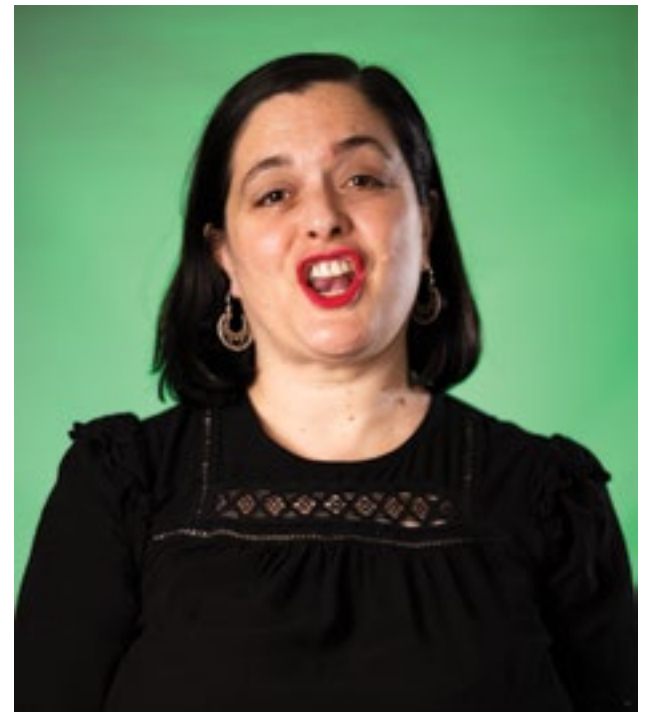
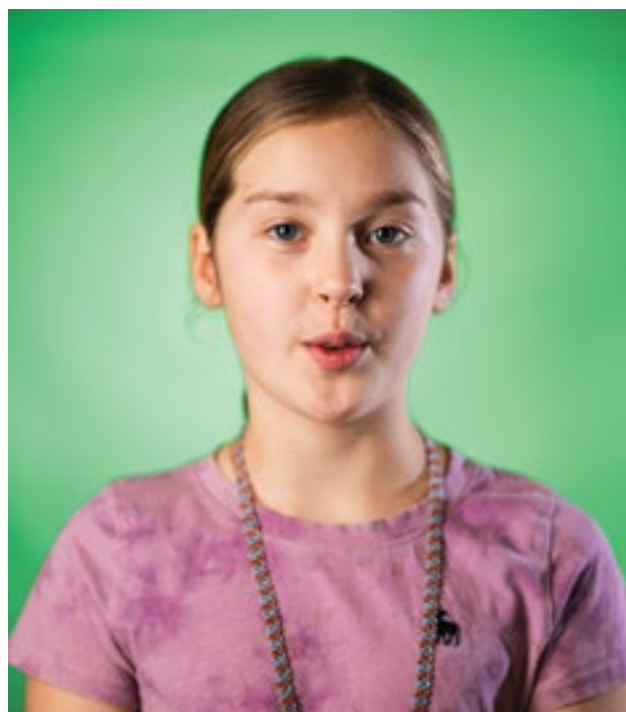




Issue Seventeen **THE** Winter 2025
**SKELETON
PRESS**
**NEIGHBOURHOOD
LANGUAGE**



These folks are trying to tell you something.
See what on page 2.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We are interested in your thoughts and opinions about stories that appear in *The Skeleton Press*, and we invite you to contribute by writing a letter to the editor. Letters may be edited for clarity and space considerations.

SEND EMAIL TO:

skeletonpresseditor@gmail.com

VIEW OR DOWNLOAD PAST ISSUES AT:

skeletonparkartsfest.ca/the-skeleton-press

AND TRADITIONAL MAIL TO:

The Skeleton Press

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Skeleton Park, Kingston Community House (99 York St.), The Elm Café (303 Montreal St.) Home Base Housing (540 Montreal St.), Novel Idea (156 Princess St.), Something Else Records (207 Wellington St.), Kingston Community Credit Union (18 Market St.), Daughters General Store (63 John St.), Next Church (89 Colborne St.), BSE Skateboard Shop (225 Princess St.), Coffee Way Donuts (472 Division St.), and Free Little Libraries in the Skeleton Park neighbourhood

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.

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NEIGHBOURHOOD EDUCATOR, PULP-BASED JOURNALISM, FREE & SERVING MOURNERS PARK & SURROUNDING AREA



TOP ROW, Left to Right:

Teilhard Frost: "Allemande" (a figure in a square dance in which two dancers join right or left hands and make a turn)
Hayley Hudson: "Precious" (in sign language)
Hilbert Buist: "Feebee" (chickadee call)

SECOND FROM TOP ROW, Left to Right:

Tianna Edwards: "Community"
Talia Acker: "No"

SECOND FROM BOTTOM ROW, Left to Right:

Omneya Asfoor: "Salam" ("Peace" in Arabic)
Lib Spry: "Learning"
Sadiqa de Meijer: "Leeshonger" ("Hunger to read" in Dutch)

BOTTOM ROW, Left to Right:

Danny McLaren: "Care"
Monarch Malinowski: "Ankosé" ("Everything is connected" in Anishinaabemowin)
Qazi Mustabeen Noor: "Para" ("A neighbourhood characterised by a strong sense of community" in Bangla)



We at *The Skeleton Press* would like to extend our gratitude to Larry Scanlan and Ulrike Bender,

who have spent countless hours proof-reading, copy-editing, and spell-checking the paper since its inception. Both have been regular contributors to *The Press* and central to our editorial and publishing process. Larry and "Ulrike" – thank you for your tireless efforts to help get *The Skeleton Press* up and running! We wish you the very best for your new adventures in the County.

ATTENTION WRITERS & ARTISTS

We invite pitches for articles related to the neighbourhood and welcome new and experienced writers. Send us your idea (max. 150 words). Most articles are maximum 800 words. We pay \$0.30 a word (\$240 per 800 words). We also welcome new illustrators and photographers and pay market rates. Our next theme is Neighbourhood Gatherings. Please send inquiries with samples of your work: skeletonpresseditor@gmail.com.



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Language

BY HALEY SARFELD



It should come as no surprise that the Inner Harbour is full of language lovers — after all, we're the kind of communication-driven community that comes together to create a neighbourhood newspaper every season or so. Last winter, I wrote to *The Skeleton Press* editors to suggest "language" as a future theme. Reading the conversations that have unfolded from this topic has been a pleasure beyond words.

This issue of *The Skeleton Press* features stories about birdsongs, dance calls, cursive writing, family names, conversations overheard at bus stops, and plant communication. You'll read about how teen activists have been using school newspapers to raise the alarm about health and safety concerns, and how organizers are calling to redefine safety and security through community care. Neighbours have shared their thoughts about local music, books, art, cinema, food, sports, and history. Meanwhile, friends near and far are using language to resist colonization, reclaim ancestral knowledge, and adopt more inclusive and affirming practices in arts and education spaces.

Translation and interpretation have played a special role in this edition. Some of the conversations and poetry you'll read in this issue were adapted into written English from languages such as French, Bengali, American Sign Language, and even chickadee. You may come across new words and phrases in Occitan, Old English, and Yiddish, and perhaps some new applications of familiar words. Sharing language is an act of generosity — whenever someone teaches me a word or definition, I always feel like I've been given a gift. As you read *The Skeleton Press*, I hope that you enjoy taking in these gifts from the neighbourhood, and that you continue to share your gifts of language with the world around you.

Help us put meat on the bones: Support *The Skeleton Press*

We love bringing *The Skeleton Press* to you every few months. But operating with a skeleton crew on a skeleton budget isn't always easy. Currently, funding comes through funds awarded to the Skeleton Park Arts Festival (SPAF) by several granting bodies. But the publication has no independent source of income and relies heavily on volunteers. You can help by donating to SPAF, a charitable organization that can issue tax receipts. Scan the QR code or visit canadahelps.org/en/charities/skeleton-park-arts-festival to get started.



Thank you to our supporters.



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We'd like to thank those special benefactors who have committed to substantial and ongoing donations. Their support is crucial for the longer term planning of the newspaper. These donors, **The Friends of *The Skeleton Press***, are: **Cam-Rog Enterprises, Cold Snap Music Ltd. and Jonathan Rose**

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A Red Card for City Council



A Proposed Soccer Stadium at the Memorial Centre is a Clear Violation of the Public Interest

STORY BY **ALAN GUMMO**

Regular readers of *The Press* will have likely heard about the scheme to build a soccer stadium on the Memorial Centre grounds. The concept is simple: a stadium will be built by a self-styled promoter, Victory Ground Ventures, for a non-existent pro soccer team and two non-existent semi-pro teams on land to be leased from the City. How the City has handled this proposal is worth a look.

INCUBATION

The scheme was incubated in closed-door meetings at City Hall involving the promoter, City staff, Tourism Kingston, and the mayor. There may have been others present, but this is what we know so far.

STAFF REPORT

The scheme was presented in a staff report consisting only of an executive summary and a recommendation. Credible reports have a statement on the plan's origins, some analytical content to demonstrate the rationale behind it, and a logically arrived-at conclusion to link directly to the recommendations. Ordinarily, recommendations should be clear. Yet the discussion at Council indicates there was much confusion over the implications of the recommendations.

COUNCIL MEETING OF JANUARY 14TH

The scheme was discussed by City council on January 14th.

There were delegations in support of the scheme from Tourism Kingston, who think Kingston is just like Halifax; the Chamber of Commerce, personified by a local microbrewer who thought the stadium would be good for his business; and representatives of various field sports organizations.

There were also delegations in opposition from the Williamsville Community Association, the Memorial Centre Farmers' Market, and the Agricultural Society. A professional planner acting as a volunteer provided Council with the expert opinion the City planner should have provided but didn't: not in the public interest, and not good planning.

From the former group, we heard the evidence-free rhetoric that typically embellishes any mention of economic development, and well-intentioned homilies about how team sports build character, family, and community. None of this was relevant to the subject but a lot of time was spent presenting it.



IMAGE CREDIT:
iStock

From the latter, we heard solid and well-grounded analysis about why this is a bad idea. For example, there simply isn't enough room for all the current and proposed activities.

Council's deliberations included some soft questions, some hard questions, some rumination with varying proximity to the issue at hand, and desperate pleas for lowering the temperature, coming together in a spirit of collaboration, and finding a win/win solution.

There were reasonable complaints about process shortcomings, primarily that the proposal had gone this far down the road without their knowing about it. Meanwhile, no one figured out that some of the information they want (for example, land use impact studies) will not be available until after this item returns to their agenda on March 18th for a go/no go decision. Staff did not step in to help them get clear on this point.

Council was flummoxed by staff on at least two other important points. First, staff maintained that they would not be able to suss out an alternative site in time to meet the promoter's timeline, although their fall-back Option 2 proposed to do exactly that. And according to the staff planner, a stadium is a stadium until it's prohibited by the zoning by-law, at which point — Shazzam! — it magically becomes a recreational facility which is permitted. But no one on Council called them on it.

The elephant in the room was the promoter. No one on Council bothered to ask him about his track record. Apparently, it doesn't matter to them.

In the end, Council voted 9-3 to move onto next steps and get more information. They also want to see a lease agreement with the promoter. Given the wording of their motion, this looks very much like a strategy known as "ratcheting to an approval" wherein a sequence of seemingly innocuous steps leads to an irrefutable yes.

TAKE AWAYS

The scheme and the controversy can be looked at through several lenses. One of the lenses focuses on how the City handled them. Some troubling observations have come into view:

- **Lack of transparency and clarity about the decision process.** To make matters worse, the process is underlaid by an arbitrary timeline forced by the promoter. The City has made no effort to bring it under control. IMAGE CREDIT: iStock
- **Absence of corporate memory.** Given past controversies over the Memorial Centre site, for example, building a school on it or, before that, selling it off for housing, and recent public reviews of it, anyone with any corporate memory would have understood that this proposal should be stopped dead in its tracks.
- **Poor judgement.** This was manifested in the inability to size up relevant decision criteria. Sufficient information has already come to light to discourage further time-wasting exploration.
- **Disregard for the public interest.** This has been shown by the lack of concern on the part of staff, the majority of Council, and the mayor for the alienation of public land by way of privatization.
- **Disrespect for legalities.** This includes the legal status of the Agricultural Society and its entitlement to use the grounds in their entirety during the Fall Fair. Disrespect for legal considerations is a good sign of a deeply compromised organisation.
- **The mayor's role as cheerleader.** A democratic mayor serves as a neutral chair of debate or mediator of conflict. Being a cheerleader is not okay in a democracy.

SUMMING UP

This is a case study of a business-friendly government in action. Sometimes the best thing is simply to say no. However, that does not happen in an organization committed to advancing business interests first and foremost. The "If you build it, they will come" mindset deserves to be challenged.

Council gets a red card for unacceptable conduct.

NEXT STEPS

Stay tuned. Attend the consultations. Organize. Attend the March 18th meeting of Council. Bring your red cards.



ALAN GUMMO is retired from senior positions in public administration (municipal sector) with specializations in city and regional planning, and corporate and community strategic planning. His career memoirs are titled *Everything is Temporary – A Career in Long-Range Planning*. He lives a block away from the Memorial Centre. He is also a resident of Brazil where they play a lot of soccer.

In School, Out of Breath

Students at a Local High School Are Concerned About Unsafe Concentrations of Carbon Dioxide in Their Classrooms. Some Are Pushing Back

STORY BY HAZEL TAYLOR-QUICK

IT TURNS OUT THAT WHEN THEIR SAFETY IS AT RISK, EVEN TEENAGERS BEGIN TO CARE.

Out of breath on the school stairs? Trouble focusing in class? Headaches walking the hall? You're not alone and it's not your fault! New findings suggest Kingston Secondary School's unhealthy high carbon dioxide levels may be the cause.

This was the opening paragraph of the article I published in the Kingston Secondary School (KSS) school newspaper, the Bears Bulletin. It was 8pm when it was released. Though I knew it was important, I had no idea what was about to happen.

The article outlined the carbon dioxide testing, measuring concentrations on all three floors. For context, Health Canada says that an acceptable concentration for indoor spaces is below 1000 ppm. Our school peaked at 2600 ppm. Paragraphs in italics are excerpts from my original article and outline some of the symptoms Health Canada says that people might experience from ongoing exposure to high levels of carbon dioxide.

At these levels, students' ability to learn is under threat. More than the risk to academic performance – these heightened CO2 levels indicate that poor air circulation at KSS is undermining student health in important ways, from aggravating respiratory symptoms to increased infectious disease transmission. [...] Chronic exposure to levels of CO2 above this [1000 ppm] is associated with serious health consequences.

I had spoken to Dr. Dick Zoutman, Emeritus Professor in the School of Medicine at Queen's University, and he was able to provide me with a CO2 monitor to do testing. But after the results came back, he was shocked.

"Elevated CO2 levels allow the virus that causes COVID-19 to survive in the air longer," Zoutman told the Bears Bulletin.

He pointed me towards dozens of articles, studies and research papers about school air quality. They showed me how high CO2 levels can make it hard to concentrate, increase migraines, and make students out of breath. They can also increase fatigue and make it difficult to focus. None of these have any place in a school, though I knew students were experiencing all of these things – they just didn't know why.

Air quality might not be something most adults would think that high school students would take

an interest in. But it turns out that when their safety is at risk, even teenagers begin to care. By the morning after the release, it had become common knowledge. Social media was abuzz, group chats were in a flurry, the hallways were crowded with students sharing experiences.

I had prepared dozens of emails to journalists, school council chairs, parent/guardian groups, air quality experts, and the teacher's union, OSSTF. I wanted to maximize the "kaboom effect," as I called it.

And it worked.

School council got involved, concerned parents and guardians began calling the school, and students grew worried about the possibility of CO2 affecting their grades. The union took an interest. As of time of writing, the original article has had over a thousand views, and the original instagram post has reached double the accounts. Teachers, students, and strangers congratulated me everywhere I went. It was more attention, and quicker than I had anticipated. Before long, journalists began reaching out. The school even had to release a statement; in it, they referred to the elevated CO2 levels as being an issue of student "comfort", which seemed to many to downplay the severity of it.

I didn't know what to say. Should I do an interview? I was getting tired of the attention; I don't thrive in the spotlight and was getting exhausted. I work as a community activist and my friends and family told me that it would be a good experience. Learn to talk to the press in a lower stakes situation, than, say, a sit-in.

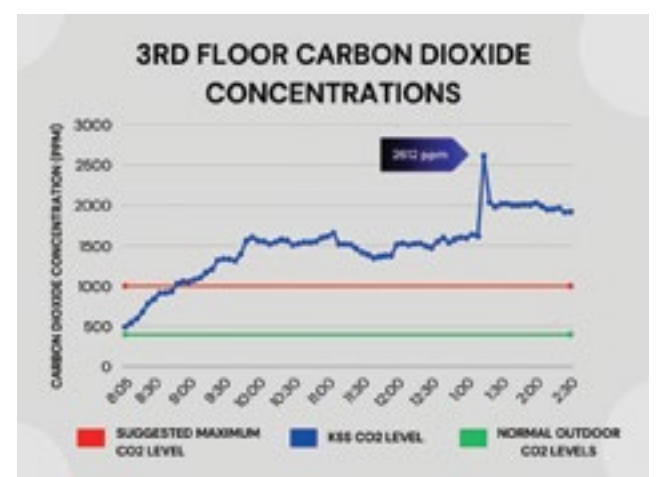
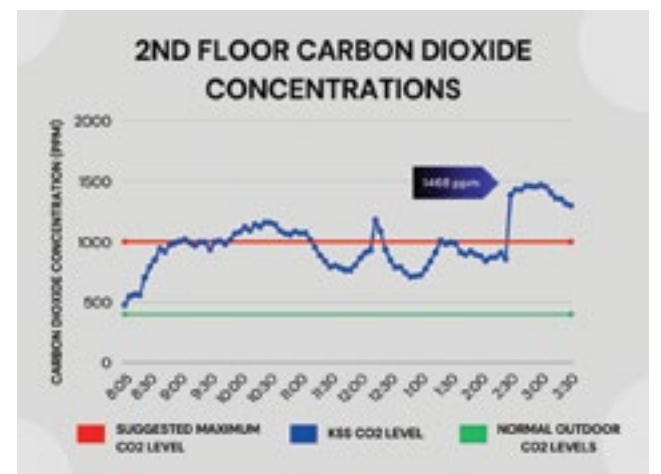
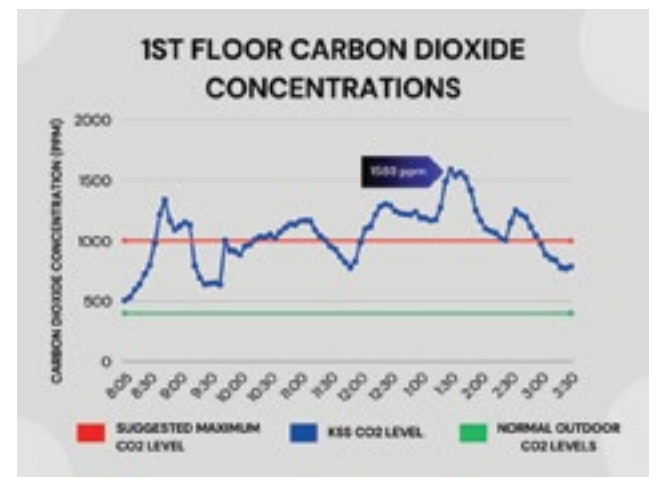
The Whig was first. Saturday. Front page. Above the fold.

