.



LAURA JEAN CAMERON is an historical geographer, **ARDEN ROGALSKY** is in third year at the University of King's College in Halifax and plays music with friends whenever he is home; **MATT ROGALSKY** is a sound artist, musician, and teacher. They have lived near Skeleton Park since the winter of 2003.

Placing a call

Public access to phones is threatened by changing times

STORY BY CHANTAL R. THOMPSON



In a telephone booth outside a small convenience store, a young man braced his foot against the glass, consumed in a stressful conversation. His shirt was soaked in sweat. He huddled as if taking refuge inside the booth, a posture that moved me through a variety of cinematic associations: Hitchcock, Superman, Dr. Who's TARDIS — making me wistful for the days before cell phones.

Only weeks later that pay phone was removed from the storefront. Why? I made assumptions about the treatment of “undesirables” and prejudice around cell phone ownership. I wondered who else relied on that phone.

In case you don't know what I'm talking about, phone booths were once found every few blocks. They were small glass shelters on the street that contained a phone, a phone book, sometimes a seat and even a pen on the end of a coiled aluminum rope. The door was accordion-style, made of folding glass and metal. When it clicked shut there was a feeling of comfort and security. The booth protected you from rain and snow, and was a warm spot if you had a thin coat or were homeless. If you felt threatened you could jam yourself inside, against the door.

The door was accordion-style, made of folding glass and metal. When it clicked shut there was a feeling of comfort and security.

I remember when payphones cost 25 cents for a local call. It wasn't uncommon to borrow the change, it was affordable, and there was an understanding that we shared the privilege to speak. There was a sense that we shared the phone itself, but we also shared connections created uniquely by public phones: connecting with others across boundaries of class, education, language, to name a few. Even if you had no luck finding a quarter, you could make a collect call and trust that the person on the other end would accept the charge — an option that's inconceivable today. The time limit on the call required you to be mindful. Of course, there are more efficient, diversified means of communication today, but unless you have a credit card or address, they're not easily accessible and are more expensive. And while there are still a few in Kingston, public access phones have been disappearing rapidly since the nineties with the popularity of mobile phones.

Debates over public and private operations have been ongoing since 1880 when Bell merged to form a monopoly on telecommunications after Alexander Graham Bell claimed the patent for the telephone. Government regulations and private competitors were streamlined in a consortium of regional providers that controlled operations until the 1980s when digital telephone technologies were developed.

The new, more expensive and deregulated technologies raise questions about who should pay for upgrading standards and accessibility. Concerned communities are trying to protect public use phones by brainstorming new options. A nonprofit in Portland, Oregon — futel.net — has dedicated itself to keeping the old-school phone booth alive through volunteers, grants, and donations. They have 10 free-to-use phones on city streets.

My hope is that these initiatives will expand and that phone booths — rather than becoming nostalgic relics in old movies — will stand the test of time.



CHANTAL R. THOMPSON is a jazz vocalist, percussionist, composer, teacher, and multidisciplinary artist. She lives in Kingston with her very special 10-year-old daughter Delphine, their enormous dog Ollie, and Saoirse, a feral kitten found in her shed.

Where's my bike?

Why bicycle theft continues to be a frustrating and complicated issue in Kingston

STORY BY CARLA TEIXEIRA

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LIZ COOPER

LOCKED BIKE ROOM, LOCKED BUILDING. I HAD TWO LOCKS ON IT. LOCKED TO TWO DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE RACK. THEY CUT THROUGH THE RACK WHERE THE U-LOCK WAS AND THEN THEY CUT THROUGH THE CHAIN I HAD BECAUSE THEY REALIZED THAT IT WAS ATTACHED TO ANOTHER PART OF THE RACK.



Carla Teixeira pictured at her workplace, Frontenac Cycle

This is the bicycle theft story of Cody Chretien, a local cyclist living in an apartment building downtown. It is no secret that bike theft is a huge problem in Kingston. Hundreds, if not thousands, of bikes are stolen each year from the city, impacting the daily commutes and health aspirations of many.

Kingston's Active Transportation Master Plan has a focus on building infrastructure to encourage cycling and protect cyclists as they make their daily commute or are getting from one end of the city to the other. However, there is little acknowledgement that with more cyclists on the road, bike theft will likely also increase. Understanding that bike theft is a deterrent for new cyclists is a key first step towards achieving our sustainability goals. But in order to tackle the problem, we must first try to understand it.

