

Issue Nineteen **THE** Fall 2025  
**SKELETON**  
**PRESS**

**NEIGHBOURHOOD**  
**FOOD**



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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. Please email inquiries along with samples of your work to [skeletonpresseditor@gmail.com](mailto:skeletonpresseditor@gmail.com).

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*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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# Woooooo!

It's that time of year again for the (almost) legendary

# SKELETON PARK HALLOWEEN PARADE

which will be held in **McBurney Park on Friday, October 31st.**

**All witches, werewolves, goblins, and ghouls are invited to congregate in the park for live music at 4:30pm, followed by the annual parade at 5pm!**

IMAGE CREDIT: Josh Lyon

# Food

BY ANNE THÉRIAULT



To say that I often think about food seems like stating the obvious: between meal planning, grocery shopping, prep, and cooking time, food occupies a significant part of most people's days. Who doesn't think about food a lot?

What I mean, though, is the concept of food — what it represents to us. I think about how food is bound up with who we are and where we come from, and how certain meals can feel like home. I think about how we use food to celebrate, motivate, and comfort ourselves. I think about how eating can be so pleasurable, but can also feel fraught for many reasons: cultural or familial baggage, economics, ethical quandaries about food production. The daily necessity of food means that it can bring up just about any emotion, and often several at once.

In this edition of *The Skeleton Press*, you'll find stories about how our neighbours eat, from athletes needing to fuel their bodies, to friends who have spent thirty years meeting for a weekly potluck, to high school students on snack-seeking missions. You'll read about edible plants in the world around us and how you can forage for them or find them in local food forests. Naz from the Cinema Society of Kingston shares some of her favourite food in films; Julie Salverson tells us about her father's experience of filming a documentary on world hunger shifted his perspective; Tante Talia offers advice on how to hostess the perfect budget dinner party. You'll learn about the City's new Food Framework, where to get jollof rice in Kingston, and what the meal program will look like at the St. Vincent de Paul Society's new location. You'll also get the skinny on local development, the Wolfe Island ferry, and the dearly departed LaSalle Causeway bridge. It's a real smorgasbord of an issue.

During my Q&A with Knifey Spooney's Christina Avery, we discussed how important the act of sharing meals is. She pointed out that one of the ways we can reimagine society is by spending a lot more time eating with our neighbours. I think she's onto something there. And hey, if you're ever hard up for conversation, you can always discuss your favourite articles from your favourite neighbourhood newspaper.

## 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](http://canadahelps.org/en/charities/skeleton-park-arts-festival) to get started.



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## WHAT'S INSIDE

### Neighbourhood in Transition

Kingston's "Food Framework": Grab bag or good news?  
BY ALAN GUMMO ..... 4

Silence of the Span: An elegy for a singing bridge  
BY DOUG STEWART ..... 6

Taken for a Ride: *Wolfe Islander IV's* ongoing woes  
BY ANNE THÉRIAULT ..... 7

Two Proposed Developments Cause Controversy:  
The opposition to slated mixed-use development of the tannery lands  
BY VICKI SCHMOLKA ..... 8

What's the Plan?: Development of 391 Barrie Street vs. heritage policies  
BY JEANNE RYAN ..... 10

The Case for Roof Gardens  
BY GERRY SHOALTS ..... 11

### This Be The Verse

Ways of tending a community garden  
BY ALANNA VEITCH ..... 12

### Something to Chew On

30 Years of Sunday Supper Club: A story of love, tenacity, and bread  
BY SKOT CALDWELL ..... 13

CONVERSATION: Knifey Spooney Digs Into Plant-Based Eating  
BY ANNE THÉRIAULT ..... 14

Bites of Cinema: Food on film  
BY NAZ ..... 15

Rethink Your Zombie Apocalypse Plans: Support local farmers  
BY MARA SHAW ..... 16

Ella's Cuisine serves up a taste of Nigeria in Kingston  
BY TIANNA EDWARDS ..... 18

Neighbourhood recipes via local chefs  
BY EM HARMSSEN ..... 19

PHOTOGRAPHY: Food facades  
BY JAY BRIDGES ..... 20

Local Runner Shares Nutrition Secrets Behind International Personal Best  
BY KATIE FIZZELL ..... 22

Volunteers Are the Secret Sauce at St. Vincent de Paul  
BY JAMIE SWIFT ..... 23

Our Favourite Snacks: Poems and pictures of our most coveted treats  
BY LCVI'S CREATIVE ARTS STUDENT CONTRIBUTORS ..... 24

The Secret Life of Food Forests  
BY HILBERT BUIST ..... 26

A Beginner's Guide to Foraging  
BY CAITLIN NEWEY ..... 27

TANTE TALIA: How to Hostess a Diverting Dinner Party on a Strict Budget  
BY TALIA ACKER ..... 28

### Fun & Games

What's On The Menu?: A crossword puzzle  
BY HALEY SARFELD WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY JILL GLATT ..... 29

### Past, Present, Future

Meeting My Father Again for the First Time: A daughter's memoir  
BY JULIE SALVERSON ..... 30

The Road to Greater Festival Waste Diversion in Kingston  
BY GABRIELLE DEE ..... 32

# Kingston's “Food Framework”

Grab bag or good news?

STORY BY **ALAN GUMMO** ILLUSTRATION BY **ABBY NOWAKOWSKI**



## There's an old political maxim: “A chicken in every pot.”

It's often attributed to King Henry IV of France: “I want there to be no peasant in my realm so poor that he will not have a chicken in his pot every Sunday.”

The City of Kingston now says it wants to put a chicken in every pot. Does it really?

## What is a Food Framework?

The City followed up its January declaration of a food insecurity emergency with the announcement of a municipal food framework in May.

The two words, food framework, don't pair easily. So let's see if we can figure things out with the help of a dictionary.

A framework is generally thought of as some kind of structure on which things can be hooked. My Oxford agrees.

Food is generally thought of as stuff that people eat. Again, my Oxford agrees. And it has related definitions for food banks, food stamps, food chains, and even a food web which is a system of food chains.

But my Oxford doesn't mention a food framework. We're left hanging. As Jamie Swift notes later in this issue, the St. Vincent de Paul Society's free meal program witnessed an astonishing 40 per cent increase in people served between 2017 and 2024. In 2021 its Emergency Food Pantry helped an average of 28 children per month; this year that monthly average jumped to 125 youngsters — an increase of 346 per cent.

## Where did the framework idea come from?

In January 2025, City Council declared a food insecurity emergency. It was not the first municipality to do so. Toronto and Mississauga City Councils had already declared food insecurity emergencies in late 2024. They called for help from upper levels of government to relieve food insecurity in their municipalities. The Kingston declaration asked the Province to increase social assistance rates and funding for school meal programs, and also to establish a guaranteed livable basic income.

As soon as the emergency was declared City staff got right to work. They prepared an 11-page report, with a 53-page appendix, proposing the Food Framework. City Council endorsed it in May.

## What is the City's Food Framework?

In the City's words, the Framework is a map of programs and actions affecting the food system.

Notwithstanding the disclaimer that the Framework is just a map, it looks very much like a strategy. Think of it as a Food Strategy. Why is that important? Stay with me.

The Framework is based on five Pillars: Food Production; Food Infrastructure and Distribution; Food Access; Food Education and Literacy; Food System Governance. It's a nice technocratic approach, slicing and dicing a complex system.

The Framework proposes three funding streams: meal provision and food access programs (see St. Vincent de Paul, above), small capital and infrastructure enhancement, and finally innovative projects and pilot initiatives. Food business start-up grants. Only the first stream involves spending on food. The report does not request any additional funding in spite of the declared emergency.

The Framework gets its legitimacy from City Council's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan. There is no reference to the provincial legislation that empowers municipalities. Hence there is no discussion of the City's actual authority to act in response to the emergency.

Instead, the Framework defaults to strategic partnerships to get things done. It uses non-action verbs to describe the City's role: explore, facilitate, sup-

port, monitor, and evaluate. None of these suggest an active response to a clear emergency.

Who knows where the strategy might have gone had it been based on the City's actual authority.

## Any take-aways from the Framework?

The Framework brings forward ten food-related priorities from City Council's Strategic Plan. Only one of these mentions food insecurity, the alarming fact that too many people hereabouts just can't afford decent diets. The Plan was prepared several years before the emergency was declared, but surely an emergency would top the priority list.

Let's look at the Framework from that point of view.

The Framework is deeply rooted in neoliberal orthodoxy. That means blind faith in the free market to solve such problems. So it never mentions the impacts of inadequate income and government austerity.

- It relies on community-based effort. This model counts on food banks and free kitchens — a system under severe stress.
- It relies on things that are already happening. For example, it recommends continuing the backyard hen permit program. This might put chickens in pots (or eggs in pans), but only if you have a backyard.
- It deflects blame down to the individual. For example: people don't get nutritious food on their tables because they just don't know how to cook, so let's give them training kitchens! This assumes they can afford both food and a kitchen to cook it in.

The Framework does not deal with food as a basic need. Or food security as a right. It's all about food as a market commodity.

As an alternative to a rights-based approach, the Framework presents a very curious Persona Map (sic) of people at risk. They include a single parent, a post-secondary student, and a person with a disability. The Persona Map seems to suggest that these are the City's "most vulnerable" residents. This hides the true scope of food insecurity.

In any case, a grab bag of measures as diverse as business start-up grants awarded by KEDCO, promoting culinary tourism, support for the Green Bin program, reviewing ethnic grocery store locations, promoting private commercial kitchens, and food literacy training (sic) is simply an unfiltered, blue-sky to-do list. It lacks any sense of urgency, importance, priority, or effectiveness.

## Should be good news, eh? Why isn't it?

The Framework is not a serious look at food insecurity in Kingston. In the end it loses track of the emergency altogether, heavy on non-action and light on direct action.

This approach suggests helter-skelter effort. According to the City, the purposes of the Framework are to support measures combating food insecurity, assist tourism and economic development opportunities, and minimize environmental impacts through food waste reduction. Can the latter two have any impact on the declared emergency?

In addition, the strategy will under-perform because it is based on City staff rooting out money to make it work. They'll be kept busy creating public-private partnerships and selling naming rights. The need to scrounge for money will delay effective action across the strategy.

Follow the money. The strategy proposes \$200,000 as a budget after-thought and another \$100,000 to be small-changed from parking fines. Think about it. The total City budget for 2025 is \$507.1 million. Spending on the Food Framework amounts to 0.0006 per cent of that. By comparison, KEDCO and Tourism Kingston are given \$1.6 million each ... combined spending that's more than 10 times the spending on the food strategy. The priorities are clear.

## Where are the chickens?

Some Council members seem genuinely concerned about food insecurity. Conversely, shame on those who are not. Special nods to Councillors Tozzo and Ridge for putting the emergency on the agenda, and for connecting the dots to related programs and insufficient income.

We already know that food banks and free kitchens aren't the answer.

Meanwhile, austerity continues as if nothing's happening.

There's a popular trope to the effect that you can't solve a problem by throwing money at it. This is false.

A strategy has to be resourced properly to work properly. It's that simple. The Food Framework's miserly budget will ensure that it will have little to no measurable effect. It certainly won't have any effect on the emergency since it relies on partnerships with organizations that have their own budget challenges. More money is needed all round. And quickly.

## Putting more chickens into more pots

Let's go back to our original word search. A food framework is a concept that is not understandable at an intuitive level.

The City's Framework looks like an attempt at a strategy, but the City says it's only a first step. If so, then it's a baby step. And like every baby step, it won't be long before we see a predictable, ass-over-teakettle result.

In the world of strategic thinking, if the language isn't clear, the strategy will fail. In the world of city management, if a strategy is not grounded in local reality, it will fail.

Such is the Food Framework. It's a strategy that's been designed to fail. It gives the appearance of commitment and obscures the reality of inaction. It's certainly not designed to relieve the food emergency.

What's needed is a well-funded strategy with clear focus and a clear destination.

What if we had a municipal government inspired by mutual aid projects instead of public/private partnerships?

A municipal government that embraced a social justice strategy linking food to income and housing would be even better. That would put more chickens into more pots.

Meanwhile, at our current City Council there is a need for:

- rigorous challenge of grant requests for 2025 to ensure that funds are directed to food insecurity and the emergency and not to economic and tourism development,
- redirection in the 2026 budget to boost prioritized funding for the Food Framework generally and food insecurity in particular.

As for the rest of us, working toward the 2026 election: More chickens! More pots!

 The Framework brings forward ten food-related priorities from City Council's Strategic Plan. Only one of these mentions food insecurity, the alarming fact that too many people hereabouts just can't afford decent diets.



**ALAN GUMMO** has retired from senior positions in public administration (municipal sector) with specializations in city and regional planning, and corporate and community strategic planning. He's still preoccupied with making democratic government work better, delivering better decisions in the public interest.

# Silence of the Span

A former operator on the Lasalle Causeway bridge looks to the past and the future

STORY BY **DOUG STEWART**

**On a quiet evening when the daily din of downtown recedes and the atmospheric conditions are just right, far away sounds seem to be amplified. Trains sound like they're a block away. You can hear traffic on the 401. But there's something missing these days, a sound that had been a part of this city's soundtrack for over 100 years. I speak of the singing bridge, which, up until last summer, was part of the Lasalle Causeway.**

The bascule bridge — that is, a bridge that lifts using a massive counterweight — opened in 1917 and was originally accompanied by two other metal spans on each side. The deck grating on each bridge made a distinct hum when in contact with car tires. Sadly, that hum has been silenced after a bungled retrofit project destroyed the remaining lift bridge. I do not blame any individual; this fiasco was truly a team effort, and I had a front row seat. I worked as a bridge operator on the causeway for a year before it was destroyed, but as a Kingstonian born and bred, I have lived with it all of my life. Here is what I believe happened.

Public Services Procurement Canada (PSPC) is a sprawling government agency in charge of all government real estate, as well as purchasing everything from fighter aircraft and coastguard vessels to office furniture and kitchen sinks for federal buildings. They own the causeway and decided they could get a few more decades of service out of it with a little facelift.

Player number two was an engineering firm called Parsons. A tender was put out for a contractor and Landform Civil Infrastructure (LCI) stepped up to the plate. Other players were subcontractors like welders, electricians, concrete specialists, metal workers, scaffold installers, traffic control, security. All in all, there were a lot of players.

The lift bridge did need some work, as the deck was well-worn, and I cannot help thinking that other components were experiencing fatigue. But this was scheduled maintenance, not an emergency repair. So why did a crucial part of the bridge buckle when supports were removed on March 30, 2024?

I am not an engineer, so this is just my opinion. I believe that fatigued components such as rivets and lattice bracing were removed too quickly without replacements, causing a main support strut to buckle under the pressure of the newly refurbished counterweight. Plus, the strut that bent had an iron stairway leading up to the motor room welded to it. It was removed for the duration of the repairs, surely compromising the integrity of the strut. I liken the whole failure to a home renovator removing a load-bearing wall. Nothing good can come from that.



LaSalle Causeway bridge **IMAGE CREDIT:** Sugarman Design

**I hope that you take a moment on some quiet evening to stop and tune into the music of the city... One thing you'll never hear again is the causeway's sweet bridge song; all that's left is the sad sound of silence.**

My colleagues and I were hoping that the bridge could be fixed, right up until a crew with 'Demolition' written on their day-glow jackets showed up. That's how we, the caretakers of this piece of Kingston's history, found out our beloved bridge was to be demolished. In the coming weeks we witnessed its dramatic destruction. It was soul-destroying.

I said earlier that I do not blame any individual player for this mess, but I must admit that PSPC could have done a better job at communicating with their employees, the people and businesses of Kingston, and all the many others who have been affected by this disastrous event.

Well over 20,000 vehicles cross the causeway daily. The lift bridge was a vital link connecting Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River to the inner harbour and the Rideau Canal. While car traffic was detoured to the Waaban bridge after the bridge was damaged, Kingston's tour boats were trapped in the inner harbour for the first months of their operating season. The communities along the Rideau Canal depend on large boat traffic that still cannot easily access navigational waters with the temporary bridge that's been put in place, which only opens once a week. Smaller boats can use the fixed bridge, but any craft with a clearance of more than fifteen feet have to wait until Sunday to get through.

What happens next? Your guess is as good as mine. The bascule has to be replaced with either another lift bridge or a swing bridge like the one at Kingston Mills. When will that happen? As usual, at the time of this writing, PSPC is not saying much.

It will take time and I'm optimistic that we will have a fully functional causeway in my lifetime, though there are plans afoot to renovate the east side fixed bridge, which will cause further delays. I hope everything goes smoothly. I also hope that you take a moment on some quiet evening to stop and tune into the music of the city. A toot from the Wolfe Island ferry, a murder of crows bickering at each other, an outdoor concert on Queen's campus. One thing you'll never hear again is the causeway's sweet bridge song; all that's left is the sad sound of silence.



**DOUG STEWART** has lived downtown for over fifty-five years and enjoys being an ambassador for Kingston where and whenever he can.

# Taken for A Ride

For Wolfe Islanders, the long-awaited electric ferry has been reliably unreliable

STORY BY ANNE THÉRIAULT ILLUSTRATION BY BENJAMIN NELSON



**I would describe myself as a ferry enthusiast.** Growing up, a highlight of our annual visits to my grandparents in Nova Scotia was taking the ferry from Halifax to Dartmouth, and then straight back again. (For me, the thrill was in the boat ride, not the destination). So I was happy to have an excuse to board the Wolfe Island ferry this month, off to interview island resident and Wolfe Island Hotel co-owner Tom Carpenter about — what else? — the ferry. Specifically, its ongoing service disruptions.

The difficulties began right away. Carpenter had suggested that I take either the 9:00am or 10:00am boat — neither of which appeared on the schedule posted online by the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO). I sent him a note saying I'd be on the 9:40am from Kingston.

"We can start right there," Carpenter wrote back. "One of the challenges we're having right now is that the MTO is still advertising the wrong schedule. There will be a ferry leaving Kingston each hour on the hour."