Within a week, it was included in a provincial government workers' memo for a huge swath of Ontario and Quebec.

Then came a CBC interview on air, then a Global News video. I was overjoyed at the community support that this issue was garnering, but I was getting tired of the microphone. It was a lot for a teenager with a full course load and I began backing down from commitments and meetings, going days without checking my email. My parents told the rest of my family to stop sending messages for the sake of my mental health. I was feeling done, but the issue had only just begun.

With the community pressure to do something, the Limestone District School Board was forced to conduct testing. Students noticed boxes or air filters in the atrium, and for a full seven days air quality tests were run. I learned that this had been brought up as an issue previously, and the authorities had done nothing. Now, with the spotlight on them too, they had to act: I called it a victory.

But we'd only won the battle, not the war. While the school has said that the testing results fall within acceptable limits, I believe that there is still more information needed, and more action to be taken, before students will feel safe at school.



HAZEL TAYLOR-QUICK

(They/She + E/Em) is a 17-year old zine-maker, canoe-tripper and chicken-enthusiast, and may alternatively be addressed as "Benevolent Dungeon-Master". In life, e enjoys savouring the mundane, from the beauty of dust bunnies, to the first sip of warm tea, to the final notes of a good song.

Meaningful Security

We Keep Each Other Safe

STORY BY **HADLEY HOWES** ILLUSTRATION BY **ABBY NOWKOWSKI**



“Where people feel safety, where they feel they can belong, they can learn. Curiosity naturally emerges from a settled nervous system. A rose can grow through concrete, but it flourishes in the soil.”

— PRENTIS HEMPHILL

¹ Some of the principles of marshalling in abolitionist organizing include:

- “We keep each other safe”
- “Care not cops” (we are here to care for our people, not punish or tell them what to do)
- Inclusion in alignment with the community’s “basis of unity” (or “why we are here, together, now”)
- Facilitation of accessibility for people with diverse needs
- De-escalation of (potential) conflict
- Escalation of connection
- “Revolutionary calm” (leading by example)
- Attending to the spiritual, physical and emotional needs of participants or connecting people to appropriate resources

Security, we may agree, is a core human need. But what does it mean?

As Prentis Hemphill suggests, the sense of belonging that goes along with feeling safe is the soil through which we nourish all our other needs. When we feel secure, we can ask for what we need, are open to hearing the needs of others, and can be generous with what we have to offer. A sense of security nourishes growth in relationships, from the most intimate and personal to the expanded communities and coalitions to which we belong. How can we consciously bring security into our neighbourhoods in ways that best support connection and care?

Different interpretations of what “security” means have radically different repercussions for our relationships. For example, the response of community leaders to the call for “security plans” after the stabbing incident in Belle Park last September reveals inequitable and prejudiced attitudes about who among our neighbours deserve safety and who, by

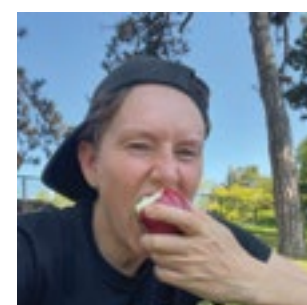
extension, do not. The decision to close the Integrated Care Hub, evict residents from the nearby encampment, and shutter access to the park denied resources to hundreds of Kingston’s most vulnerable community members. The compassionate answer to a call for security is not to deny vital services and resources, but to ask, “what are the needs that are not being met, and how can we meet them?” The fallout from this incident highlights diverging definitions of security and asks us to get creative about our own roles in securing neighbourhood spaces. What does security mean to the diverse communities who frequent Skeleton Park? What do children need to feel safe? The elderly? People who are unhoused? Use drugs? Walk alone? Experience emotional distress? What can we imagine when we seek to answer this question from places of curiosity, compassion, and belonging, instead of from places of fear and exclusion?

Police and security guards – the systemic answers to social safety needs – represent the opposite of security for many people in our communities. For a

security guard, “security” typically means prioritizing the protection of property through monitoring, controlling access, and excluding unwanted persons – they protect property, not people. Police, while similarly mandated to protect private property, respond to some of our most urgent needs by “securing” through violence, detention, or containment what they perceive to be “threats,” even when the “threat” is the very person who called for help. Far too often to be considered human error, mental health crisis calls result in the person needing assistance being killed by police responders; most often, the people harmed and/or killed in these incidents are racialized (in so-called Canada, remember Ejaz Choudry, Regis Korchinski-Paquet, D’Andre Campbell, Tylor Coore, and Steven Dedam, among too many others). Police, courts, and prisons do not attend to our communities’ diverse needs – they do not keep us safe.

One grassroots response to a community’s need for security is to provide a community care team, sometimes called “marshals.” Marshals, like security guards, have duties of protection and access, but they differ in their mandate to protect people over property, and to facilitate access to civic space rather than deny it. In abolitionist organizing, marshalling is the act of embodying the community tenet of “we keep each other safe.” You may see marshals blocking traffic so a demonstration can walk safely through an intersection, creating distance between agitators and demonstrators, escorting speakers at an event on or off the podium, handing out water and snacks, providing medical assistance, initiating chants and songs, and generally contributing to the character and safety of an action or event. A marshal’s role is about creating a sense of security based on prioritizing *people*: marshals provide safety and access to being-with-community by attuning and responding to diverse needs and providing care for these needs in ways that increase accessibility for the most oppressed, vulnerable, and criminalized members of our communities. The role of a marshalling team is to protect and facilitate access to space for diverse people to be together with a shared desire for connection and belonging. Abolitionist principles of marshalling¹ are aligned with the characteristics of secure relationships (protective, available, attuned and responsive) — a definition of security that prioritizes relationships, collectivity, connection, and neighbourly resourcing, as in: we keep each other safe.

Skeleton Park Community Care Team: Do you feel called to co-create a care team for our neighbourhood? Community members are initiating a marshal/care team for the Skeleton Park Arts Festival this year, and we’re looking to connect with others and imagine what this could look like together through a series of workshops this winter/spring. Sign up for the initial “Basics and Principles of Abolitionist Marshalling Practices: We Keep Each Other Safe” in February, facilitated by the author of this article, and stay tuned for more opportunities to contribute to this project and learn from various community members this spring!



HADLEY HOWES is an artist, scholar and organizer living in T’karonto and writing a dissertation for Queen’s University on the relationship between artistic and abolitionist practices. They’ve been marshalling since 2020 with various communities, including No Pride in Policing Coalition, Prisoners’ Rights Project Toronto, Palestinian Youth Movement, Feminists for Jina, and others.

Seven Generations Thinking

How the KNCLN is Chipping Away at Colonization

STORY BY **LIB SPRY** AND **TERRI-LYNN BRENNAN**

ILLUSTRATION BY **JOEL KIMMEL**

We sit in my living room — Brandon Maracle, the new Executive Director of the Kingston Native Centre and Language Nest (KNCLN), Terri-lynn Brennan, co-founder of the LodgePole Arts Alliance, and myself. I listen as Maracle and Brennan share information about who they are, make connections around issues, and discuss the challenges and realities facing Indigenous peoples across the region. Brennan and I have caught the very busy Maracle for a brief hour and a quarter to interview him for this paper. Their discussion is, to me, in fact, more important than the interview. As a settler, I am always humbled when I listen to these exchanges by just how little I know and understand of today's realities faced by those whose ancestors have lived here since time immemorial, where I am now a guest.

Maracle is young, energetic, and enthusiastic about the responsibilities and challenges of his new job. The KNCLN has grown out of the Kingston Indigenous Language Nest (KILN), an Indigenous-led, community-based volunteer organization “focused on families learning their ancestral languages in a safe and nurturing environment...achieved using stories, games and song.”¹ It was started in 2013 by Community Grandmother Maureen Buchanan, a member of the Katarohkwi Grandmothers' Council, with a focus on revitalizing the languages of the nations of this area: Anishinaabemowin (Anishinaabe), Kanien'keha (Mohawk) and Ininiwan (Ojibwe).

Initially run by volunteers, the organization has grown into a fully-funded charitable organization with a paid team and has acquired its own building on Montreal Street. In 2023, it was granted friendship centre status by the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC) and has adopted offering a variety of social services rooted in Indigenous cultures that fill in gaps and address some needs of this particular urban Indigenous community. Since the transition into the KNCLN, the number of people making their way through the doors on Montreal Street has quadrupled, as they make use of all the services involved. Some of the programs now on offer include:

- **Indigenous Language Revitalization** — in-person beginner classes in Ojibwe and Mohawk are offered weekly, plus a variety of language-based events over each year.
- **Awkekon and Wasa-Nabin** — Children's (7-12) and Youth (13-18) drop-in programming and a range of growing programming for these new offerings at the Centre.
- **Intergenerational Strength and Resiliency Program** — a wide-ranging set of supports including peer counselling/community outreach, cultural and land-based opportunities, knowledge sharing, client-led wellness planning.
- **Life Long Care** — support and programming for community members of all ages including our elderly population with transportation services; opportunities for socialization; service navigation and advocacy; and emotional and spiritual supports to promote independent living and good quality of life.
- **Land-Based programs** with activities that include foraging walks, stories, and teachings.
- **River Alternative Secondary School Program**, in partnership with the Limestone District School Board, offers Indigenous youth the usual secondary school curriculum together with cultural programming in order to provide “an alternative learning environment for Indigenous learners wishing to obtain their Ontario Secondary School Diploma.”²



Maracle, a Kanien'keha:ka (Mohawk) from Tyendinaga First Nation/Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte, who took on the role of Executive Director just over three months ago, describes his position as his “dream job.” He has a background in law, and as an articling student at an Aboriginal Law Firm specializing in Claims at the Specific Claims Tribunal, he was involved in a variety of legal issues, including Indigenous rights, land claims and negotiations. Prior to joining KNCLN, he was Director of Supportive Housing for Lionhearts Inc., an organization dedicated to uniting “people in the community with practical acts of love.”³

He sees the work of KNCLN as “a long-term conversation,” one that provides a space for the local Indigenous community — mentally, physically, spiritually, and emotionally — a task that will continue, he says, long after he is gone. His aim is to chip away at colonialization. “This is seven generations thinking,” he says, “which should provide all levels of teaching and is intergenerational. It is of particular importance to engage kids at an early age.” He feels strongly that the leadership within KNCLN must stay close to the community's wants and needs. He hopes that the job of Executive Director will fade away as the community reclaims healthy ways of governing and servicing itself.

Two areas of particular interest to him are the lack of affordable housing in this city, and the need for the law profession to learn about Indigenous justice through education and experience with the community. “It is a very exciting time to be here,” he says.

Just as we are getting into some of the nitty gritty about the hopes and potentiality of the local urban Indigenous community, it is time for Maracle to leave, as his next meeting is with the Queen's University Law Clinic, to discuss just how to include Indigenous justice in their curriculum. He's a busy person, doing great work across multiple sectors on the Ka'tarohkwi landscape. Great, and necessary work.



LIB SPRY has been a theatre maker for more than fifty years. She is a specialist in non-traditional theatre forms and is a recognized teacher of Theatre of the Oppressed.

DR. TERRI-LYNN BRENNAN is a proud kawehnohkwes tsi kawè:note (Wolfe Island'er) and is the Executive Director of LodgePole Arts Alliance.



¹ kingstonnativecentre.org

² ibid

³ lionhearts.ca

STORY BY **RON SHORE**ILLUSTRATION BY **HOLLY GILMOUR**

Waking to the More-Than-Human

Plant Communication and The Original World Wide Web

In some Native languages, the term for plants translates to “those who take care of us”.

– **ROBIN WALL KIMMERER, *Braiding Sweetgrass***

You don't know what you got 'til it's gone.

– **JONI MITCHELL, “Big Yellow Taxi”**

IN 2017, the *Oxford Junior Dictionary* began to remove words related to nature, such as “wren,” “acorn,” and “dandelion,” citing the need to accommodate more contemporary language such as “committee,” “broadband,” and “blog.” In response, author Robert MacFarlane published *The Lost Words: A Spell Book*, which itself prompted the song “Lost Words Blessing”:¹

“Look to the sky with care, my love
And speak the things you see

Let new names take and root and thrive and grow
And even as you journey on past dying stars exploding
Like the gilded one in flight, leave your little gifts of light
And in the dead of night my darling,
find the gleaming eye of starling
Like the little aviator, sing your heart to all dark matter”

While the book and song are meditations on nature, they also celebrate language. There's a link between our relationship with nature and with language, *Lost Words* seems to suggest, and that got me thinking.

Plants and fungi are known to communicate through shared mycorrhizal networks, expressing chemicals, electrical signals, and other compounds across individual plants and even across species. Modern biology recognizes that ecosystems regulate through shared networks of global connectivity, much like our bodies do. In fact, mycelial and mycorrhizal networks share the same branched network patterns as the synaptic networks in your brain. *We are the forest.*

Communication and community are words that share a common root. The old Latin word *communis*, meaning “shared by all or by many,” is at the origin of both words. Both communication and community hinge on this very notion of something shared, of commonality and distribution across many. So, it's not surprising that when you really look at recent

advances in understanding plant communication, you discover how much we as humans have in common with our botanical relatives. *We are all related.*

Plants use many ways to communicate. They release and receive electronic and chemical signals, express volatile organic compounds, and share networks with other plants, fungi, insects, and microbes in the soil. They also learn and store memories. So, do plants communicate with humans?

We know that plants are very much biosensors, sensing and responding to the presence and movements of humans.² And as Michael Pollan has pointed out in his great book *The Botany of Desire*, plants can be wily, using sweetness, beauty and intoxication to influence human behaviours and further their own evolution. The effect plants have on humans includes the alteration of consciousness.

In plant-medicine traditions, plant preparations such as the Amazonian ayahuasca brew are considered to have a spirit, in this case the Queen of the Forest. Ingesting such visionary plants, or “plants of the gods,” is thought to allow for communication with this spirit, practically facilitated by the near perfect match of its chemistry to serotonin in the human body. More locally, a group of Algonquin-Anishinabeg and non-Indigenous allies are seeking legal personhood status for the Gatineau River, much as the Magpie River in Northern Quebec was recognized in 2021. Such recognition grants the river extra protection, under a Rights of Nature framework.

Today, roughly 40% of pharmaceutical drugs we use are directly derived from plants, including many of the most prescribed drugs. Aspirin was originally derived from willow bark, and quinine used to treat malaria was originally extracted from a South American tree by the Quechua people of modern-day Peru and Bolivia. Drugs to treat malaria, leukemia, and glaucoma, among many other serious diseases, are derived from Amazonian plants.

¹ <https://www.thelostwords.org/>

² <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37571752/>

³ [1] Fabricant, D and N. Farnsworth. “The value of plants used in traditional medicine for drug discovery.” *Environmental Health Perspectives* 109 (2001), 69-75. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1240543/pdf/ehp109s-000069.pdf>



Suggested Reading:

Thus Spoke the Plant, Monica Gagliano

Braiding Sweetgrass, Robin Wall Kimmerer

To Speak for the Trees, Diana Beresford-Kroeger

Finding the Mother Tree, Suzanne Simard

Plants of the Gods, Richard Evans Schultes,

Albert Hoffman and Christian Rätsch

The Botany of Desire, Michael Pollan

Humans have turned to the plant world as medicine for millennia: fossil records show that medicinal plants were used 60,000 years ago, during the Paleolithic Era.³ Today, we recognize the importance of protecting remaining Traditional Ecological Knowledge: local and Indigenous knowledge of the land, its blessings and needs, and cosmologies which place humans within the natural world and spirit within nature. Like the *Lost Words*, there has been so much Lost Knowledge in this era of More Information.

In many ways, moving forward in the modern crisis depends on remembering the more-than-human worlds. Remembering ancestral ways. Remembering and practicing the skills and techniques of living with the land. Of sharing. Remembering villages, land- and water-based traditions. Remembering our place within the real world wide webs. Reviving lost words may help us remember the lost ways, or at least point us in the right direction and get us singing.

*Don't forget your history
Know your destiny
In the abundance of water
The fool is thirsty*

– **BOB MARLEY, “Rat Race”**



RON SHORE is a researcher and scientist at Queen's University. He is the founder of Street Health Centre and Stone City Ales. He lives with his family among the trees of the Kingscourt neighbourhood.



The Promise of Song

How To Speak Chickadee

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY **HILBERT BUIST**

I am distracted from reading under the maple tree towering over my patio. Laughter drifts in from neighbouring backyards.

Two pedestrians talking animatedly from the sidewalk lower their voices, taking their secrets with them.

House sparrows charge from the dogwood across the patio to the feeder and back chattering constantly.

I return to my book. The narrative reabsorbs me when a high, thin skree-call grabs my attention. I get up and look for a tiny brown mottled bird. It's a brown creeper! I am thrilled to see it. It is fall and not only the migratory birds are on the move.

The necessity of putting on a warm coat or a layer of fat, storing food, finding warmth and security drives birds to migrate to warmer climates, hunker down in familiar natural habitat, or to come into the city. As days shorten and cold sets in, birds join flocks, cross into each other's territories, and find alternative food sources. With a drop in insect population, birds turn to plentiful and well-preserved seeds and berries. This is good news for urban bird enthusiasts as suet cakes are hung and feeders are filled.

However, the drop in number of insects is bad news for the brown creeper. They depend on finding insects through the winter. Their quiet, high-pitched calls remind me they are locating insects and signaling their success to each other.

Having lost the creeper, I return to my book only to be jolted out of my seat by the piercing screams of a bluejay. "Hey! I found the human who's going to feed us peanuts!" Few birds talk to humans, none talk to themselves. When they call, they are calling to a mate. Soon the bluejay's partner shows up. I get the peanuts.

Bluejays are intelligent and have developed a wide variety of calls such as jeer, whistle, rattle and click. They also mimic the calls of other birds, particularly crows and raptors, and communicate with behaviour through posture, bobbing up and down, and by raising or lowering their crests.

Walking the KP trail, I heard a whistle call. Scanning the shrubs, I discovered a lone bluejay whistling and bobbing its body. This "squeaky gate" call is more common in breeding season. It was now fall without any other jay nearby. Had it found something that prompted a warning? A cat? A raptor?! I searched for the problem. Deep in the tangle of a leafless lilac bush I spied branches that were curiously bird-shaped. It was a Barred Owl blending



into its surroundings. The bluejay knew the owl was not a direct threat but had to tell others. Having done so it flew off.

Back on the patio, the bluejays are busy. I return to my book, only to be interrupted again.

Tseedeleedeet!

I look up to see a flash of gray feathers shoot by carrying a sunflower seed. Weighing the equivalent of four pages of my book, the chickadee is fearless, gregarious, and everywhere. They connect other birds and humans. When I walk through the woods holding out a handful of seeds, the chickadees are usually the first to arrive, followed by nuthatches and downy woodpeckers. Bluejays, cardinals, and the red-bellied woodpecker eventually show up. If I stay still, I see brown creepers and kinglets.

Warblers migrating south in the fall hang out with the chickadees, who know all the best places to eat, allowing the warblers to forage in silence while the noisy chickadees find new places, keep order, and call out danger.

