



Used chairs find a home

Woodroffe High School inherits the NAC's old theatre seating p. 9



Price tag on Christmas

How the holidays make it feel like spending is a civic duty, p. 5

Centretown News

Police face race scrutiny

By Matt Yuyitung

Ottawa's police department is at odds with the chief commissioner of the provincial human rights body over how to address the fact that black and Middle Eastern people are much more likely to be pulled over for traffic stops than other motorists in the city.

A recent report by York University researchers found black people were two times more likely, and Middle Eastern people were three times more likely, to be stopped.

The report drew from data on 81,000 traffic stops over a two-year period, and is one of the first of its kind in Canada.

"As the Research Team has pointed out throughout this project, the report does not conclude racial profiling, but it's clear that there are variances and anomalies in the analysis that must be researched further," Ottawa Police Chief Charles Bordeleau said in a statement. "We need to explore these findings further to understand the reasons for those differ-



Lysia Filotas, Centretown News

Dahabo Ahmed Omer, co-chair of the Justice for Abdirahman Coalition, stands at a makeshift memorial for Somali-Canadian Abdirahman Abdi, 37, who died in July after an altercation with police.

ences."

In a deputation to the Ottawa Police Services Board, Renu Mandhane, chief of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, said the findings are "entirely consistent" with racial profiling.

"For the required systemic change to happen, it is important that police services don't focus their efforts on denying racial profiling and managing community expectations," said Mandhane.

"Instead, they must publicly commit to changing their practices, developing a human rights organization change plan, and then doing the hard work required to make that happen."

Dahabo Ahmed Omer, co-chair of the Justice for Abdirahman Coalition — a group named for Abdirahman Abdi, a Somali-Canadian man who died earlier this year while being arrested by Ottawa Police — believes calling it

racial profiling "makes a big difference."

"By saying it, you're acknowledging the issue as it is," she said. "You're saying here's the issue and now here is how we're going to face it."

Omer also urged the police to do "tangible, concrete things the community can see" to fix the problem and rebuild trust.

See **ADVOCATE** on page 2

Kitigan Zibi files claim for the Hill

By Lyndsay Armstrong

An Algonquin nation in Quebec has launched a land-claim lawsuit asserting rights over a high-profile swath of downtown Ottawa including Parliament Hill and LeBreton Flats, potentially complicating the NCC's ongoing redevelopment of the Flats and Windmill's planned "Zibi" commercial-residential real estate project on adjacent lands around the Chaudière Falls.

The claim, encompassing Centre Block and the Peace Tower, the Supreme Court building and the Canadian War Museum, was filed by the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation, a community of Algonquin people based in Maniwaki, Que., about 150 kilometres north of Ottawa.

The claim was filed in Ontario Superior Court in Ottawa on Dec. 7, and names the defendants as the Attorney General of Canada, Ontario, and the NCC.

See **QUEBEC** on page 3

War tributes in limbo

By Jolson Lim

The federal Liberal government says it will consult Canadian veterans and other stakeholders before deciding what to do with two military heritage projects in downtown Ottawa that were announced by the previous Conservative government last year.

The first project is a 2.8 kilometre-long Memorial Route connecting several military history sites in the heart of the capital. The route would be the centrepiece of the National Capital Military Commemoration Plan.

The Memorial Route was designed to begin at the Canadian War Museum on Wellington

Street west of Parliament Hill, stretch east along Wellington past several historic sites before turning south on Elgin Street near the National War Memorial, and finally ending at the Cartier Square Drill Hall near Ottawa City Hall.

The second project is a national memorial dedicated to the 99 Canadian recipients of the Victoria Cross, the highest honour awarded to Commonwealth soldiers. That monument would be erected at Richmond Landing, where the Royal Canadian Navy Monument is already located and an Afghanistan War memorial is expected to be built.

Richmond Landing is a small peninsula of land bounded by



Government of Canada

Canada's version of the Victoria Cross was created in 1993.

Victoria Island, the cliff on which the Library and Archives Canada headquarters is situated, and the Portage Bridge connecting Ottawa and Gatineau.

See **DECISION** on page 2

Knox reunites refugees

By Matt Horwood

A refugee family from Syria has been reunited in Ottawa thanks to members of the Knox Refugee Committee, based at Centretown church.

The committee welcomed the five remaining members of the Tayar family on Nov. 22.

The eldest daughter had arrived four weeks earlier, and she had been anticipating the arrival of the rest of her family ever since. The family had been waiting in Lebanon for more than a year to be admitted to Canada.