Islanders will tell you that the ferry has never been entirely predictable; the fact that it could be delayed, re-routed from Marysville to Dawson Point (the winter dock, colloquially), or unexpectedly go out of service, is just part of life as they know it. Still, ferry service was more or less reliable until the Province introduced the *Wolfe Islander IV*, an electric ferry with a larger capacity than its diesel-powered predecessor, the *Wolfe Islander III*. This new boat was supposed to improve life for islanders. Instead, it's been a constant source of exasperation.

The *Wolfe Islander IV* has been plagued by problems since before it even launched. The Province had initially announced that the ferry would enter service in 2021, only to then push that date back by a year. But by the end of 2022, infrastructure needed to enable year-round service to Marysville still wasn't complete. Finally, the new boat began full-time service in August 2024 — only to go out of service less than three months later after veering off-course, running aground, and tearing a gash in its hull.

**The new ferry, which the Province had touted as an example of its commitment to fighting climate change, had been running on its backup diesel engines all along.**

After months of repairs in a Hamilton dry dock, during which time the *Wolfe Islander III* carried passengers between Kingston and Dawson Point, *Wolfe Islander IV* resumed service in late May of this year. Then, in July, there were more disruptions in the form of blown generators. It turned out that the new ferry, which the Province had touted as an example of its commitment to fighting climate change, had been running on its backup diesel engines all along because the charging stations still hadn't been installed. Those engines kept breaking down because they were never intended to be the boat's main power source. At the time of writing, the *Wolfe Islander IV* is out of service until at least Thanksgiving weekend, and the *Wolfe Islander III* is once again running to Dawson Point.

"I no longer [have] emotional valence for the ferry," says Carpenter. "'It's coming! No wait, it's not coming. Now they say it's coming! Oh, now they say it's not coming.' At some point I realized, hey, [nonattachment] is what the Buddhists say you should do anyway. Who knew I'd learn that from an Ontario government ministry."

Part of the problem is that MTO has been tight-lipped about, well, almost everything. Most of the information about why the *Wolfe Islander IV* keeps going out of service has been obtained through freedom of information requests made by CBC. The government's silence has only fostered rumours and hearsay among islanders; a friend of Carpenter's estimates that they've heard 100 different stories about the ferry over the last year, and it can be hard to decipher what might or might not be true.

"It's an embarrassment that this public service is just so incredibly poorly run," says David McDonald, a professor of Global Development Studies at Queen's University (and frequent ferry user) whose research focuses on the negative impact of service privatization. "The communications around what is happening and what's not happening — I've never seen anything like it in thirty years of working on public services."

The Wolfe Island ferry is a lifeline for islanders in many ways; it doesn't just connect them to all the goods and services they need to access on the mainland, it also brings tourists — and their money — to the island during the summer months. Carpenter says that the ferry disruptions have been a disaster for Marysville's restaurants and cafés, which see a huge dip in business when the ferry docks at Dawson's Point.

But even when the new ferry is running as it should, potential visitors to the island might be turned off by the possibility of yet another breakdown. Carpenter tells me that when the *Wolfe Islander IV* suddenly went out of service in July, those waiting to travel back to Kingston — many of whom had boarded the ferry on foot — were told they had to make their own way to Dawson Point, four kilometres away, to be picked up by the *Wolfe Islander III*. Many islanders, including Carpenter's business partner, Hugh Christopher Brown, took multiple trips in their own vehicles to get stranded passengers to the correct dock.

For McDonald, the bigger picture is that the constant disruptions erode people's trust in the ferry as a public institution and feed what he refers to as the privatization agenda.

"And if this were to be privatized, it would be a disaster in terms of affordability, in terms of access, in terms of reliability. We do not want to privatize the Wolfe Island Ferry. What we need to do is make this public operator and public agency more communicative, and more transparent, and more accountable to the people it serves."

ANNE THÉRIAULT is a neighbourhood scribbler with bylines at the Walrus, the London Review of Books, Longreads, and many other outlets.

# Two Proposed Developments Cause Controversy

Site at 630 Gore Road, adjacent to Butternut Creek, clear-cut to “store soil” and one of the areas of proposed development outside the growth boundary.  
**IMAGE CREDIT:** Friends of Butternut Creek

Vicki Schmolka on why residents oppose these developments and what they can do about them

STORY BY **VICKI SCHMOLKA**



“We need to value natural systems when making decisions about new buildings and infrastructure.”



**VICKI SCHMOLKA** was a city councillor from 2006 to 2010. She continues to take an interest in urban planning and its impact on people and nature.

**T**he thirteen-hectare piece of land where the Davis Tannery once stood is the former site of both the aforementioned tannery and a 19th century lead smelter, two industries notorious for the use of dangerous toxins. The land is between the K & P Trail and the Cataraqui River with the landmark Woolen Mill and Belle Park nearby. Now densely treed, the North End area contains significant contamination from the industrial uses that ended over fifty years ago.

## Council voted “no” to controversial development proposal

In 2017, local developer, Jay Patry Enterprises, began the City’s application process for permission to build 1,600 housing units in four buildings of between four and eight storeys. To help with the costs of cleaning up the contaminated property, the city promised a tax holiday of up to \$64 million and lifted the requirement to pay compensation for the trees that were to be cut down.

The massive housing development proposal along the Cataraqui River sparked strong opposition and led to the formation of No Clearcuts Kingston, a climate-focused community group seeking to protect the remaining wooded areas in the City of Kingston.

At the August 4, 2022 Planning Committee meeting, a supportive staff report and pro-development presentations by Downtown Kingston and the Chamber of Commerce were countered by several residents. They spoke in favour of protecting the woods and the wetlands at the Tannery and against the development plan. Planning Committee voted: two councillors in favour of the development and four against.

The development plan met a similar fate at City Council with an eight to five “no” vote.

As No Clearcuts Kingston founder Kathleen O’Hara told the *Whig Standard* at the time, “The tannery fight has brought together citizens from across the city who are seeing a nature-destroying, pro-developer pattern, and they don’t like it. This was their victory, along with the thoughtful councillors who listened to them.”

## The developer appealed

The developer appealed Council’s rejection of his plan to the Ontario Land Tribunal. The hearing took place over five weeks in February and March 2024. Twenty-three witnesses presented evidence. Fourteen were called by the developer, five by the City defending the Council’s “no” vote, and four by No Clearcuts Kingston.

The Tribunal released its decision on July 25, 2025. It approved the development proposal for 1,600 housing units plus commercial and space. *But* it rejected the part of the plan that would cap the Provincially Significant Wetland on the property.

The development plan was to fill the wetland on the site with soil and surround it with a barrier and a clay top. Paragraph 322 of the decision reads “The Tribunal was not convinced by the Appellant’s [the developer’s] evidence regarding its jurisdiction over the “capping” of any portion of the PSW [Provincially Significant Wetland]. The PPS [Provincial Policy Statement] clearly states that “development and site alterations shall not be permitted.”

The City’s subsequent media release quoted the Mayor, who voted in favour of the development in 2022. “I’m excited to see how this project will contribute to the renewal and revitalization of Kingston’s Inner Harbour.”

The lawyer for No Clearcuts Kingston, Rick Lindgren of the Canadian Environmental Law Association, sees the decision differently. “My client remains highly disappointed in the Tribunal’s decision to approve the large-scale development despite environmental concerns. Since the developer proposes to cap and leave most of the existing contaminants on-site, it will be important for local residents to closely monitor the upcoming brownfield remediation process.”

## Looking ahead...

Nothing can be built on the land until the developer prepares a site remediation plan approved by the provincial Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP). Nathan Richard, a consultant with the Patry Group, says that they will be following a Request for Proposal process to find an “environmental consultant” and “environmental contractor” with the necessary expertise to develop the required detailed plan.

Richard says “it’s a tough program” and that “the public can have confidence that MECP won’t let anything past them. They are thorough.”

Obviously concerned with the restrictions in the Tribunal’s decision regarding the wetland, Richard defends the original plan, noting that “capping that area would be to the ultimate benefit of the people of the city” because “potential park space” would have been created.

The costs of remediation have gone up “significantly,” he adds. There is “a monopoly on where you can take the stuff.” The Phase 1 and 2 environmental assessments prepared by Kevin Shipley, an engineer with XCG Environmental Engineers & Scientists, (now retired), estimated that about one-third of the contaminated soil would need to be trucked away with the rest remaining on site and covered with a clay cap, the buildings, and roadways.

The contaminated soil slated for disposal will either have to be trucked to a landfill in Brighton, one hour away, or to Moose Creek, north of Cornwall, two hours away, depending on the contaminants involved.

Aside from getting the Province to approve the site clean-up plan, the developer must work with City staff on several important items, including a final plan for the development which shows the exact location of the buildings, roads, water and sewer pipes, etc. The landscaping plan to re-naturalize the shoreline will require consultations with Cataraqui Conservation, Parks Canada, and Transport Canada.

How will the federal government’s plans to clean up the Inner Harbour mesh with the Tannery clean up? Richard says they will be working with the municipality.

## Residents can still have a say...

According to the City’s website, the final Tannery development plan will go through the usual Planning Committee and Council approval process. Residents will be able to comment on or ask questions about the final plan at the committee stage, with height limits and the number of units now set in the Tribunal’s decision.

Residents can also contact their city councillor about No Clearcuts Kingston’s request to the city to hire a hydrogeologist immediately to assess the flow of the underground water that moves through the Tannery land to determine how this might affect the clean-up.

“Tearing apart this contaminated land without having a hydrogeologist evaluate the underground wa-

→ **The City will not issue a building permit until the remediation work has been completed and a qualified expert confirms that the site now meets environmental standards for a residential development.**

ter systems would be risky and could easily cause irreparable damage to the air, water, wildlife, even humans,” says retired biologist Kerry Hill, a member of the No Clearcuts Kingston board.

## Public information

Provincial government rules may require the developer’s risk assessment pre-submission form to include information about planned communications with the public.

The developer has, for example, the option to have a remediation website, making risk assessment reports and other material available to municipal and other levels of government staff, agencies such as Cataraqui Conservation, and the public. Lindgren says having this public opportunity to understand the proposed clean-up plan would be “a good site remediation process.”

After the remediation is completed and meets environmental standards, a Record of Site Condition with supporting documents is filed with the provincial government and is available to the public for review.

In situations where the government issues a Certificate of Property Use to impose land use restrictions or risk management measures to address potential hazards on a site, the Certificate must be posted on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ero.on.ca). This gives the public a chance to comment.

## Actions

Interested readers could write to:

**Jay Patry, Patry Enterprises Inc.**  
(692 McKay Street, K7M7G2) asking for the technical documents that are being submitted during the risk assessment process.

**The Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks Kingston**  
(District Office Unit 3, 1259 Gardiners Road, K7P 3J6)  
They can ask for notice of the technical documents filed on the Tannery project and request documents of interest. An access to information request could also be used to access the documents.

## Timeline

Richard expects the remediation approval process and remediation work to take a year or two with the complete construction of the development by 2040. He says that Jay Patry is “invested in this project” and wants it to be “something special.” He expects that once it is finished people will say “if we had known that the owner had this vision, we would have thought differently about it.”

## City Council to consider expanding its Urban Boundaries. Critics say it is not necessary

The City is writing a new Official Plan, YG220K. This crucial document sets the policies to guide the City’s planning decisions for 25 years. Grounding the draft Plan’s approach is a projected population increase to 220,00 people by 2051. The YG220K label spins the

city’s airport code with this assumed population explosion.

A Council decision to open the existing urban boundary has far-reaching implications. Development outside the boundary requires new services — water and sewer infrastructure, roads and bridges, garbage collection, libraries and recreational facilities, policing and ambulance services, etc. and has an impact on traffic and transit.

To find out where housing might go, the City asked developers where they are ready to build.

At least four of the proposed developments are on the east side of the Cataraqui River. It’s an undeveloped area of forests and farmland. The proposal has spurred the creation of at least four new community groups — Friends of Butternut Creek, Protect Butternut Creek, Responsible Development Kingston, and Keep HWY 2 for Rural Development.

Jon Lenton lives near one of the possible projects. He’s worried about his well water and being part of “a big urban sprawl.”

“If we’re going to be another Brampton, another Mississauga, please tell me as soon as possible so I can move elsewhere.”

A feeling among residents that decisions have already been made has been amplified by a map in the draft Technical Report on the city’s woodlands, wetlands, shorelines — its natural heritage. The map outlined areas that should be protected in the new Official Plan, leaving the developer-requested areas for the new building projects blanked out.

“It doesn’t give me much confidence that our voice matters,” said Lenton.

West end resident Celeste Booth despairs at Kingston’s overall loss of woodland over the past twenty years. Over 2,200 hectares of woodland have been cut and the City’s urban area now has less than 8 percent forest cover.

“We have to look at the economic benefits that nature provides. It’s so short-sighted not to do that,” she said, asking that the new Official Plan be guided by a natural asset management plan for all Kingston, both rural and urban.

“We need to value natural systems when making decisions about new buildings and infrastructure.”

Retired municipal planner Rob Fonger questions the “overly optimistic” population growth projections being used to justify opening the urban boundary.

“So much has changed in Canada and this region since the population projections were calculated in 2023. And looking at the already approved housing projects in Kingston, there are enough new units in the pipeline to meet the City’s 2019 Growth Study predictions of 197,000 people.”

Consideration of proposed development applications outside the urban boundary is on the City’s Planning Committee agenda, October 1 and 2 at 6 pm, on Zoom and at City Hall. The City is accepting comments on the draft Official Plan until November 28.

**NOTE:** The map that created an uproar is on page 100 of the draft Technical Report Natural Heritage Systems Mapping.



# What's the Plan?

A three-storey apartment building is proposed for the former Community Midwives of Kingston site. Will new heritage area policies carry any weight?

STORY BY JEANNE RYAN



Proposed York Street Elevation showing building height (from May 13 application) IMAGE CREDIT: E.R. Trought Design

**T**he North King's Town Secondary Plan (NKTSP) had a long-awaited birth: it's been nine years since the City's project began, and twelve since the idea came into existence. But after all the labour — meetings, and outreach, and reports culminating in a unanimous City Council vote on March 18, 2025 — the plan and its updates to land use went largely unmentioned at the Kingston Planning Committee's Community Meeting on the potential development of 391 Barrie Street.

The July 17 meeting regarded local landlord and developer David Kay's proposal for a twenty-two bedroom apartment building at the former Community Midwives of Kingston site. This would add two storeys plus a rooftop patio to the existing structure wedged between Barrie, York, and Ordinance Streets.

The City Hall chamber was filled with neighbours, councillors, and city planners, as well as Kay and his planner, Bart Ryan of Arcadis. The conversation lasted for hours, but only one person mentioned the NKTSP's relevance: "The building has been recently added to the St. Lawrence Ward Heritage Character Area," said Ryan during his kickoff slideshow.

Officially, the NKTSP guides community-centred development. Former industrial spots are rezoned for residential "intensification," and historic neighbourhoods are added to the St. Lawrence Ward Heritage Character Area. Kingston's Official Plan — the master plan for land use — is updated with policies to maintain "heritage integrity": building reuse should support the area's heritage character, and proposals such as Kay's should consult the NKTSP's Cultural Heritage Study for "characteristics and context."

391 Barrie Street, the Cultural Heritage Study states, is "a unique triangular site at the western gateway" to the McBurney Park neighbourhood. Its criss-cross of angled intersections makes it "a local landmark" meriting "special consideration for conservation and any proposed redevelopment." Development should follow zoning and do streetscape compatibility studies using the city's residential design guidelines heritage sections, which state additions should be no more than one-third the building volume. The Official Plan states such studies can be required.

For the project, Kay needs a zoning change plus exemptions. In July, speakers voiced a litany of concerns: garbage, parking, the top-loaded base's structural safety, loud rooftop gatherings, loss of privacy and light, and problems for future tenants, such as overcrowding and unequal access to the rooftop common area. It was simply too much housing for the small island.

## KINGSTON HOUSING BY THE NUMBERS

**In March, the City reported a turnaround in rental vacancy, thousands of new units planned, and uncertain demand:**

→ From 2023 to 2024, rental vacancy rate flipped from one of the lowest in Ontario, at 0.8%, to higher than average, at 2.9%. The target is 3%.

→ As of December, Kingston had almost 9,500 housing units in the pipeline, with about 4,800 more potentially on deck, including the 1,600-unit Tannery project.

→ International student numbers are down, and due to US tariffs, "Kingston might experience outmigration."

Neighbour Daryn Lehoux noted even with the zoning change, nine apartments is more than four times greater than allowed on the undersized lot, far exceeding any other apartment building nearby: "This is exploitative housing. Let's not fundamentally change the character of the neighbourhood."

Susanne Cliff-Jungling said the build would be referenced for future developments, an erosive precedent.

In response, Kay and Ryan underscored the structure's reuse, with Kay reiterating he would look into concerns. Councillors weighed in, and city planners said technical review comments would be forthcoming.

There was no mention by the City of the NKTSP's new policies.

In an August interview, King's Town councillor Greg Ridge observed most attention was given to the NKTSP's policies for housing on Montreal Street. But the heritage area, he noted, is important for the city's diverse neighbourhoods: "There's a rich history, too, of working-class people."

Anne Lougheed echoed Ridge. A longtime McBurney Park resident, Lougheed was part of the NKTSP's neighbourhood Working Group. Meeting notes from 2018 state heritage is "the modest as well as the grand." She pointed to 391 Barrie Street: "Part of what makes the building a landmark are the proportions. It's got this really funky shape. One storey. Flat roof. Super-tall chimney."

Kay insists his priority is adding housing. The planning review comments issued in late July did not reference the St. Lawrence Ward Heritage Area, the location's context as a neighbourhood landmark, or the recommendations to follow zoning and do a streetscape compatibility study. Planners commended the building's reuse but instructed Kay to reduce units and bedrooms and address design issues, including submitting an engineering analysis showing the project's structural feasibility.

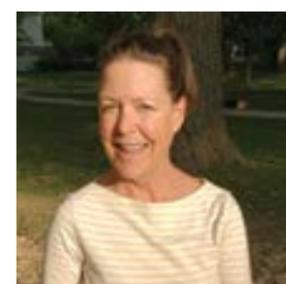
His 391 Barrie Street proposal, Kay said, like the apartments he plans for Montreal Street, follows the City's housing push, in line with Doug Ford's flurry of build-it-fast legislation: "If it weren't me, it would be somebody else."