Songbirds of the order Passeriformes — perching birds — have a highly developed vocal organ, the syrinx, where the trachea forks into the lungs enabling it to produce sounds from both bronchial openings, expanding the birds' repertoire. Most songbirds have complex songs and simple calls. Songs in males advertise suitability in mating and defense of territory in the breeding season.

The chickadee is different. They have a simple mating song, the fee-bee, and complex calls. Calls are for keeping contact, exchanging foraging locations, flock cohesion, warnings, and mobbing. Approximately sixteen different vocalizations have been identified in chickadees with endless variations and many more when combined with bill snapping, hissing, posturing and raising or lowering pitch. Scientists have concluded that chickadee communication is one of the most complex non-human languages.

Chickadees are year-round residents and prefer rich forests bordering shrub edges and open fields supporting a diversity of seed-bearing plants. Because of their long-term investment in complex habitats, chickadees have evolved strategies for survival including social hierarchies, flock formation, physical adaptations in winter and, of course, complex language.

How to speak Chickadee

Chick-a-dee-dee-dee!

The best food is over here!

Hi! How's it going?

Look out for danger!

Tree-treat, treat-tree-tree!

You're in the wrong place!

Tseedeleedeet!

Look out! Coming through!

Prrt-prr, prrrt, prr, prrt

Move faster!

Chebeche!

I'll fight you!

Hiss!

Get out of my space!

Dee-dee-dee!

Trespassers beware!

Tseet-tseet-tseet!

I'm here, you there? I'm okay, you?

Fee-bee, fee-bee, fee-bee-ee!

Hey-sweetie, hey-sweetie, hey-sweetie-hey!

FEE-BEE, FEE-BEE!

I'm the best! This is my territory!

Fee-zhee, fee-zhee, fee-zhee!

Feed-me, feed-me-please, please-feed-me!

Silence

Perched chickadee who knows its place in the hierarchy.

Silence

Look for a raptor.

Chick-a-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee!

Drive this hawk away!

Zeee!

Danger! All quiet! Freeze!

HILBERT BUIST is a part-time pastry chef, part-time wildlife guide, and a full-time nature noticer.

Linguistic Snapshots

Vignettes That Show How Language Shapes Our Neighbourhood

STORY BY **OMNEYA ASFOOR**

ESL learners at KEYS PHOTO CREDIT: Lea Westlake



Coming from a background in linguistics and phonetics, paired with a deep passion for languages, I've always considered myself a language lover. For me, they are more than just words — they're bridges that connect people and cultures. Since moving to Kingston in 2016, I've experienced countless moments that celebrate the rich tapestry of languages within our neighborhood. Here are a few snapshots.

A WARM WELCOME TO KINGSTON

When I first arrived in Kingston as the spouse of an international student, I wasn't sure how I would fit in. But within a week, my love for languages found me a place. I started volunteering with the Queen's University International Centre's English Conversation Club where I met a facilitator who introduced me to a group of women who had just sponsored a Syrian refugee family.

The family had just arrived and needed help with interpretation, and within ten days, I was out and about, helping them settle in. That experience not only connected me to my new community but also reaffirmed how my passion for languages could help others. It helped me find my footing and gave me a sense of purpose during those early days in a new city.

THE LANGUAGES OF THE BROCK STREET BUS STOP

During my early morning bus rides to Queen's campus, I was amazed by the diversity of languages spoken at the Brock Street bus stop: Mandarin, Spanish, Arabic, and more. It's amazing how easily people switched to English to communicate across cultures. It made me realize how Kingston, and Canada in general, is a true cultural melting pot.

THE REFUGEES WELCOME SIGN

A few years ago, a simple sign became a powerful symbol in our neighborhood. Many houses displayed a "Refugees Welcome" sign, which went viral and became a source of inspiration for many. Although I am not a refugee, seeing the sign written in Arabic made me smile every time I walked past a house displaying the sign.

For me, it wasn't just a kind gesture, it was a reminder of how languages can make people feel seen and included. It spoke to the heart of what our neighborhood represents: an openness to diversity and a willingness to embrace people from all walks of life.

THE FUNNY SIDE OF TEACHING ENGLISH

Fast forward a few years, and I now work as an English as a Second Language (ESL) instructor right here in our neighborhood. One day, I was teaching a lesson on idioms, and I used the phrase, "it's raining cats and dogs." A student raised her hand and asked, "Why cats and dogs? Why not something useful, like coffee and donuts?" The whole class burst into laughter, and it sparked a lively discussion about idioms in their own languages. A Spanish-speaking student shared that they say, "it's raining buckets," while someone from Japan said they say, "It's raining earth and sand."



It spoke to the heart of what our neighborhood represents: an openness to diversity and a willingness to embrace people from all walks of life.

Moments like these remind me why I love my work. Language is not just about grammar or pronunciation — it's about sharing stories, cultures, and laughs.

SKELETON PARK

One of the most delightful sights in our neighborhood is the kids playing at Skeleton Park. It's a spot where cultures mix and languages flow freely, as children switch back and forth between their mother tongues with their parents and English with other kids. You'll hear a mix of French, Spanish, Arabic, Mandarin, and more, as little voices chatter excitedly on the swings and slides. It's fascinating to watch how effortlessly they navigate between languages.

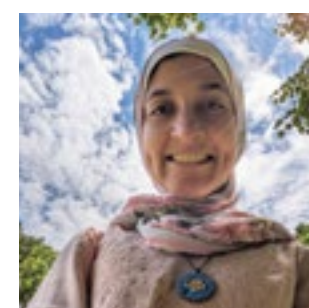
As a parent, I find myself smiling at the scene, even though my child and I often stand on the sidelines. You see, most of our international friends have graduated and moved away from Kingston, and we're left feeling a little lonely these days. I joke with my child that we're on a "friend hunt" at the park, hoping to make new connections and expand our circle. It's a bit like matchmaking, but instead of finding a date, we're looking for fellow parents who also want their kids to have playmates who can switch from "home language" to "playground language" in the blink of an eye.

We've yet to find our perfect match, but we're hopeful. After all, what better way to connect than through the universal language of play.

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD, A LINGUISTIC MOSAIC

Kingston, especially our neighborhood, beautifully illustrates the power of diversity. Whether at bus stops where multiple languages are spoken or in classrooms where idioms connect cultures, language reflects the richness of our community.

In our neighborhood, language is more than just communication, it's a testament to diversity and inclusion. Every new word, accent, or story reminds me why I love languages. They aren't just bridges — they are the soul of our community.



OMNEYA ASFOOR, an ESL instructor passionate about teaching both kids and adults, an occasional weekend crafter, and a full-time mom.

The story of a rise and a fall

My father was first
 An educated, cultured editor
 Then he became
 A mighty officer;
 In his dreams he would
 Play catch with money
 With money,
 I, his son, first became
 Jobless
 Then a lecher
 And then an idiot
 I write poems now
 In my dreams I
 Play catch with the stars
 With the stars;
 My father had bright, fair skin
 Six feet two inches tall
 I, his son, am a sunburnt shade of dark¹
 Five foot nine inches in total (that makes me
 Five inches shorter)
 My father's sharp nose keeps
 His pince-nez in place
 I hardly have a nose
 So my glasses have handles on them
 My father knew fantastic English
 And I, a little Bangla
 My father could simply slap
 Anyone, anywhere
 I can barely blow a kiss
 At some person or the other, that's it
 On days of torrential rain my father
 Would create great waves while returning home in his Studebaker
 I roll up my pants, sandals in hand
 Trying to cross the avenue, stepping in its many ditches
 My father's name is Khaled-Ibn-Ahmad Quaderi
 As if a heavy sword made in Damascus, of intricate design
 As if a British-period, still-reliable overbridge
 That rattles with all its might
 My name is very short
 My name is Shaheed Quaderi
 Puny, short — feeble as
 A paper boat in a turbulent river
 Feeble as a paper boat
 In a turbulent river

POET

SHAHEED QUADERI (1940-2016) was one of the most prominent voices of the modern contemporary Bangladeshi poetry scene and the broader literary movement in the 1950s. His poems are rooted in the metropolitan culture of Dhaka. Before leaving Dhaka to settle in the US in the 1980s, he wrote three poetry collections and then a fourth after a hiatus of thirty-one years. His poetic voice is unabashedly urban; he candidly writes about his alienation from nature, the various political upheavals including the 1947 Partition of India and the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971, the dark underbelly of Dhaka as well as the mundanities of life.

একটি উত্থান-পতনের গল্প

আমার বাবা প্রথমে ছিলেন একজন
 শিক্ষিত সংস্কৃতিবান সম্পাদক
 তারপর হলেন এক
 জাঁদরেল অফিসার;
 তিনি স্বপ্নের ভেতর
 টাকা নিয়ে লোফালুফি খেলতেন
 টাকা নিয়ে,
 আমি তাঁর ছেলে প্রথমে ছলাম বেকার,
 তারপর বেল্লিক
 তারপরো বেকুব
 এখন লিখি কবিতা
 আমি স্বপ্নের ভেতর
 নক্ষত্র নিয়ে লোফালুফি করি
 নক্ষত্র নিয়ে;
 বাবা ছিলেন উজ্জ্বল, ধবধবে ফর্সা
 এবং ছয়ফুট দুই ইঞ্চি লম্বা
 আমি তাঁর ছেলে-ময়লা, রোদে-পোড়া, কালো
 ৫ ফুট ৯ ইঞ্চি মোটে(অর্থাৎ
 পাঁচ ইঞ্চি বেঁটে)
 বাবা উন্নত-নাসা
 পরতেন প্যানাসে
 আমার নাকই নেই বলতে গেলে
 পরি ছ্যান্ডেল-অলা চশমা
 বাবা জানতেন দুর্দান্ত ইংরিজি
 আমি অল্পধনু বাংলা
 বাবা যখন-তখন যাকে-তাকে চপেটাঘাত করতে পারতেন।
 আমি কেবল মাঝে-মাঝে একে-ওকে চুম্বন ছুঁড়ে মারতে পারি, বাস!
 প্রবল বর্ষার দিনে বাবা
 রাস্তায় জলোচ্ছ্বাস তুলে স্টুডিবেকারে ঘরে ফিরতেন,
 আমি পাতকুন গুটিয়ে স্যান্ডেল হাতে
 অনেক খানাখন্দে পা রেখে এতিনিউ পার হ'তে চেষ্টা করি
 বাবার নাম খালেদ-ইবনে-আহমাদ কাদরী
 যেন দামেস্কে তৈরী কারুকাজ-বন্দা একটি বিশাল ভারী তরবারী,
 যেন বৃষ্টি আমলের এখনও-নির্ভরযোগ্য কোনো
 বানবন ক'রে-ওঠা ওজারব্রীজ,
 আমার নাম খুব দুর্বল
 আমার নাম শহীদ কাদরী
 ছোটো, বেঁটে - বোড়ো নদীতে
 কাগজের নৌকার মতই পলকা
 কাগজের নৌকার মতই পলকা।

¹ Colourism in South Asia is a social ill that predates and then was worsened through colonialism, but here the speaker flips the script and takes pride in his darker skin tone. Among the many connotations of having darker skin, being adventurous and outdoorsy (and hence more tanned) takes precedence in this poem. The speaker is a wanderer; things like the strict discipline of a desk job or the luxury of traveling by car do not appeal to him. His darker skin tone is a symbol of his free spirit as opposed to his father's rigidity.



TRANSLATOR

QAZI MUSTABEEN NOOR (she/they) has spent most of her life in Dhaka, Bangladesh. She is currently pursuing her PhD in English at Queen's University. She shares her home base in Kingston with her partner and two cats: Nimki and Narella.

In *Hard White*, A Story Rich in Beauty and Colour

Melanie Dugan's Latest Novel Reimagines the Life of American Portraitist and Visual Artist, Alice Neel

STORY BY **JOCELYN PURDIE** ILLUSTRATION BY **HAYDEN MAYNARD**



In Melanie Dugan's fifth novel, *Hard White*, the Kingston writer reimagines the life of Alice Neel, an American artist who was recognized for her groundbreaking portrait paintings. Neel's portraits are known for their expressive use of line and colour, psychological insight into her subjects, and emotional intensity.

Told through first person narration, *Hard White* seamlessly blends facts and fiction to weave a fascinating account of a fearless woman, one who was deeply driven by her desire to be a painter, a mother, and a lover in a period of time when it was highly unusual for women to lead such multifaceted lives.

Neel was born in 1900 and lived through key periods in American history, including World Wars I and II, the establishment of the women's right to vote, the McCarthy era, the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, and second-wave feminism — heady times indeed. Her paintings often reflected the social and cultural changes that were going on around her. Dugan tells Neel's story in the context of these historic moments, fleshing out the impact they had on her work and her life.

Told in chronological order from Neel's childhood until her death in 1984, *Hard White* opens in Colwyn, Pennsylvania, a small rural community where Neel's family moved soon after she was born. We learn that even as a young girl, Neel had an appetite for something beyond the conventional lifestyle of her mother, a middle class homemaker. This lifelong attitude often led Neel to question the status quo regarding the roles of men and women. She developed a passion for painting and pursued it by taking night classes, and eventually enrolling in a summer art program where she met her first husband, an artist from a wealthy Cuban family. Thus

began her journey as an artist. She briefly moved to Cuba with her husband, and then to New York City, where she immersed herself in the culture and politics of her new milieu.

Neel spent most of her adult life in New York City where she worked, raised her children, and pushed creative boundaries. She struggled to gain recognition for her work in the largely male-dominated art scene, while grappling with bouts of depression, poverty, heart-breaking loss, violence, and a series of challenging relationships. She fought for social and gender equity, focusing on the restrictions imposed on women in society and, like many other women artists of her time, she was not recognized for the contribution she made to art history until late in her life — however, when acknowledgment came, it was significant. In 1976 Neel was elected as a member to the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters for her achievements to her field. She also received the Lifetime Achievement Award in 1979 from the National Women's Caucus for Art.

Dugan delves deeply into Neel's psyche to express the artist's innermost thoughts and her emotional state as the story unfolds. She recounts intimate details of the people Neel encountered in her life — family, husbands, lovers, children, friends, artists, and the odd celebrity — thus driving home the many obstacles and hardships she endured throughout her life.

One might expect a book about a visual artist to have images of the artwork, but instead Dugan skillfully uses language to create vivid images of the paintings for the reader — the composition, the colour, the line, the gaze, the position of the subjects, and the content.

Throughout the novel, Dugan continually draws the reader in through her poetic use of language that is layered with humour and frankness. All of this underscores the complexity of this fiercely independent woman and artist, her resilience and her emotional vulnerability. One of the passages that comes to mind occurs after Neel receives a letter from her first husband informing her that he has taken their daughter to live in Cuba with his family after promising that they would all move to Paris together.

She writes, "I stop reading. The words dissolve into letters, the letters seem to free themselves from the page and rise into the air, becoming a cloud of gnats swarming around my head."

The novel is structured in short chapters that revolve around significant events in the artist's life. Dugan brings a visual focus to the story by introducing Neel's paintings at the beginning of various chapters, thereby making a visual link to enhance the content in each chapter. One might expect a book about a visual artist to have images of the artwork, but instead Dugan skillfully uses language to create vivid images of the paintings for the reader — the composition, the colour, the line, the gaze, the position of the subjects, and the content.

Despite the overwhelming challenges in Neel's life (and they were numerous) Dugan portrays her subject not as a victim but as a self-aware, optimistic woman with a sharp sense of humour who was committed to her goals and beliefs, yet who was also cognisant of the consequences of her choices — some that resulted in great joy and others that were disastrous. This is a timely read given the current zeitgeist where hard fought for freedoms in society are under threat. It is a very compelling and beautifully crafted story about an exceptional artist and I highly recommend it.

JOCELYN PURDIE is an artist, curator, and former director of the Union Gallery. She has exhibited and curated exhibitions regularly in gallery and public spaces over the years has been curator of the Swamp Ward Window, an alternative located in the front porch of her home on Bagot Street since 2001. She has lived in the Skeleton Park neighbourhood (a.k.a the Swamp Ward) for over 30 years.

Extraordinary

An excerpt from *PLAY: Dramaturgies of Participation*

STORY BY **JENN STEPHENSON**
AND **MARIAH (MO) HORNER**
ILLUSTRATION BY **JEFF MCGILTON**

Jane's Walks,¹ guerilla gardening, urban foraging, Situationist *dérive*,² yarn bombing, parkour, ghost bikes. Responsive to specific urban locations, these participatory performance-actions assert community. Invariably, the socially engaged artists of these works offer only the *thinnest* frame around everyday life, like a clear glass container to carry play. Creators in this mode, like the Fluxus artists of the 1960s, and contemporary Canadian creators Mia Rushton and Eric Moschopedis (Mia + Eric) rely upon their participants fully as collaborators, both “creative and resistive.”³ These artistic practices function like a magnifying glass to marvel at the everyday as art in itself. In line with Nicolas Bourriaud's *Relational Aesthetics*, these artists use participation to reframe everyday places and experiences for participants through peer-to-peer RELATIONAL encounter, often in concert with a third element of civic space. From the perspective of participants in this work, this kind of social art aims to facilitate “sociopathic relationships,” remapping everyday life into a kind of community imagined UTOPIA.⁴

Different from the purely aesthetic illumination that happens with OSTRANENIE, this kind of relational encounter has a strong focus on materiality and community. There is no show. The process is the show. This work is firmly rooted in conditions already achieved by the everyday world, its magic harkening back to the simple interaction at the place where it happens to be. These artists build PLAY-GROUNDS and offer RECIPES, and then attempt to erase themselves from the narrative construction of the work, allowing the participants to take the lead.

Eric Moschopedis and Laura Leif as co-leaders of *Imaginary Ordinary* inhabited an empty storefront in downtown Calgary to hold space for a month-long local gathering. The storefront space offered a very loose frame for activity, but participants were expected to populate it with their ideas. In his review, Andy Houston describes the space as having “a fun and funky décor . . . Wall space was devoted to the display of various projects; there was a collection of comfortable chairs and a large table for gathering, and even a modest kitchen space so tea and other refreshments could be served.”⁵ The space served as a hub for “connecting and reconnecting,” providing a container for participants to fill with whatever story they felt like telling.⁶ Houston continues, “There were excursions, some in groups, such as the psycho-geography inspired Urban Wander nights, and some were set up for exploration solo or in pairs, where participants were invited to borrow ‘do it yourself’ kits that offered guidance and the equipment for unique journeys, from bird watching in the nearby parks to a romantic drink for two in a destination to be discovered. There were also all manner of events organized in the Centre Street location, from collective cooking projects based on locally purchased foods, to quirky themed crafts events, dances, and tributes to local community members.”⁷

The framework encouraged participants to take over the community hub, to feel ownership over the

community centre and whatever activities were inside. Participants in *Imaginary Ordinary* referred to it as a “mapping process, a reconfiguration” as the artist-leaders drew up the coordinates, but community participants did the surveying, plotting foliage and imagining places for growth.