Through a survey, I reached out to the cycling community for stories of bike theft. These stories reflected huge frustration and anger from victims of bike theft. One respondent said, “[I'm] not sure I even want a bicycle again although it is my only means of transportation other than walking or bus.”

Part of the reason that people feel so victimized and frustrated is that they feel bike theft is not taken seriously by the authorities. “Lack of enforcement of this crime promotes it... perpetrators aren't sought, aren't prosecuted to the full extent of the law, so why would they modify their behaviour?”

Bike theft includes entire bicycles or just parts. When one respondent had their wheels stolen, “the police said they wouldn't be able to do anything and I was completely out of luck. I really do feel the city needs to be doing more to combat bike theft.”

Cyclists living in the Skeleton Park area are particularly frustrated because even with strong community connections and — sometimes — information about who the thieves might be, thefts

Protecting your bike While bigger-picture change is clearly needed, here are some short-term preventive measures we can all consider.

- Register your bike at 529 Garage (project529.com): a free, nationwide registration system that makes reporting a stolen bike easy, and allows the cycling community to keep an eye out for stolen bikes.
- A good lock goes a long way to protecting your bike.
- Keep your bike inside when possible.
- If/when buying a used bike, make sure you're buying from a reputable source: there is always a chance that a used bike for sale may have been stolen at one point.

continue. According to one respondent, even when police are aware, “nothing seems to happen.”

According to the Kingston Police's Crime Investigations Unit, 389 bikes were reported stolen in Kingston in 2019, 40 of which were taken from the downtown core. The number of bicycles stolen may actually be greater than this, as it is unlikely that all thefts are reported to police.

Kingston Police reported that in 2019, 244 bikes were coded as “found, seized, [put in] safekeeping, or stolen/recovered.” Whether all of these bikes were originally stolen, reported, and returned to their rightful owners is unclear, but these facts do make a case for reporting a stolen bike to increase the chance of getting it back. (A list of other questions was sent to the Kingston Police regarding bike theft but we received no further response as of press time.)

While it is easy to blame either the police, cyclists when they don't properly lock up their bikes, or the City for not providing the appropriate infrastructure to prevent bike theft, the problem is not as simple as pointing the finger at someone or something.

Scot Caldwell, who has had many bikes stolen, underscores the complexity of stolen bike issues. One of his bikes was stolen by someone he knew who was caught after getting in an accident running a red light on the stolen bicycle. The thief was en route to a court date, using the bike as his transportation. While not exonerating the thief for his actions, Caldwell was not without empathy, and points out that the theft could have been motivated by opportunity, poverty, or simply a need to get from one place to another.

Cycling is a keystone for sustainable living. With the increasing threat of climate change, cycling is a great way to keep our carbon footprint down since transportation is one of the biggest pollutants in Kingston.

Apart from the environmental benefits, cycling is great for our physical and social health. One respondent described their bike as both a means of transportation and social connection and “felt really isolated once it was stolen from [them].”

These survey responses clearly show that bike theft has multi-tiered impacts on victims, and is a serious and complex issue that needs to be addressed, ideally with effort and input from cyclists, cycling groups, city officials, and police.

CARLA TEIXEIRA's love for bicycles started while she was pursuing a Master's degree in health promotion. She is a year-round bicycle commuter who works at Frontenac Cycle and with local organizations that encourage cycling and active living. In 2020 she will be revitalizing the Cycling Working Group, a subgroup of the Kingston Coalition for Active Transportation, to help organize and consolidate efforts to make Kingston a bike friendly city. If interested in joining or to talk about bike theft, come by Frontenac Cycle or contact Carla: carla.teixeira@queensu.ca.

My favourite little thing

Jen Lendrum, principal of Central Public School, discusses “Hedgieville”

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LIZ COOPER

A column in which people from the Skeleton Park area submit sometimes quirky, often overlooked neighbourhood gems for our consideration.



One of the most wonderful things about Central Public School is the tiny village in the back yard. For 10 years the small but mighty municipality of Hedgieville has lived under the trees at Central. The children have created this village, complete with hotels, houses, hospitals, police, and a mayor. Children can get jobs cleaning the houses or hotels and are paid in stones and rocks. Eventually, they make enough to buy their own Hedgiehouse and pay their mortgage in rocks to the Hedgiebank. I've even held an assembly to stop the children from chipping the paving off the school walls to pay their mortgage!



Strike a pose

Yoga has arrived in the Swamp Ward

STORY BY JANE KIRBY

ILLUSTRATION BY FLORIANA EHNINGER-CUERVO



Yoga's visibility in the Inner Harbour has seen a dramatic increase since the opening of two new yoga studios in the neighborhood late last year. Yoga, it seems, is everywhere, but is it for everyone?