Does zoning matter? "Great question," Ridge said, noting ever-changing provincial rules, with appeals overwhelmingly favouring developers. Review deadlines propel applications through the pipeline. Community participation is increasingly constrained, with last year's *Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act* blocking the public, including immediate neighbours, from appealing zoning changes.

The public is also blocked from the City's "pre-application" communications with developers. City planning states these are confidential because they are not mandated by the Province, falling outside of public notification rules. Kay's filings with the City reference a December 2024 pre-application report that listed review requirements for his initial plan for a three-storey, six-unit, twenty-bedroom building. In May, Kay officially submitted his formal application for the current project.

When I spoke to Kay at the end of August, he sounded confident. "We're close," he said of his resubmission, still aiming for three storeys and nine apartments but fewer bedrooms. He thought he could be scheduled for November's Planning Committee meeting, when staff would recommend whether to send the proposal to City Council for approval.

Meanwhile, across from where apartments may rise, Jill Bryant emphasized the impact on homeowners "if zoning bylaws are rendered meaningless." And Lougheed wondered about all the effort put into the NKTSP: "It would be great if it had some clout."



**JEANNE RYAN** is a writer, editor, and English teacher living in the McBurney Park neighbourhood.

# The Case for Roof Gardens

Roof gardens can make a significant contribution to our quality of life, particularly as density increases in our neighbourhood and city

STORY BY **GERRY SHOALTS**

**If you live somewhere without access to green space on the ground, have you ever wondered how to grow food, flowers, or shade-providing trees?**

With the additional density in the Skeleton Park Neighbourhood and the city, there is less available ground. But apartments, mixed-use commercial buildings and denser types of housing typically have flat roofs. These are all potential roof garden sites.

## Types and Benefits of Roof Gardens

There are two general types of roof gardens.

**Intensive roofs or green roofs** use shallow light-weight growing mediums and drought-tolerant plants like sedums and mosses.

**Extensive roofs or rooftop gardens** have deeper planting beds or raised planters allowing cultivation of vegetables, flowers, shrubs, and even trees.

While both types have many benefits, this article is primarily focussed on extensive roof gardens. Here is a summary of some of these benefits.

**Reduced urban heat island effect and improved energy efficiency:** Cities are hotter than the surrounding countryside due to heat absorbed and radiated back by solid surfaces. Roof gardens shade the roof membranes, reducing energy consumption.

**Improved storm water management:** Hard surfaces do not absorb storm water. This increases the amount and intensity of stormwater runoff, which can cause flooding and reduced water quality in adjacent waterways. This effect is only increasing with climate change. Roof gardens absorb and use rainwater and reduce storm water runoff.

**Extend the life of the roof membrane:** a shaded roof membrane, shielded from UV radiation, experiences reduced extreme swings in temperatures. Roof gardens can extend the life of the roofing membranes by two or even three times.

**Improved air quality:** Plants absorb many pollutants and, through photosynthesis, they convert carbon dioxide to life-giving oxygen.

**Improved quality of life:** Gardening can improve moods, provide a sense of accomplishment, and alleviate some of the stresses associated with living in dense urban environments. Working on a shared roof garden project can reduce isolation and help build a sense of community.



Roof garden project in Calgary by MODA Architects  
IMAGE CREDIT: Ema Peter

**“ ROOF GARDENS CAN MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO OUR QUALITY OF LIFE, PARTICULARLY AS DENSITY INCREASE IN OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD AND CITY.”**

**Additional physical activity:** Gardening takes physical effort, which is beneficial for people of all physical abilities and ages.

**Improve biodiversity:** Roof gardens create a healthy environment for bees, butterflies, birds, and other wildlife, contributing to increased biodiversity.

**Food security:** With the rising cost of food, particularly healthy, organic food, access to a roof garden can help increase food security.

## Challenges of Building Roof Gardens

In spite of the benefits, roof gardens are rare. There are challenges which need to be understood in order to establish successful roof gardens.

**Climate conditions:** Roof gardens are located at higher elevations with increased amounts of wind, sunlight, heat, and evaporation.

**Irrigation:** While drought-tolerant plants can be selected, for the reasons listed above, a convenient source of water will be needed.

**Pests and disease:** While these are issues in all gardens, management of these is more challenging on a typical roof garden.

**Safe access:** Convenient access, ideally universal access, is needed for gardening and for moving garden supplies and produce up to and down. If the access is not convenient, the roof garden will inevitably have less use and maintenance

**Structure:** Roof gardens increase the weight of a roof. While this can be accommodated with light weight soil types, water management, and careful drainage, this has to be investigated, particularly on existing buildings.

**Roof membrane maintenance:** While roof gardens can extend the life of the roof membrane, you do need to consider that eventually the membrane will need repair, maintenance, and, at some point, replacement. If root barriers or raised planter are not used then roots can damage roof membranes.

**Additional costs:** Roof gardens cost more because of possible structural and membrane upgrades, water access, stairs, and guardrails, etc. While a case can be made that these additional costs are a good investment, it is important to be realistic in your assessment of these costs, particularly on existing buildings, when you make a case for roof gardens.

## Starting a Roof Garden

There are many available resources that outline how to start a roof garden, as well as the plant material and soil mixes that are suited to the ecozone where you live. On existing buildings, a roof garden works best on a flat roof or terrace. Even a small roof garden can still provide most of the benefits listed above. In new construction, like the Calgary example shown above, the design challenges are more straightforward to plan for. The additional costs are modest compared to overall project costs and can usually be justified based on the many benefits of roof gardens. Roof gardens can make a significant contribution to our quality of life, particularly with the increasing density of our neighbourhood and the city. There are many examples of successful roof gardens — now is a great time to look into whether one could be right for your home.

**GERRY SHOALTS** is an architect who has lived in the same townhouse near Skeleton Park since 1988. In 2011 he and his partner, Linda Williams, installed a green roof, which continues to thrive, on their back porch.

## Ways of tending a community garden

I can see the community garden  
     from the window of my apartment  
 I watch tenders care for their seedlings  
 Like mother hens tend their young

The garden is much smaller  
     than I'd imagined  
 How do we feed a(n entire) community  
     with a few feet of fertilized soil  
 This garden must give a lot

I reflect on community as a public, where life is  
 to flourish; a place of gathering, of connecting  
 A feeling of shared ownership  
     and responsibility  
 But there isn't always room in the garden

We had raspberry bushes when I was younger  
 Saskatoon bushes, too; established long before  
     we moved onto the farm  
 I don't see any berry bushes here

A block over, a neighbour I haven't met  
     has rows of vine tomatoes  
 I wonder whether any go missing,  
 whether anyone braves the chicken wire  
 There must be a hen there

About a year ago, I witnessed a man  
     break a branch for giving  
     too much shade to his plot  
 I wonder whether the seedlings did better  
 The tree has never been the same

This year, a seedling found its way  
     into a crack in the driveway  
 It buried itself just enough to sprout  
 A vine, green with promises

I wait for the community market,  
 the gathering of neighbourhood harvests  
 Remember bushes of berries in the backyard  
 Moose would tend to the pruning

Through the window of my apartment, I watch  
 Dream of strawberry rhubarb crumble  
     of iced cream blushing of raspberries  
 We foraged in the backyard



**ALANNA VEITCH** is a poet and emerging interdisciplinary scholar currently based in Katarokwi-Kingston, where she is completing her PhD at Queen's University. Through poetry, she grapples with disability, female embodiment, crisis, and hope. Where language fails, she looks to emotion, feeling along its edges.

*This Be The Verse* is *The Skeleton Press's* poetry page. Each issue features an original poem by a local poet, selected (or occasionally written) by Kingston/Katarokwi Poet Laureate **SADIQA DE MEIJER**. Submissions are open for the next issue. Please send up to three poems for consideration to [ygkpoetlaureate@gmail.com](mailto:ygkpoetlaureate@gmail.com).

# 30 Years of Sunday Supper Club

A story of love, tenacity, and bread

STORY BY SKOT CALDWELL



It was definitely always food and more. I knew that my belly would be filled with good food, [and] my heart would be filled with good company.

**M**uch is said about how food traditions can be the fibres that connect families. For more than thirty years, a group of neighbours have met every week for Sunday Supper Club, building a family food culture of their own in the process. I spent time with founders Kate Thomas, Annie Wilcox, and Derek Rogers as they reminisced about the early days of the club, finished each other's sentences — as old friends do — and gently argued over whose versions of the stories were true.

Although no one can remember precisely how it started, they all agree on why it did. Kate and Annie had first met several years earlier at a 99 York book group. They bonded over their shared vegetarianism — a choice that was much less common in the mid-80s. By 1992, the year the gatherings started, each club member was balancing several jobs as Annie and Derek raised their son and Kate prepared to welcome her daughter. Amidst the busy pace, Kate explained that they “wanted a time where [they] focused on each other, where [they] gathered as a family.” Soon, friends Dale Fainstat, Wayne Westfall, and Shaké Kodjagouzian, along with her two sons, joined. Unified by a lack of extended family close by, the question “What were your childhood family meals like?” was an early topic of conversation. Annie and Derek had each grown up in small families in Wales, while Wayne had grown up in a very large family and valued being around a full table. Shaké had been surrounded by Armenian Lebanese traditions and Kate had regularly found strangers and international students gathered around her childhood table.

Every Sunday for three decades, these friends have arrived at one another's homes with a pot, a bowl, or a dish. “At the beginning,” Kate said, “we were very organized. We'd each pick a country and bring a vegetarian meal from that country.” Checking in

The Sunday Supper Club, circa 2002 **BACK, LEFT TO RIGHT:** Shaké Kodjagousian, Annie Wilcox, Derek Rogers, Dale Driver, Dale Fainstat, Susan Walker **FRONT, LEFT TO RIGHT:** Taylyn Thomas, Wayne Westfall, Kate Thomas

about the meal plan throughout the week became a way of seeing how everyone was doing. Later, there would be check-ins to ensure a balance of proteins, salad, and even soup — a dish that has always featured heavily. Derek contributed Welsh cakes and soon began experimenting with other breads. He and Wayne even had periods of beer-making, as well as hot pepper growing. Shaké began contacting her sister, piecing together recipes remembered from their mother. “Over the years, she's introduced us to so many different meals,” Annie told me. Shaké has asked, “Aren't you getting tired of my hummus?” Nobody is — not even close. Every so often, instead of supper the group would gather around a traditional Lebanese brunch featuring ful, a hearty dish of fava beans, lemon juice, crushed garlic and cumin. Eventually, the club became a true potluck: anything vegetarian, or now, vegan.

“It was definitely always food and more,” Kate said to Annie's agreeing nod. “I knew that my belly would be filled with good food, [and] my heart would be filled with good company. I would have held hands with my family here, and that set me [up] for the week [ahead].”

But it wasn't all reverence. “[F]ood and more,” included fun. Seasonal celebrations gave shape to the group's culture — they observe each solstice or equinox along with birthdays and other events. Everyone wanted to talk about “The Snow Bet” in which, Derek explained, “we guess when the first inch of snow is going to fall on our deck.” In addition to a trophy, the winner gets to choose a meal theme. Through laughs, the group told me about the year every dish included garlic, another where everything had chocolate, and others where everything was in muffin form, round, or rolled up. Throughout the years, the members of

the Supper Club have held space for their traditions, for each other, and for all the happy and difficult moments of life.

Wayne, who became quadriplegic in 1979, would contribute to the meals by dictating recipes to a personal support worker. The Sunday Supper Club was only one way the group wove Wayne into their lives, sharing meals with him individually throughout the rest of the week, too. When we spoke, the group highlighted how deeply Wayne valued these mealtimes, how he made a kind of ritual out of looking each person in the eyes at every gathering, reinforcing and celebrating the connection they were sharing through food. “I tried to do that too,” Kate said. “I try, you know, to really be conscious. I think all of us do.”

As Wayne declined physically, and it became harder for him to go out, the Sunday Supper Club moved to his home. He would have his own table spread across his chair and eventually, his bed. In his last days, he urged the group to “keep this going”. They have.

When I re-read my notes, I wished I'd asked them more about the act of “keeping it going.” I wondered about sustaining that commitment. An email from Kate answered my question. “We have shared birth, death, stroke, broken limbs, broken family structure and held each other in the light,” she wrote. “We've shared gratitude, grief, joy, and fears together. It takes tenacity to make it a priority; it takes love to make it happen for over 30 years. And bread.”

**SKOT CALDWELL** has been enjoying meals in and around Skeleton Park for more than thirty years.

# Knifey Spooney Digs Into Plant-Based Eating

Christina Avery wants you to eat your veggies (and love them, too)

INTERVIEW BY ANNE THÉRIAULT

This interview has been edited for content and clarity.



**Many people are curious about eating a more vegetable-forward diet, but might feel intimidated by it, especially if they're used to a meat-and-potatoes approach to meals.**

*Skeleton Press* co-editor Anne Thériault recently sat down with Christina Avery of Knifey Spooney — the neighbourhood duo known for dishing up incredible plant-based foods at festivals, catered events, and through intimate cooking classes — to get the low-down on eating less meat.

**AT:** How would you describe what a plant-based diet is?

**CA:** So, like the name suggests, a plant-based diet is a diet made up mostly of plants, or that focuses on plant foods first. The word vegan provokes a real knee-jerk reaction in a lot of people. I was shocked — but not shocked — to learn about a recent poll where a really high number of people didn't even want to try a dish if it was vegan. I found that very disheartening, because vegan food is delicious, and I can't believe you would just decide to not even try it.

Also, when you say plant-based instead of vegan, you can take some of the rules [of veganism] away and just do your best. That definitely doesn't work for everybody; some people believe that strictness is the only way to go. But I really do feel like a million of us doing this imperfectly is a lot better than a hundred people doing it religiously.

**AT:** How can readers who are interested in eating more plant-based foods get started?

**CA:** Just go to the library and take out a cookbook that looks really interesting — that's how I started. I picked a recipe that looked really tasty, and, yeah, it had a bunch of ingredients I'd never heard of, and I had to go on a bit of a journey to be able to make this recipe, but it was an exciting journey to learn more about food and new cooking techniques.

**AT:** I think the most well-known benefits of plant-based eating are related to health or animal rights. What are some of the other benefits?

**CA:** For me, the main reason was just the sheer environmental impact that meat has — 80 percent of the global soy crop goes to feed animals, so it's like there's this unnecessary middle step. Instead of sending all that soy to fatten up a cow, that we then have to transport and do all these things to before we can eat it, we can literally just eat the soy and reduce this whole cycle.

I picked a recipe that looked really tasty, and, yeah, it had a bunch of ingredients I'd never heard of, and I had to go on a bit of a journey to be able to make this recipe, but it was an exciting journey to learn more about food and new cooking techniques.

So that made sense to me, as far as it being a smaller impact. I did try for a while to exclusively eat local, ethical meat. That was my first stop. But it turns out I'm not a millionaire, so I just frankly couldn't afford it. [When it comes to meat] I still think it's important to invest in the best quality that you can, as local as you can. If it's expensive, eat less of it. Use it more as a seasoning versus a main dish.

**AT:** Speaking of soy, what advice do you have for readers who are unsure of what to do with tofu? A lot of people seem worried that it will make a dish bland.

**CA:** You have to think about tofu like flour. So you can't make delicious bread, in my humble opinion, without some kind of flour. But nobody wants to taste flour on its own — there's some sort of process that has to go into it. Tofu is amazing because the process can be really easy, but you still have to do something with it, or it just tastes like nothing.

I could wax poetically about tofu for a hundred years. It is so versatile, and it is so cheap, and it is so high in protein. You can get it everywhere, and you can make your whole family's protein portion for, like, \$2.99.

Also, you can blend soft tofu into many things for extra protein. I use it for a chocolate mousse pudding that is the most decadent, delicious thing ever.

**AT:** Can we talk a bit about how plant-based meat substitutes have improved so dramatically in the past decade or so?

**CA:** Absolutely! There's been a really great influx of plant-based foods recently. In fact, I find Impossible Burgers so realistic that I don't really like them because I've lost the taste for meat. But I don't think that they make those mostly for vegetarians — they're great for people who are transitioning to a more plant-rich diet, and still really crave the taste and texture of familiar foods. They are on practically every menu now. At this point, though, lots of vegans have had enough Beyond Burgers for a lifetime and would like to see chefs branch out into something a bit more creative.

**AT:** My last question is, what is your favorite meal to prepare right now?

**CA:** Lately we've been cooking a lot with lion's mane [mushroom]. All the little tendrils on it absorb flavor. We've been making a sort of steak with it, just with Montreal steak spice and oil and then grilling it, and it is so good. We've been having it with new potatoes and corn right now, and it is just absolutely perfect.

Learn more about Christina's work at [knifeyspooney.com](http://knifeyspooney.com) or on Instagram at [@knifeyspooneykingston](https://www.instagram.com/knifeyspooneykingston)

**ANNE THÉRIAULT** is a neighbourhood scribbler with bylines at the Walrus, the London Review of Books, Longreads, and many other outlets.



# Bites of Cinema

A local cinephile dishes up a selection of under-the-radar movies centred on food and community

STORY BY **NAZ**

PICTURED: Scene from *Big Night*

**From the chocolate cake rebelliously scarfed down by *Matilda*'s Bruce Bogtrotter, to the iconic ratatouille which transports Anton Ego to his boyhood in the French countryside, film is an appetizing medium through which to convey the power of a meal to bring us together. In this article, I serve to you, dear reader, a menu containing a shortlist of my favourite films about food for you to enjoy. Let's dig in.**

## FOOD AS GRATITUDE **Babette's Feast (1987)**

Based on a short story by Karen Blixen and set in nineteenth-century Denmark, *Babette's Feast* is the tale of protagonist Babette Hersant taking refuge in the home of two elderly sisters. The sisters' sleepy, religious village is not altogether welcoming toward Babette, who is fleeing the war-torn and sin-addled streets of Paris. Regardless, she establishes herself as a good housekeeper and cook in exchange for room and board, as the sisters are too poor to pay her otherwise. At the end of fourteen long years, Babette wins a lottery of 10,000 francs and decides to splurge on ingredients to make a huge celebratory meal, in gratitude toward the sisters. They invite other members of their congregation to this authentic French dinner, the likes of which the village has never seen. The decadence of the meal causes a stir amongst the guests; they worry they have committed the sin of gluttony and fear punishment. During dinner, they discover Babette has been hiding a secret for years. The film culminates in a paean to the transformative powers of a sumptuous meal. A word of caution to my fellow animal-lovers; Babette serves a particularly upsetting, but peculiarly French, quail dish.