Created in collaboration between Mia + Eric and UK-based performance duo Action Hero (Gemma Paintin and James Stenhouse), *Future Perfect: New Bylaws for Civic Spaces*, is another act of public and participatory community art. In *Future Perfect's* Toronto iteration at the SummerWorks Festival in 2022, participants were invited to rewrite Toronto's bylaws, by reorganizing words from existing bylaws that were literally cut up word-by-word before being re-glued onto new pages in new orders. “Meticulously rearranged into a new set of rules for a transitioning world,” these new bylaws were then posted publicly on Twitter and selected transformed bylaws were pasted on billboards in the city. The results were poetic and playful: Engage a tree or it expires.⁸ A park is established by committee.⁹ Any weeds.¹⁰ Toronto is a personal playground of corporate council.¹¹ Animal advertising is under suspension.¹²

Hunter, Gatherer, Purveyor (2012) is another collaborative community artwork hosted by Mia + Eric. Dressed as hybrid park wardens/vendors and performing as urban foragers, the pair led local group walks and “collected and dehydrated roots, barks, fruits, grasses, moss, berries, weeds, and other plant life that [they] found on front lawns, hanging over fences, along boulevards, in back lanes, or in empty lots with the intention of making community-specific edible art objects that [they] could feed to residents — popsicles!”¹³ Over time, they not only discovered and shared the taste of different neighbourhoods, Mia + Eric also report that the plant life “welcomed them in,” opening avenues for conversations with residents, neighbours, and passersby. “We were so close you could taste it.”¹⁴

In each case, these participatory works activate real civic space both in its geographic materiality but also on a social level. The ordinary becomes extraordinary but also the extraordinary of these curated performance events reignite our appreciation for and engagement with the ordinary.

¹ Jane Jacobs was an American-Canadian urban geographer who after her death, inspired Jane's Walks, free public walking tours in urban city centres

² See DRIFT

³ Eric Moschopedis, “Public dreaming and the transgression of neo-liberal borders,” *Public* 23, no. 45, (June 2012), 192-99.

⁴ Peter Mark Keays and Eric Moschopedis, editors, *Imaginary Ordinary*, 2010.

⁵ Andrew Houston, “The Experience of *Imaginary Ordinary*,” *Canadian Theatre Review* 148, (Fall 2011): 95.

⁶ Peter Mark Keays and Eric Moschopedis, editors, *Imaginary Ordinary*, 2010.

⁷ Houston, “The Experience of *Imaginary Ordinary*,” 95.

⁸ @FP_new_rules, “engage a tree or it expires,” *Twitter*, 16 August 22, twitter.com/FP_new_rules/status/1559696601899323393

⁹ @FP_new_rules, “a park is established by a committee,” *Twitter*, 12 August 22, twitter.com/FP_new_rules/status/1558139850171219969

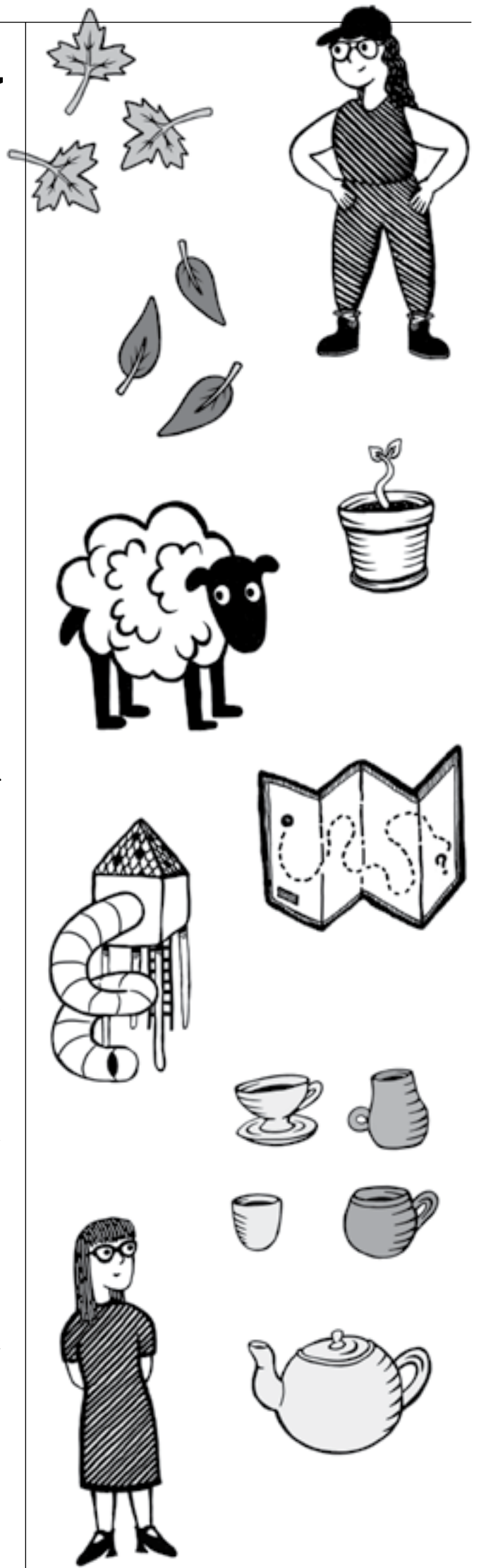
¹⁰ @FP_new_rules, “any weeds,” *Twitter*, 11 August 22, twitter.com/FP_new_rules/status/1557830311236476929

¹¹ @FP_new_rules, “Toronto is a personal playground of corporate council,” *Twitter*, 13 August 22, twitter.com/FP_new_rules/status/1558507466853437442

¹² @FP_new_rules, “animal advertising is under suspension,” *Twitter*, 10 August 22, twitter.com/FP_new_rules/status/1557449329912193024 Eric

¹³ Moschopedis and Mia Rushton, “Digesting *Hunter, Gatherer, Purveyor*,” *Canadian Theatre Review* 163, (Summer 2015): 31.

¹⁴ Moschopedis and Rushton, “Digesting *Hunter, Gatherer, Purveyor*,” 32.



JENN STEPHENSON AND MARIAH (MO) HORNER are the co-authors of *PLAY: Dramaturgies of Participation* (Playwrights Canada Press, 2024). They have been thinking about theatre together for almost ten years and are both avid appreciators of the extraordinary ordinary.



JEFF MCGILTON is a visual learner who appreciates pictures and puzzles as a means of engaging with topics and strives to create these avenues of engagement for others. He created 100+ illustrations to fill the pages of *PLAY: Dramaturgies of Participation*, but the sheep were his favourite.

Cursive in the Classroom



The Benefits of Reintroducing Cursive Writing to the Ontario Curriculum

STORY BY ANNE THÉRIAULT

IMAGE CREDIT:

Forrest, age 8, grade 3 student at Central Public School

In the late eighth century, the great ruler Charlemagne realized that he had a problem: people of the literate class from various corners of his empire could not communicate with each other through writing, because there was no standard script. So, as part of his so-called Carolingian Renaissance, Charlemagne set about a series of educational reforms that included the creation of a Latin script that everyone could read. To that end, he brought a famed English scholar named Acuin of York to his court, who helped develop a script that would come to be known as the Carolingian minuscule, which differed from classical Roman script in several ways: it added lower case letters, spacing between the words, punctuation, and conventions like capitalizing the first letter in a sentence. It was far more legible than any Latin script that had come before it; it's also the direct ancestor of most modern writing that uses the Roman alphabet, including printing, cursive, and various typefaces.

Here in Ontario, we're experiencing our own educational reform with the new language curriculum, which was put into practice in September 2023. One element of this updated curriculum is the return of cursive writing, which had previously been taught in Ontario classrooms but was deemed optional in the last curriculum overhaul in 2006. Many parents seemed perplexed, or even downright annoyed, about the return of cursive writing — after all, is it even a necessary skill in the digital age? But, says Erika Chesnick, the Elementary Literacy and Early Years consultant for the Limestone District School Board, studies actually show that learning cursive has many benefits for students, even if as adults they'll primarily be using keyboards to write.

“Research has shown that when students build fluency and automaticity with any skill, whether it's reading, writing — cursive writing, in this case — it requires lots of explicit instruction and practice,” says Chesnick. “And when they have that automaticity and fluency, then they have more cognitive space in their brain to do some of those higher order thinking skills that are required for writing. [Things like] thinking about word choice, adding voice to their

TEACHING STUDENTS TO PRINT, WRITE IN CURSIVE, AND TYPE ON A KEYBOARD ALL BRING THEIR OWN UNIQUE BENEFITS TO LEARNING LITERACY.

writing, developing their ideas. Those are just a few of the really complex mental skills that are required to write an essay, or a story, or that sort of thing.”

Chesnick adds that these aren't skills that children develop in the same way through learning to type — reading and writing are two sides of the same coin, and as students learn handwriting instruction, they're learning the shapes and letter sounds that are integral to early reading development.

When it comes to cursive writing specifically, Chesnick cites the work of Virginia Wise Berninger, Professor Emerita of the University of Washington's School Psychology program and author of *Brain Literacy for Educators and Psychologists* (Academic Press, 2002). Berninger's research showed that cursive writing engages multiple regions of the brain, and fosters a better integration between that visual, motor and cognitive process. So teaching students to print, write in cursive, and type on a keyboard all bring their own unique benefits to learning literacy.

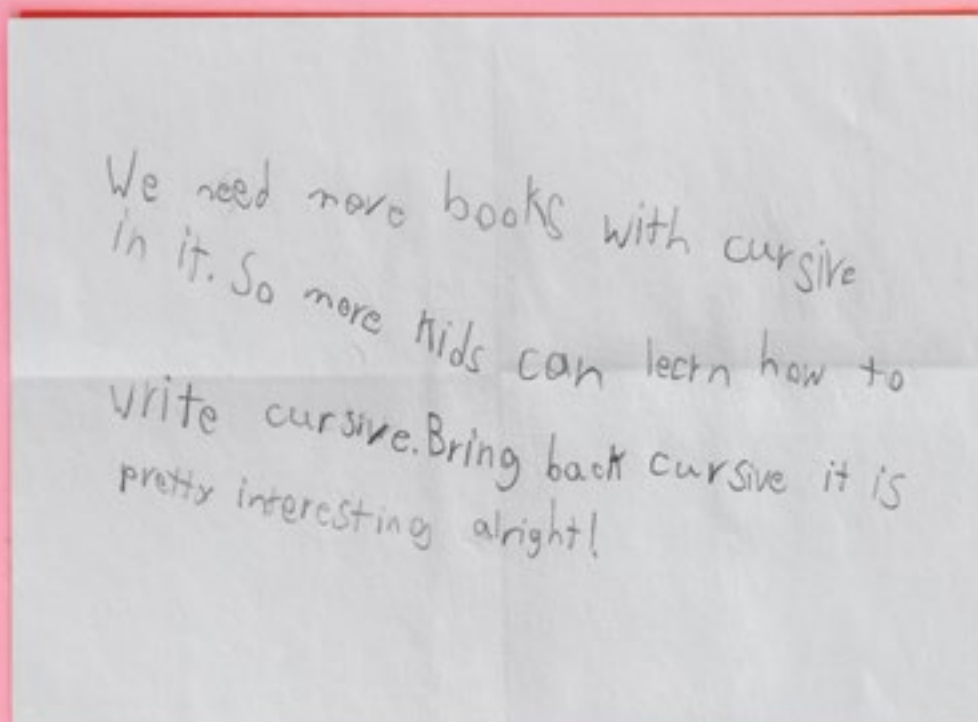
There is also research that suggests that cursive has benefits for children with learning disabilities in reading (also known as dyslexia).

“In cursive, the word becomes a unit, so rather than a series of separate strokes and letters, it's all kind of combined together and so the correct spelling is more likely to be retained for students with dyslexia,” says Chesnick, citing an article from the International Dyslexia Association. “[In cursive writing] all lower case cursive letters can begin on a line, so then there's fewer opportunities for reversals to happen.”

For parents who are looking to help their children get comfortable with writing in cursive, Chesnick has a few suggestions: they could have their children write the weekly grocery list, use a notebook to write messages back and forth, or compose little notes that they leave on the breakfast table or tuck in their children's lunch. She also counsels parents to have patience — there's a lot of what Chesnick calls “really hard brain work” that goes into learning any writing style, so progress will be slow and laborious at first. And, of course, if any parents are concerned about their child's progress, they should speak to their child's teacher.

Charlemagne has been dead for over 1,000 years, and by some accounts was barely literate himself (a contemporary biographer recorded that Charlemagne did his best to learn to write, “however, as he did not begin his efforts in due season, but late in life, they met with ill success”), but his educational reforms have had a long legacy. Not only do we write using a direct descendant of the Carolingian minuscule, but much of our knowledge of classical literature comes from manuscripts written in the scriptoria that he founded. Neighbourhood students might be happy to know that every time they put pen to paper, whether printing or writing in cursive, they are a part of that legacy, a link in the chain of transmitting knowledge from one generation to the next.

ANNE THÉRIAULT is a neighbourhood scribbler with bylines at the *Walrus*, the *London Review of Books*, *Longreads*, and many others. She co-hosts *Broadview Magazine's* podcast *And Also Some Women*.



Inclusive Language is a Practice of Care

A poet reflects on the power of words to harm and heal

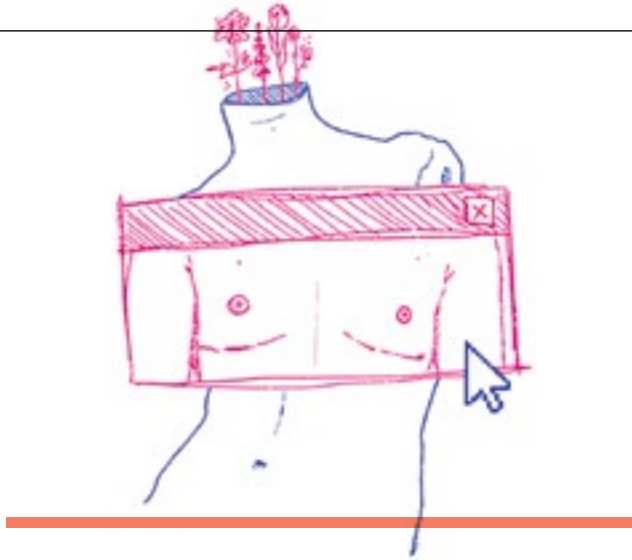
STORY BY **DANNY MCLAREN**
ILLUSTRATION BY **MARISSA THOMAN**

As a poet, I spend a lot of time with words and in language. I love words and I care for them deeply. I like to believe that I am intentional with them each time I choose one to live in a piece of writing.

As a queer and trans person, however, words have hurt me. The term misgender means to apply gendered language to someone incorrectly and is often applied to the experiences of transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people. Misgendering can seem small, a mere slip of the tongue. But a slip can lead to a fall, and a fall to a bruise. Frequent misgendering presses on this bruise, not allowing it to fade from memory or from skin.

Everyday, words convey to me how other people see me – or how they are unable to see me. Misgendering is one aspect of the broader use of gendered language, a means – sometimes unintentional but always impactful – of telling me where you imagine I belong within the gender binary. While I may use my words to tell you how I exist in the world, you use yours to tell me how you perceive my existence. These words, and these ways of using words, can hurtfully sit at odds with one another.

As a queer and trans poet, I walk the line between the joyful playfulness of language and its ability to harm. Like many marginalized artists and writers, I reckon with my hurt by reclaiming and repurposing the words that have harmed or belittled me in the past or have pressed on the places that ache. I write lovingly about femininity and use a literary drag persona to play creatively in a space where she/her pronouns can apply to me without discomfort. I have used they/them pronouns for myself for nearly ten years and tend towards a trans masculine identity, but I find so



much joy in taking pronouns that are frequently misapplied to me and using them on my own terms.

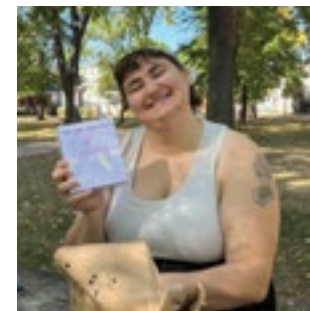
Inclusivity can mean many different things. My own understanding of the term centres care. Being inclusive in our language means taking care to honour the words that others give us to speak about them. As Lee Airton, professor in the Faculty of Education at Queen's University and author of *Gender: Your Guide*, writes, being corrected when you use a trans person's incorrect pronoun can be a hopeful gesture, a sign they would like to continue being around you. Whenever someone shares their pronouns or any other words to help you speak about them, they are making this hopeful gesture, too.

Inclusive language can also be non-verbal. It is our actions, our habits, our spaces and their configurations and cultures. When I enter a space without a gender-neutral washroom, I am being told that I am not expected to be there, that no non-binary or gender non-conforming person is expected to be there. Spaces, like people, can be caring and intentional, and can

honour our identities and what we choose to share of them. Or, like careless and harmful words, they can push on the pain points, mimicking the structures of power and oppression they exist within.

Inclusivity can mean speaking in broader ways, opening up our usual habits of language to make more space for a multiplicity of identities. We can see this tactic in action with shifts away from “boys and girls” as a classroom greeting, towards more gender-neutral and all-encompassing options like “everyone” or “friends.” But meaningful inclusivity also means specificity. “Everyone” is not automatically welcome in a space unless we specifically make it so, naming and addressing the barriers that prevent people with marginalized identities from access, comfort, recognition, and safety within them.

There is no one size fits all way of being inclusive with our language – and this is a good thing. Inclusivity should not just be a list of words to use or avoid, but rather an on-going practice of care and respect, led by our curiosity about one another and how to best honour each others' whole selves. In language and in space, inclusivity is as personal as it is broad, creating ways of relating to and speaking about one another that communicate and demonstrate respect for our unique identities.



DANNY MCLAREN is a queer, trans, non-binary, and Jewish poet and writer living next to Skeleton Park in what is colonially known as Kingston, Ontario. They are the author of two poetry chapbooks, *Two-Way Town* (2020) and *The Enby Manifesto* (2023).



SPIRIT OF WINTER



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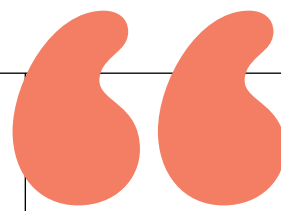
downtownkingston.ca/spiritofwinter



Disability in the Kingston arts scene

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CAT LONDON

At *The Skeleton Press*, we believe discourse and dialogue are pillars of an eclectic, diverse, and healthy community. Call us old fashioned! In that spirit, we are introducing a new feature to these pages: candid conversations between people who live or work in the neighbourhood but who've not previously met. Here, newly-acquainted neighbours come together to share thoughts, stories, and reflections on life, community, and Kingston. Welcome to the inaugural column!



I've actually been involved in a few hearing theatre groups in Kingston, but they don't know how to have accessibility for Deaf actors like me. But I do it anyway, because while I'm waiting for opportunities out there, I can't just sit there and do nothing, so I actually involve myself in hearing theatre. I wish there was more accessibility, which I'm trying to get them to learn about.

— HAYLEY HUDSON

In this edition we meet Lindsay Fisher and Hayley Hudson. Lindsay is an artist and designer and the founder of Creative Connector, an online arts hub for Deaf and Disabled artists and creatives looking for community and opportunities. Hayley is a Deaf actor and storyteller with a passion for Shakespeare, as well as the co-founder of Deaf Spirit Theatre. Lindsay and Hayley got together in late November at Next Church, where they discussed their early entry and sustained passion for theatre – and their hopes for a flourishing Disability theatre scene in Kingston.

This conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

LINDSAY FISHER: Did you grow up here?

HAYLEY HUDSON: No, actually, I grew up in Alberta, in a town called Coaldale, near Lethbridge. It's a really small town. And then I moved to Ontario in 2005, and I've been here ever since.

LF: What brought you here?

HH: I moved to Toronto for theatre because, before the 2000s, there weren't a lot of opportunities for Deaf actors compared to now, so it was either Vancouver or Toronto. I applied to George Brown College for theatre school. I didn't get in, and then I realized that, you know what? It wasn't for me. So I moved to Kingston around 2010. What about you?

LF: Yeah, I grew up here. I lived in Vancouver for five years. I went to art school, Emily Carr, there. And then I lived in Toronto for maybe ten years, and I came back here during the pandemic.

HH: I lived in Toronto for about five years, and then I moved here with my husband when I got pregnant. But I do go to Toronto often. I'm going back in March and April. I'm in a show there with a theatre called Theatre Passe Muraille, *The Little Prince*. It's a whole cast of Deaf actors, and the story has translated into a Deaf perspective as opposed to a hearing one.

LF: Awesome!

HH: I'm excited for that, for sure.

LF: I have a friend who works at Tangled Art + Disability in Toronto, and he says disability art is like the new avant-garde, or maybe the last avant garde because of these different cultural practices that we're seeing, and the artists that are coming out of this community – I don't think many people have seen anything like it until now.

HH: So what company are you working with?

LF: I run a not-for-profit – creativeconnector.art – it's an art service organization to support Deaf and Disabled artists.

HH: Is that in Kingston?

LF: We're actually national, it's all online. It's a members organization, so we have about 340 artist members. We have an artist directory where you can create an account and make your profile public. People who want to diversify their team and work with Deaf or Disabled artists – they can use this directory. So, if you join, people who might not know about you can find you in this directory.

HH: That sounds good. I've actually been involved in a few hearing theatre groups in Kingston, but they don't know how to have accessibility for Deaf actors like me. But I do it anyway, because while I'm waiting for opportunities out there, I can't just sit there and do nothing, so I actually involve myself in hearing theatre. I wish there was more accessibility, which I'm trying to get them to learn about. But, you know, for most of the Kingston theatre community, that means funding. They need to have money to hire interpreters. So sometimes I just have to be patient and put up with it.

Theatre is in my heart, in my blood, so I really need to be involved. But it'd be nice if maybe after this it'll make them open their eyes and realize that, you know, it's not that hard.

If you want to bring Deaf performers into a show with hearing folks, it's best to get an ASL theatre consultant, because they can give you that perspective of a Deaf person, as well as see things that sometimes hearing people aren't thinking about.

And don't wait until the last minute to think about hiring interpreters. You have to really start at the beginning and think about that within your process. And you need to know how to really coordinate that with the Deaf actors, with the interpreters. So if you want to have a Deaf interpreter, maybe signing the show on stage, you need to really make sure that the blocking is there, that it's considered beforehand. It's not something that's an afterthought, because then sometimes you do the whole design, and then at the end, you're like, "Oh, we want interpreters there, but it won't work with this setting." And then what happens is, it's the Deaf person that will suffer from that.

LF: When I lived in Toronto, I would often go to events and mingle with Deaf artists, it felt more easygoing. There were always interpreters at these events and it was very laid back and normal and it's like, how can we do that in Kingston? There's still this kind of awkward feeling here.

HH: Yeah Kingston is really small, and there are small theatre companies around. Which is why in Deaf Spirit theatre, we try to really expand on that. But it's still not enough.

LF: What was the moment in your life when you realized you wanted to be an actor?

HH: I was three, maybe four, years old? I don't know. I was in a Deaf program at a hearing school, and every year they had Christmas concerts. Each class would perform a song, and the class that I was in chose "Santa Claus Is Comin' To Town." Every week in class we would work on this, we'd all stand in a row, I think there was me and maybe six of us as a group, and we would practice signing it.

And on the night of the show, the audience was there – parents, family, everyone came to come see the performance – and when it was our turn, we went on stage, and I stepped out from the line. The teacher said, "No, Hayley, get back into line. Get back with the rest of the group."

And then my teacher said to another aide, "You know what, I'm sure she will grow up to become an actor, because she loves that."

So there was always something, ever since that time. I'm fascinated with theatre, with performing. And it's funny, I still have the hat that I wore for that performance.

What about you? What made you want to start being an artist?

LF: I was a kid like you, four or five years old, and I remember realizing I was good at drawing and I like the feeling of being good at something.



When I moved to Toronto to be an artist, I was really disillusioned by the whole art scene there – it was harsh, kind of cruel, and snobby. I remember one artist calling me a coward because I didn't take up his offer to be his studio assistant. I had another artist tell me I needed to change my personality if I was going to make it as an artist.

Around that time, a friend of mine from Vancouver came to visit. He was a performer and he took me out for dinner with a bunch of his friends who were all academics and artists with disabilities. And it was kind of like I came home. We spent hours eating, drinking, sharing stories, and laughing, and there was no pretense that you had to follow this kind of mould of what an artist should be, or to "fit in", or be cool. I fell in love with that community, and that's kind of where everything changed, and why I founded Creative Connector.

HH: I had a similar experience. I remember when I went into grade seven, I was taking a drama class, and there was a moment where the teacher had talked about what drama class is, and just described it for those who wanted to pursue acting in high school and beyond. And from that moment, I knew that I wanted to be a professional actor. Before that, I had enjoyed it, but I hadn't thought of it as a career choice.

And then, when I was going into high school, another Deaf person and I had to share interpreters at school, because that was the cheaper route for the school board. But I'm happy that wasn't the case for drama class, because my mom had emphasized that they shouldn't split the interpreter's time for the drama class, because this was something I really wanted to pursue for my future. I later went on to graduate from the Rosebud School of the Arts in Rosebud, Alberta.

But I do remember in grade seven, that teacher made me realize that I should go for my dream. Like, really, stand strong with what I wanted to do. And I remember being asked what I wanted to be after high school. And when I said I wanted to be a professional actor after high school, you know, they just laughed at me. They said, They said, "No, you'll be that poor little Deaf girl all your life." But I took that negative experience, and I turned into a positive, to go for my dreams and prove to them that they're wrong. Even though it was horrible to have that said to me, it made me really work harder for what I wanted to do.

LINDSAY FISHER (she/her) is a deaf artist, designer, and textile hobbyist who believes life is better when we expand opportunities in the arts so that creatives with disabilities can bring their whole selves — their bodies, their stories, and their ideas to the stage. Born and based in Kingston, she shares her life with her husband and two charming (if occasionally neurotic) dogs who never fail to keep things interesting.

HAYLEY HUDSON (she/her) is a Deaf actor and storyteller with over 20 years of experience in theatre. A passionate advocate for Deaf-led performances, she co-founded *Deaf Spirit Theatre* to amplify Deaf voices on stage. Hayley's extensive Shakespearean credits, including *The Tempest* and *As You Like It*, reflect her deep connection to his works. One of her dreams is to bring more of Shakespeare's plays to life in American Sign Language, blending timeless themes with Deaf culture. Hayley strives to inspire audiences and expand Deaf representation through storytelling.

Mourning Alice Munro

STORY BY **TALIA ACKER** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **AL BERGERON**



“
I wish that my
forefather
Abraham and
my former idol
Munro had
known that
their first
duty isn't to
your god or your
spouse, but to
your child.

When Alice Munro won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2013, I felt like I had won too. I considered myself an expert on her work, having started to read her at age fifteen after a lonely couple of weeks at a summer camp where I was the weird kid. I picked up my mother's copy of *Friend of My Youth* and right after that, *The Progress of Love*, and that was it — I had found my writer. I read and reread her religiously for the next twenty years.

Born in Wingham, Ontario, in 1931, Alice Munro wrote thirteen books of short stories in her lifetime, and one early novel, *Lives of Girls and Women*. For our grade twelve English class's final project, instead of writing an essay, I memorised her story “How I Met My Husband” and performed it in front of a confused class. Munro made me feel Canadian, made me a feminist, and made me read more passionately than any other writer. When she died at the age of ninety-two in May of 2024, I said we had lost the greatest short story writer to ever live. I started grieving her loss.

In July of 2024, news broke that Munro's youngest daughter, Andrea Skinner, had gone public with an old family secret: her stepfather, Munro's second husband, who died in 2013, had sexually abused her over several years as a child. She told her father about the abuse at the time that it happened, and then told her mother years later when Munro expressed sympathy for a fictional character who had experienced something similar; neither parent took action. Our national literary treasure, Alice Munro, whose stories often contained empathetic portrayals of girls and women experiencing sexual violence, had chosen to remain with her child's abuser. I immediately started grieving again, and this time, for all of her stories too, and the world of Munro references I lived with.

My Boomer father and my Gen Z daughter both gave me the same advice: Separate the artist from the art. That wasn't possible for me. I did not want to think about child abuse every time I thought of a line from one of her stories. Munro once said she wanted to write about the ways in which women protect men — it never occurred to me she would choose to protect her predatory man over her child. I felt duped and tricked, like I'd been praying to a false god for decades.

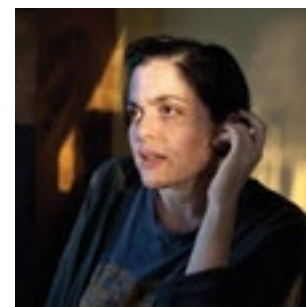
I was introduced early on to the idea of wrestling with a god who seemed moody and difficult. As a young child, I had a book of illustrated bible stories. The most upsetting and compelling story was the one in which Abraham is commanded by God to bind and sacrifice his only son, Isaac, to God. Abraham binds his son, puts him on the

altar and raises his axe, but God stops him at the very last second. The moral here is that being a God-fearing person is the most important thing, but what I understood was that no matter what your god says, do not sacrifice your child. Do not even pretend to sacrifice your child. And maybe your child's opinion of you is more important than God's. I wish that my forefather Abraham and my former idol Munro had known that their first duty isn't to your god or your spouse, but to your child.

After Munro died I had planned on writing an article titled “Life-Saving Lessons from Alice Munro”. They were as follows: number one, if your first flame is bad for you, dump them as quickly as you can (from the chapter “Baptising” in *Lives of Girls and Women* about Del, who figures this out right after her first boyfriend tries to forcefully baptise her in the Wawanash River); number two, it's ok if your marriage fails (from “Mischief” in *Who Do You Think You Are?* a book of linked short stories about Rose); number three, you don't have to make men the focus of your life (from the story “Wigtime”, about Anita and Margo, from the book *Friend of My Youth*).

I still feel these are important lessons. And for me, they were life-saving. I have come to feel grateful the stories were such a big part of my life before her death and the crushing news that followed.

Today I am more inclined to be dazzled by great parenting than by great writing. Alice Munro, who I still think is the greatest short story writer to ever live, put so much brilliance and bravery into her work that perhaps she had little left over for the rest of her life. In July, I put all my Munro books, the full collection plus many multiple copies, on the top of my bookshelf. I put a bunch of books by other women in front of her. I put a little wooden mother owl and her baby owl on top of that. This symbolic shelf reorganization serves as a reminder to me that although my young self was a lonely idolater of books and authors, my present self puts her faith into the task of parenting.



TALIA ACKER has lived by Skeleton Park for twenty years.

What Does Hope Mean?

STORY BY **ANNIE CLIFFORD** AND **LISA PASOLLI**
 ILLUSTRATION BY **CHANTAL BENNETT**



“I think it’s likely that hope and its close companion, happiness, are not states of being that we passively experience. Hope is not like the weather. Rather, hope is an action word, like ‘throw’; it’s something we have to do consciously and intentionally.

I’m inclined towards the Oxford dictionary’s contemporary definition of hope: ‘In its widest sense it may be defined as the desire and search for a future good, difficult but not impossible to attain.’” - **ANNIE**

“Hopelessness is feeling paralyzed, like you can’t act. Or there’s no point in trying, because the problem is too big, the hole is too deep, the opposition is too fierce. To go from hopelessness to hope takes a lot of effort.” - **LISA**

“Usually people we trust are also people who love us, or at least care about us and are willing and able to help us with the awareness, engagement, thoughtfulness, and action required for us to enact hope.” - **ANNIE**

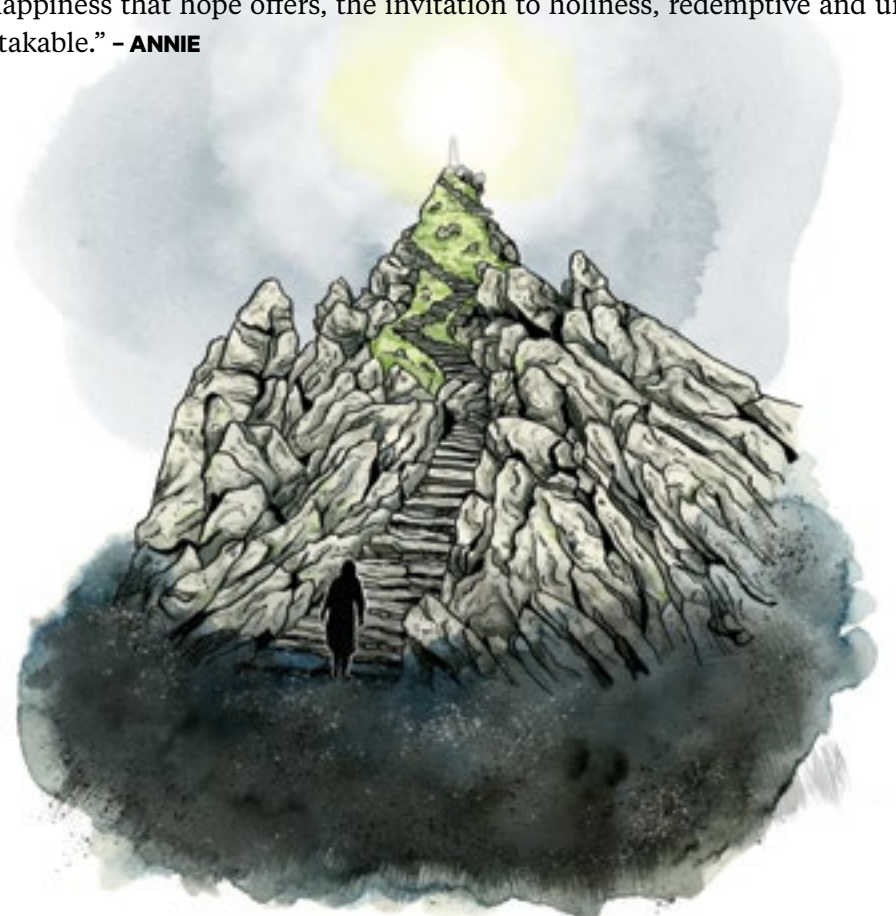
“When my feelings of hopelessness are most acute, it’s usually because I’m in a state of panic or confusion; I can’t make sense of what’s going on. Why are people behaving like this? Why are people doing these things to each other? Why is it that words seem to have lost their meaning?” - **LISA**

“Many of the things I hope about are bigger than I can do alone. Hoping requires an openness to others, to their unique knowledge and experience, and calls us to connect and communicate in honest and vulnerable ways.” - **ANNIE**

“To get to hope requires, as a first step, taking a deep breath and starting to figure it out, as painful or frustrating as that may be. Which takes us back to hope being an action – a muscle you must train and a practice you have to cultivate – and one that is best done in a community and as a collective.” - **LISA**

“Hope is not like a fluffy pink cloud, that we can walk into and let drift around us. Hope is a series of engaged, active steps, better in a community, requiring strength of mind and an openness to the reality of the world, a reality which is almost always a reality of suffering, drudgery, frustration, and pain, as much as it’s a reality of beauty and kindness.

I have to force myself to look for circumstances of real hope, and I often fail to get myself in gear to make it happen – to recall to myself, again, the invitation to happiness that hope offers, the invitation to holiness, redemptive and unmistakable.” - **ANNIE**



ANNIE CLIFFORD is a neighbourhood lawyer and musician. She likes cheese, her buddies, and looking at the sky through the trees in Skeleton Park.



LISA PASOLLI lives in the neighbourhood and spends a lot of time at Skeleton Park with her two young kids. She teaches history at Queen's and is always on the lookout for new tennis partners.

How Wood Speaks to Me

On the Unexpected Poetry of Carpentry

STORY BY **MARK STOLLER** ILLUSTRATION BY **VINCENT PEREZ**

In life, my grandfather was many things: architect, anarchist, professor, and, like me, a Stoller. The name means carpenter or cabinetmaker in his native, Bronx-inflected Yiddish, though there is no record of anyone in our family ever serving that profession. Family lore holds that the name was adopted in the process of evading conscription into the Russian army around the mid-nineteenth century. Still, I've carried it with me as something of a calling, something to come home to.

My own foray into woodworking came from the desire for a spice shelf and a stubborn refusal to pay for one. From the spice shelf, built from cheap pine boards, a saw, and chisels, I graduated to crokinole boards, bookcases, credenzas, music stands, kolsch wreaths – a circular beer tray found in western parts of Germany – and an assortment of cutting boards, taco presses, and picture frames. Most of these I've given to others as gifts.



THE STORY OF WOOD, IT IS SAID, IS IN THE GRAIN. BUT HOW WOOD HAS HISTORICALLY BEEN USED TELLS ALSO A HUMAN STORY.

Woodworking is amongst the world's most ancient professions. The craft was contemporary to Stone, Bronze, and Iron ages, during which time wood was used to make tools, weapons, shelter, and rudimentary furniture.

The story of wood, it is said, is in the grain. But how wood has historically been used also tells a human story. Variations in tools reflect the cultures that produced them. Tools serve not only a functional purpose but convey values and beliefs. Western hand-held tools, such as smoothing planes and saws, are designed to be adjustable and to vary according to the preferences and stylistic choices of the user. In Japan, the design of hand tools reflects Shinto and Buddhist philosophies, practices, and devotion to craft. Cutting tools, which work on the pull stroke rather than the push, are highly specialized to produce clean and precise cuts.

Lately, I've been drawn to the words of wood themselves and how this language mediates my experience of the hobby. Much of our present-day vernacular derives from now-vanished trades, tools, and techniques of seventeenth century England and later Anglo-American wood crafting. During this period many of the techniques, measurements, and terminology of woodworking was "rationalized" – or standardized – through the proliferation of pamphlets, guidebooks, and companion workbooks.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, mechanization, associated with the industrial revolution and the growth of urban communities, saw once highly specialized roles – joiner and carpenter were once separate professions – fused into one. The profession and language also reflected increased trade between England and continental Europe, especially France. *Treowwyrhta*, or "tree-wright" in Old English, was overtaken by the French *charpentier* around the early nineteenth century.

Contemporary woodworking terminology retains the quirks of old English and French. Kerf – the thickness of a saw blade, evolved from Germanic



origin to Old English *cyrf* – meaning to carve. Use a good flat-topped kerf to cut grooves, dados, or rabbets! Chamfer, an angled profile applied to "ease" the edge of a table or a sharp corner, is not unlike a round-over.