The committee at Knox Presbyterian Church, located at 120 Lisgar Ave., raised more than

\$40,000 for the family's refugee settlement fund. Of that money, \$12,000 is dedicated to housing for the family.

The money to bring the Tayar family to Canada was raised through private sponsorship.

Knox committee member Laurie Fyffe says that the organization has pledged to support the family financially for a year.

"You pay for their basic needs, and you work with them to help them adjust to life in Canada," she said. "You help them get language lessons, jobs, education, whatever you can. It's all about preparing them for life in Canada."

See **CHURCH** on page 2

NEWS

Church resettles displaced Syrians

Continued from page 1

The Tayar family was forced to flee from the Syrian city of Aleppo after their home was destroyed by rebel airstrikes.

Committee member Lisa Jennings said the family was being persecuted because of their Christian faith.

"Christians in Syria are very much at risk right now," she said. "They were stopped on the road between Homs and Aleppo by a rebel group and their names were placed on a wanted list."

Knox raised money for the family through donations, concerts and silent auctions. Fyffe said she designed a Christmas card that was made available so people could give a donation to the Refugee Sponsorship Fund as a Christmas gift.

Jennings stressed that there are other ways to contribute besides simply giving money, such as donating furniture.

"If somebody says, 'Well I have a fridge I'm not using,' or 'I've got a spare bed that nobody is sleep-



Kelsey Curtis, Centretown News

Nathalie Bradbury of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Pat Wong, Phil and Linda Winkelaar, Laurie Fyffe and Pastor Jim Pot of the Knox Presbyterian. The Tayar family presented the group with a plaque of the Lord's Prayer that hung in their Syrian home before the war.

ing in,' then they can donate to the family and that will be deducted from the total," she said.

Matthew House furniture bank, a faith-based organization caring for Ottawa's marginalized population, picked up and distributed furniture and household goods for the Tayar family.

Jennings said that while Knox Ottawa has not been working in

partnership with other Presbyterian churches, she has been in contact with them for advice.

"Through the church I have contact with the Presbyterian church of Brockville, and Manotick, and these people are good resources for me. I can go to them and say, 'I don't know what to do about this, what do I put here?'" she said.

The church had been waiting for

over a year to welcome the family to Ottawa. Fyffe said that she had spoken to many sponsorship teams that had experienced similar delays.

"We thought that it would only take them a couple of months to come to Canada" she said. "Instead it took more than a year and they were unable to all arrive at the same time."

Advocate: 'Trust is broken'

Continued from page 1

"If I see a police car drive by me, I don't feel safe," Omer said.

"I don't feel safe as a black Muslim woman. I do not feel safe. And that's not ok."

"The Ottawa Police needs to understand the trust is broken right now," added Omer.

According to Chris Rheume, acting superintendent with the Ottawa Police Service, there is a need for more data.

"You have to look at what time of the day people were stopped, were they stopped multiple times," said Rheume. "There's a lot of questions that need to be answered and I don't think we got them all just from this project."

Lorne Foster, who co-authored the study, also sees room for future research, including studies into where potential racial profiling comes from, such as implicit biases in police leadership.

"I'd like to see this (study) be a baseline for people to create a conversation and an action plan," he added.

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Decision not yet made

Continued from page 1

Sarah McMaster, press secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, said the ministry is not scuttling the two projects.

"We want to talk to veterans, veterans stakeholders and interested parties to make sure we get these commemorative monuments and route right," she said.

"Part of our government's commitment to renewing our relationship with the veterans community is to ensure that there is meaningful and in-depth consultation on issues that pertain to them and their experiences," McMaster added.

"Any decision on a memorial will be made to ensure effective planning and spending," said Zoltan Csepregi, who also responded on behalf of Veterans Affairs Minister Kent Hehr.

The pace of the two projects has Conservative MP Erin O'Toole — a party leadership candidate and former veterans affairs minister — accusing the Liberals of willfully allowing commemoration projects to die a slow death.

"They're either trying to cancel it by stealth," O'Toole said, "or minimize it to such a point that they're not actually giving (veterans) the recognition I think they deserve."

The idea of the Memorial Route was proposed by Veterans Affairs

and announced in 2015. The National Capital Commission, under the authority of the Department of Canadian Heritage, is the agency responsible for implementing the commemoration projects.

Canadian Heritage is tasked with choosing the themes of new commemorations and acts as a project manager for both the Afghanistan and Victoria Cross memorials. The Memorial Route was intended to link various monuments of military significance in downtown Ottawa and allow tourists with an interest in Canada's military history to view all the related sites in one trip.