**NAZ** is a member of The Cinema Society of Kingston, typewriter enthusiast, cloud gazer, and aspiring neighbourhood witch.

## FOOD AS FAMILY **Big Night (1996)**

No list about film and food is complete without a mention of Stanley Tucci, who directs and co-stars in this delectable morsel of a film with Tony Shaloub. The two play Italian brothers who immigrate to America and attempt to run an Italian restaurant, called Paradise. Tucci's character, Secondo, is a businessman who worries about the restaurant staying afloat. Meanwhile, Shaloub's Primo is a culinary artist who resists sacrificing the dignity of Italian cuisine to cater to American tastes and detests Pascal's, a popular bar across the street. If you enjoy grumpy old men with strong opinions, you will get a kick out of this film. Pascal is fond of the brothers and decides to help bring traction to their restaurant by inviting his friend Louis Prima, the popular Italian-American singer, to dine at Paradise. The film then centres around the brothers getting ready for this 'big night', planning a multi-course meal and inviting everyone they know, from the florist Primo has a crush on to a car salesman Secondo meets earlier that day. Like *Babette's Feast*, the film culminates in an extraordinary meal, an Italian banquet that alters the guests' perception of what food can do and be. I maintain this film has one of the most touching final scenes in cinema history.

P.S. - If, afterward, your appetite for Tucci has yet to be sated, I suggest a dessert viewing of *Julie & Julia*, where he plays husband to Meryl Streep's wonderful Julia Child as the two eat their way through Paris.

## FOOD AS MASTERY **Tampopo (1985)**

This Japanese comedy follows Lai Lai, a single mother on a quest to perfect the signature ramen recipe for her restaurant. She befriends two men to help her on this endeavour and therein follow *Rocky*-style montages of her ramen training. The film uncovers the underground world of competitive ramen shops, complete with ramen duels. Spliced throughout her journey are scenes of other minor characters and their experiences with food. It is a deeply unappetizing film at times, with scenes testing my endurance of will, chief among them watching a couple exchange an egg yolk between their mouths during a passionate kiss. Yet this film celebrates the art of perfecting a recipe and the satisfaction of seeing a customer lick your bowl clean. Lai Lai doubts her ability to achieve this final validating act, but you root for her the whole way through. This heartfelt story will leave you craving a visit to your favourite local eatery; follow your instincts.

## FOOD AS LOVE **The Lunchbox (2013)**

I would be remiss not to include a film from India and would never hear the end of it from my parents, so this is for you, mamma and pappa. It follows a housewife trapped in a loveless marriage who tries to spice things up (literally) by packing her husband exquisite food in his work lunchbox, or tiffin. The tiffin, however, is mistakenly delivered to a different man: Saajan, an aging widower nearing retirement. The homemade meals become the highlight of his day. Saajan and Ila, the housewife, soon begin a correspondence, tucking secret letters into the tiffin. They bond over their shared darkness, stories of their childhoods, and observations about life. They also help one another find joy in the small moments because, in the end, that's all we have. After Ila finds out about her husband's affair, she develops feelings for Saajan, but he worries it would not be right to rob Ila of her future due to their age gap. It is reminiscent of *You've Got Mail*, but with a tragic ending, my favourite kind of love story. Write a letter to someone you care about, and serve it to them with a hot curry — it makes for an unforgettable meal.

# Rethink Your Zombie Apocalypse Plans

Zombies may not be real, but the impact of climate change on our food system is

STORY BY **MARA SHAW** ILLUSTRATION BY **RYAN EWING**

***“I’m coming to your farm when the Zombie Apocalypse happens.”***

***“Like hell you will.”***

I’ve been friends with this farmer and bought his beef for over a decade. I was stunned. How can he shut me out in a theoretical time of need?

The table of farmers all laughed. We were at an Annual General Meeting for Local 316 of the National Farmers Union-Ontario, so the table was filled with farmers from around the Kingston area.

It took some sorting out, but here’s what I heard: Every farmer at the table has been asked by many, many people to be their place of refuge in the Zombie Apocalypse. So many, in fact, that there are social media memes shared by farmers about the crowds that will be at their gates.

We are all smart. We know we will need a continuing supply of food in the Zombie Apocalypse. That food requires good soil, seed, and a lot of knowledge — the knowledge our farmers hold. You (or I) can’t acquire any of those overnight, so we’re all looking for the easy out: an open farmgate.

“You have to understand, Mara. Not only are too many people assuming they are coming to the farm, but most of us didn’t go into farming because we’re extroverts.”

This made me laugh. I’ve worked with thousands of farmers across Canada, so I know they range all over the extro/introversion spectrum. Some of them love human company; some prefer the company of their animals. No, they don’t want us all at their gate.

“I’m only taking in people with wicked skills,” said one veg farmer. She has obviously thought this through.

“My husband is an amazing chef,” I offered. “Truly. He makes authentic dishes from all over the world out of fresh ingredients every night.”

“Great. He can come,” she replied. It was clear that my mastery of project management wasn’t going to get me through the selection process.

Most of us can feel that a version of the Zombie Apocalypse is coming (though, hopefully, without any zombies involved). We’re living through unprecedented forest fires, receding winters, and rapidly heating weather. In Ontario, the Provincial

Climate Change Impact Assessment Technical Report gives us the full analysis of what is coming. Based on the Ontario government’s own data, the report identifies the risks we face now and within the next few decades — risks that are likely to destabilize society and certainly our food system. The report was buried upon its release, but *The Narwhal* reporter Fatima Syed revealed in her February, 2024 article “Climate change is hitting Ontario’s farms hard. Why won’t the government talk about it?” just how committed the Ontario government is to avoiding discussing the impact of global warming on our food system.

As non-farmers, our best bet for the Zombie Apocalypse is to make sure we have lots of experienced local farmers on the ground. Not so we can mob their gates, but so we can still have food. To ensure we have enough farmers to feed us, they need, among other things: access to prime farmland; earnings enough to keep farming; regional infrastructure; decent growing conditions; and pollinators. And they need sales (that’s us).

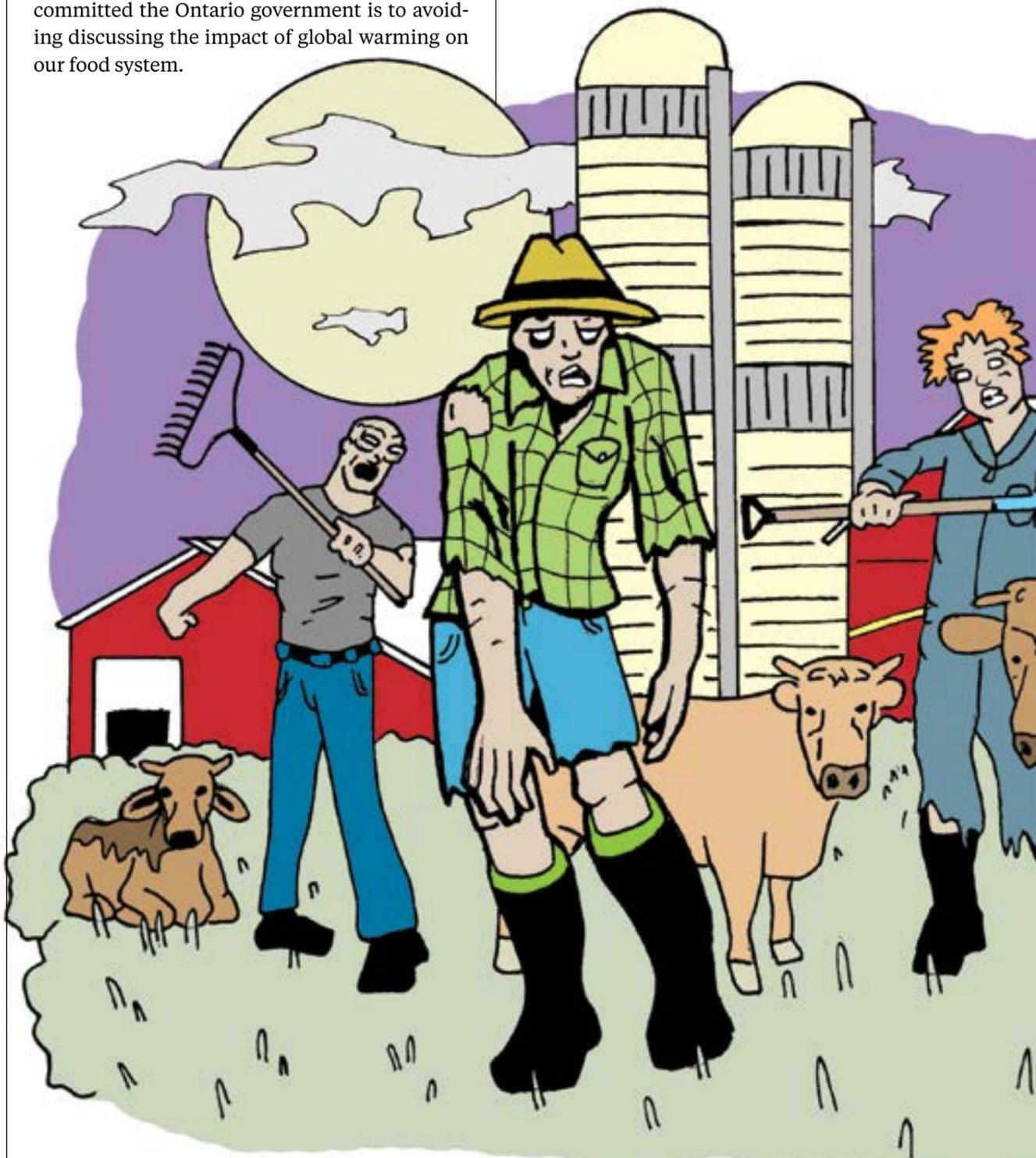
We can find and support our local farmers through Community Shared Agriculture (CSA), at our farmers’ markets or directly at the farmgate. We can advocate alongside our farmers for the local food chain from the producers to the processors to the distributors and markets. We can fight for legislation that enables the growth of local production.

If you want to have a good discussion with a farmer, check out our active local chapter of the National Farmers Union (Local 316), or the many farmers’ markets. Ask questions when they are between sales. Join the movement. Build our food system in advance of the zombies’ arrival. Just don’t expect an open farmgate when the time comes.

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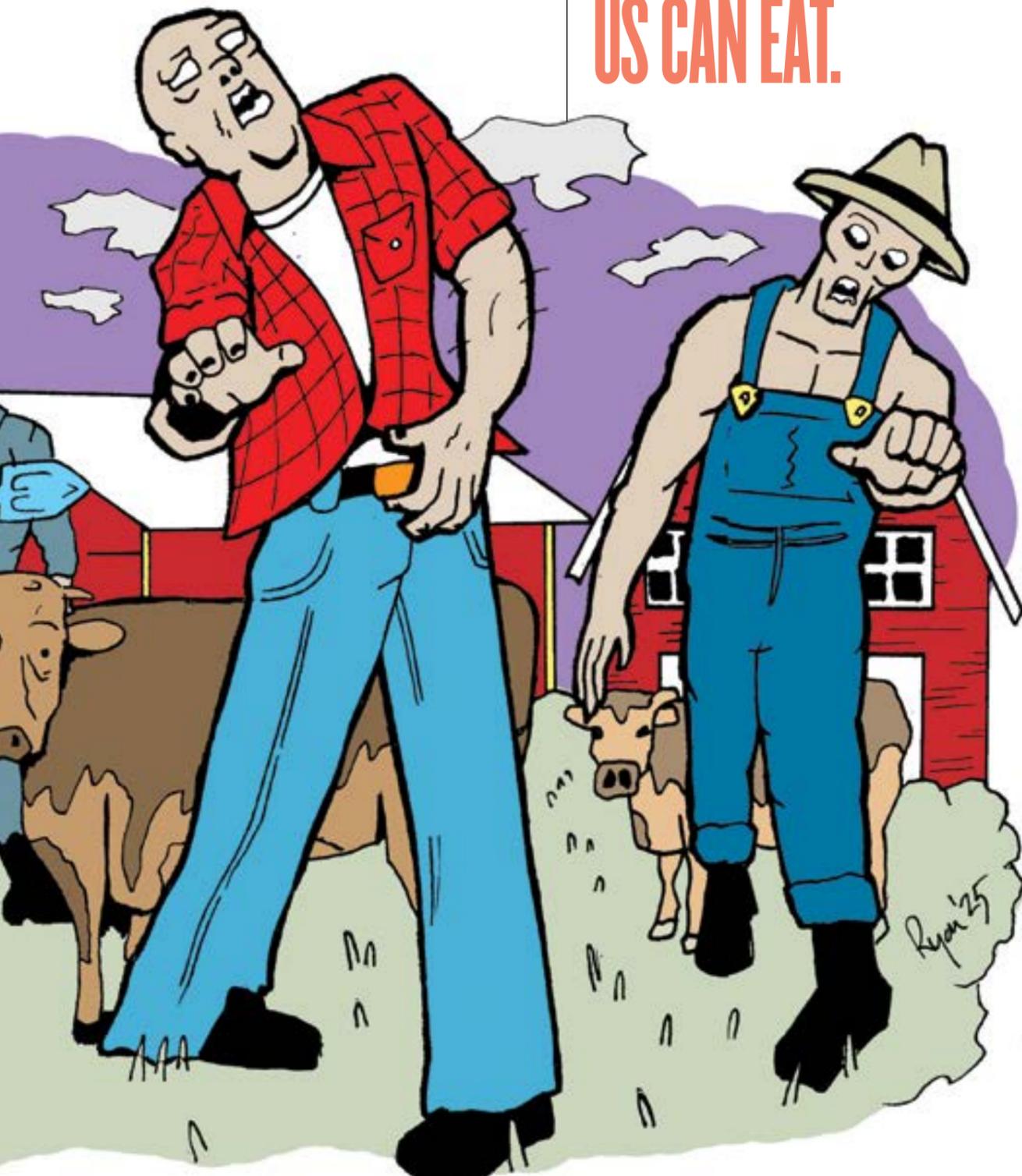
## Action you can take:

- The Food Policy Council for Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox, & Addington (FPC) is leading efforts to develop a regional food strategy for KFL&A. This fall, the FPC will be holding community engagement sessions across our regional food system (e.g., production/harvesting, food security, distribution) to identify strategic actions and priorities for both government and community to include in the food strategy. The food strategy will provide a framework for ongoing action on local food system efforts. To learn more and take part, follow the Food Policy Council of KFL&A Facebook page or check out their website.

- All credible sources tell us in North America that we need to eat less meat. For the meat that some of us are eating, our local farmers are the best. You can see how much they care about their animals, the land, the barn swallows in their barns and grass-land birds in their fields, and their community. But — they need the rebuilding of local infrastructure. With the fire that closed Quinn's Meats in Yarker and the closure of the Pittsburgh abattoir, farmers have few options for local processing. Many are giving up on meat production altogether. There is some effort to encourage the resumption at Pittsburgh Penitentiary. If this matters to you, you may want to contact MP Gerreston or the Minister of Corrections.

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**WE CAN ALL  
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FOR OUR LOCAL  
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US CAN EAT.**



- There is no food without seed. The Kingston Area Seed System Initiative (KASSI) is growing out locally-adapted seed every season so we have vegetable seeds that remain adapted to our changing climate. They could use help growing and teaching, so contact them if this fills your personal plate.

- Growing your own gardening skills is certainly useful. The 1000 Islands Master Gardeners, local community gardens, and Gardening Kingston are all great resources for learning. The advantages of learning in-person are huge and there is a lot of knowledge in our community.

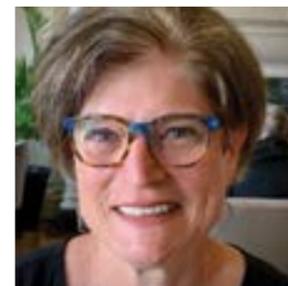
- Food needs pollinators! The decline of pollinators is well documented. But the number of companies offering a “bug-free summer” by spraying your entire lawn or cottage is ever-increasing — with huge impacts on pollinators and the entire food web. Stop spraying! You can also be a pro-pollinator host by growing more native plants in your yard. Little Forests Kingston and the 1000 Islands Master Gardeners are both great sources of information and inspiration. Have dry shade and crap soils? There are native plants for all kinds of conditions.

- Ontario Bill 5 directly threatens our food future. Prime farmland can be declared to be a “Special Economic Zone” for condos, a landfill, whatever — and no one, not even the municipality, can stop it under this Bill. Resistance to this Bill will be, indeed, fertile — in so many ways. If you haven’t already, please read the Bill (the summary takes mere minutes) and feel your rage rise. Then join in the action so we can all eat in the future.

- Agricultural subsidies overwhelmingly support the biggest export commodity producers in the country. We can all advocate for more supports for our local farmers — the family farmers we need to thrive so all of us can eat. There is a ton of information about this on the National Farmers Union webpage. Take a deep dive and then take action.

- Indigenous food ways are being taught at the Indigenous Food Sovereignty Garden on Hwy 15, and elsewhere both here in Katarokwi and at Tyendinaga. Learn and contribute. There are other worldviews that make much more sense than capitalism.

- You know your local farmers markets. Continue to seek them out. They contain all of the joy of community, good food, deep roots. They are literally where we’ll convene in the Zombie Apocalypse — as long as we have farmers and food production. I hope to see you there *sans* zombies.