"I thought I had to be a skinny white woman to practice yoga," says Kayley Marsh, an anti-oppression facilitator and yoga practitioner of Indian descent. "I assumed you had to look a certain way, or be of a certain economic class. I thought it was a physical workout and a status symbol."

Marsh's perceptions are largely an accurate reflection and indictment of mainstream yoga studio culture. Yoga, which has its roots in Hinduism and India, may have many benefits for physical, mental and spiritual health, and for healing. But its expression often reflects many of the oppressions and exclusions present in the culture at large.

The opening of Soul Academy on John St., at the former site of Pat's Convenience, and Oasis Yoga on Montreal St. at the former site of the Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism — where yoga studios would have been unimaginable a decade ago — is undoubtedly indicative of a neighborhood undergoing rapid demographic change.

"We're focused on serving the neighborhood," says Johnny Rowe, owner of Oasis Yoga. Rowe moved his studio, formerly known as Feel Yoga, from its downtown Princess St. location to the current location on Montreal St. in the fall of 2019. While Rowe says that almost all their downtown students have followed them to the new location, he adds that they are getting many new students, most of whom are from the neighbourhood. "In contrast to being a downtown yoga studio, we can do more good with this new location."

This sentiment is echoed by Ashley Silversides, owner of Soul Academy, which bills itself as a wellness studio that goes beyond yoga. Like Rowe, Silversides landed in the neighborhood in part because of rising rents and an oversaturation of yoga studios downtown. Her studio attracts students from across the city, but she saw potential in having a community studio that could serve the needs of area.

"The reason I landed in the area is that I live across the street from Skeleton Park and I love this neighborhood," says Silversides, who is currently training as a Mental Health and Addiction Worker. "Part of what we are planning on doing at Soul Academy is programming for foster children and at-risk youth, and many diversion programs are already centred around this location."

I thought I had to be a skinny white woman to practice yoga. I assumed you had to look a certain way, or be of a certain economic class. I thought it was a physical workout and a status symbol.

Silversides adds that she has received a warm welcome from the community, and that the biggest barrier to opening her studio was city bylaws that restrict locating health facilities in residential neighborhoods. "We felt this was really interesting because we want to increase wellness and well-being in people's lives, yet there are parts of the city where these facilities weren't allowed."

That such facilities now exist in the neighborhood represents an opportunity to expand who has access to yoga.

"Yoga is not like a gym, it is a healing practice," says Rowe. "The people who come to yoga are people with injuries, illness, and trauma."

"I think yoga is for processing trauma," agrees Marsh, who uses they/them pronouns. They suggest that the people who might benefit most from yoga often can't access it, either because they can't afford the cost of classes or don't feel welcome in studio spaces. "We need to think about changing

the culture, and making it financially accessible, sliding scale or pay what you can. We also need to make sure it's trauma-informed, and centred on people who have mental health issues or who have experienced trauma, addictions, or have socioeconomic instability in their lives."

Silversides says that Soul Academy works with Home Base Housing, and that her studio classes are open free of charge to individuals involved in their programs: "Our homelessness rate is increasing, and a lot of people are experiencing trauma and addiction. We don't want to forget that these are also humans," says Silversides. "A big part of what we want to do with the studio is make these things accessible."

Subsidized yoga classes are also currently available in the neighborhood at the Artillery Park Aquatic Centre via the Subsidy Program for Affordable Recreation in Kingston (SPARK), offered through the City's Municipal Fee Assistance Program. Eligible individuals are able to access up to \$300 annually for yoga classes and other recreation programs.

Of course, yoga goes beyond studio walls, and it is here that the truly accessible nature of the practice is most evident.

"It's not just Asana," says Marsh, referring to the physical practice of yoga postures. "We have this very narrow perception of what yoga is in our society. Yoga is about being a good person, having a mindful relationship with yourself, being aware of your environmental impact, your social impact, fighting for justice, equity, and accessibility."

That's something our neighborhood could certainly use more of.



JANE KIRBY is a circus performer, movement educator, non-fiction writer, and author of the book *Fired Up About Reproductive Rights*.

Our great river

CROSSWORD BY LEA WESTLAKE
ILLUSTRATION BY SU SHEEDY

Test your knowledge of our local waterways, their flora, fauna, history and surroundings.