The route also was meant to provide opportunities for new memorials to be constructed. A new 'Remembrance Precinct' where Wellington Street meets the Portage Bridge was to accompany new memorials. The precinct was to include Richmond Landing and the property directly east of the War Museum on Booth Street.

The NCC's board of directors voted in June 2015 to proceed with public consultation on the military commemoration plan, according to a press release from that month. A version of the plan for stakeholder consultations was created in May 2015 and published online.

This story was produced in collaboration with iPolitics.

NEWS

Giving on the menu at Art Is In

By Salma Mahgoub

When Kevin and Stephanie Mathieson learned that their restaurant could help provide free meals to youth in need, the couple thought it was a great chance to give back to their community.

Their Centretown restaurant launched a new partnership this month with Mealshare, a Canadian non-profit working to end youth hunger.

"It really sticks with our core values," said Stephanie Mathieson, co-owner of Art Is In Bakery, located on City Centre Avenue near Bayview station. "We really want to be part of the community and make a difference that way."

Mealshare, which came to Ottawa five months ago, celebrated over a million meals served to hungry youth across Canada as of Nov. 1. Of those meals, 11,514 were served in Ottawa. The program is adding eight new partners in the city this month in hopes of increasing those numbers.

Since its launch in 2013, Mealshare has worked with more than 200 restaurants in seven cities nationwide. The group aims to provide a free meal for each purchase of a Mealshare-labelled menu item at partnering restaurants.

These partners select a few items on their menu to mark with the Mealshare logo. If a customer chooses one of these items, they get their meal at the regular price. But they also



Heather Botham, Centretown News

Kevin and Stephanie Mathieson, owners of the Art Is In Bakery, have recently partnered with Mealshare.

help provide a meal to a hungry youth. Mealshare calls it a "buy one, give one" model.

"If people chose to buy, let's say, one of the sandwiches that is part of the Mealshare (program), there's an amount attached to this that we owe the association at the end of the month," said Mathieson.

Mealshare collects this money to give monthly cheques to their local charity partners. Half of all meals served are delivered by these charities, while the other half are provided by Mealshare's international partner, Save the Children Canada.

In Ottawa, Mealshare's primary partner is Operation Come Home, a walk-in centre for youth headquartered on Gloucester Street in Centretown. The charity uses the donations from the program to shop for meals to serve during its daily drop-in hours.

"It's really wonderful because

in the past it's (been) very difficult to afford things like meats," said Lynda Frank, OCH programs and services director. "With the funding we've received through Mealshare, we're actually able to provide really good, hardy meals every time people are here."

She said 1,500 meals were served through Mealshare last month to about 200 youth. Cristina Dufaure is one who benefited from the service.

"I have food in my fridge every day and my belly is full in the morning," said Dufaure. "If it wasn't for the food bank here I probably would have starved some days."

The 25-year-old said she gets milk, fruit and meat from the centre, where she's been coming every week day since she moved to Ottawa last year.

She said she even hopes to organize a bake sale to raise funds for more meal options and to

help draw more youth to the food service. "I think if people saw that more people are coming, we could get more help," she said.

The community support for a project like Mealshare in Ottawa has been unbelievable, said the group's Ottawa community leader, Mariam Zahouri. "I think Ottawa really does have a strong penchant for grassroots movements," she said. "I feel that Mealshare fits right into the ecosystem that already exists."

Mathieson thinks the idea will get positive reactions from customers. "We get a lot of youth at Art Is In," she said, "so I think it will be well received."

North & Navy, located on Nepean Street, is a second Centretown restaurant launching a partnership with Mealshare this month. One of Mealshare's existing partners in the area, Clocktower Brew Pub, helped serve 760 meals.

Homicide suspect remains at large

Centretown News staff

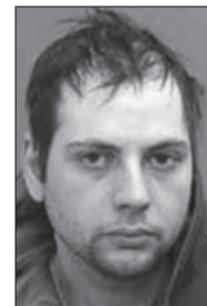
Ottawa Police have issued a Canada-wide warrant for first-degree murder for 33-year-old Steven Frenette.

The man suspected in a shooting death that took place Saturday afternoon in Centretown.

The victim of the city's 21st homicide of the year, identified as Lee John Joseph Germain, 32, was found seriously wounded at 571 McLeod St. after gunshots were heard around 4 p.m. Dec. 10.

Germain was rushed to hospital but later died.

Police later identified Frenette as the alleged shooter and described him as armed and dangerous.



A second Steven Frenette homicide, the city's 22nd of the year, occurred at about 2:45 a.m. Sunday outside a McDonald's restaurant at the intersection of Meadowslands Drive and Prince of Wales Drive. The city's 22 homicides in 2016 represent a three-fold increase over 2015.