**MARA SHAW** is past Executive Director of the National Farmers Union and Loving Spoonful.

# Ella's Cuisine serves up a taste of Nigeria in Kingston

Local caterer Christiana Adewale is filling a cultural gap in Kingston's food scene

STORY BY **TIANNA EDWARDS**

**In 2020**, Christiana Adewale was a brand-new mom who had moved to Kingston to be closer to her husband's new job. Craving cultural comfort foods from her Nigerian heritage like egusi soup and pounded yam while adjusting to a new city, Adewale soon realized she had no place to order it.

"I was just stuck at home and thought, okay, how can I get me some African food?" says Adewale. "And my husband says, 'Well, sorry. There is no African food.' Like, oh my God, take me back to Hamilton!"

Locals will often share that Kingston has one of the greatest number of restaurants per capita in Canada. It's true Kingston is home to a lot of restaurants. But the other truth is that only a very small number of these restaurants represent the flavour profiles of African or Caribbean countries. If you have a craving for a specific dish from a Black diasporic country, you likely need to travel to Montreal, Ottawa, or Toronto — or you need to make it yourself.

In this moment of desperation, missing her cultural foods and seeking a stronger sense of community, Adewale took matters into her own hands. She began preparing Nigerian comfort foods for the local community, a project that would eventually become her catering business, Ella's Cuisine. "I thought, 'How best to meet people? Cook for them,'" she explains. "My daughter was four months old and I was kind of getting a swing of this motherhood thing. I thought, okay, how about I just cook something?"

Adewale began by posting about her service in Kingston's Nigerian WhatsApp group. Soon, her first order came in, from a new mother with a baby that needed extra care. Adewale felt fulfilled in that moment, knowing she was able to provide a service she had been searching for herself just a few months prior. Things have taken off quickly since then. Once she started taking orders from groups at Queen's University like the women's basketball team, she knew it was time to make her catering service an official business.

"People call me Ella, but actually my daughter's name is Israella, so I got the name from her name," she tells me.

I've connected Adewale with many student groups at Queen's looking for Nigerian food for a taste of home away from home, and I've witnessed her sell out time after time at pop-ups. My kids and I look forward to her puff-puffs most — they are perfect and sweet fried yeasted dough balls. I am also a big fan of her jollof rice. Ella's Cuisine caters weddings and conferences and has become known as Kingston's go-to caterer for authentic Nigerian cuisine.

If you're wondering how a Nigerian caterer finds the appropriate ingredients for their dishes, the answer is another up-and-coming culturally-affirming local business, Blossom African Foods. "She has been a blessing," Adewale says of Blossom's founder, Tomilola Aladejare.

Adewale has managed to build this reliable and exceptional reputation while working full-time as a medical laboratory technician at Kingston General Hospital, a job that also brings her joy. For now, Adewale rents space to prepare her meals at the Harbour Community Kitchen, and she plans to continue juggling work and her cooking passion with the help of a supportive team. But she sees a brick-and-mortar restaurant in her future: "Kingston is ready for it."

If learning about Ella's has left you craving Adewale's dishes, you can find her on Instagram @ellas\_cuisine1 — details on how to order can be found through the WhatsApp link in the bio.



A very small number of these restaurants represent the flavour profiles of African or Caribbean countries. If you have a craving for a specific dish from a Black diasporic country, you likely need to travel to Montreal, Ottawa, or Toronto — or you need to make it yourself.

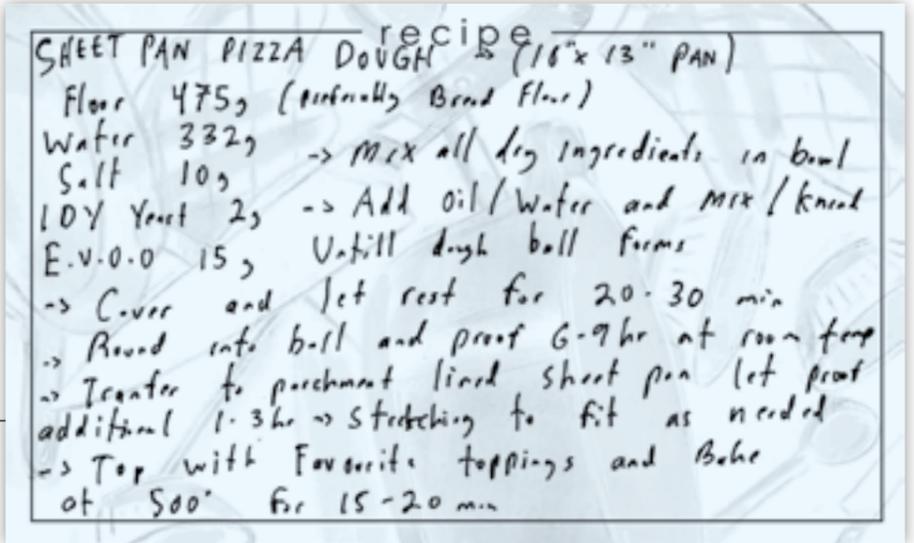


**TIANNA EDWARDS** is an Equity, Diversity, Inclusion Coordinator at Queen's University, host of the podcast, *Kingston, The Black Experience* and the creator/author of a blog, [keepupwithkingston.com](http://keepupwithkingston.com). She lives in Kingston with her husband and two daughters.

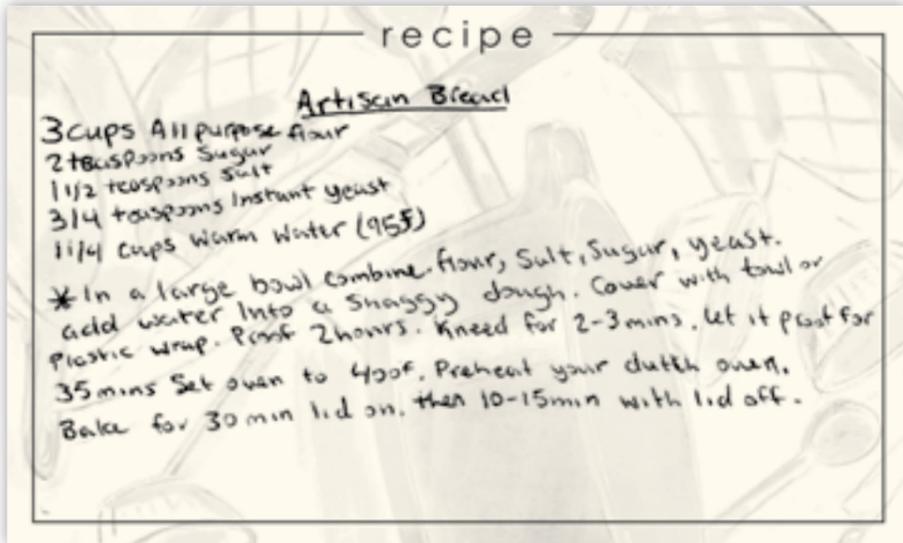
# Neighbourhood Recipes

Local chefs jot down tasty and easy recipes to add to your rotation

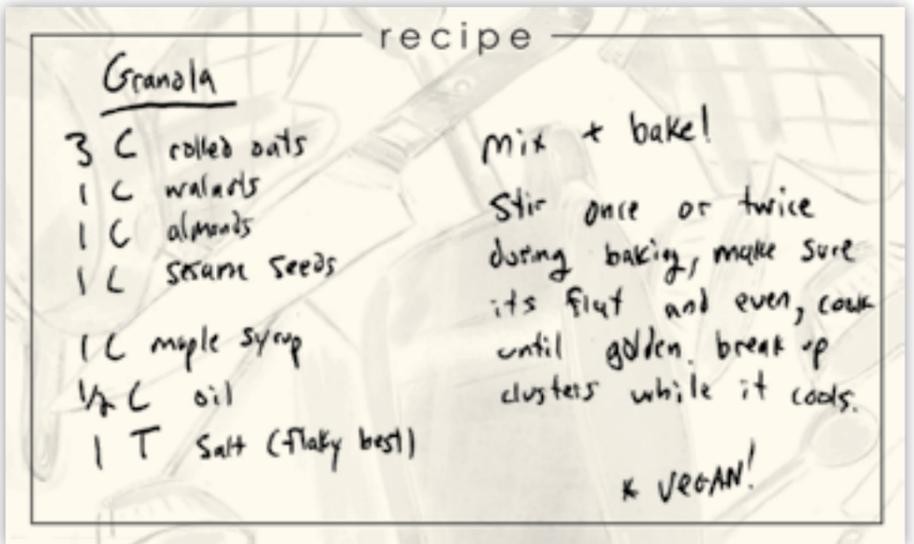
STORY AND ILLUSTRATIONS BY **EM HARMSEN**



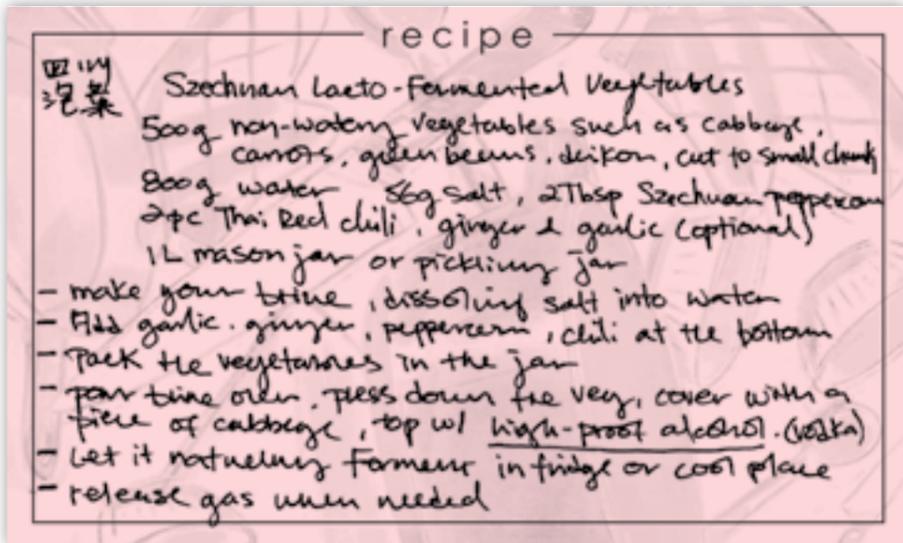
**Lori Anne's Pizza** "Along with my wife Rebecca and good friend Mitch we love sharing our love of pizza and local fare with our community. While we're usually found making pizzas at our local market/pop ups it can be super easy to make pizza at home too. We chose this recipe because it's user friendly and easy to feed the whole family. Enjoy!" — Meredith Egan, owner/operator of Lori Anne's Pizza



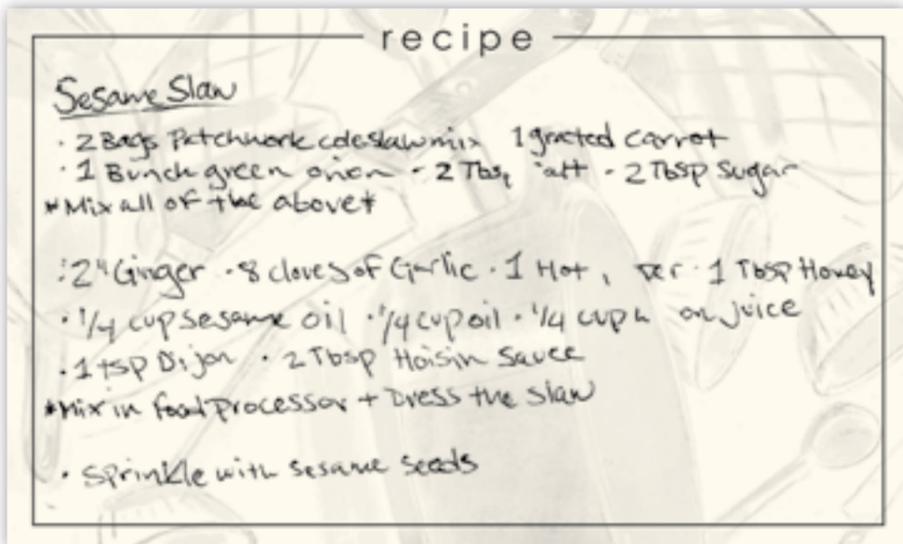
**The Everly** "I chose this recipe because it reminds me of my mom. I love making bread and the smell of this fresh bread reminds me of my mom's house! My mom is an excellent home cook. Most of my love of cooking comes from her. I feel so proud to work for The Everly! I am so grateful for the beautiful space and team that I get to work with everyday." — Michelle Brightman, sous chef at The Everly



**Northside Espresso Kitchen** "As well as being a restaurant, we love being a third space in our community where people feel free to be themselves + experience a sense of true hospitality. We are for anyone, even if at times we're not for everyone. Our sous chef Jesse Aylesworth chose this granola recipe because it's delicious and happens to be vegan too, so it's a recipe everyone can enjoy." — Cade Pentland-Boyce, co-owner Northside Espresso Kitchen



**Miss Bão** "Miss Bão is an Asian Fusion tapas-style restaurant in Kingston, dedicated to celebrating local ingredients through creative, sustainable dishes inspired by our cultural roots. I chose this recipe because it's a delicious way to preserve seasonal vegetables from my favourite spot, the Memorial Centre Farmers' Market, while also honoring my Chinese/Asian heritage. It's a dish that's both nourishing and deeply rooted in tradition." — Bellen Tong, co-owner of Miss Bão Restaurant and Cocktail Bar



**Old Farm Fine Foods** "This recipe is quick and easy. You can add other seasonal ingredients like apples or Kolrabi. We started Old Farm at the market and always want to support our fellow farmers from those days." — Nancy George, co-owner and chef of Old Farm Fine Foods



**Share your own recipe** Share your recipe with the *Skeleton Press* by writing it on this card, then photographing and emailing it to our editors at [skeletonpresseditor@gmail.com](mailto:skeletonpresseditor@gmail.com) (or by scanning the QR code below). We'll post your recipes to Skeleton Park Arts Festival's Instagram and Facebook for the community to enjoy.



**EM HARMSEN** is a designer and artist. She runs *emske* - design studio ([emske.ca](http://emske.ca)), a mindful creative studio that is eco conscious and adaptive in mindset. Em has a background in fashion design, art, technology and accessibility. Currently she's furthering her practice through a PhD focused on user-centred design.

# Food Palaces

Photographer Jay Bridges captures the Kingston restaurant facades and storefronts that feed our imagination

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **JAY BRIDGES**

**JAY BRIDGES** is an artist and entrepreneur who lives in Kingston. After gaining a national and international reputation as a skateboard photographer, he shifted his focus to landscape, street and structural photography. Jay's curiosity, and his understanding of cameras themselves, pushes him to use a wide variety of formats, from digital to medium and large format film cameras. Together with his partner Jenna, he runs BSE, a coffee bar and skate shop on Princess Street, and contributes to the local counterculture of Kingston.



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:**  
Coffee Way Donuts at 472 Division Street  
Quattrocchi's Specialty Foods at 662 Montreal Street  
The Store Famous at 406 Barrie Street



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:**  
New Garden Restaurant at 779 Division Steet  
The Hoagie House at 384 Division Steet  
Saigon Delights at 217 Division Street



# Local Runner Shares Nutrition Secrets Behind International Personal Best

STORY BY **KATIE FIZZELL**

PICTURED: Miles Brackenbury IMAGE CREDITS: Kevin Baxter

**R**epresenting Canada at an international sporting event demands rigorous preparation, determination, and of course, the right kind of fuel. Fresh off setting a personal best in the half marathon at the FISU Summer World University Games in Rhine-Ruhr, Germany, local runner Miles Brackenbury shares how food sustains his training and helps him perform his best.

Miles grew up on Redan St. and ran cross country at KCVI before joining the varsity team when he was studying at Queen's University, so he's a familiar face to many in the neighbourhood. You may have spotted him running through the park with a smile on his face, a show of his commitment and love for the sport.

When I asked Miles how he thinks about food and nutrition in relation to running, he explained that he typically follows the philosophy that all food is fuel. He knows what works best for his body but also recognizes that while travelling — especially internationally — you can't control every detail of your diet. Instead, he focuses on what he can control, striking a balance that helps keep him healthy and ready to perform.

When I spoke about Miles' approach to my friend Steph Alp, a Registered Dietitian with a focus on sports nutrition who lives in the neighbourhood, she echoed his thinking. Steph explained that when we break down the content of our foods, they are made up of some combination of protein, fat, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals. And whether they come from whole foods or processed ones, our bodies use those nutrients in similar ways. While there are advantages to prioritizing whole foods, demonizing other food sources can be restrictive. In the case of competitive athletes, this may make it hard to meet nutrient needs, which can not only affect performance but recovery and overall wellbeing.

So, what does it take to stay fueled for a day-to-day training regime that includes a mix of endurance, interval training, strength, and mobility? For Miles, who has recently overcome an inflammatory condition, this means starting the day with anti-inflam-

**FOR MILES, AND MANY OTHERS, THE KEY TO SPORTS NUTRITION IS GETTING TO KNOW WHAT WORKS FOR YOUR BODY.**

matory foods like berries, leafy greens, walnuts, and chia seeds, combined with a high source of protein such as Greek yogurt. When we spoke, Steph noted that this is a great way for anyone to start their day — with foods are high in antioxidants, healthy fats, protein, fibre, vitamins and minerals that help sustain energy. Adding whole or steel cut oats to Miles's routine breakfast would also provide another important source of energy. Of course, as both Miles and Steph were quick to point out, nutrition needs vary by person. It's important to pay attention to what is working in your own body and to seek the advice of health professionals to support your unique health and performance goals.

Miles also emphasized the role that fresh vegetables play in lunches and dinners, helping him feel his best both during training and in the lead-up to big races. He also credited his mom, Rae Duncan Brackenbury, for preparing delicious homemade meals throughout his life, and for providing consistent access to healthy food, something he knows not everyone has. As our conversation turned to the broader issues of affordability and accessibility, Miles mentioned the vital role that local food sources — including the Skeleton Park community sharing gardens (where Rae is an active volunteer) and Lionhearts' Fresh Food Pop-Ups — play in helping families bring fresh produce to their tables.



Knowing that factors like travel, sleep, and pre-race jitters can impact appetite and digestion, I was curious to find out if Miles has a go-to pre-race meal. His advice was simple — stick to foods you know your body handles well. For Miles, this has traditionally been his favourite lemon pasta with chicken, spinach, and broccoli, but lately, he's become less fixated on having one specific meal and now just focuses on making sure it's a balance of veggies, carbs, and protein.