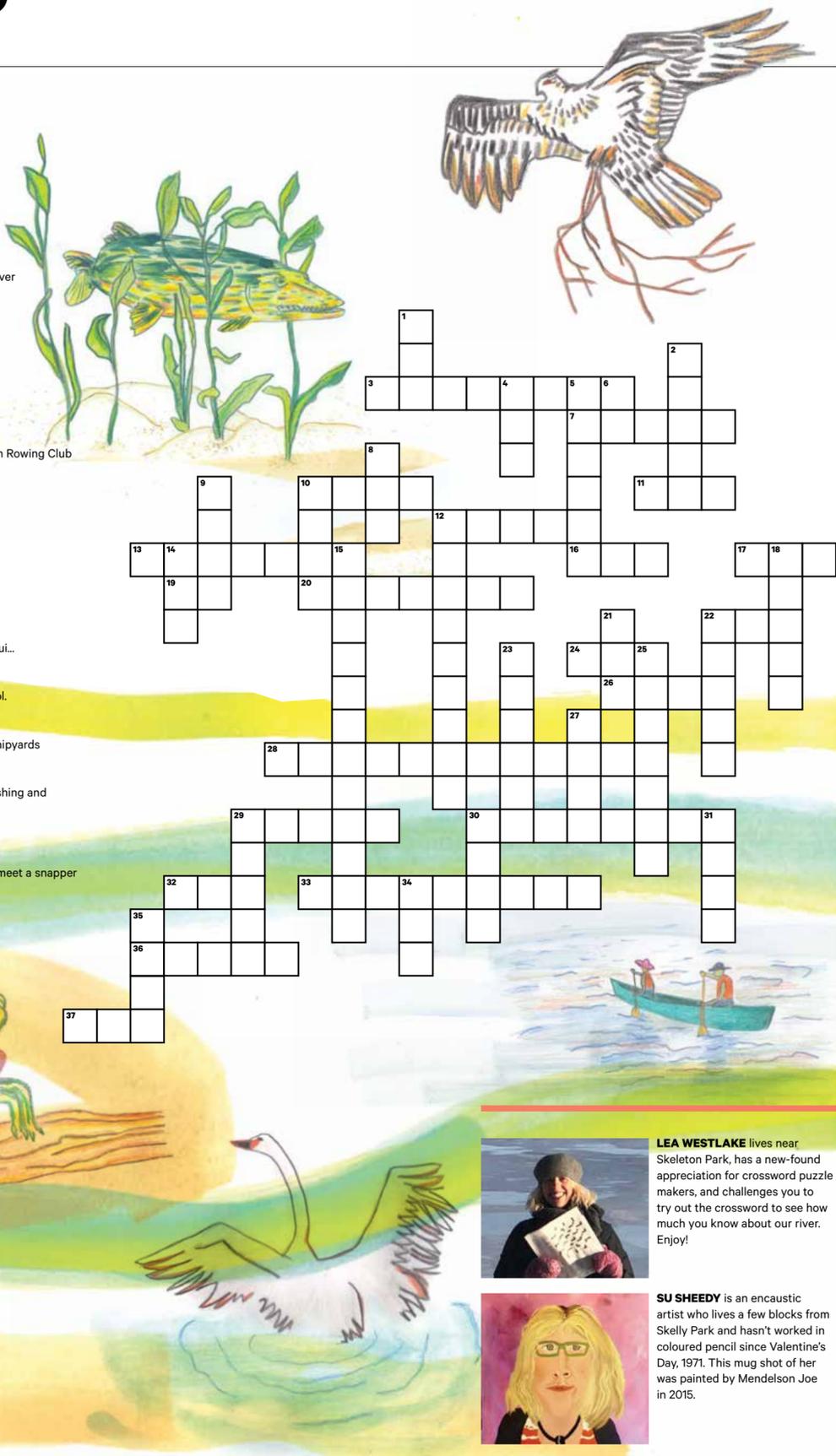
- ACROSS**
- 3 Smelly turtle?
 - 7 Approx. # of ships sunk in the harbour
 - 10 Past home heating fuel
 - 11 Davis ____ Dock
 - 12 Cataraqui ____ Club
 - 13 ____ Street Marsh south of Belle Island
 - 16 Did Wellington X stop the southern extension?
 - 17 In winter, you can skate on the ____.
 - 19 Alright?
 - 20 Artistic turtle?
 - 22 River St. pumping station takes this across the river
 - 24 Head colour of threatened pecker?
 - 26 Want to learn more? Take the Life and Labour in the Inner Harbour Walking ____.
 - 28 Harbour industry existing for over 300 years
 - 29 Famed Mohawk leader who lived on harbour
 - 30 Song to sing by the river? Head and shoulders ____ toes. (2 words)
 - 32 Stored in imperial tanks
 - 33 Large musical swan?
 - 36 Harbour at south end of Cataraqui River
 - 37 ____ Cataraqui Street - address of the Kingston Rowing Club