Ottawa Police Chief Charles Bordeleau tweeted: "Another two senseless deaths this weekend... Too many lives lost this year."

Quebec-based Algonquin community stakes land claim

Continued from page 1

The claim says that the Algonquin Anishnabe Nation have rights to what is described as "Kichi Sibi Lands" — or Ottawa River Lands — including the Chaudière Islands and the adjacent shoreline on the Ontario side of the river.

The claim was filed in response to a recent agreement-in-principle between the Algonquins of Ontario and the federal and Ontario governments, which did not include the Algonquins of Quebec.

The Ontario treaty established that roughly 36,000 square kilometres of land, including portions of the Ottawa Valley, would be signed over to the Algonquins of Ontario in a deal estimated to be worth around \$300 million.

The Ontario deal is deemed problematic to the Algonquins of Kitigan Zibi, they say, because it does not account for the interests

of Quebec-based First Nations that historically resided on both sides of the Ontario-Quebec border.

Kitigan Zibi chief Jean-Guy Whiteduck said he filed the suit because of frustration at the slow pace of negotiations between his community and the federal government over unceded Algonquin territory encompassing the present-day national capital along with much of present-day Ontario and Quebec.

Whiteduck stated in a press conference after the site-specific land claim was launched that recent discussions with the National Capital Commission have been going nowhere.

The statement of claim states that the Algonquin Anishnabe Nation "physically occupied the Kichi Sibi Lands in a variety of ways," and used this area for a host of activities, including: fishing, hunting and trapping, as

camp sites for meeting, farming and cultivation, gathering berries and medicinal plants, trade, travel routes, and as sacred land that includes burial grounds.

This claim also stated that the Algonquin Anishnabe Nation "had the intention and capacity to retain exclusive control over the Kichi Sibi Lands."

The document cites a number of justifications for the claim, noting that historically there was a system of rules and laws in place confirming and enforcing their ownership of the land, that they controlled the occupation and use of the land, as well as passage along the Ottawa River. The claim argues that a number of agreements were made with other aboriginal and European nations that confirmed the Algonquin Anishnabe Nation's right the possess and control this land.

The nation "has never surrendered its title to the Kichi Sibi

Land," The document states.

Currently, the NCC is negotiating with a group called Rendez-Vous LeBreton and the City of Ottawa to build a new NHL arena for the Ottawa Senators, as well as an accompanying neighbourhood at LeBreton Flats and a host of other public and private facilities.

The controversial Zibi development, which envisions condominiums and office buildings on reclaimed industrial lands on Chaudière and Albert islands as well adjacent shoreline properties on the Gatineau side of the Ottawa River, has been touted by Windmill Developments and the City of Ottawa as a showcase "green" community. It also has the support of the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation near Renfrew, about 150 kilometres west of Ottawa, but is opposed by Kitigan Zibi and a number of other Quebec-based Algonquin communities.

Whiteduck said he's not against development, but wants his people to be considered an equal partner in the decisions around development of the Kichi Sibi lands.

The claim specifically cites their right to have a role to "manage" the land.

The statement of claim argues that the NCC and the Canadian government have "economically benefitted from the Kichi Sibi Lands... without transferring those benefits to the Algonquin Anishnabe Nation."

The claim states that Kitigan Zibi and the Algonquin Anishnabe Nation have never been compensated for the use of this land.

An NCC spokesperson did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The NCC and federal and provincial governments had 20 days after the Dec. 7 filing of the claim to submit a formal response.

COMMENT

Hospital site choice a botched operation

The planned site for Ottawa's new hospital campus has been chosen, but the path taken to reach it was unnecessarily convoluted. The new Civic campus is now slated to be built at the former Sir John Carling building site on the Central Experimental Farm after many spoke out against the NCC's top choice.

After six months of review, on Nov. 24 the federal commission recommended the new hospital be built at Tunney's Pasture. The level ground, expansive parking space and proximity to public transit made it the NCC's top pick. But the northerly location and the poor road access were serious drawbacks.

The hospital's board of governors swiftly rejected the recommendation and then reportedly refused to meet with NCC officials to discuss the decision. The NCC's plan ignited a public outcry and a hasty agreement among local powerbrokers — including MP Catherine McKenna and Mayor Jim Watson — that the Carling site was best.

It should be worrying that those in charge did the equivalent of a toddler stamping their foot in anger after the NCC's announcement.