When it comes to the morning of a race, he's still committed to something familiar, like a bagel with peanut butter and banana, eaten two to three hours before the event. Miles has also experimented with timing, eating early enough to allow for digestion, but close enough to the start time to sustain his energy throughout the race. As for recovery, Miles focuses on water for hydration and chocolate milk as a quick source of protein, carbs, and electrolytes he finds easy to digest.

For Miles, and many others, the key to sports nutrition is getting to know what works for your body. There is no one-size-fits-all formula, so it's important to pay attention to factors like gender, age, dietary needs, and preferences along with the specific demands of your sport — all of which can help you optimize performance and support long-term health.



**KATIE FIZZELL** (she/her) has lived in the Skeleton Park neighbourhood since moving to Kingston in 2010. She and her partner, Miles Wilson, are grateful to live in such a vibrant and supportive community as they raise their two daughters, Cassidy and Holly, and their chatty dog, Gibby.



# Volunteers Are the Secret Sauce at St. Vincent de Paul

The new St. Vincent de Paul facility is better equipped than ever to tackle food insecurity in Kingston

STORY BY **JAMIE SWIFT** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **AL BERGERON**

“HERE, WE GET THE SUPPLIES IN AND THEN I HAVE TO COOK WITH THAT. THERE’S NO PROFESSIONAL KITCHEN CREW. IT’S ALL VOLUNTEERS. THE MENU CHANGES EVERY DAY.”



**Kingston chef Gareth Hewitt once cooked at a swanky downtown eatery where a steak would run you \$58. A serving of carrots? A mere \$19.**

These days he finds himself saving up chunks of gouda so he can finally serve that mac and cheese he just knew would be popular among diners. On the sweltering August day when I visited the St. Vincent de Paul Society (aka “Vinnie’s”) kitchen on Stephen Street, he was making orzo salad.

Feeding people who are unable to afford a decent diet is tricky at best. Diabetes requires carbohydrate caution but the understanding that — particularly in winter — some who depend on Gareth’s kitchen live on the street. A high carb diet can help keep them going.

“I’m always trying for low sodium,” he said. The watchwords are “making do” when serving our neighbours shut out of the food system’s abundance. Gareth depends on chickpeas and other legumes. Baked beans from cans are a mainstay.

“I’m happy if I can make someone happy with their meal once a week,” he said. “I’m saving up to do a lasagna but I don’t have enough ricotta yet. It’s expensive and just doesn’t get donated.”

Making do was initially hard to learn when he started at Vinnie’s in 2024. He had cooked in commercial kitchens from Scotland to New Zealand. Things are straightforward in restaurants. You have a menu. You order your supplies and cook the menu.

“Here, we get the supplies in and then I have to cook with that. There’s no professional kitchen crew. It’s all volunteers. The menu changes every day.”

So food prep relies on skill levels that are all over the place. Many volunteers need careful, diplomatic supervision. Restaurant culture is famously authoritarian.

“It’s not like a kitchen where you tell people to just do something and they better darn well do it.”

With the menu changing daily, depending not on market pricing but on the whims of charity, Gareth can’t simply tell volunteers to do the same thing they did yesterday or the day before. It all depends on what happens to come through the door. Donations of food “that’s on its last legs” require quick changes in menu planning. “We simply have to cook it that day.”

The old St Vincent de Paul facility on Stephen Street is scheduled to close its doors by year’s end. The ramshackle place has a kitchen far too small to easily prepare some two hundred meals daily.

The extent of Kingston food insecurity — a tidy euphemism meaning too-poor-to-eat-well — has meant that Vinnie’s has seen a stunning 40 per cent increase in people needing meals between 2017 and

2024. In 2021 its Emergency Food Pantry supported some 28 children per month. This year that number rose to 125 youngsters — an increase of 346 per cent.

Stubborn levels of deprivation in one of the world’s richest countries aren’t going to change anytime soon, no matter how much charities make do. But at least Vinnie’s, the new purpose-built North End facility at Bagot and Charles, will soon offer a customized space. St Vincent de Paul Executive Director Judy Fyfe describes it as a “workhorse of a building.”

The new facility will include 10,000 square feet of space, up from 1,500 square feet in over two buildings on Stephen Street. There’s ample space for a dining room, kitchen, food bank, and “warehouse.” The latter is a free clothing and houseware operation: “You don’t have to reach a certain level of poor before we’ll help,” said Ms. Fyfe.

Hewitt looks forward to working in a spacious, purpose-built kitchen with an industrial stove and dishwasher, and a walk-in-fridge and freezer.

“You can talk about the food and that’s important,” he explained. “But the space is just as important.”

For years, steadily increasing numbers of people have had to wait outside in a busy parking lot on an arterial road. A half hour wait in heat or cold, drizzle or snow was normal. Only then could people crowd into a small dining area.

“My biggest thing is that we’ll be indoors,” Hewitt said. “Children, parents, elderly adults will all be able to come in, sit down in a civilized manner.”

The new building will provide air conditioning during scorching summer months for people without it at home. If they have homes. A coffee station. Seating for 120 people. Washroom capacity will more than double.

Still, there’s only so much that even a new, improved space can offer.

“I’m in awe of SVDP and all they do on a shoestring budget,” said Queen’s food security expert Elaine Power. “But I’m not sure whether to cry or self-combust in rage at the increase in demand for their services. Not to mention the utter neglect of provincial and federal governments in effectively addressing poverty. The increasing numbers Vinnie’s is helping — especially children — it’s simply sickening.”

Kingston writer **JAMIE SWIFT** has been a contributor since *The Skeleton Press* began publishing.

**FULL DISCLOSURE:** Elaine Power and Jamie Swift are co-authors of *The Case For Basic Income: Freedom, Security, Justice*.

# Our Favourite Snacks

Students from LCVI's Creative Arts program share their most coveted treats

STORY AND ILLUSTRATIONS BY **LCVI'S CREATIVE ARTS STUDENT CONTRIBUTORS**

## Mama Noodles

Lway Lway Htoo

My choice of childhood snack is tom yum Mama noodles. I know this can be considered a meal, but in my household, it was a snack, because we could never get full from just one. It was usually eaten dry, like chips.

Dear MAMA,  
Whenever my hunger whispers a sound  
You heed my rumbles  
The emotions that I bring to the table  
You serve me a dish without a stumble

One isn't enough  
I might ask for more  
I look inside the cupboard  
Now I'm here at the grocery store

My classmates used to laugh when I told them your name  
I always got confused and made an upset face  
Now I puff up my chest, saying your name with pride  
Wish I did that in second grade, but that wasn't the case

Thank you MAMA,  
For being here throughout my childhood  
Thank you MAMA,  
For filling up my belly like nobody could



## Pumpkin Pie

Sophie Garster

Pumpkin pie brings me back to this time last year. Every fall, I begin my obsession with the treat. I am a 12th grade student currently enrolled in my second year of the Creative Arts program at LCVI. As a first-year student, I would roam the close-by corner stores and halls of Loblaws looking for my new snack. One windy October day, I spotted the freshly-made pie, bought it, and covered the delicacy with my coat as I braced myself against the wind. The pie was 100% worth it.



## Pomegranate

Charlie McGowan

Dear pomegranate moon  
that glows over my hometown,  
whose seeds scatter across my best friend's carpet,  
your red juice colouring our last meeting

We know to wait until New Year's  
to gather again,  
buy the fruit,  
and by the grace of remembering  
welcome another season,  
another new date to be marked on the letters we exchange

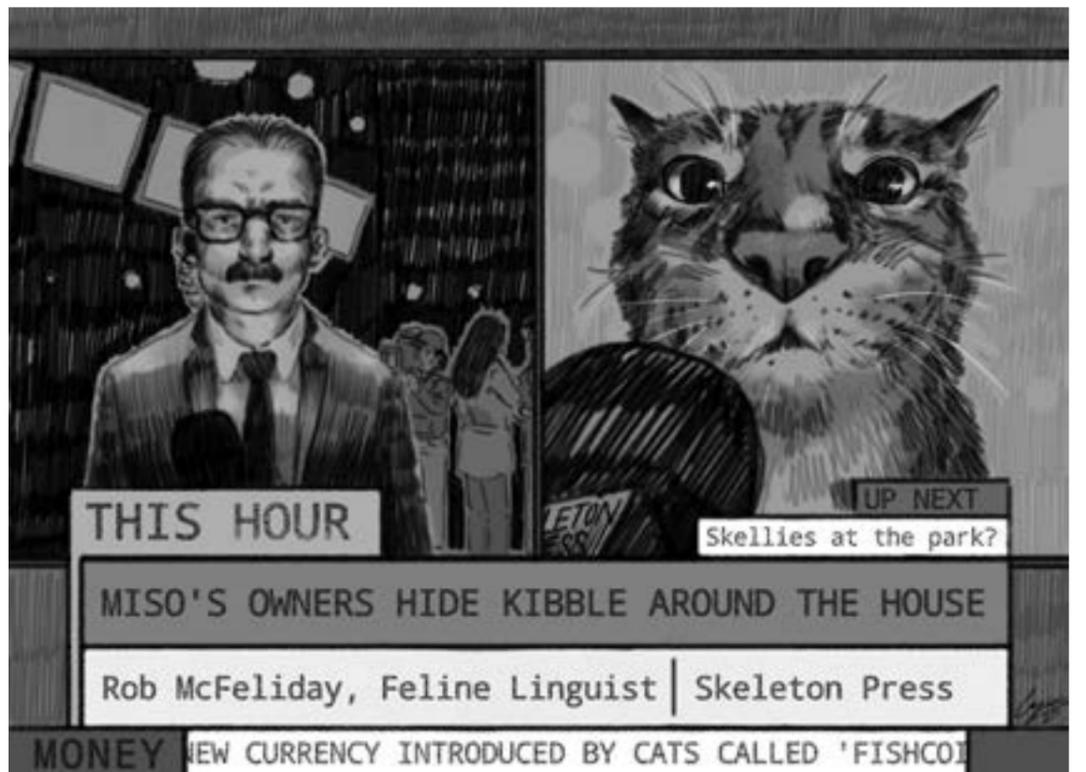
Dear pomegranate moon,  
you remind me  
the stars are brighter in Manitoba



## Kibble

Camille Giasson

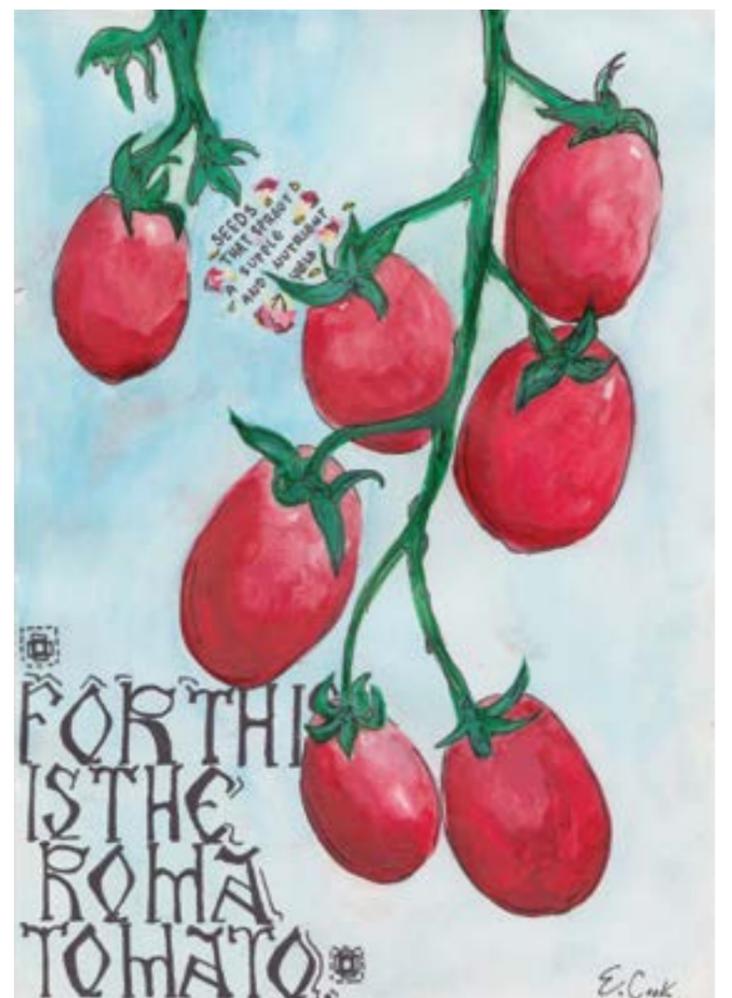
(while purring) “Meow meow meow, prrrt meow, prrrt meow — (pause) — meow.” For those unfamiliar with the domestic feline dialect, Miso, age 5, explains that her favourite snack is kibble. Ever since the change to a wet-food-only diet one year ago, Miso craves kibble over any other snack. “Meow meow prrrt.” Miso adds that, although she also likes other treats, she loves the crunchy and savoury flavor of salmon kibble. “Mrrrt!” Her owners even like to hide kibble pieces around the house for her to find in a treasure hunt.



## Roma Tomato

Elise Cook

I bite. Beneath its skin lies a cornerstone meat of Italian culture. I chew. In between chunks of meat lie seeds that sprout a supple and nutrient-rich yield. Anticipation of spring is swallowed, building silently through the dark of winter. I look on to spring as it glimmers in the sun's luminosity. When might I taste this fibrous treat again? To indulge in such a delicacy is to walk among the originals that planted my dear seeds long ago. For this is the Roma tomato.



**CREATIVE ARTS** is a full-day, immersive Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) program for students interested in a career in Art & Design or in further honing their skills as an artist. Assignments in Creative Arts have been developed to meet the requirements for post secondary applications and provides students with opportunities to build a competitive portfolio, engage in community art events including their end of semester exhibition titled *Visual Paradise*. Creative Arts is open to all grade 11 and 12(+) high school students in Kingston.

# The Secret Life of Food Forests

Oak and Hickory forest on Belle Island

Our ancestors spread the plants that they foraged, which helped shape the ecosystems of today

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY **HILBERT BUIST**



## Before there was agriculture, there were food forests.

Beginning around 12,000 years ago hunter-gatherers left the forests for the plains and grew wheat, barley, and rice on such a scale that grains could be stored and controlled. Agriculture was born. Cities were raised.

Today large-scale industrial farming is faced with a growing list of problems, but none more troubling than highly-processed, low-nutrient foods grown by synthetic fertilizers. Food that is supposed to keep us healthy is making us sick. However, more holistic approaches to farming are gaining ground. Food forests are one such example.

Food forests are grown in groupings, or “guilds” of complimentary plants, each providing nourishment to the main food crop, or to humans, or both. Food forests are designed to grow in natural, symbiotic, relationships with all other living things. Community food forests contribute to social engagement, build sustainable ecosystems, and promote biodiversity while contributing to healthy organic eating.

A typical fruit tree guild might consist of a pear tree surrounded by raspberry canes, a goji berry bush, pollinator flowers, clumps of chives and walking onions, and ground covers such as clover and creeping thyme.

A single guild could fit into a corner of a garden, or a yard. In larger spaces, they could be connected to other guilds. In Kingston, two notable food forests grow at Oak Street Community Garden and Lakeside Community Garden. These can be visited either online or in person. The varieties of fruits and vegetables are broad and impressive!

On Belle Island, Kingston, there is another food forest. It consists primarily of oak and hickory with complementary shrubs, flowers and grasses. Acorns and nuts from shagbark hickory trees provide rich food every fall for squirrels, wild turkeys, deer, and blue jays. Pockets of red and black raspberries, red and black currants, serviceberries, and choke cherries can be found across the island. Medicinal plants grow abundantly, including St. John’s wort, milkweed, boneset, jewel weed, clover, dogwood, willow, cattail, and a wide variety of fungi.

Prehistoric humans migrating across Europe and Asia are thought to have hunted forests, collecting eggs, game, roots, nuts, berries, and fruits. Wherever our earliest ancestors travelled, foraging helped to spread plants. Certain species were favoured, especially oaks, guaranteeing their abundance. Many ancient cultures worshipped the oak tree for its gifts of food, wood, and medicine.

Oaks, a forest-building keystone species, date back to about 55 million years ago, perhaps arriving in North America 44 million years ago. Modern humans are thought to have evolved about 200,000 years ago. Recent archaeology has pushed the first humans in North America from 20,000 years ago to 130,000 years ago, long enough to develop kinship with oaks. Humans aren’t the only ones with special relationships to oaks. Hundreds of insects, birds, and animals have grown to depend on them.

Oaks and hickories are favoured when a fire sweeps through the forest. Their survivability in the seedling stage and their thick bark in the mature stage makes them flourish under harsh conditions.

North American Indigenous Peoples have long taken advantage of the oak-hickory ecology and introduced a yearly burn suppressing the less desirable trees such as quick growing, shade-tolerant maples. The resulting ash when mixed with rain turns it into a type of potash, an essential fertilizer increasing yields. Berries, fruits, and nuts flourished. Along with them came birds, rodents, and deer, becoming an essential part of Indigenous diet, clothes, tools, and culture.

I don’t believe this forest grew here by chance. After the retreat of the last ice age, Kingston would have first resembled a spruce boreal forest. As the temperatures climbed the boreal gave way to hemlock and mixed hardwoods including oak.

Belle Island has a long tradition of Indigenous presence. Archaeology indicates Belle Island as a sacred burial site as far back as a thousand years. I believe this forest was regularly visited by the indigenous and cultivated as an important source of nourishment. Belle Island oaks were prized. Across Ontario, oak forests either went into decline or were lost.

“Community food forests contribute to social engagement, build sustainable ecosystems and promote biodiversity while contributing to healthy organic eating.”

The forest is under threat by non-native invasive species, mostly common buckthorn. Buckthorn shades native species, especially oaks, inhibiting their growth. As a non-native shrub it has no natural predators, grows at a rapid rate, and robs nutrients from other plants. Do nothing to remove buckthorn and the oak forest will continue to fall and become a buckthorn thicket. But buckthorn is not the only threat. Maples and ash trees are choking out oaks contributing to their decline.