- DOWN**
- 1 What you do at the River Mill
 - 2 Playful harbour creature
 - 4 RR turned waterfront trail with &
 - 5 Fish hawk that nests on poles
 - 6 ... fa, so, la, ____, do
 - 8 Tails used for past play
 - 9 Canadian Dredge and ____ Co.
 - 10 Koi kin bottom feeder
 - 12 One spelling of Ka'tarohkwi, Katarokwi, Cataracoui...
 - 14 Activity to do on the river
 - 15 Brownfield poised for redevelopment (2 words)
 - 18 The Woolen Mill produced this in cotton and wool.
 - 21 What you get if you jump in the river
 - 22 Yellow fish found in the harbour
 - 23 Small bay whose shores were lumber, coal and shipyards
 - 25 First name of park
 - 27 Spotted nothern swimmer
 - 29 Island used by indigenous peoples as hunting, fishing and burial grounds
 - 30 Farrar is ____ about turtles
 - 31 Former Belle Park use
 - 34 Lost turtle of the north?
 - 35 What you want when you fish but not when you meet a snapper

LAST ISSUE'S SOLUTIONS

ACROSS 3 Ovale, 4 Thor, 6 Bald Cypress, 9 Serviceberry, 10 Copsse, 11 Elm, 12 Leaflets, 13 Acorn, 14 Serrate, 15 Bitternut

DOWN 1 Norway, 2 Key, 8 Black Walnut, 7 Sycamore, 8 Deciduous, 16 Trunk



LEA WESTLAKE lives near Skeleton Park, has a new-found appreciation for crossword puzzle makers, and challenges you to try out the crossword to see how much you know about our river. Enjoy!



SU SHEEDY is an encaustic artist who lives a few blocks from Skelly Park and hasn't worked in coloured pencil since Valentine's Day, 1971. This mug shot of her was painted by Mendelson Joe in 2015.

Whose river is it?

My thoughts on the third crossing

STORY BY LAUREL CLAUS-JOHNSON



Mother Earth takes care of humanity naturally. Taking care of her is our reciprocal responsibility, our duty, and our pleasure. As humans, surely we should all be aware that an integral relationship with land and water is vital to our survival.

On December 19, 2019, the City of Kingston broke ground on a new bridge across the Great Cataraqui River. The process of planning and consultation took many years. And yet, the consultation was done in very limited ways, and it is important to know that many voices were not listened to.

This is Indigenous land. This is Indigenous water. The City committed to consult with “Indigenous communities whose interests may be directly affected by the project.” In fact, the Supreme Court has said there is a duty to consult with Indigenous people in this kind of situation. The City sent information at various points to several Indigenous communities in southern Ontario, but sending information is not consultation. And the City did not consult in a meaningful way with those of us who actually live here. Indigenous citizens of Katarokwi were sometimes invited to meetings as individuals, but not integrated into the study process in any significant manner. This is distressing and hurtful. It seems that the City wanted to “tick the boxes” but not listen to our perspectives on this community and its living beings.

TRIBUTE

Words about Wayne Westfall: 1948-2020

SUSAN WALKER

Wayne Westfall was a Kingston man-about-town, a fixture in the neighborhood he cherished. Often seen piloting his motorized chair through Skeleton Park, he was instrumental in launching the fundraising campaign to replenish its trees after the devastating ice storm of 1997.

Wayne died at the age of 71 on Sunday, January 12. He was a poet, artist, teacher, social activist, writer, adventurer, conservationist, and advocate for the disabled. He lived for over 40 years with quadriplegia. His love for our city and its people was tangible, as reflected in his painting, poetry, sketching, and advocacy work.

Natural beauty entranced him, and he wanted it within everyone's reach. As a result of his efforts, the city became more accessible and safer for the

In 2011, the City did consult with the Traditional Chiefs of Akwesasne, many kilometres downriver, and they wrote a remarkable report on the bridge project. The Chiefs offered, “as partners in this process... to help... find ways toward creating the healthy living space you strive for with your Master Plan.” They insisted that, “in our thinking and planning, we must respect the river and the life it sustains.” The Chiefs stated the importance of “a sense of place, and of peace within one's place.” Their report puts forward profound and also practical ideas about bridge design, and how to be ecologically and spiritually responsible in its construction. As far as I can see, this report has been entirely ignored in the bridge plans that have been adopted. It isn't even on any City website.