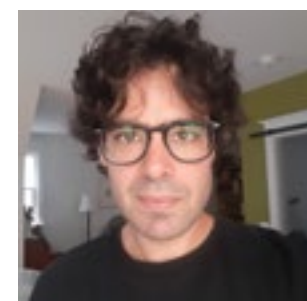
Wood terminology even conveys a directional orientation. To rip a board is to go with the direction of the grain. Cutting an inset cutaway along the length of wood produces a groove; across the grain. The same cut produces a dado.

More simply, words are a pleasantness – and a fortune for Scrabblers, word puzzlers, and spelling bees.

*Arris and stiles and mullions and pawls
Mortise and spalting and trunnions and burls,
Rifflers and spalting and scorp, oh my!*

And chatoyance, my favourite: the three-dimensionally figured patterns found in hardwoods, such as maple, the result of the grain curling back on itself from growing under stress. A French term, chatoyance means to bear likeness to the eye of a cat.

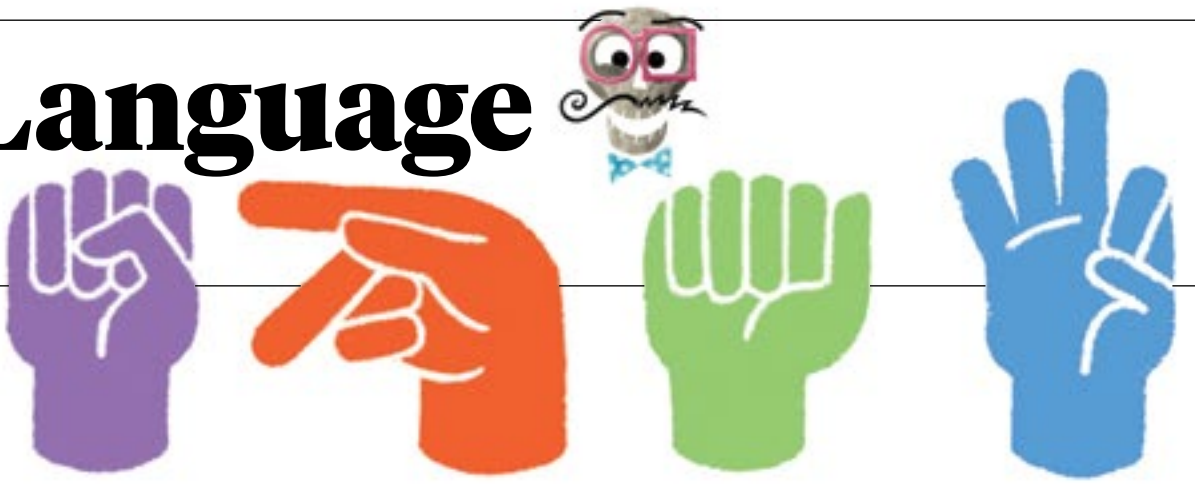
Towards the end of my grandfather's life, I built and sent a crokinole board to his home in California. He kept it out as regular piece of furniture in the living room and would be sure to let visitors know about that "Canadian game." I never did acquire the Yiddish that he knew and loved, but perhaps I'll live up to the family name yet.



MARK STOLLER is a Skeleton Park resident, web developer, and occasional academic.

Watch Your Language

PUZZLE BY **HALEY SARFELD**
ILLUSTRATION BY **JILL GLATT**

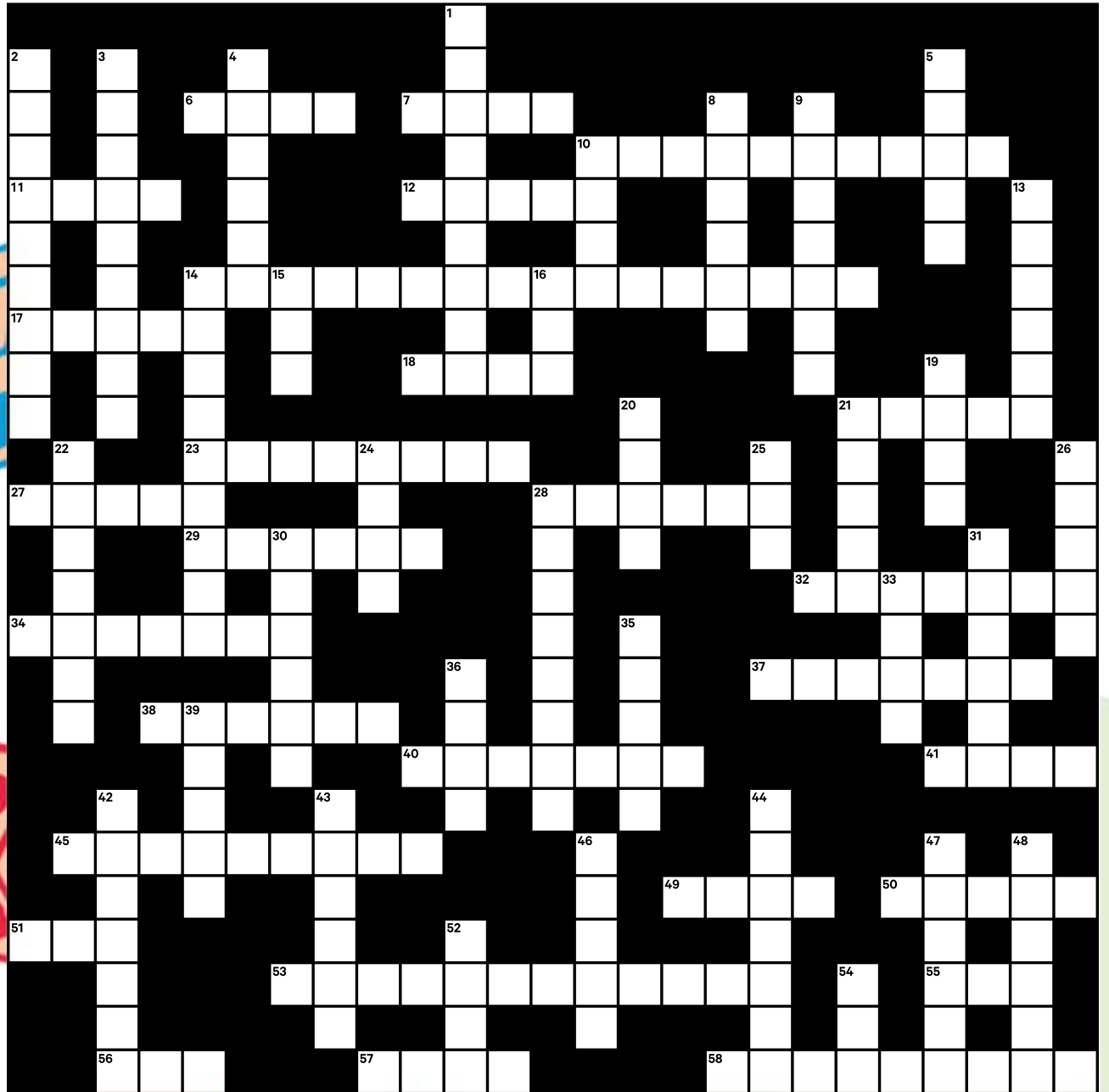


ACROSS

- 6 _____'s *Delivery Service* (1989), dir. Miyazaki
- 7 To invent a shiny new word or saying
- 10 As you learn more words, your _____ increases
- 11 "What's in a _____?"
- 12 What Ursula wants from Ariel
- 14 "Nibi" means "water" in this language
- 17 Are you reading this silently or _____?
- 18 An unconscious sign that someone's bluffing
- 21 Hulled wheat
- 23 High-top shoe brand
- 27 Ctrl+P
- 28 I tried to put more emphasis on my syllables but I couldn't handle the _____
- 29 "Hey ballpoint pen, can you write a sonnet in Shakespearean pentameter?" "Of course! _____!"
- 32 I, you, they, she, he, etc.
- 34 A form of a language spoken in a particular region
- 37 Centre _____ Frontenac
- 38 Given by a valedictorian
- 40 Announcements typically play over a loud _____
- 41 With a long E sound, it's present; with a short E, it's past; you've just done it
- 45 Source of synonyms
- 49 French feline
- 50 An iconic Canadian word
- 51 No _____ intended
- 53 In order from A to Z
- 55 A good talker has the gift of the _____
- 56 "_____ My Name", 1999 song by Destiny's Child
- 57 To lend or borrow
- 58 I'm saving this for future _____

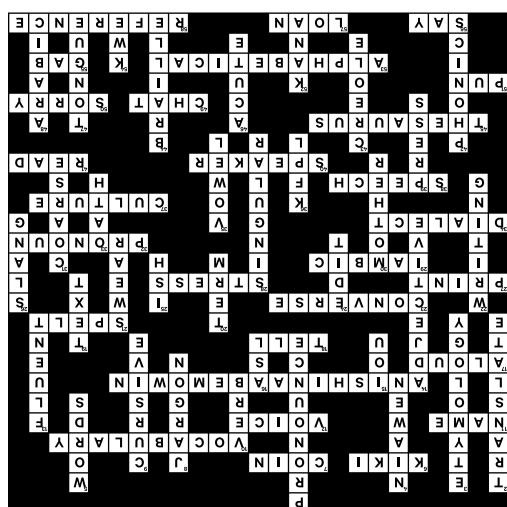
DOWN

- 1 Do you _____ "GIF" with a hard or soft G?
- 2 Change from one language to another
- 3 Study of word origins; not to be confused with study of insects
- 4 Kanien'kéha word for "thank you" (no punctuation)
- 5 Actions speak louder than _____
- 8 Industry-specific vocab
- 9 Writing style where the letters connect
- 10 Action word
- 13 Adept in a language
- 14 Descriptive word
- 15 A debt of vowels
- 16 Shorthand for a North American manual language
- 19 SMS
- 20 Semester
- 21 "Don't tell me your comedy is family-friendly!" "It's not, I _____!"
- 22 I'd like that in _____
- 24 Revise text
- 25 A sort of suffix
- 26 "Skibidi" and "rizz", for example
- 28 One-of-a-kind
- 30 With 47 down, a child's first language
- 31 "Did you study for the coffee grinding exam?" "Of _____!"
- 33 Vow
- 35 The Y in "funny", but not the Y in "yellow"
- 36 Our local library, abbreviated
- 39 Your neighbourhood has its own newspaper? Im_____ive!
- 42 A sound-based language learning method; not to be confused with a bird that rises from the ashes
- 43 A language constructed from the languages of two different cultures
- 44 Tactile writing system invented by Louis
- 46 "What do you think of Aimée?" "She has _____ accent"
- 47 The answer is on the tip of my _____
- 48 Language from which English got the words "algebra" and "cotton"
- 52 Japanese system of syllabic writing
- 54 "Hello" in Mi' kmawi' simk



HALEY SARFELD AND JILL GLATT are your local cruciverbalist/illustrator dream team. Together, they host Grad Club Trivia on Thursday nights.

SOLUTIONS



Revelling in the Joy and the Anger

The Occitan Songs of
La Mal Coiffée

STORY BY ALISON GOWAN

IMAGE COURTESY OF:
La Mal Coiffée

The French expression, *mal coiffé(e)*, means having bad or messy hair, and, in rare usage, it can also mean wearing a hat that doesn't fit. For the members of *La Mal Coiffée*, (Karine Berny, Myriam Boisserie, Mari Coumes, and Laetitia Dutech), these messy tresses might be seen as the rebellious style of the underdogs, who shrug off dominant cultural conventions, while the ill-fitting hat is the oppressive grip of colonialism and the rigid rules of capitalism that have been forced upon those unruly locks.

La Mal Coiffée, a vocal quartet from the southern France region of Languedoc, enchanted the audiences at Blue Skies Festival in Clarendon, Ontario (north of Kingston) last summer with their stunningly layered vocal harmonies, and energizing percussive rhythms, all sung in the Occitan language.

Although French is the only official language in France, Occitan is one of several minority languages spoken in France (Breton, Alsatian, and Basque are among the other examples). Despite greater visibility of these regional languages over the past few decades, there is an ongoing struggle to have them legally recognized in France. Occitan, a Latin-based language, was spoken widely across western Europe in the Medieval era and different dialects of Occitan are still spoken in Southern France today. The language has survived despite widespread suppression, the worst of which stemmed from the French Revolution and the nationalist vision that the exclusive use of the French language would unify France. Although usage of regional languages was actively discouraged, the Occitan language survived in rural areas, where it is still referred to pejoratively as "*patois*." In the cultural revival period of the seventies, there was a renewed interest in preserving regional languages. Occitan is now taught in some schools and active use of the language among artists and creators is an encouraging sign that it will continue to flourish.

Laetitia Dutech, one of four original members of *La Mal Coiffée*, grew up in the Languedoc region of France during this period of cultural revival. While



older generations of Occitan speakers were often shamed for their use of the language, her parents were proud native speakers and insisted that Occitan be spoken at home and in their community. While Dutech is bilingual and has spoken and sung in Occitan throughout her life, one Parisian member of the group learned Occitan by singing songs in the language, a veritable testament to the importance of keeping language and culture alive through music and art.

La Mal Coiffée, formed in 2003, was the brainchild of musician, poet, and Occitan scholar, Laurent Cavalié, who wanted to introduce the mostly forgotten works of eighteenth-century Occitan poets to new audiences through polyphonic singing. Polyphonic song in France, as in many other parts of the world, consists of multi-part singing, usually with no instruments. Cavalié began to compose his dynamic new vocal arrangements using these old Occitan texts for the singers of *La Mal Coiffée*. Over the years, Cavalié began to write more of the original lyrics for the group in the Occitan language himself, creating a vibrant new context for the language to resonate.

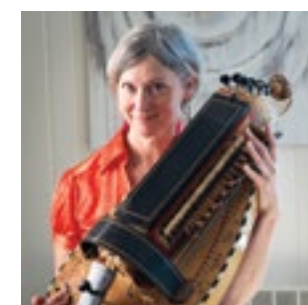
Singing in Occitan, their own endangered language, is the perfect medium to convey the group's message. They recount stories of unsung heroes, of populations who resist forces of social or ecological repression, aiming to give voice to stories that are often erased in conventional history telling. Through song, they hope to celebrate those who defy the dominant order, and those who find new ways to make beauty in these hard times, through joyful resistance.

The group is currently working on a new recording entitled *Rojas*, which translates as the third person feminine word for "red." It is the final of a trilogy of three albums centred around the colour: *Roge* (also meaning red) was released in 2021, and *Roge Caparut* (which translates as *rouge tête* or stubborn red) in 2022. Dutech says that while the colour red represents the anger and indignation inherent in their music, it equally expresses joy and love. The albums feature their lush vocal harmonies arranged by Cavalié, and they accompany the song with a variety of percussion instruments, some conventional, others rarer and more fanciful, such as the *monocorde*, a one-stringed instrument made by Marc Oriol.

Rojas will be released in March 2025. *La Mal Coiffée* will be returning to Canada and perform for the next edition of the Skeleton Park Arts Festival on the weekend of June 20-22, 2025.

Singing in Occitan, their own endangered language, is the perfect medium to convey the group's message... to celebrate those who defy the dominant order, and those who find new ways to make beauty in these hard times, through joyful resistance.

"Un gros merci!" to Laetitia Dutech for agreeing to be interviewed for this article. The interview was conducted in French and Gowan has translated the content from their conversation.



ALISON GOWAN is a professional musician who lives in Québec. She performs with Kingston-based groups, Chanter la Pomme and Birdbone Theatre where you can hear her play the hurdy gurdy and sing songs in English, French, Occitan and other languages.

Speak to Me in Square Dance

Building Community, One Call at a Time

STORY BY **MEREDITH DAULT** AND **TEILHARD FROST** ILLUSTRATION BY **FLORIANA EHNINGER-CUERVO**

While he grew up playing fiddle, multi-instrumentalist Teilhard Frost fell in to learning the language of square dance (where four couples dance in sets squares) and contradancing (where people dance together in long lines) in his twenties, and never looked back. An accomplished caller – the person who calls out the steps and sequences to the dancers – Frost believes in the power of dance to bring people together, no matter their age or experience. He began calling dances in Kingston more than twenty years ago. Here, he speaks with dancer Meredith Dault about the joys of moving together in community.

MD: It seems to me that square and contradancing is all about communication, even though we don't necessary talk to one another when we do it. What is your experience?

TF: Yes, it's pretty cool. I've played square dances and contradances in every province in Canada and nearly every state in the U.S., and I have always loved to watch people. I've watched socially awkward people, who might feel uncomfortable if they were asked to just sit around and chat, come to life in a dance. Square dancing is an enhanced social event with the opportunity to be near people, physically, which is really lacking in our modern society. You have to let go of your fear of strangers, and you embrace other people, both physically and with your eyes. People smile at each other! In contradancing, especially, you interact with everyone, but you don't actually have to speak to anyone if you don't want to. So, it's a really safe way for people to be social. Dances are also amazing in that the demographic is so mixed – you get kids hanging out with adults who aren't their parents or teachers, which doesn't happen much anymore.

MD: That physical intimacy is so interesting, since it is otherwise very unusual for us to touch people we don't know. But in square dancing, suddenly you are holding hands with a stranger! What else do you love about it?

TF: I love that when we are dancing as a community, we are part of a larger thing. The rest of the people who are moving and whirling around the dance floor are counting on you. Each person has a responsibility to get to the right place at the right time, and I love watching people take that responsibility, step into their role, and really enjoy it! I've seen awkward young men so shy they wouldn't even look out from under their baseball caps at the start of a dance, to smiling with delight by the end. You can just feel the energy in the room lift right up. I love it.

MD: Square and contradancing has traditionally been gendered, in that the dances have set male and female roles. How is that changing?

TF: In the past you would always have women – called 'ladies,' on the right, and men, or 'gents,' on the left. And it was that way for years. But the fact is that at any dance, you could have uneven numbers of men and women, or you could have people wanting to dance different parts. So more recently, callers have been using the terms lark and raven

– lark for the dancer on the left, which we used to call the 'gent', and raven for the dancer on the right, formerly the 'lady'. It's fun and it allows people to participate however they want, but still follows the dance calls.

MD: Does that make things complicated for you, as a caller?

TF: Well, truthfully, it does sometimes make things confusing, because you are no longer relying on the 'traditional' markers of gender. So, some callers will use physical markers, like a scarf or a tie, just so that you can clearly see one group as opposed to the other. I definitely still make mistakes sometimes. At the end of the day, however, inclusivity is about including everyone. If using the term "lady" or "gentleman" makes someone feel awkward, that isn't nice. But I hope people can see the roles as characters rather than fixed identities. When you start a dance, you are really stepping into a little play that will take about fifteen minutes. Square dancing and contradancing are really about breaking down barriers and bringing people together. It's a way for people to hold hands in a safe way, and just have a nice time. It's a way for people, no matter their age or background, to feel part of a community.

MD: I know there will be people reading this saying "yeah, but I have two left feet." How do you convince those people to get up and dance?

TF: I always say that if you can walk or roll from point A to point B, then you can square dance. No experience necessary. The caller is there to tell you what to do. You just have to listen and do it. If you mess up, I always tell people to just keep smiling and wait for someone to grab you and put you back in the right place. It's about everyone doing the same thing, at the same time. When you get to the end of the dance together, everyone feels good.