The oak-hickory forest on Belle Island is a unique ecology that is disappearing from Ontario and the Northeastern United States. We must do all that we can to restore and protect this important food forest.

**To arrange a walk on the island with Hilbert, email [buisthilbert@gmail.com](mailto:buisthilbert@gmail.com)**

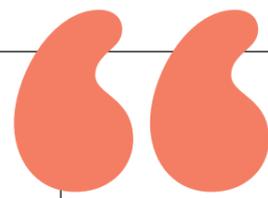
**Visit Kingston’s food forests!**  
[oakstreetgarden.wordpress.com](http://oakstreetgarden.wordpress.com)  
[lakesidecommunitygarden.org](http://lakesidecommunitygarden.org)

**HILBERT BUIST** is a part-time pastry cook at Pan Chanco Bakery, part-time nature guide at Wintergreen Studios and assists in land restoration projects.

# A Beginner's Guide to Foraging

STORY BY **CAITLIN NEWEY**

ILLUSTRATIONS BY **CHANTAL ROUSSEAU**



Since there is an incredible bounty growing all around us, I couldn't possibly teach you everything there is to know about foraging in one article; what I can do is get you interested in learning more, and direct you to some great resources.

**No matter what your heritage is, your ancestors ate wild plants. A lot of them.**

When I think back to how long I've been eating wild plants, I recall being a child at daycare, sitting in a field by myself, and eating little plants growing around me; I later learned I was eating sheep sorrel and yarrow. Where I grew up, picking wild blueberries was just part of summer; it wasn't until I was an adult that I realized that this was a type of foraging.

With the rising cost of everything, being able to supplement your diet with free food is a real asset. Some of my favourite things to harvest, in both urban and rural settings, are wild greens (stinging nettles, violets, lamb's quarters), fruits (black raspberries, wild grapes, elderberries), and mushrooms (chicken of the woods, dryad's saddles, saffron milk caps). I have found all of these in quantities enough to preserve for later use, whether through freezing or dehydrating, as well as eating fresh.

Since there is an incredible bounty growing all around us, I couldn't possibly teach you everything there is to know about foraging in one article; what I can do is get you interested in learning more, and direct you to some great resources. There are a few foraging and wild mushroom-related pages I follow on social media (Forager Chef on YouTube and Instagram, r/foraging on Reddit, to name a couple) and having identification content front and centre as I scroll online has helped me learn a lot.



**CAITLIN NEWEY** is a many-talented, compassionate being who lives in the Kingscourt area.



Here are some general dos and don'ts for those getting into foraging:

**DON'T** rely on AI or strangers on the internet for identification! While using a tool like Google Lens can be very helpful for identifying plants, it's not always absolutely accurate. Read up on wild plants and mushrooms, take photos, and, for mushrooms, harvest a couple, do spore prints, and verify in person with someone who has real expertise; take the time to be absolutely sure that you know what that plant or mushroom is before you eat it.

**DO** be mindful and **DON'T** over-harvest — leave some for the animals and for other foragers.

**DON'T** harvest anything growing in waterways by roadways. Harvest from at least 100m from any road edge, and keep in mind anything knee-height and lower will likely have animal pee on it (dog pee, if you're in the city).

**DO** pay attention to the weather. Mushrooms are the fruit of a mycelial network — key word being fruit — and these fruits only show up when the conditions have been perfect for them. Mushrooms generally love rain, followed by a sunny day or two.

**DON'T** be afraid to touch wild mushrooms. Wild mushrooms have a bit of a bad rap — so much so that sometimes people are afraid to touch them with their bare hands! These same folks will think nothing of pulling up weeds from the garden without gloves, or go traipsing through the bush touching every beautiful plant they see. But, fun fact, there are no mushrooms (in North America, at least) that will cause harm to naked skin. On the other hand, beware of wild parsnip and poison ivy, two plants that can most assuredly hurt you, even if you only brush up against them.

**DO** only try a small portion of new-to-you wild foods; any kind of food can cause gastric upset, wild or not, and it's best to go slowly your first time trying something new. Be sure to follow cooking guidelines, particularly for wild mushrooms, which (in almost all cases) need to be cooked thoroughly before consumption.

**DO** spend time outside. Go slowly and look closely at everything. Observe what trees are growing where you are; once you've learned how to identify trees, you're several steps closer to being able to find

choice mushrooms (different fungi have preferences for different species of trees).

**DON'T** be afraid to incorporate wild foods into your diet — try swapping stinging nettles or lamb's quarters for spinach. They can be cooked and used the same way as any other green (and nettles lose their sting once they've been cooked).

**DO** get excited about eating seasonal foods! Here are some things you can go out and find right now: wild grapes, chicken of the woods, lamb's quarters, stinging nettles, dryad's saddle, and highbush cranberries.

Something you'll discover once you start foraging is that you'll inevitably learn about all plants, not just the edible ones. You'll find great spots that you keep coming back to year after year, and you'll develop a relationship with the woods and the natural world. You'll also be taking steps to fight against the climate crisis by reducing fossil fuels needed to transport farmed food. Foraging really has enriched my life in so many ways, and I hope it does the same for you.



# How to Hostess a Diverting Dinner Party on a Strict Budget with Tante Talia

STORY BY **TALIA ACKER** ILLUSTRATION BY **ZARA ACKER DRAVILLAS**

**TANTE TALIA** has been effortlessly hostessing dinner parties on a strict budget for decades. She graciously encourages you to do the same.

**ZARA ACKER DRAVILLAS** is in grade 8 in the LEAP program.

*Gentle Readers of Skeleton Park,* it has come to my attention that there are would-be hostesses of all genders in our neighbourhood who are intimidated by the prospect of tackling a good old-fashioned dinner party on a strict budget. The kind of dinner party our more conscientious mothers taught us to take on. I myself received years of diligent training in this artform from all of the strong matriarchs in my family. I will now endeavour to pass some of it on to you, my avid readers. In my experience, the key to hostessing successfully is in realizing exactly where your strengths and limitations lie. It is crucial to know where you will inevitably put most of your energy and where you will put none of it.

## Attire

I start here. I have found that a dramatic piece of clothing or jewellery that is impossible to wear outside the home is the best motivation for hostessing a dinner party. Highly impractical footwear, excessively heavy jewels, and impossible-to-sit-down-in jumpsuits are all excellent starting points both in terms of setting the desired tone for your soirée and also for providing inspiration for your table setting. Your table setting is a natural extension of your outfit, which is why difficult dresses that are reminiscent of tablecloths are perfect for a dinner party. Remember, this is your chance to wear anything you want and it will be perfectly appropriate. That being said, feel free to insist on a complicated dress theme for your guests. This helps separate the wheat from the chaff.

**“In my experience, the key to hostessing successfully is in realizing exactly where your strengths and limitations lie.”**

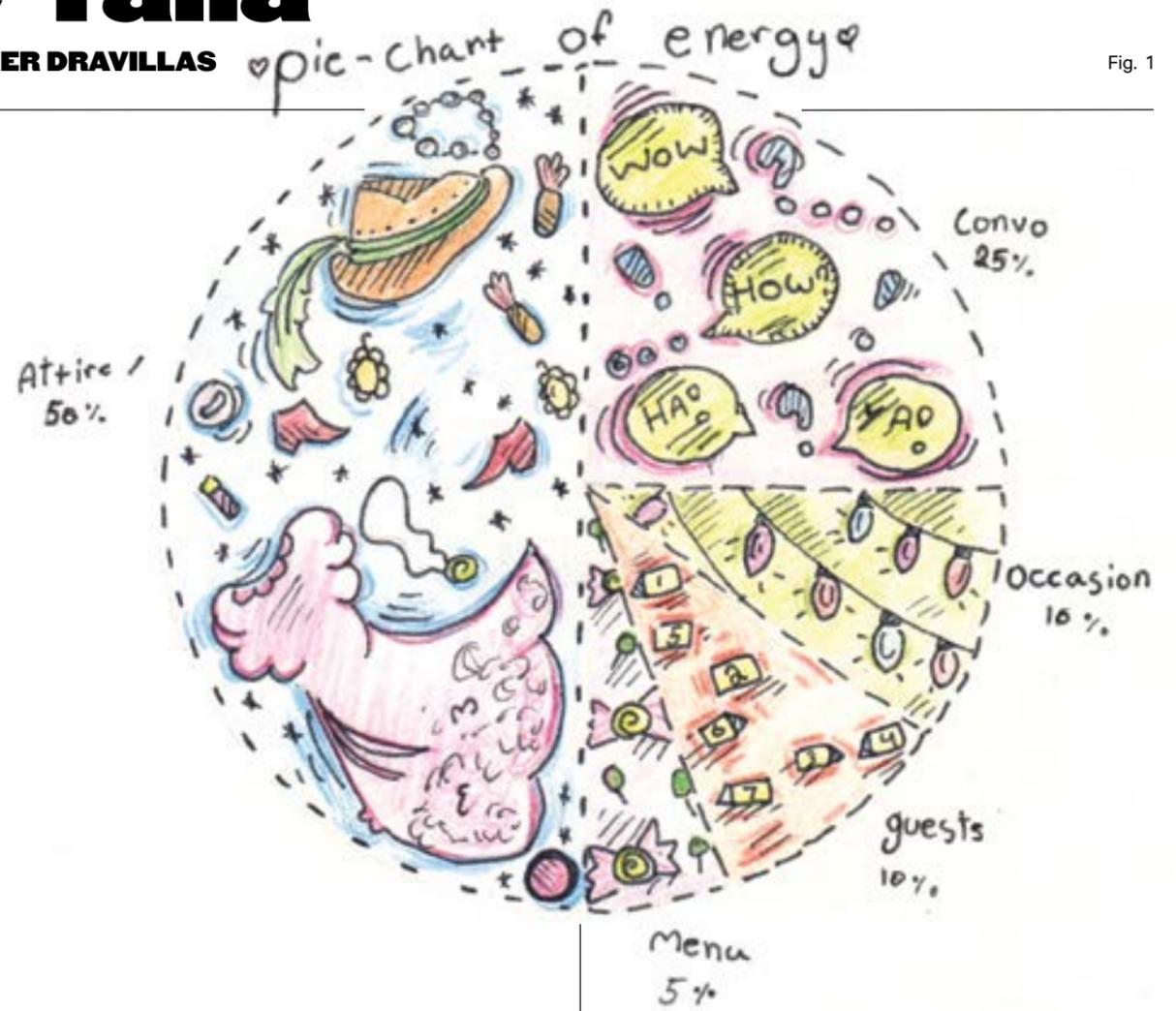


Fig. 1

## Occasion

Another worthwhile reason to throw a dinner party is to celebrate a holy or cultural day that most or none of your guests are familiar with. Minor religious holidays are good, so are festivals and memorial days not printed on Canadian calendars. Perhaps you have a child who requires ongoing cultural education, or perhaps you just want to easily outdo your family when it comes to honouring tradition. Whatever the case, it's nice to make your guests do a bit of research before they arrive so they can properly pronounce the specific holiday greeting.

## Guests

Contrary to popular opinion, your guests need only have one thing in common — knowing you. The number of guests you should invite depends partly on the size of your abode and partly on how many souls you can spiritually tolerate in your home at one time. When working on a tight budget, whether very real or very imagined, it helps to have friends who know you well enough to come prepared. My guests always ask what they can bring, and I tell them: appetizer, drinks, or dessert, based on their skill level. That leaves me with the formidable main course.

## Menu

Food and drink, as you may have already surmised, are often the least interesting part of hostessing a dinner party, especially on a strict budget. Opt for a vegetarian or a vegan entrée.

One-pot or one-pan meals are best if you suffer from any sort of anxiety, as there is less tricky timing to worry about. Call your legume stew “Morrocan” or “Cajun” depending on whether you choose cumin or smoked paprika as your primary spice. And remember, a good hostess accepts compliments readily. There's no need to spell out the simplicity of your famous Moroccan chickpea casserole.

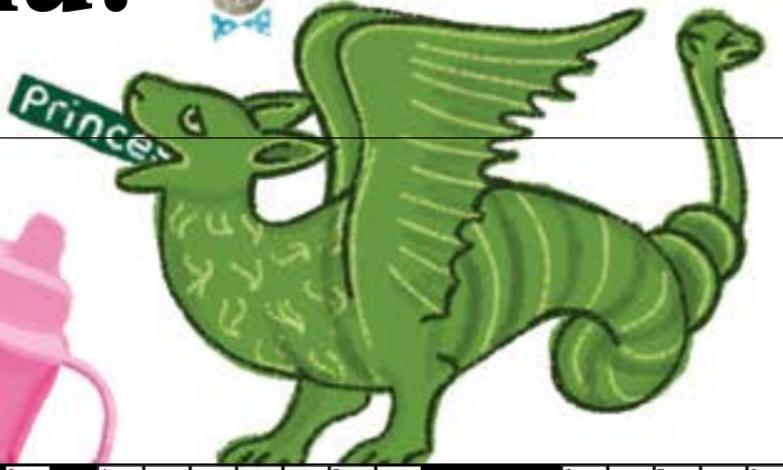
## Conversation

Mark Twain sagely said “never discuss politics or religion in polite company”, and this is a time-tested rule for you to impose upon your guests. As hostess, of course, you can say whatever you like — it's your party! Make sure to corner a grown man for at least two minutes and describe to him in detail the lengths you have gone to hostess him. He will appreciate this fun role reversal. Allow him to thank you profusely. Gracefully move on. Should you suffer a paralyzing fit of malaise, go do the dishes until your guests get the hint and leave. In conclusion, avid readers, there is nothing to fear about hostessing a diverting dinner party on a budget. With some careful planning, and a good therapist, you can easily hostess a dinner party of your very own. If you are a visual learner, try creating your own customized pie chart of energy (see fig 1). This will help you manage your time and resources wisely, as well as understand and accept your priorities — invaluable skills for contemporary hostesses.

**Generously Yours,  
Tante Talia**

# What's On The Menu?

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

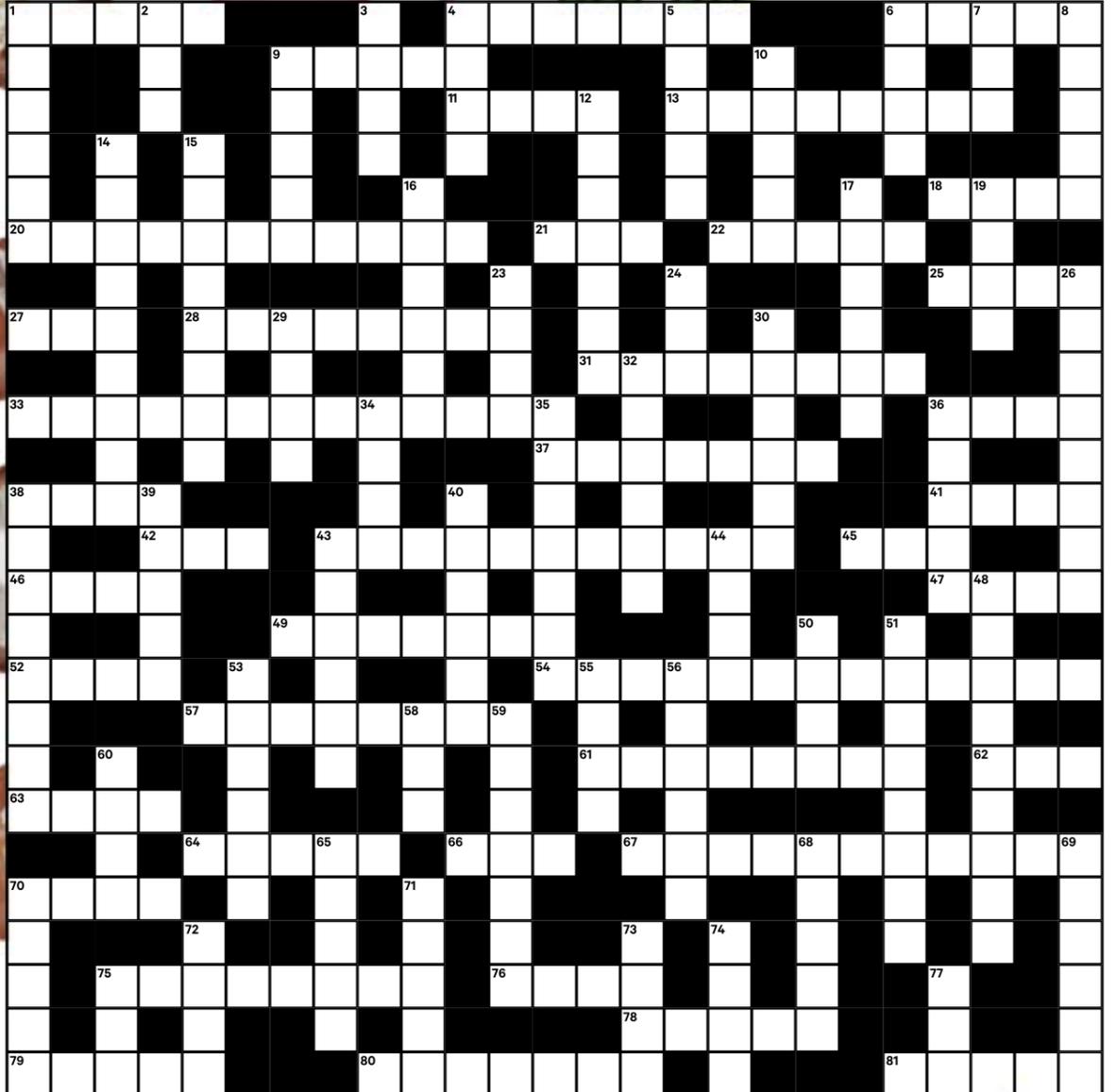


**ACROSS**

- 1 Cold emulsion of garlic and oil
- 4 Monty Python's instrument for hoofsteps
- 6 Leafy green, possibly Alpine
- 9 Japanese-style lunch container
- 11 Road rage miniseries starring Ali Wong and Steven Yeun
- 13 Snacking before dinner will spoil your \_\_\_\_\_
- 18 Happy as a \_\_\_\_\_
- 20 Friend of Peaseblossom and Puck
- 21 Somehow I can never seem to find my container \_\_\_\_\_s
- 22 Nori, for instance
- 25 What an irritable pea might do
- 27 I forgot to pick up corn and got an \_\_\_\_\_ful about it
- 28 Nickname for a fan of Miss Tyffanie Morgan
- 31 Disgusting, unpalatable
- 33 Dragon, upon arriving in downtown Kingston: "So, where's this \_\_\_\_\_ I've been hearing about?" (2 words)
- 36 What spiders use to catch food
- 37 Rolled or steel-cut cereal
- 38 Seedy fruits or diagrams
- 41 Be careful with that thinly sliced meat, it's \_\_\_\_\_cate
- 42 Picton's Department of Illumination used to hold a winter \_\_\_\_\_BOX festival
- 43 Combinations of watermelon, cantaloupe, grapes, pineapple, etc. (2 words)
- 45 Ovum
- 46 Shape of a cat or a sourdough
- 47 \_\_\_\_\_, Shoots, and Leaves
- 49 Poison found in trace amounts in apple seeds
- 52 Saturated, trans, monounsaturated, etc.
- 54 A safe haven for an evening meal between Division and the Cataragui River (2 words)
- 57 Root veg coated in wax at most grocery stores
- 61 When my baby \_\_\_\_\_ their high chair I'll put them in a booster seat
- 62 Wine and cheese improved with it
- 63 A feast for a pig
- 64 Parsley, sage, rosemary, etc.
- 66 Expression of disgust
- 67 My pantry is stocked with all the basic \_\_\_\_\_
- 70 "Do those mushrooms have stems?" "NO" "Why are you shouting?" "THEY'RE ALL \_\_\_\_\_"
- 75 Condition that makes it difficult to regulate blood sugar
- 76 Green, tube-like pod with a mild, grassy flavour
- 78 "Did you want to try some of that little silver fish?" "I don't know, it \_\_\_\_\_ kinda funny"
- 79 Cup lid for a little kid
- 80 Dating app scammer
- 81 Function of a Vitamix or Magic Bullet