Watson almost instantly threw his weight behind the Sir John Carling site and accused the NCC of not consulting hospital officials enough. What he meant, it seems, was that the hospital board hadn't been informed Tunney's would be the NCC's top pick before the commission's report was finalized and made public.

In a press release, board chair James McCracken said road access, costs and the uncertain timeline in developing a site already occupied by Health Canada were all good reasons for rejecting Tunney's.

As NCC chairman Russ Mills said of the process in an interview with CBC: "It didn't unfold exactly as planned."

The commission reviewed 12 possible sites and hadn't, in fact, reached a unanimous decision for its favoured location. Sir John Carling — its second choice — did.

The site covers about 20 hectares southwest of the intersection of Carling Avenue and Preston Street. On the cusp of Centretown, the new campus will bring the Civic's services closer to downtown Ottawa and near to the Carling station along the Trillium O-Train line.

Environmentalists aren't pleased that what looks to be the final site for the new campus will be on the Experimental Farm — it isn't the valuable research land originally identified as the best site by the former Conservative government, but on the farm nonetheless.

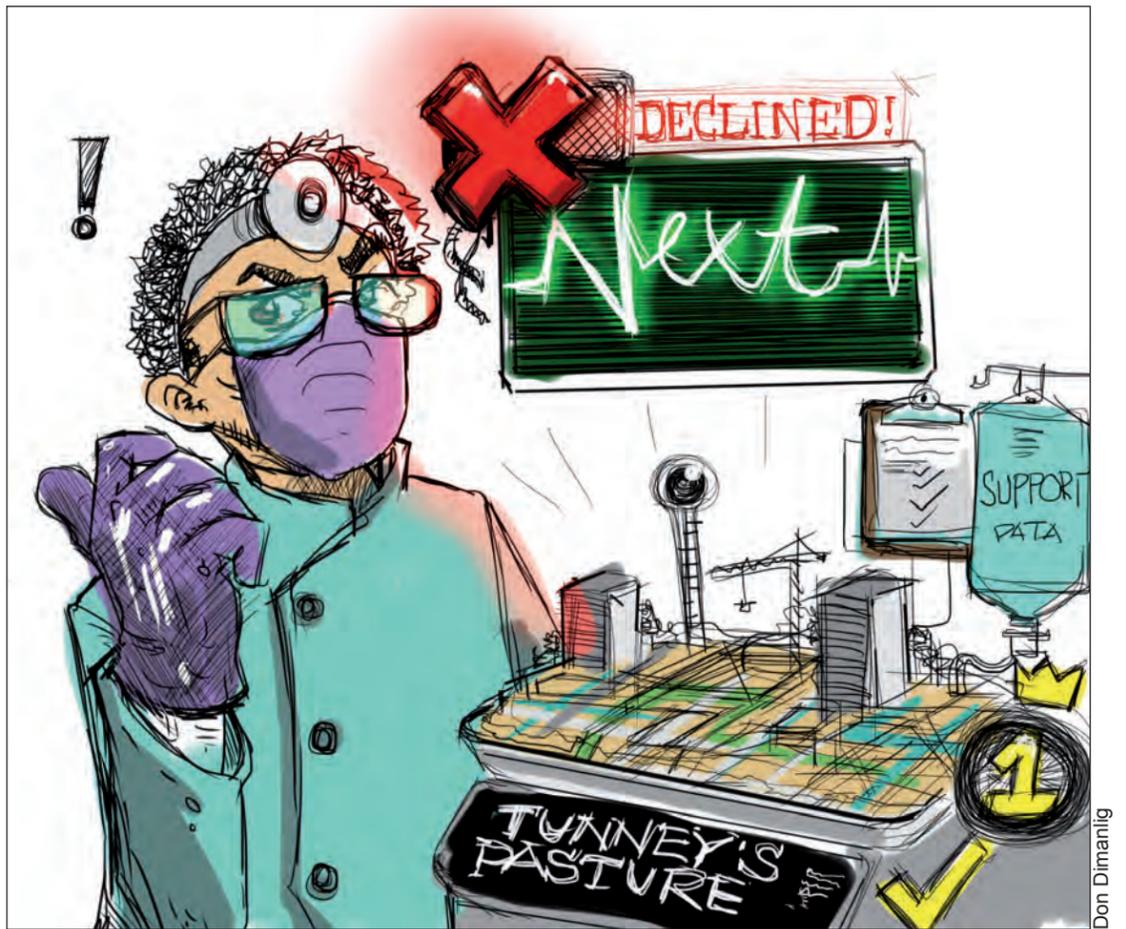
Many people have been left scratching their heads as they tried to make sense of the various twists and turns in this saga before the final decision. The problems began with the Tories' original, out-of-the-blue choice of the farmland across from the current Civic — a decision announced before the public had been consulted at all, and which backfired badly.