Many trees gave up their lives in the past months as construction began. One of the trees we lost was a sugar maple that had seen decades of Katarokwi seasons: springs, summers, falls, and winters. It was cut down without ceremony or thanks for what it gave to us. The maple is a sacred tree to both Canadians and Indigenous people: it gives us food, shelter, shade, and heat. Cutting down a tree is cutting down a life.

The final Environmental Impact Analysis does claim to evaluate the impacts of the bridge on animals, birds, fish, and plants. But it doesn't recognize the value of their lives. For example, in one section, the report admits that the bridge will have a negative effect on beaver, mink, muskrat, and river otter. But in the end, it says that given “the ample habitat retained, [and] the abundance of the species regionally,” the damage is “Not Significant.” For the animals that live here, this river is their only home. The muskrat features in the Haudenosaunee creation story: the muskrat gave his life to bring clay from the water bottom so that others could live on the turtle's back. But to the authors of this report, muskrats are “common,” so if a few muskrats in Kingston are harmed, it just doesn't matter. Would we displace some Kingston residents from their



Bridge construction / PHOTO: Greg Tilson

homes, or expose them to noise and pollution, just because there are lots of humans in other places? I hope not, and we shouldn't do it to other beings either.

Whose river is it? This year, Bangladesh decided to grant all of its rivers the legal status of humans. Whose river is it? Maybe it doesn't belong to anybody. It is its own self.

We are conceived in water; water makes every stage of life happen. The impact of this bridge on the river deserves ceremony. I wish this bridge were being built on a foundation of respectful inclusivity, honorable intentions, deep analysis, and true acknowledgment of impacts. Why did the City of Kingston only follow the letter of colonial law in its consultation instead of considering the value of Indigenous knowledge? Is it too late to honour the river?



LAUREL CLAUS-JOHNSON (Mohawk), a member of the Grandmothers' Council of Kingston, is involved in many efforts and projects in the Indigenous community.

compassionate heart, a boundless curiosity, and a joyful sense of wonder.

His body was broken but his spirit wasn't. He achieved so many remarkable things. He succeeded at making a positive difference in the community as a teacher and advocate, while also becoming a highly accomplished thinker, essayist, poet, and painter — and, I might add, a stimulating conversationalist and caring mentor.

Wayne showed us how to live fully, even in the face of unthinkable adversity, and in the end, he guided us to understand and gracefully accept death. He was an amazing man who deeply loved life and the world, and was deeply loved in return. It is hard to accept that he is gone, but we can be comforted in knowing he is no longer a prisoner of his broken body but, instead, free and at rest, after a life that was exceptionally well-lived.

KATE THOMAS

What to say about Wayne Westfall? Out and about in his chair, viewing the world, in Wonder, acutely aware, yang, a yen for beauty, narrator of all he purviewed Navigating paths and our hearts, element of elegance.

Wayne's depiction of life in the 'hood, through poetry and art, gives us a path through to something in ourselves.

Development on the shore

Big plans for the Davis Tannery site have people talking, and asking questions

STORY BY HARVEY SCHACHTER

The Davis Tannery shut its doors nearly 50 years ago in 1973, leaving a heavily contaminated, foreboding empty space on Kingston's Inner Harbour waterfront. The Frontenac Smelting Works started operations on that site in 1878 and closed in 1918, seven years after the Tannery began; together they left a legacy of old-time, polluting industrial plants.

The 13-hectare site beckons for some sort of development rather than remaining a desolate wasteland. But it has not drawn much attention, because the site is complicated, requiring considerable investment and risk. In 2014, when the city called for development proposals, Jay Patry was the only person to come forward but was rejected. In 2017 he bought the land from Rideau Renewal and has returned with a proposal that, in December, received what the City's chief planner and commissioner of community services Paige Agnew describes as "a high level nod of support from City Council that we want something good to happen but we withhold approval until you do proper consultation."

Mayor Bryan Paterson is optimistic: "I think this is a once in a generation opportunity to finally create a future for the largest brownfield site in Kingston. A big advantage is to finally clean up the contamination, and have housing and green spaces and have it as a catalyst for development in that area."

Agnew says the site is "incredibly contaminated," with all sorts of chemicals: "It's the most encumbered site I have seen. We're looking at \$60 to \$80 million just to clean the land." But Patry became entranced with the site as a high school student rowing on the Great Cataraqui River in the early morning, and that interest persisted through his university days and time on the Canadian National Team. Even in high school, he was entrepreneurially minded, according to Nathan Richard, who was the City's project manager for brownfield sites from 2012 to 2018, handling 18 projects remediating contaminated properties, and now is a consultant to Patry Inc. Developments. "He has a high tolerance for risks. He likes challenges," says Richard.