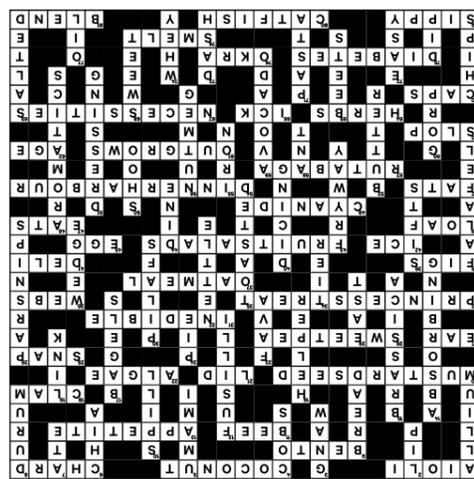
**DOWN**

- 1 Genus of chives and shallots
- 2 Rim of a container or a bit of attitude
- 3 Nibble, like a dog with a bone
- 4 Corn cores
- 5 Rich, savoury flavour
- 6 Seed that absorbs 10-12x its weight in liquid
- 7 She \_\_\_\_\_, no crumbs
- 8 Flour used to make pasta; not to be confused with an Ontario municipality
- 9 "Why are you working at a bakery?" "Gotta get that \_\_\_\_\_"
- 10 What a gossip might do with the tea
- 12 Corkscrew pasta
- 14 Tofu may not taste like much, but it's good at \_\_\_\_\_ flavour
- 15 Cabbage and mustard genus
- 16 Assistant to ground beef, Hamburger \_\_\_\_\_
- 17 Montreal and New York each have their own way of making these
- 19 Segment of sausage
- 23 Broad bean
- 24 \_\_\_\_\_-in-the-sky
- 26 Carrots' nutty cousins
- 29 \_\_\_\_\_ Side Village restaurant on Division
- 30 Fragrant rice dishes
- 32 Stinging plant rich in vitamins
- 34 The cake was so beautiful, it had me in \_\_\_\_\_s
- 35 Celebrated with a drink
- 36 Type of golf club or potato slice
- 38 Deep-fried Levantine fritters
- 39 What a sieve does with flour
- 40 Chopping into cubes
- 43 Poutinerie on Concession
- 44 Take out or \_\_\_\_\_ in?
- 48 Flavour base ingredients like onions, carrots, celery, garlic, and ginger
- 50 \_\_\_\_\_fly pie is made with molasses
- 51 Salad sauce
- 53 Churned cream or someone who cuts in line
- 55 Fe
- 56 Spice that comes from the same tree as mace
- 58 Uninvited picnic guest
- 59 Toast topping supposedly responsible for millennial money woes
- 60 Good old raisins and peanuts, for short
- 65 "What are those red root vegetables?" "\_\_\_\_\_ me"
- 68 Hozier hit, "Too \_\_\_\_\_"
- 69 Type of peanuts that might make you thirsty
- 70 Let the \_\_\_\_\_ fall where they may
- 71 \_\_\_\_\_ Genova on Wellington
- 72 I like my eggs over \_\_\_\_\_
- 73 Horizontal punctuation mark
- 74 Eaten by Miss Muffet
- 75 If it's not too cold, we could go for a \_\_\_\_\_ in the lake
- 77 Companion to vinegar in 51 down



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

**SOLUTIONS:**



# Meeting My Father Again for the First Time

Julie Salverson reflects on food insecurity, fighting back against global bullies, and the process of writing her memoir *A Necessary Distance*

STORY BY **JULIE SALVERSON**

In 1963, when I was seven and he was forty-six, my father, award-winning writer George Salverson, left Toronto to travel the world. It was probably his first time on an airplane. When he died in 2005, he left only a few boxes of possessions; it took me nine years to get up the nerve to open them. Dad had thrown away hundreds of radio and television scripts that he'd written for hit shows like CBC Stage, *The Littlest Hobo* and *Beachcombers*, but I found a large binder containing seven hand-written notebooks: his moment-by-moment account of the film shoot that took him to fifteen countries, including Japan, Kenya, Indonesia, India and Brazil.

Dad was part of a team shooting a documentary for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). *The Secret Hunger* was commissioned to accompany the *Freedom from Hunger Campaign*, an international initiative launched by President John F. Kennedy in 1960. My father, along with director Gene Lawrence and cinematographer Grahame Woods, flew in small planes with no internet and no phones. The trip took two months, Dad wrote the script in a week, and it aired on a Saturday night, pre-empting *Don Messer's Jubilee*, a popular music variety show. The stories the documentary tells are not tragedies of hunger, but examples of projects that were working, narratives of resilience and resourcefulness. The opening voice-over says that hunger can be overcome, it is now possible to "lift the entire earth by its bootstraps... all men are one and the bell tolls for thee". I have no memory of his absence or of watching the film.

**I read and decipher the scratches of pencil marks. Already they tell me this is not the man I thought I knew. I hope they will lead me to my father.**



George Salverson in Ganvié, Benin, 1963 **IMAGE CREDITS:** Courtesy of Julie Salverson

The notebooks are on delicate paper and the writing is deeply personal. My father is candid about his assumptions, his fears, and his continually challenged expectations. A universalist and a liberal, he was an optimistic 1960s journalist committed to objectivity. The dominant culture he grew up in believed white men were superior, but his mother Laura Goodman Salverson wrote books about poverty, injustice and the treatment of immigrants — she was the first woman to win the Governor General's Award and she won it twice, once for her 1939 autobiography *Confessions of an Immigrant's Daughter*. I wonder what impact this had on his world view and how his thoughts will change over the course of the journey. I read and decipher the scratches of pencil marks. Already they tell me this is not the man I thought I knew. I hope they will lead me to my father.

I read and write through the pandemic as, in 1963, Dad flies from country to country. When he visits farmers outside Jakarta, I research the revolutionary movements of Indonesia; when he chats with FAO officials at the Amul cooperative dairy outside Mumbai, I remember that name from the milk my husband's family in India drinks today; when the team films a wedding in a fishing village, I look for Togo on a map. When Dad writes of being horrified by wild dogs in the Serengeti and bewildered by his heartbreak at the slaughter of a wildebeest, I share his innocence.

Working on this project, which became a published memoir, was sometimes overwhelming emotionally. I'd find other journals where Dad wrote endless budgets and money worries — the life of a writer in Canada. I'd come across a note about my brother or myself and be stunned by something he would say. At the airport in Toronto, alarmed at the distress in his wife's face, "Depth of emotion disturbing... a new realization of lives in common, different from feelings about children, who are temporary comrades." When he is in Kenya and sees all the white golfers and the Black workers, he thinks the Black Kenyans should take their country back. And this: "Maybe Algonquin Park should go back to The Algonquin."

I wrote my way through surprises, delights, grief, all of it about my family and about the world, then and now. I included what was happening in my life, trapped both in lockdown and in the story of Dad trying to understand his complicated responses to other cultures. I felt ‘trapped’, too, in the challenge of seeing my father — a white guy in his forties in 1963 who has never left North America — as a man full of ideas and feelings shaped by many things.

Dad’s notebooks showed me the trip was hard, and fabulous, and terrifying, and illuminating. He was faced with himself and often didn’t like it. He wrote, “Some part of me hates it here, some resentful conservative. It wants to escape, this stupid protected provincial element of me. It’s a combination of ‘Get away at all costs,’ and ‘Hurry on, see more.’” But Dad kept going, he didn’t run home, and it wasn’t only because he had a job to do. He stayed open, honest about his responses. It’s as if he said to himself, “I need to keep doing this. I need to be uncomfortable as I try to live in this explosive disorienting destabilized world. And trust that stories matter.”

Just before I finished my book, I discovered that Grahame Woods, the cameraman, was alive and living in Coburg. I visited him and he asked me what my project was about. I said, “Your film was about world hunger. I’m wondering, what is the world hungry for now?” His wife Gloria snapped, “We’re facing extinction. We blew it.”

I don’t think Dad would say that. Or, not only that. He’d summon up a faith in the power of people to rally, resist, create. He believed in fighting back, he considered it part of his Icelandic and Norwegian heritage and he learned it through a childhood of poverty. He hated bullies — he saw Hitler as one, he would recognize Putin and Trump as the same — and he’d say, “Stand up to them and they’ll collapse.” I think what he would say now is we can all stand up, and it’s time.

But perhaps this is sixties optimism speaking. I wonder how the film would translate now, so I ask my friend Deborah Barndt to take a look. Barndt is almost eighty and has been an educator all her life; in the 1990s, she coordinated The Tomasita Project, which incorporated elements of academic research, art, and activism, and traced the journey of a corporate tomato from a Mexican agribusiness to a Canadian-based fast-food restaurant. Barndt describes it as a “depressing study” that “revealed the insanity of the supply chain and its devastation of biodiversity and cultural diversity. With the neoliberal trade regime, Global South countries were forced by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank to shift to agro-export.” She now co-ordinates The Earth To Tables Legacies Project, focusing on stories of resistance and alternatives like Via Campesina, “the largest NGO in the world with eighty million Indigenous and peasant members in eighty countries, mobilized around food sovereignty and food justice rather than food enterprise or food security.”

Barndt sees in Dad’s film the “sometimes colonial view of Indigenous practices, implying that Shamans and centuries of ignorance and superstition need to be overcome ideologically. Many of those understandings of the Earth and food as sacred are resurging. One of the strongest Indigenous movements today is in Peru’s Andiplano [a large South American plateau, and one location in the documentary] or the Andes where the biodiversity of potatoes is being lauded.” She says that “since 1963, the sites featured in the CBC documentary have represented great struggles between the capitalist industrial food system and these insurgent grass-roots movements.” More recently, she notes that the pandemic and climate change have woken up North American consumers. “There is a growing public awareness of the interconnections of all living things... the climate crisis is also partially caused by industrial agriculture’s dependence on water and agrochemicals and depletion of the soil. The problem of hunger is seen by Via Campesina as more an issue of distribution.”

I ask Barndt about the form of Dad’s documentary, and she answers as a teacher of photography and video production. “The black-and-white footage is extraordinary and moving, also reminiscent of the heyday of documentary photography and film, where it was seen as “objective” and “truth telling”, aided by the authoritative voice over of a renowned British actor.” (Sir Peter Ustinov, perhaps best known for portraying Agatha Christie’s detective Hercule Poirot in multiple films.)

My publisher, Noelle Allen, told me that it’s hard to face the skeletons in our closets, since we don’t know what we’ll find — as families, and as a country. In this historical moment we are all needed to save the planet. That means looking for any resources and stories that can help us move forward, anything that reminds us how to listen and how to be. Canadian essayist Tim Lilburn writes how, when we walk alone in the woods and encounter a deer, we don’t know how to see — just see — the deer, without all the stories and assumptions we bring. It took me six years of writing this book to learn to see my father.

We launched *A Necessary Distance: Confessions of a Scriptwriter’s Daughter* at Novel Idea, and everybody came. I was touched to see people from all parts of my twenty-five years in Kingston. What I didn’t expect was how it would feel to watch each friend walk out the door with my dad under their arm. I had spent almost a decade with my dead father — now I had to let him go.



**JULIE SALVERSON** is a fourth-generation Icelandic Canadian writer whose non-fiction, theatre and opera embrace the relationship of imagination and foolish witness to risky stories and trauma. She is Professor Emeritus of Drama at Queen’s University.

Cameraman Grahame Woods in Ganvié, Benin, 1963 **IMAGE CREDIT:** Courtesy of Julie Salverson



# The Road to Greater Festival Waste Diversion in Kingston

STORY BY **GABRIELLE DEE** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **AL BERGERON**

PICTURED: Gabrielle Dee



**T**he weekend I first volunteered at the Skeleton Park Arts Festival (SPAF) waste diversion station in 2021 was life-altering for me in the most positive of ways. During my pandemic-era graduate studies at Queen's, I had read about best practices for waste diversion and I realized that SPAF was utilizing the very methods described in the research literature. The fact that the majority of the festival's waste was organic, because vendors sign an agreement to not use plastics when serving food, really resonated with me. Organics are composted locally (right on the outskirts of Kingston at Tomlinson Organics) unlike recyclables and garbage. Recyclables are transported to Napanee, and then often to other provinces and to the United States on their long journey to potentially becoming something else. Garbage is now transported hundreds of kilometres to either the Moose Creek landfill north of Cornwall (206 km away) or the Twin Creeks landfill near Sarnia (497 km away).

Composting is by far the most efficient way to reduce the carbon footprint of producing waste. Diverting organic waste is strongly promoted in Kingston's Climate Leadership Plan. I wrote about my experiences at SPAF in my

master's thesis and have since been on a mission to replicate what SPAF does at other events in the city.

Obtaining permission to divert waste has not always been easy. I am very proud to have been asked to help initiate the reusable dish program at the Memorial Centre Farmers' Market and to get vendors to use truly compostable cups instead of the disposable plastic to-go cups that were in use. This was especially important since Circular Materials, the company now responsible for the city's recycling pickup, only collects residential recycling — meaning Market pickup was no longer available. The City of Kingston however, continues to collect garbage and organics.

This past winter I saw a request for volunteers for the upcoming South Frontenac Summer Kickoff Music Festival. I answered and said I would love to volunteer if I could help divert waste. A festival organizer wrote back "Waste isn't usually diverted, but what do you have in mind?" I replied that if they could set me up with a table, a tent, and some bins, I would be willing to sort the garbage from the festival. The organizer liked the idea. The only issue was that organic waste could not be collected by South Frontenac Township because they do not have a green bin program. I was able to divert all the cans and most of the plastics and fibers brought to me, but I also diverted enough organics to fill four large garbage bags. I stuffed the organics into my Subaru and on the following Monday I drove to Tomlinson Organics on Joyceville Road (smelling heavily of poutine) and filled the bucket of their front-end loader twice.

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For several years I had been trying without success to get permission to divert waste at ArtFest. This past winter, I contacted the new organizers of ArtFest and was told "Yes, we would love to divert waste". Meetings were held, I advised them of the methods used by SPAF, and the organizers were able to set me up. I was provided with numerous bins from TakeAway & Recycle (a private contractor referred to me by Tomlinson) who would divert everything we collected from festival patrons who happened to come by the food court. I did have some help because other volunteers covered for me on the Sunday when I worked at the Market. I was excited (and exhausted) to have diverted over 1,400 gallons of waste, half of which was organics!

The successes of the South Frontenac festival and ArtFest got me focused on two other festivals that I knew about from my work at the Market — RibFest and Poutine Feast. I tried to work with City officials to plan to divert waste at these festivals but realized that a more direct method of inquiry was needed. I emailed the organizers of both festivals with my offer of free waste diversion, and both responded positively. Indeed, the organizer of RibFest said he usually diverted waste in other cities but did not have a contact to help him do so in Kingston. I provided local contacts and information, and his waste contractor provided me with what I needed. This time I had a dumpster for the organics and we over-stuffed it! I was able to divert 1.41 tonnes of compostables during RibFest, compared to the 0.67 tonnes of garbage produced by patrons — meaning that 68% of trash was diverted.

The organizers of Poutine Feast said they were interested but did not have enough time to set up diversion this year. They asked me to reach out to them next year as early as I can, and I intend to do that.

My vision for the future is to work in association with the City of Kingston Events Team to create contracts for festival organizers that would include a requirement to divert waste, the use of compostable food serviceware, and the elimination (or at least reduction) of plastics. Having a team of paid helpers to ensure that waste diversion is done properly would also be crucial. These could be Neighbourhood Climate Action Champions (a program run by the City of Kingston, see the City's website for details).

I hope to discover other festivals in the area and to help anyone interested in reducing and diverting their waste. If you have suggestions, or want to help, you can find me next to the info booth at the Sunday Market, collecting the dirty dishes. I am always happy to chat!

**GABRIELLE DEE** is an Assistant Researcher and Adjunct Professor in the School of Environmental Studies, Queen's University. She is an avid waste reductionist, volunteer, biologist, puppy raiser for Kingston 4 Paws, and lover of the Skeleton Park community (even though she lives in the "burbs").