“

I LOVE THAT WHEN WE ARE DANCING AS A COMMUNITY, WE ARE PART OF A LARGER THING.



MEREDITH DAULT is a writer, stilt-walker, and dancer who has lived in the Skeleton Park neighbourhood for a decade. She wanders the streets and parks regularly with her dog, Frida.



TEILHARD FROST is a multi-instrumentalist specializing in traditional fiddle tunes with a particular interest in the music of the Appalachian Mountains. He has spent the last eighteen years touring with critically acclaimed band Sheesham, Lotus and 'Son.





Funeral Lakes Interrogate Canadian Nationalism, History and Settler Identity on *North American Martyrs*

STORY BY **ROB HOWARD**



We've come to really appreciate opportunities for collaboration... Opening up our creative world to more collaborators has enriched our process and results.

IMAGE COURTESY OF:
Funeral Lakes

From deep within the rich treasure chest that is Kingston's music scene, Funeral Lakes has recently emerged as a band of note. With a haunting and energetic sound that blends elements of post-punk and shoegaze, the duo of Sam Mishos and Chris Hemer has made its mark within and beyond the city limits, garnering critical acclaim, international and national radio play, and a growing reputation for their concept-driven, thought-provoking yet accessible brand of moody indie rock. Their sophomore album, *North American Martyrs*, released this past April, has cemented their standing as one of Kingston's most compelling acts.

The album, an eight song exploration of nationalism, history, and settler identity in Canada, originated from Hemer's Master's thesis. "It interrogated the role of cultural production in sustaining Canadian national myths through a case study of Gordon Lightfoot's *Canadian Railroad Trilogy*," explained Hemer. "The album attempts to show how cultural production can cut both ways — music can exist in tension as both a tool of nationalism and a medium for counter-discourse."

Much of *North American Martyrs* was recorded in Kingston's Skeleton Park neighbourhood. "The majority of tracking took place in our friend's living room," Sam shared. "We recorded some of the louder guitar parts at Next Church so we could play off the room, which is also where we filmed our music video for the title track. As one of the few DIY spaces in Kingston, it's where we often go to play local shows."

Friends from the Skeleton Park community also played a significant role in the album's creation. "Our bandmates and local musicians Michael Broadhead and Arden Rogalsky played a huge part in making this album and our live shows happen," said Mishos. "The musicianship and personal-

ity they brought to the album elevated everything. The whole Rogalsky/Cameron family has been super supportive of our music, letting us record and practice in their home, which is beyond generous."

Touring *North American Martyrs* over the summer took the band across Ontario and Québec. "It was a bit of a mixed bag," Hemer said of the experience. "We played some very intimate shows and also a festival main stage, opening for artists we grew up listening to — so it was certainly a range." The highlight? "Our album release show in Kingston. We got to share the stage with local sweethearts Princess Towers and Groucho Pepe, and many familiar faces were in the crowd, including the academic committee who oversaw the research that inspired this project."

Beyond the live performances, *North American Martyrs* marks a creative leap forward for Funeral Lakes. "We've come to really appreciate opportunities for collaboration," said Mishos. "We worked with our friend and filmmaker Kat Zoumboulakis on two music videos and collaborated with artist Grace Dixon, who created incredible artwork for our merch. Opening up our creative world to more collaborators has enriched our process and results."

Looking ahead, Funeral Lakes is preparing a follow-up project. "We're finishing a new EP over the

holidays, which will hopefully be out in the spring or summer," said Hemer. "It's a collection of anti-western songs questioning the frontier myth and the glorified cowboy archetype. In some ways, it extends the themes and ideas from *North American Martyrs*, including hero worship, masculinity, and capitalist exploitation."

While fans may have to wait until spring to see Funeral Lakes perform live again, Mishos and Hemer are embracing the winter months to focus on new music. "We're enjoying a small hibernation right now as we finish recording and plan new projects. We'll emerge in the spring when Punxsutawney Phil gives the go-ahead," they joked.

Funeral Lakes continues to blend creativity and collaboration, all while staying deeply rooted in the vibrant Skeleton Park and Kingston music communities.



ROB HOWARD co-founded Kingston Live in 2018 to help forge a destiny for Kingston as Canada's First Capital of Music.

How James Taylor Discovered His Love of Pickleball



STORY BY **STUART MILLER-DAVIS**

James Taylor plays pickleball **IMAGE CREDIT:** Brad Lowe



After moving back to his hometown of Kingston following the COVID-19 pandemic, local musician James Taylor went looking for a new racquet sport. Having played lots growing up – tennis, badminton, ping pong – he was keen to immerse himself once again in Kingston’s sporting community. What he found surprised even him.

“I was looking for places to play squash and for a squash community, but I didn’t really find anyone,” Taylor said during an interview at the Elm Café. “So, I went to the YMCA, and there’s a group of people playing pickleball. And I was like, ‘Oh, cool. I can probably try this out, and it looks fun.’ There’s all these people lined up waiting to play. I’m like, ‘Oh, what’s the hype? What’s the buzz?’ So, I tried it out, and kind of just got hooked from there.”

He said the sport is an amalgamation of tennis, ping pong, and badminton, which helped him adapt easily. But what really got him hooked were the social and community aspects of the game.

“Everybody’s always lined up waiting for courts, so inevitably you just end up talking to people and getting to know people,” he said. “A lot of pickleball has this open play stuff in different cities. There’s public courts at Bayridge, for instance.”

Kingston has four outdoor courts dedicated to pickleball at Bayridge Park, which are available for free use on a first-come, first-served basis from April until October. With the game’s popularity

rising, pickleball lines have appeared on many of the multi-use courts, including at Riverview Park on Rideau Street.

Now that the weather is colder, the City of Kingston offers drop-in pickleball at Artillery Park, the Kingston East Community Centre, and the Kingston Racquet Centre. Sessions cost \$6.70 for adults and \$5.65 for youths and seniors. They are free for members. Equipment available at city facilities varies by location, and players should check ahead of time in order to know what to bring

The YMCA also has three indoor pickleball courts available to members.

For those more serious about the sport, like Taylor, the Kingston Pickleball Club at the corner of Gardiners Road and Cataraqui Woods Drive has seven courts for use by members all season long. The club hosted the Canadian Pickleball Championships in 2019 and 2022.

For newcomers to the game, Taylor says it’s like playing chess on a small tennis court.

“There’s lots of strategies and tactics you have to implement,” he said. “You don’t necessarily want to hit a winning shot right away. You kind of want to set yourself up for success and a winning shot. So, it might take three or four or five shots to get to that point.”

Taylor’s still a relatively new player but loves how easy it is to play, and how accessible the sport is. On a recent trip to Los Angeles, he took his paddle and a good pair of running shoes and was all set to go.

“There were lots of great spots where there was a community pickleball thing going on,” he said. “And the climate in L.A. is very conducive for that. It was great just to be able to go to different courts and meet new people. It’s a great travelling game.”

The sport has seen rapid growth in recent years in North America. It was founded in the summer of 1965 by Joel Pritchard, a congressman from Washington State, and his friend Bill Bell. The two came up with the game when, having misplaced their badminton racquets, they substituted ping pong paddles and a perforated plastic ball, which they hit back and forth over the badminton net. They soon lowered the net to ground-level. By 1972, a corporation was developed to protect the new sport.

Pickleball came to Canada in the 1970s with snowbirds who had learned of it stateside. A study by Pickleball Canada in January 2022 estimated that 1.37 million Canadians played the sport at least once a month.

Taylor said the sport’s accessibility is probably the biggest factor in why it has gotten so big. It also helps that they don’t take themselves too seriously.

“The game is called pickleball, right? So it already has this fun title to it,” he said. “I mean, not that there’s not people that are really competitive, but I think it does have this aura of a light-hearted, fun game.”

When Taylor is not trying to set up the perfect shot on the court, he can be found at The Toucan, Tir Na Nog, or Musiikki playing music, or teaching at the Skeleton Park Music School.

There’s lots of strategies and tactics you have to implement. You want to set yourself up for success and a winning shot, but it might take three or four or five shots to get to that point.



STUART MILLER-DAVIS is a sports journalism student in the postgraduate program at Centennial College in Toronto. He grew up playing street hockey on Markland Street.

Queen Tyffanie Morgan Wins a Mayor's Arts Award

STORY BY ELLA BIGRAS

The Mayor's Arts Awards program recognizes excellence in the arts in Kingston, Ontario. The award is divided into two categories: the Creator Award and the Arts Champion Award. Creator Awards honor individuals who drive progress in their artistic field, demonstrate exceptional artistic merit, and positively impact the Kingston community. The 2024 Creator Award recipients were Hill Werth, W.C. Creatives, and Tyffanie Morgan.

Hill Werth is a trans rights activist inspiring change through their art. They are best known for their *Hate Has No Home Here* poster campaign that Werth describes as “a peaceful way to combat hate against all marginalized groups of individuals who currently and historically have faced discrimination”. The *Hate Has No Home* campaign can be seen throughout Kingston, and it even travelled to Parliament this past summer. Dakota Ward and Jaylene Cardinal are W.C. Creatives, both multidisciplinary Cree artists making their mark on Kingston with inspiring visual art pieces, jewelry, clothing, soaps, and other self-care products. Ward and Cardinal draw inspiration from their culture, communicating ideas and stories passed through generations with a modern twist. And last but not least, Tyffanie Morgan is a beloved drag queen and integral part of Kingston's art scene. Morgan lives right here in Skeleton Park and I had the pleasure of sitting down with her last month to discuss her art form and journey as a drag artist.

Morgan embodies the spirit of the Mayor's Arts Awards, as she celebrates her twenty-fifth year as an integral force in Kingston's arts community. One thing became quickly apparent during our interview: Tyffanie Morgan is a queen who truly does it all.

Morgan's journey began in March 2000, when she attended a drag performance and was captivated by the queen's ability to command an audience. Since then, the microphone has been central to her drag. Her early career coincided with a transformative period for Kingston's queer community, as the closure of local gay bars in the 1990s and 2000s created a void in queer spaces. Morgan took it upon herself to fill this gap, stating, “Once the gay bars closed you had to carve out your own scene.

She created *dragshow.ca*, a platform centralizing drag events and performers in Kingston, which eventually expanded to include drag across Canada. Morgan also launched her podcast *Breakfast with Tyffanie* to connect the queer community with



Tyffanie Morgan IMAGE COURTESY OF: Kingston Arts Council

Morgan embodies the spirit of the Mayor's Arts Awards, as she celebrates her twenty-fifth year as an integral force in Kingston's arts community.

events and spaces, ensuring accessibility for both performers and audiences. Her podcasting career didn't stop there. In 2021, she and Rowena Whey began *What's the Maple Tea?!*, a podcast dedicated to discussing all things drag with a focus on showcasing drag events in the Kingston area.

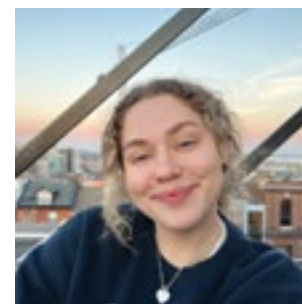
While Morgan is a distinguished podcast host, she also wears many different hats, since drag artistry is multidisciplinary and ever-evolving. Onstage, she thrives in front of a microphone, feeding off the symbiotic energy between herself and the audience. “It has always been about the audience,” she explains, noting how she gets “energized after each performance.”

This year, Morgan is expanding her creative repertoire by making her acting debut in the upcoming film *Doom Boogie*, proving once again that her creativity knows no bounds. Morgan is also part of the *Patterns for All Bodies* initiative with the Agnes Etherington Art Centre. This collaboration reimag-

ines garments from the Agnes's historical Dress Collection as digital patterns, allowing anyone to create or adapt these garments to fit their own body. Morgan joined fellow drag artists Dare de LaFemme and Rowena Whey in re-inhabiting these garments. They worked with local dress historians and makers, choosing their own fabrics, embellishments, and accessories to create a gown uniquely their own, so Tyffanie Morgan's Teagown was created.

On top of it all, Morgan is an online presence and avid horticulturist, sharing her gardening endeavours online under the popular hashtag #TyffsGarden. In her Silver Jubilee Year, she is spearheading the Limestone to Limelight initiative aimed at fostering collaboration between drag artists and other creatives in Kingston. Seriously, what doesn't Tyffanie Morgan do? (That should definitely be a new hashtag!) By the time this article is published, it's likely she'll have even more projects in the works that continue to redefine the boundaries of her drag artistry.

It is fitting that Morgan's Silver Jubilee Year coincides with receiving the Mayor's Arts Award, an accolade celebrating her twenty-five years of artistry and community impact. From creating spaces for the Queer community to inspiring interdisciplinary collaborations, Morgan has shaped Kingston's arts community in countless ways. With her acting debut, *Limestone to Limelight* initiative, and ongoing advocacy, Tyffanie Morgan proves that her legacy is as vibrant and multifaceted as the art she creates.



ELLA BIGRAS is a recent English literature graduate from Queen's university, and an emerging visual artist in Kingston with a focus on painting, drawing, and illustration. Follow her @ellaraquelstudio.

Lights – Camera – Cinema Society Action!

Groups Devoted to the Appreciation of Film Aren't New to Kingston, But This One Is

STORY BY **ASAD CHISHTI**

IMAGE CREDIT: Asad Chishti



A group devoted to cinema is back in Kingston. The Cinema Society of Kingston (CSOK) turned one year old this past fall. The community-led organization is fostering a healthy local culture for cinephiles — makers, viewers, learners, and more — by screening films, both old and new, and being inventive about their programming. At one of their events, viewers could craft-along while watching a movie!

William Jennings, one of the organizers, is a PhD candidate in the Film and Media department at Queen's University. He confirms there was a Kingston film society over half a century ago and while the details of what happened to it are unclear, a current version was sorely missing.

"We have an archive of all of their ... notes [at the film department]," Jennings says. The idea of reviving something similar seemed apparent to some professors, as well as the Screening Room owner and operator, Wendy Huot.

One of the earliest events put on was a film screening and discussion with filmmaker Ephraim Asili since several graduate students had invited the U.S.-based Asili to Kingston to discuss a film and his process. Hosting something from an independent filmmaker at the independent movie theatre just made perfect sense.

The screenings regularly feature discussions with community members who are enthusiasts with traditional and non-traditional experience or knowledge (or both) related to the film being screened. In at least one instance there was live music. The genres and time periods span decades; a film released four decades ago still endures and every single seat is filled. A four-part series spanning six decades of horror movies. A non-competitive show-and-tell. Poetry as part of the movement between short films.

Aiden Ennist, a regular attendee who knows several regular movie-goers, says, "What the Cinema Society of Kingston does is create a space to experience unique films as they are intended ... on the big screen." He compares the outings to book clubs for readers or board game cafes for board game enthusiasts.

You have this ... opportunity to bond with not only the people that you go with, but the people who are already in the theater enjoying that same experience with you.

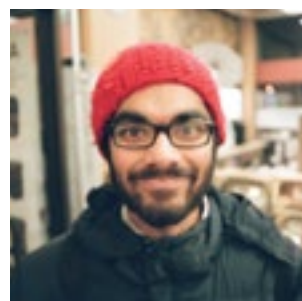
Bianca Cindric-Myers, a student at St. Lawrence College, is a regular attendee of the Cinema Society's events. She's also worked on designing several posters for the society as well as putting up the posters around town. Cindric-Myers used to make a regular habit out of watching films together with friends and family before the pandemic. The experience of being in an actual theater with the smell of popcorn and being able to hear the room react is part of what elevates the experience, she says, "You have this ... opportunity to bond with not only the people that you go with, but the people who are already in the theater enjoying that same experience with you."

It really is a communal experience, says Cindric-Myers, who usually attends with a plus one. She lingers in the lobby afterwards to talk to the regulars and the staff about the movie, how it landed, and what is happening next cinematically. The experience of posterizing is one of her favourite aspects, of actually going into various businesses and meeting the community. Her one hope is that CSOK's programming does not just take place at the Screening Room because while there is an overlap, they are not one and the same.

To reflect back on how the Screening Room is and has been a cultural hub for years, as well as the persistence of its survival along with other local cinema institutions (RIP Classic Video), is a meaningful exercise. There are so many film-y dreams that have lived, are currently alive, and will come to live in Katarokwi, this place of limestone and clay. This new cinema society is part of that ongoing current. A tributary of sorts.

The archives of the old cinema society are but one testament to the longevity of cinephilia in Kingston, for so much exists in unwritten ways and unpreserved manners. Technologically, the society as it was in the 1950s and 1960s was working with different parameters to current distribution models, having to find prints of movies to project off of a reel, Jennings reflects. Compare that to the plethora of visual media available today, a few mere clicks away.

The very real magic of the society is in how it shows that an antidote to the so-called loneliness epidemic can be as simple as gathering together to watch a film. Attendees experience similar yet different feelings, thoughts, and memories watching the same film buttressed by discussions. A welcome public intimacy, presented by the Cinema Society of Kingston.



ASAD CHISHTI is a journalist and poet. Currently based out of Whitehorse, Yukon, he used to live on Markland Street. The Screening Room, Skeleton Park neighbourhood, and Kingston are still home. Many of his favourite people in the world reside there. A former staff member at the Screening Room, the local arts and cinema communities remain essential.



Kingston Falls in Love with Lala Masala

STORY BY **TIANNA EDWARDS**

IMAGE COURTESY OF: Hardeep Chawla



When Chawla was ready to open his own restaurant, he had his eyes on Kingston for affordability. In October 2023, they acquired the building on Hickson Avenue and began renovating it for a February launch. Singh played a crucial role in building key elements of the space, like the wall that separates the takeout area from the kitchen and the large wood buffet table display. Chawla describes his father's involvement as: "He's almost seventy years old and still works ten to fourteen hours a day. He has given his life to cooking and serving. Even at this age, he finds his joy in the kitchen. He is not the type to just sit idle. He wants to be moving at all times."

Chawla shares what the first few weeks of business looked like: "The first day we didn't make any sales. Second day, zero. Third evening, someone came and bought food — they went to the temple across the street and saw the restaurant was open. The fourth day the word spread and within two weeks we were really busy. We weren't expecting it. We were very thankful and grateful to have folks come in and support us."

The excitement for Lala Masala started in the Indian community, but word quickly spread, and now the broader Kingston community has fallen in love. Chawla explains the method for their success: "All of the recipes he [Singh] learned from his father and some of them he's innovated and learned. For example, he didn't know how to make Indo-Chinese. Hakka is also something he's learned. And he learned how to make dosas. We try to keep it medium to high spicy but it is customizable. If someone doesn't like it, we will try to make it how they want it."

Another big factor in their likeability is that Lala Masala is incredibly affordable. Customers can pick up full rice bowls with curry and salad starting at \$10 or thali combos starting at \$14 with seven different items and plenty of options that are vegan or gluten-free.

Now that Lala Masala is gaining traction, Chawla's next goal is to focus on giving back to the community. He shares, "We believe in serving the community so we've donated free food to new temples being built and we've donated food through an organization that has joined up with Martha's Table. This is our karam. Our mission is to create a positive impact in Kingston."

I wrote this goal on a paper like fourteen years ago because I feel if you want something in your heart, you write it down. — HARDEEP CHAWLA

After being assigned a story about a local Indian restaurant, Lala Masala, I couldn't help but notice mention of it everywhere, and even had the pleasure of tasting their delicious food. So, when I finally have the opportunity to meet the owners in person, I am filled with more excitement than usual.