Patry visited 15 cities while researching his original proposal, which has now been revised after discussions with local planning officials and other interested parties. It will involve 1,509 condominium and apartment units housing 3,000 to 4,000 people in four mid-rise buildings, each about the size of a city block. The buildings will be shorter on the Rideau Canal side (four storeys), after discussions with Parks Canada flagged concerns about the view from the water on what is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The highest point will be eight storeys in buildings that surround the above-ground parking garage. The original proposal was chunky — a solid, undifferentiated mass — but now is more varied, with more entrances, some directly to the units as at the Anna Lane condos at Queen and Bagot. "It doesn't feel as bulky and oppressive. It looks heterogeneous rather than homogeneous — the same over and over," says Agnew.

The buildings are further from the waterfront, which, instead of being hard-edged as in the original proposal for concrete and steel, will be built using more natural materials. The intent is to encourage people travelling along the waterfront trail to walk and cycle through. There will be more commercial spaces on the ground level than originally intended, a design which will turn this into what planners call "a complete community," ideally with a grocery store and day care, but also enterprises that might draw people from the Skeleton Park area and elsewhere to the waterfront. Richard notes that Patry has been wary about that aspect, as in the Amazon era developers are finding commercial space difficult to fill, and "Jay has commercial [elsewhere] he would like to get rid of."

Patry proposes green roofs and solar panels, charging stations for at least 10 per cent of vehicles in the new area, and has intentions to buy ebikes and scooters which residents could rent. Patry prefers wood construction, which Richard touts as being advantageous in combating climate change, trees being a renewable resource, but proponents of concrete and wood are now at war on which is preferable. Patry is well-known in Kingston, of course, for the dramatic fire in December 2013 at The Foundry building, then under construction on Princess Street, but Richard says winter construction methods have changed since that time, reducing risk of such blazes.

The municipal brownfields program allows Patry to receive some after-the-fact rebates for a limited period on his property tax for any remediation, based on the difference between the expected tax he would pay and the current tax level. The idea is that if the site remains undeveloped the city receives hardly any tax revenue so it's preferable to develop it. He must find the estimated \$66 million for remediation — no civic assistance on that score — but would receive an estimated \$36 million in tax relief. In total, the city is being asked

“

Agnew says the site is “incredibly contaminated,” with all sorts of chemicals: “It’s the most encumbered site I have seen. We’re looking at \$60 to \$80 million just to clean the land.” It will involve 1,509 condominium and apartment units housing 3,000 to 4,000 people in four mid-rise buildings, each about the size of a city block.

to provide about \$50 million in benefits to the developer, including not charging the \$1 million dollars he would ordinarily face under Kingston's tree bylaw for removing about 1,600 trees from the site to allow remediation, or the \$3 to \$6 million he would ordinarily pay towards what is known as "community benefits" — compensation for the City allowing somewhat higher density.

Agnew stresses the city is not a partner with Patry; it works with all developers and makes no judgments on whether he can pull it off. Richard notes that while the development is far larger than anything Patry has constructed so far, each stage is about twice the size of his Princess St. building, so, he says, not that huge a stretch. Construction is estimated to run from 2022 to 2033. Were there changes the city wanted that he refused? "He really did everything we asked," Agnew says.

But now additional discussion will take place and already more changes are being requested. Sydenham District Councillor Peter Stroud told Council the mature trees on the site should be preserved. He argues the 10 trees saved on Block D remain the best feature in Battery Park. Rob Hutchison, councillor for King's Town district, which includes the site, wishes the project was further away from the waterfront, leaving more than just a ribbon of space as in the current plans, even if that meant higher density closer to Rideau Street, presumably in concrete since buildings above six storeys must be constructed of a non-combustible material according to provincial rules. He also is concerned about the money the city will be giving up to get the project: "It's substantial."

Mary Farrar, president of Friends of Kingston Inner Harbour, would like to see 10 to 20 storeys on the Rideau Street side — where there are not many neighbouring homes — to allow the residences to be further from the waterfront. That would avoid endangering the area's turtles, who, after hibernating in Kingston Mills for the winter, have chosen the tannery site over all other possible places to bask in the sun, strengthening themselves with vitamin D before laying their eggs. Patry has proposed installing floating logs for the

turtles to bask on along the shore, believing it can provide greater protection, but Farrar insists "it means cutting down trees and putting in some logs for the turtles. That's not nature." She opposes the new rowing club facility the developer is planning along the south shore of Belle Park, in the one water lot he owns, because it is where basking currently occurs. She also wonders whether it might be better to allow the site to remediate naturally over time rather than undergoing development.