Then came the NCC's months-long, multi-stage public consultation and its long-awaited decision to go with Tunney's — a choice abruptly rejected before everyone rallied around the Sir John Carling site.

The decision ultimately came down to the hospital board, though its own dealings with other stakeholders throughout the site-selection process have been messy at best.

Pressure needs to be put on all the players in this sorry tale to do a better job of building and running this important new healthcare hub for Ottawa than they did in selecting its location.

— Anna Carroll



CENTRETOWN COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Saturday, Dec. 17

Elves of the Estate — Billings Estate National Historic Site, 2100 Cabot St., Alta Vista community. Do you have a little elf at home? At our Elves of the Estate event, kids can dress up like elves, visit with Santa and take a look around his workshop, enjoy milk and cookies while reading stories with Mrs. Claus, and make their parents a secret gift! 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tickets: \$6.15 person, \$10.20 pair, \$16.35 family. museums@ottawa.ca; phone: 613-247 4830.

Sunday, Dec. 18

Ottawa Kwanzaa Celebration, presented by Jaku Konbit, Jean Pigott Place, Ottawa City Hall, 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. Kwanzaa is an African-centered holiday which celebrates family, community and culture. Normally celebrated from Dec. 26 thru Jan. 1, its origins are in the first harvest celebrations of Africa from which it takes its name. The Kwanzaa celebration is based on seven principles, with a special emphasis on family unity, and every day one of the candles on a seven-branched called the Kinara is lit.

Wednesday, Dec. 21

Free noon-hour recitals at the Christian Science Church (Metcalfe Street at Gilmour). 12:15 to 12:45 p.m. — Wesley Warren (organ).

Thursday, Dec. 22

OrKidstra's Annual Holiday Concert! Fun for the whole family! No charge, but donations to OrKidstra gratefully accepted. Concert begins at 6:30 PM at the Bronson Centre Theatre (211 Bronson Ave.). The concert will

feature OrKidstra's students (children ages 5-18) singing and playing a selection of classics and holiday favourites! OrKidstra empowers kids and builds community through music! Get into the holiday spirit with an inspiring evening of music and song featuring the kids of OrKidstra.

Throughout December

For over 35 years, the Christmas Hamper Project — hosted by Centretown United Church — has helped thousands of Ottawa families and individuals who have been referred by Centretown agencies. This year, our goal is to supply 175 recipients with boxes of food, toiletries and small gifts to make their Christmas season brighter. Hampers will be delivered on Dec. 23. To pack hampers and help wrap gifts on Dec. 22, please contact Willy at chp2016.volunteers@gmail.com. To deliver the hampers or drive on Dec. 23, please contact Linda at linda.jpollack@icloud.com or phone 613-232-0370. If you prefer, please send a cheque made out to Centretown United Church, 507 Bank St. K2P 1Z5, indicating "Christmas Hamper Project." Click the "Donate Now" button on the church's website at www.centretownunited.org/ and select Christmas Hamper Project.

Throughout December

Friends of the Farm's new book *Blooms* — about the ornamental gardens at the farm — is available for anyone who loves gardens and flowers, or Canadian history. It is the friends' contribution to the country's 150th anniversary in 2017. Available at www.friendsofthefarm.ca.

ONGOING

Dawn Breaker Toastmasters Club — Have a fear of speaking in public? The club can help you overcome these fears in a friendly, non-confrontational atmosphere. Meetings are at 7 a.m. on Wednesday at 269 Laurier Ave. West. For more information: 613-834-1562.

Centre 507 is located at 507 Bank St. The centre accepts financial contributions to assist people in Ottawa who need it most. Donations address homelessness, unstable housing, mental illness, addiction and poverty. For more information, see Centre 507 website: www.centre507.org

Cantonese or Mandarin language lessons for elementary students Saturdays 9:30 a.m. to noon. Provide your child with new language skills this year; \$10 fee for Ontario residents. Ongoing enrollment at 391 Booth St. For more information: www.chinghua.ca.

Friends of the Central Experimental Farm

Protecting and preserving a National Historic Site and treasured public venue in the heart of Ottawa. For more information email info@friendsofthefarm.ca, visit www.friendsofthefarm.ca.