As I open the door to the restaurant at 43 Hickson Avenue, and I smell the incredible curries, my eyes widen as they scan the vibrant dishes steaming in trays. Owner and operations manager, Hardeep Chawla, quickly appears from the kitchen followed by his father and head chef, Raghbir Singh. We sit down and chat over hot chai and samosas.

Chawla proudly shares that Lala Masala wouldn't exist without his grandfather, who arrived as a refugee from Pakistan to New Delhi in the 1940s. The name is inspired by him. Chawla explains that his grandfather, Kundan Laal Jaba, was forced to leave Pakistan and flee to India during the partition of India in 1947 that created two independent dominions of the British Commonwealth, Pakistan and India. Chawla shares, "The government [in India] provided the shops for them to do their own busi-

ness in the 1950s and they started making sweets, like the sweets we have at the front. They were doing well and they moved to another place and opened up another place in 1978 and since then the shop is still there. He started providing full caterings, selling confectionery, and started taking big catering orders. It was passed down to his kids, they were working together and now it's passed down to their kids — my cousins."

His grandfather's cooking was a necessity to care for family and community during a time of crisis but has evolved as a lifestyle and passion for the generations that followed. The love of food and cooking was passed down to his father, who moved to Brampton, Ontario, in 1998, when Chawla was young. Singh opened a restaurant with his brother-in-law and worked as head chef. Chawla was raised often helping in the kitchen and with serving customers. He grew his career in the truck industry with the long-term goal of opening his own restaurant one day in the back of his mind. He says, "I wrote this goal on a paper like fourteen years ago because I feel if you want something in your heart, you write it down."



TIANNA EDWARDS is an Equity, Diversity, Inclusion Coordinator at Queen's University, host of podcast, *Kingston, The Black Experience* and the creator/author of a blog, keepupwithkingston.com. She lives in Kingston with her husband and two daughters.

Belle Park from the Air

How Historical Aerial Photos Speak to Change

STORY BY **LAURA MURRAY**

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Belle Island, 1948; Belle Island, 1962; Belle Island, 1924

MORE PHOTO INFORMATION: belleparkproject.com/projects/belle-park-from-the-air-19242024

Belle Park, off Montreal Street, is at 44 hectares the largest city-owned open area in the urban area of Kingston. However, it hasn't tended to be a "destination" park for people beyond its part of town. Its golf course closed in 2017, and since then it has mainly attracted attention as the site of encampments of unhoused people. Living rough carries many challenges and risks. Yet folks continue to live in the park because of the extreme shortage of housing and shelter beds, finding support from staff at the Integrated Care Hub and dedicated volunteers.

It seems important in today's context — when garbage and rats in the park have been the focus of public complaint — to remember that Belle Park is literally made of garbage. In 1955, the City of Kingston chose the marsh between Montreal Street and

Belle Island as the location of the city dump. Even after the golf course was built in 1974, the dump remained open. Greenskeeper Garry Lavallee remembered that "they would pile so much garbage... and soon as they'd go to put the earth down the rats'd start... hundreds and hundreds of them come running outta there down on the golf course." In 1996, Janet Fletcher successfully sued the city for allowing toxic leachate from the dump to enter the Great Cataraqui River. Court-mandated monitoring and remediation have been in place since then.

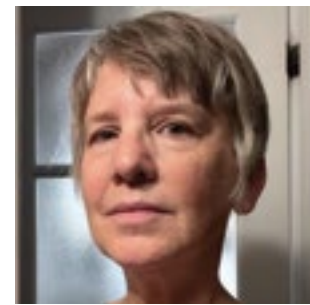
Nevertheless, the park does not entirely belie its name: it holds much beauty.

One way to contemplate the complexity of the park is to look at historical aerial photographs, the first of which dates to 1924. The 1948 photo shows the wetland undisturbed, a rich habitat. By 1962, the road has been built and several dump sites established which look oddly ornamental from the air.

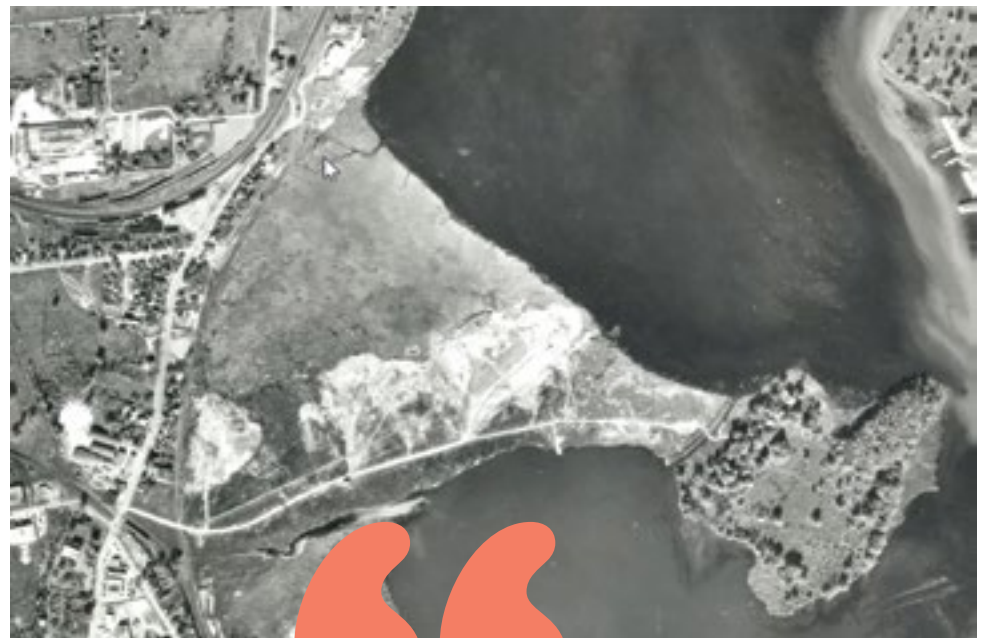
Over the past few years, Francine Berish, the geo-spatial librarian at Queen's, has shared these images

at events in the library and in the park. To make this experience more widely available, Francine, Dorit Naaman, and I made the short film Belle Park from the Air. With an immersive soundtrack by Matt Rogalsky, the film speaks to changes and continuities, signs of violence and signs of life. When we launched it at the Broom Factory in June of 2024, it was exhilarating to see the audience's engagement and curiosity.

Belle Park from the Air is available any time at belleparkproject.com, under "Projects." For some fascinating context, see also Francine Berish's blog post "The Politics and History of Aerial Photos: Introducing Belle Park from the Air."



LAURA MURRAY, a settler scholar of English and Cultural Studies at Queen's, has lived near Skeleton Park for almost 30 years. She is one of the leaders of the Belle Park Project, which uses art and research, and art as research, to try to understand this complex space.



IT SEEMS IMPORTANT IN TODAY'S CONTEXT — WHEN GARBAGE AND RATS IN THE PARK HAVE BEEN THE FOCUS OF PUBLIC COMPLAINT — TO REMEMBER THAT BELLE PARK IS LITERALLY MADE OF GARBAGE.

Pen Farm Herd Co-op Celebrates Victory Fourteen Years Later

STORY BY **JAMIE SWIFT**

Protester Helga Mankovitz being arrested in 2010 in front of Collins Bay Prison. **IMAGE CREDIT:** Still from the film *Til The Cows Come Home* (2014)



Mid-summer, 2010. In a massive operation, a gang of cops arrested twenty-four Save Our Prison Farms supporters outside the Bath Road prison complex. Determined civil disobedience activists thought it was a bad idea to sell off the dairy herd that had long been providing milk to inmates at federal institutions.

“This is what democracy looks like!” chanted the angry, sometimes tearful, supporters of a campaign that brought together a remarkable coalition of Kingston-area farmers, local food activists, former inmates, social justice advocates and faith communities.

Fourteen years of tireless organizing later, some thirty members of the Pen Farm Herd Co-op gathered at a church north of town to wrap up their organization. Most of us had invested in nineteen Frontenac Institution cattle, purchased at an auction that the government set up immediately after the arrests. Countless determined citizens had vowed to keep up the fight ‘til the cows came home.

And they did. The feds have been cajoled into building a new barn with space for eighty milking cows at the Joyceville Institution. Sixteen inmates are now at work at the dairy operation, once again burnishing skills that the lock-em-up/throw-away-the-key Harper government had actually said were useless.

Indeed, one of the things that stoked resistance to the Conservative closure of the prison farm was that insulting claim: Farming skills that men had long been learning were irrelevant in the twentieth century modern labour market. It was a line that offended farmers hereabouts, as well as pretty much anyone in what the rapidly-growing food localist movement — backed by crucial support from the National Farmers Union — had come to call “eaters”.

There was a mission-accomplished vibe at that meeting held at the United Church hall in Inverary on November 29, 2024. Four farmers who comprised the campaign leadership — Dianne Dowling, Dave Perry, George Sutherland, and Jeff Peters — were present. A Co-op member stood to offer her congratulations.

“It’s been a protest movement that succeeded.”

The scene was particularly poignant, what with tragic wars, searing climate breakdown, nasty divisions stoked by online hate and Trump-inspired demagogues. Maple Syrup MAGA looms north of the border.

Here was an example of a small but stubborn social movement that simply wouldn’t quit.

One remarkable feature of the Save Our Prison Farms movement has been that it was based not only on support for local food production and the farming community, but also that the campaign explicitly appealed to what Abraham Lincoln famously called “the better angels of our nature.” It asked us to think the best of some of those among us who are among the most despised members of society. Maybe looking after animals could very well engender compassion in people who have been living the hardest of lives.

One Corrections Canada staffer told Dowling that it’s exceptionally rare for prison officials to hear a focused public appeal on behalf of people in jail. Vitriolic clamour of tough on crime voices usually dominates criminal justice debates.

Dowling, a retired teacher and Howe Island farmer, summed up what this movement shows. Especially in times like these. “The legacy of the Save Our Prison Farms campaign and the Pen Farm Herd Co-op is a remarkable network of creative, compassionate and dedicated people.”

Ms. Dowling explained that the organizing effort had broad political implications. “It reflects a community of people buoyed by the knowledge that they are not alone in caring about hope and justice. And wanting to do what is right, in spite of the odds.”

As those nineteen cows were finding foster homes with Kingston-area farmers, a lengthy political struggle unfolded. A weekly vigil began on Bath Road in front of the Frontenac Institution, continuing every Monday evening, no matter what the weather. It lasted until the Trudeau Liberals announced their intention to re-open the pen farm.

Mark Gerretsen, who became Kingston’s Mayor shortly after the arrests and closure of the dairy farm, was quick to read the political tea leaves. Public opinion was clearly on our side. City Council had passed a motion opposing the pen farm closure in 2009, before Mr. Gerretsen became mayor. Elected Kingston’s Member of Parliament when Justin Trudeau formed the government in 2015, he continued his support for bringing the cows home. Although it would take nine long years, determined and sustained pressure from the cow campaign won the day.

In January 2025, Dianne Dowling toured the new Joyceville pen farm. The manager explained that some 40 per cent of the cattle can be traced back to the herd dispersed in 2010. Dianne described it as “very heartening.”

“It would have been zero per cent without the actions of the Save Our Prison Farms campaign and the Herd Co-op members. There would have been no dairy farm at all.”

“The prison farm campaign brought together Kingstonians in extraordinary ways,” said Andrew McCann, arrested in 2010 and a beekeeper today.

“We fought for democracy against a government bent on ignoring people’s voices. We fought for social justice — a rehabilitation program that transformed lives. We fought for the land, the cows, and the ecological sustainability of local farming.”

“This is what democracy looks like!”

What about those six words? Are they a sardonic comment on how the state treats people bold enough to break the law by risking arrest for a cause in which they believe?

Or are the words meant to show support for people committed to actually *participating* in democracy?

Perhaps both.

Kingston writer **JAMIE SWIFT** was a Pen Farm Co-op member and co-producer of the documentary *“Til the Cows Come Home”*. It’s available at <https://vimeo.com/97536245>

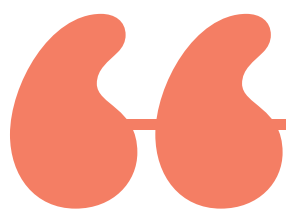
Still Waters

Artwork by Ivan Soudek Will Be Showing at The Elm Café, January to March 2025

STORY BY JANE SOMERVILLE



IMAGE CREDIT: *At the North Dwellers* by Ivan Soudek



That Ivan had an artistic eye is obvious at a glance. His choice of subjects, composition, and balance of light and dark are immediately engaging. But I'm also struck by his deftness and confidence at every line cut with assurance into a clear block of wood or lino. Then there is the perfect transferring of black ink to the white page. The marriage of his art and his craftsmanship is perfect".

— NEIGHBOURHOOD ARTISAN, TIM SOPER

Ivan Soudek once lived across the street from our beloved Skeleton Park (a.k.a McBurney Park) in downtown Kingston. His front porch and windows looked out over the main stage erected for the Skeleton Park Arts Festival in June every year. Ivan joined in with the events of SPAF when he was alive. He loved to square dance, listen to live music, and be surrounded by community. The first time I laid eyes on him he was in the park dancing.

Ivan was a self-appointed overseer of Skeleton Park for 24 years. He watched with great interest that the winter hockey boards and protection nets were installed correctly each season. (Too many hockey pucks had broken his windows and landed on the sidewalk at his doorstep). City workers were met with Ivan's inspection and counsellors heard his voice if he felt things weren't done quite right. He contacted the city when late night hockey games broke out after rink hours. (I expect my son Joel was one who broke the rules when he was a teenager). Ivan spoke to children if they were taunting small animals in the park, defacing monuments or breaking branches on trees. One year he reburied a small piece of a grave marker that had migrated to the surface near the ball diamond. Some who encountered Ivan may have been surprised by him as he could be very direct. He cared deeply about community, respecting neighbours, wildlife and history.

Ivan died in our neighbourhood in 2022 leaving me with the task of emptying his home, distributing his possessions and repairing his beloved "Fort Balaclava". I have been surprised, challenged and enriched by the task he asked of me.

His home and possessions painted a picture of a complex, caring man who had a hard time keeping up with what life asked of him. His front hallway housed two canoes, two long ladders, outdoor clothing for any weather, skis, car repair items and a push lawn mower. It was hard to get in the door, but these items showed clearly what was important to an active man who lived on Skeleton Park. As I dove deeper into the layers of his home and my new job, my understanding and appreciation of him grew.

Ivan was a keeper of things — too many to list — both from his own life and that of his family. Examples include: five leather suitcases that each member of the Soudek family carried when they emigrated to Canada from Czechoslovakia (with the airplane receipts inside dating 1968); editorial cartoons depicting his mother Vera as Public Officer of Health in Kingston (when the Whig Standard was able to employ a cartoonist on staff); and an original seal from Gregor Mendel once belonging to Ivan's father — both men from Brno, Czechoslovakia who dedicated their life efforts to understanding genetics. My friend's home housed a rich history and also housed an extensive collection of Ivan's own artwork.

I knew Ivan was an artist, but had no idea of the breadth and skill of his efforts. As an accomplished painter and print maker he has left behind artwork I look forward to sharing with the community.

From January to March 2025 at The Elm Café on Montreal Street in Kingston, there will be a public art exhibit of Ivan's work. I hope others enjoy discovering more about Ivan Soudek, who loved Skeleton Park, and want to take prints and linocuts home. All proceeds of purchases will benefit Skeleton Park Arts Festival.



JANE SOMERVILLE was a close friend of Ivan Soudek.

AGNES

REIMAGINED:

CREATIVITY, CONNECTION AND COMMUNITY

A NEW HOME FOR ART IN KINGSTON

In 1954, Agnes Etherington bequeathed her house to Queen's University on the condition that it would be become a public art centre for Kingston communities.

Over the past two years a community engaged design process, modelled on Anishinaabe talking circles, has reimagined the foundations of this promise.

**We can't wait
to welcome you
to Agnes's
new home!**

**OPENING
2026**

**AL DOXTATOR,
ONEIDA ELDER, CULTURE ADVISOR,
OFFICE OF INDIGENOUS INITIATIVES,
QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY**

Indigenous Self-Determination spaces will allow for the continued use and implementation of our cultural practices and traditions, while also providing a safe space for Indigenous staff, students, artists and guests alike. Agnes Reimagined is a step toward reconciliation and Indigenizing spaces at Queen's University."

**MIKA HENRY, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR,
OFFICE OF INDIGENOUS INITIATIVES,
QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY**

It is important that we prioritize the creation of Indigenous spaces on campus, as spaces of reclamation for the Indigenous community. A space to connect back to place and self; to be out on the land; to practice our customs. Agnes Reimagined is working with community to provide these spaces."

**JOSÉE SMELTZER,
PARENT OF AGNES ART CAMP PARTICIPANT**

Lauren felt empowered and supported. Her love of art was allowed to flourish and grow under the guidance and support of all the talented, creative and awesome teachers/staff. We look forward to how much more expansive these opportunities will be in Agnes Reimagined and all their new dedicated spaces for youth."

**EMELIE CHHANGUR,
AGNES DIRECTOR AND CURATOR**

We are creating a living museum for the 21st century—literally! Our live-in artist residence, community hub and first-ever café in the heritage Etherington House ensures hospitality is the foundational and aspirational ethos of Agnes Reimagined!"

**EM HARMSSEN,
DESIGNER, EMSKE DESIGN STUDIO, KINGSTON**

The design of Agnes is future focused. There is a strong emphasis on accessibility within the new building, being designed from the ground up with collaborative insights gained from community focus groups for the most inclusive approach. I'm looking forward to the new space and the opportunities that Emelie and Agnes will provide our communities."

ABBY NOWAKOWSKI, LOCAL ARTIST

It was an absolute treat tattooing and creating permanent marks within the old Agnes. I can only imagine what kind of mark Agnes Reimagined will make on Kingston."

**ASHLEY BRADSHAW,
DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, TOURISM KINGSTON**

Tourism Kingston is so excited for Agnes's Arts and Events Hub! It's an ideal location for a variety of events, from weddings and corporate celebrations to so many cool arts events that will benefit all sectors of Tourism Kingston. We look forward to collaborating with Agnes to host conferences and other events in this beautiful, state-of-the-art facility."

**TIANNA EDWARDS,
BLOGGER, COMMUNITY MEMBER AND HOST
OF KINGSTON, THE BLACK EXPERIENCE**

bell hooks once said "Art constitutes one of the rare locations where acts of transcendence can take place and have a wide-ranging transformative impact." Agnes has done that for the Kingston community. This ethos was literally built into Agnes Reimagined ensuring its enduring transformative impact."

**ALICIA BOUTILIER,
AGNES CHIEF CURATOR/CURATOR
OF CANADIAN HISTORICAL ART**

We're doubling our exhibition spaces! With new and expanded galleries, Agnes collections can really bust out! From installations to paintings to dresses, more artworks, across time, geographies and media, can co-mingle with each other, engage with the public, and breathe."

**AGNES REIMAGINED WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE
WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF:**



**WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF
THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA /
AVEC LA PARTICIPATION DU
GOUVERNEMENT DU CANADA**