After 50 years, the fate of the old tannery land is now being actively discussed, and a decision on Patry's proposal may be coming this year.



HARVEY SCHACHTER, a columnist for *The Globe and Mail* and *Kingston Life*, and former editor of *The Kingston Whig-Standard*, lived in the Skeleton Park area in the late 1970s and 1980s.



Dave Gordon

Making art “full of strange utterance”

STORY BY JAN ALLEN

Artist Dave Gordon’s rumpled, quiet self-assurance and fascination with popular culture might disguise, at first, the sophistication of his art. But, for those who follow his work, the intelligence, wit, and sheer expressive talent and tenacity of his practice put him in the forefront of art-making in the region. Even better, Dave’s approach to issues like climate change, terrorism, or political corruption is consistently grounded in his immediate environment.

Dave’s creative trajectory was shaped by his mentor Greg Curnoe, a London (Ontario) artist who famously championed regional expression in art in the 1960s. Dave brought this credo to Kingston when he joined the faculty at St Lawrence College in 1976. To boost the presence of art in the city, he worked with others to establish the Kingston Artist Association Inc. (K.A.A.I.), now Modern Fuel Artist-Run Centre. When the college closed its fine art program in 1993, Dave remained in the area, and helped set up the Kingston School of Art to sustain community access to printmaking equipment and art classes. He has been a generous mainstay of Kingston’s visual art scene for over four decades.

Living in the Swamp Ward since 1998, Dave Gordon makes his home on Bay St. and works from a studio at the NGB complex on Cataragui St. His affection for the neighbourhood is reflected in a series of watercolours from the early 2000s, views of sun-dappled streets and the family-run businesses that dot the area.

He recalls, “I did a lot of watercolours of the Swamp Ward... the Store Famous, Cochrane’s variety store, the Chinese restaurant on Montreal Street.” Dave still sketches regularly today, filling Moleskine notebooks with swiftly-captured scenes and incidents, visual diaries of daily life. While his work has been featured in galleries across the province — and locally at Art Noise, The Elm Café, Modern Fuel and Agnes Etherington Art Centre — he also enjoys the immediacy and wide reach of circulating his art through social media.

A prolific artist, Dave works in series, primarily in drawing and painting. He returns again and again to animal images, portraits and caricatures, and, most of all, to landscape. In the eerie and hilarious Headlands series, he combines portraits and landscapes: the faces of celebrities like Celine Dion or infamous political figures like Osama bin Laden hover in the familiar forests and waterways of this region. In addition to the ever-changing churn of popular culture, Dave’s art reflects the influence of writers T.S. Eliot, Charles Bukowski, James Joyce and Karl Ove Knausgaard, as well as painters from Philip Guston to Kim Dorland. His paintings are sprinkled with wide-ranging allusions to Carl Jung, Steven Spielberg, and, recently, filmmaker Alex Garland’s apocalyptic 2018 thriller, *Annihilation*.

As the *Annihilation* reference suggests, environmental degradation is a central theme in Dave Gordon’s art. His 2019 portrait of the fiercely articulate angry-child climate activist, Greta Thunberg, makes this focus explicit. In his recent paintings, surreal species displacements signal nature in crisis: a dolphin or sailfish leaps from an Eastern Ontario lake, or ominous animal-shaped cloud formations — a massive whale or stretch-necked chickens — hover over the land. In these paintings, Dave animates the sky with portents of a sullied natural world. In other works, visceral paint “blobs,” impasto emblems of waste emissions, infect the surface of the scene.

When asked about his current focus, Dave remarks, “The short answer is — clouds. Articulate, provocatively sentient clouds... full of strange utterance (with thanks to Gary Michael Dault).”

Dave Gordon’s studio workspace, detail.
PHOTO: Jan Allen

Dave Gordon’s painting *The Spirit of Walt Whitman at Bon Echo*, from the Headlands series, is on view in the exhibition *Face of the Sky*, at Agnes Etherington Art Centre until August 9, 2020.



An artist, curator and writer, **JAN ALLEN** moved to the Skeleton Park neighbourhood in 2007. After a long career at Queen’s Agnes Etherington Art Centre, she is savouring post-institutional life.