Dalhousie Food Cupboard

The Christ Church Cathedral community provides food, donations and volunteer support to the Dalhousie Food Cupboard. The Cupboard serves about 750 people a month. Contact: Barbara Morris at bmmorris@rogers.com or 613-523-0531

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BUSINESS

Our solemn duty: shop 'til we drop

Viewpoint



Brian Hill

Bah humbug — it's that time of year again. No, not Christmas — a time when we're supposed to reflect on days gone by and share precious moments with friends and family. This is also that time of year when we lose our minds and drop our gloves over big screen TVs, ugly sweaters and knick-knacks we'll most likely forget by the time New Year's Eve rolls around.

In many respects, it's become a civic duty to immerse ourselves in the holidays and embrace the hysteria known as Black Friday, Cyber Monday, Boxing Day — heck, even Boxing Week.

We're drawn into shopping centres by bright lights and holiday displays. We're enticed by offers of unbeatable savings — as if by spending money we're somehow

saving money — and we're told that retailers, who "depend" upon our holiday generosity, will not survive the year if we don't do our part and shop 'til we drop.

Don't believe me? Just wait.

If you haven't seen them already, there'll soon be a slew of news reports detailing the economic importance of holiday shopping — and implicitly (or explicitly) urging consumers to do their part for the greater good. In other words, to go out and buy something.

What you buy doesn't matter, so long as you're spending.

Don't need it? Who cares. Never going to use it? Doesn't matter.

The only things we should think of as consumers — yes, don't dare

Fear not noble shoppers, there's still a week left to make up for last year's failures and perform our duty to Queen and company with honour and dignity.

mention the word "budget" — are the cha-ching of the cash register, the sound a mouse makes when clicking "buy" and the smiles on retailers faces as they run to the bank and we flee to the poor house.

In 2015, holiday sales in Canada were "sluggish," according to media reports. Statistics Canada said the decline in sales was "widespread" and that 10 of 11



Kristine Lee, Centretown News

Christmas-themed gift boxes line the shelves at a downtown Dollarama.

retail sectors saw monthly figures reduced by up to 3.5 per cent.

We obviously didn't do our part.

The StatsCan report, released in February, laid blame for slow holiday spending squarely upon the shoulders on Mother Nature.

"Later snowfalls and unseasonably warm unseasonably warm weather in many parts of Canada may have contributed to lower seasonal purchases," the report said. "Store types typically associated with holiday shopping registered weaker sales in December."

Weak and feeble-minded as we are, Canadians were clearly blindsided by snow and warm weather

— two things that don't typically go together — and were thus incapable of making the annual pilgrimage to our local shopping centres.

Online shopping aside, it was just too much for us. We desperately wanted to get out and pitch in to support the multi-national corporations that do so much for our society, but the weather just wouldn't co-operate.

But fear not noble shoppers, there's still a week left to make up for last year's failures and perform our duty to Queen and company with honour and dignity.

Consulting firms Ernst & Young and Colliers International predict

December holiday sales in Canada will increase by between 3.5 and 4.8 per cent when compared to last year — meaning Canadians are expected to spend as much as \$2.1 billion more this holiday season.

If you feel you haven't done enough to support the economy, and your primal instinct to support retailers in their time of need remains unsatisfied, there's still time to do your bit before stores shutter their doors and another holiday season is behind us.

So pull yourself up by your bootstraps and get shopping — retailers and your country will thank you.

Health centres raise red flags on city's rooming houses

Occupants face more illness, shorter lives, reports Clarissa Leir-Taha.

Residing in an Ottawa rooming house could mean living amongst cockroaches, bed bugs and broken appliances while facing lower life expectancy and poor health.

A new report published by the Somerset West Community Health Centre and the Centretown Community Health Centre shows many rooming houses in Ottawa are failing to meet minimum health and safety standards — and tenants are suffering.

The report's authors are appealing to the City of Ottawa for better enforcement of regulations and for the provincial government to address the need for more affordable housing options for those forced to turn to rooming houses.

"It's essential that as a city we

are protecting our most vulnerable residents," said Somerset Coun. Catherine McKenney. "It really is our responsibility as a city to ensure that rooming houses comply with standards that are set out."

Rooming houses are defined as buildings with multiple rooms that are rented out individually with common living spaces.

As part of the private sector, landlords do not receive the same funding for repairs as government owned social housing, making maintenance in rooming houses a significant issue.

Experts say a combination of a lack of affordable housing and reduced community resources have resulted in tenants being left with no other option but to accept sub-standard conditions.

"They're in their last resort place. They don't want to be on the street, they don't want to go back to a shelter and they're in a place where they say, 'I should probably not complain, hold my head low and just survive,'" said Simone Thibault, the executive director of the CCHC.

Despite rooming houses being monitored by municipal government regulations and receiving yearly inspections, Thibault said a lack of follow-up after the filing of complaints often leads to issues never being resolved.

"Bylaw might be coming, but are they following up after the fact to ensure that it's been done," asked Thibault.

The report's authors see the implementation of "a single unified licensing bylaw" alongside a complaint tracking system as a way to solve inspection gaps and to hold landlords accountable for issues.

Craig Calder, the program manager of environmental health protection for the Ottawa Public Health, the city-funded preventive health agency, said that if public health inspectors find a serious issue, a follow-up visit to make sure it is resolved is guaranteed.

He added that OPH has never had to issue a full closure of a rooming house.

With many tenants suffering from physical or mental illness,

access to healthcare for rooming house residents is an important factor in helping solve current issues.

Thibault said that most landlords are not trained to deal with crisis situations and are often unsure where to direct residents if health concerns arise.

Community health centres provide outreach by sending nurse practitioners and social workers to rooming houses, but often find it challenging to connect with residents.

Joanna Binch, a nurse practitioner with the SWCHC, said many people are reluctant to visit doctors or connect with community health workers about their living conditions.

"Vulnerable people are hesitant to speak out," said Binch.

Budget cuts have also affected community outreach to those living in rooming houses.

"Our demand has grown exponentially but our resources have stayed the same," said Thibault.

Despite current difficulties, experts said rooming houses will not be phased out, as they are a nec-

essary part of the solution to the city's affordable housing crisis.

"Rooming houses are an option that needs to stay," said Thibault.

"We need all options when it comes to affordable housing — we really can't afford to get rid of one option."

Rooming houses provide 1,328 affordable housing spaces, mainly located in the downtown core.

But Ottawa currently has more than 10,000 people waitlisted for subsidized housing and only 34 new affordable housing units were opened in 2015.

The report calls for the implementation of a rent-supplement program provided by the provincial government that would help low-income families afford rental payments.

McKenney echoed the need for new affordable housing to be built in Centretown alongside funding initiatives.

"We need single-family housing, condominiums, we need rentals, we need social housing and we need rooms that are up for rent for those that can't afford more," said McKenney.

BUSINESS

Parking app sparks chatter

By Rachael McCulloch

City representatives have agreed to meet with the founders of CityParking, a parking app that is currently operating illegally in Ottawa.

CityParking, a Montreal-based app that connects parking space owners with drivers looking to rent a prime, downtown parking spot, expanded its operations to Ottawa in November. The app, which operates similarly to Uber, allows driveway owners to post their parking spot when they don't need it, and lets people driving into the city core book an available parking space ahead of time.

Technically, it is illegal to rent out residential parking spots in Ottawa.

"For residential properties, renting of parking spaces is generally prohibited," said Lee Ann Snedden, acting director of planning services at the City of Ottawa. "The general requirement under the city's zoning bylaw is that parking spaces, other than those within a public parking lot or parking garage, must be set aside exclusively for their associated use."

There are some exceptions to this rule within the bylaw, Snedden said, but to have an exception applied to their spot, property owners would have to apply for a zoning change, which can be a lengthy and expensive process.

"We launched in Ottawa a little over a month ago... and we've



Kelsey Curtis, Centretown News

CityParking says its app will reduce cruising for parking spots on busy downtown streets.

seen some really healthy numbers there that are growing everyday," Jessica Mastronardi, manager of public relations at CityParking, told Centretown News in early December.

Currently, the app is focusing on the Glebe specifically, Mastronardi says, because of the high demand for parking spots along Bank Street near Lansdowne Park, including TD Place.

"Right after Lansdowne was done being built, there was a lot of congestion problems," she said. "There's not a lot of parking around Lansdowne for all the people who go to Redblacks games or to see Fury play."

Though the app has had considerable success in Ottawa so far, it has raised some issues since it seems to run contrary to the movement to make Ottawa a less car-centred city.

But this movement was actually one of the ideas that inspired CityParking, Mastronardi said. "We remember Mayor Watson making remarks encouraging people to take the bus in or take

their bikes in, so that's why we decided to target the Glebe area."

While it is obviously a good idea to use public transit or bike downtown during spring and summer, Mastronardi says, it's also important to take into account people who live too far from downtown to bike or don't have access to buses.

"This just gives them the opportunity to book parking ahead of time and cut down on the congestion caused by everybody looking for parking," she said. "We look at it as just an additional tool that people can use to cut down on congestion on the streets."

There are good and bad sides to an app like this, said Hans Moor, an Ottawa-based cycling blogger.

"When people have a dedicated spot organized, the number of drivers cruising in vain through a neighbourhood in search for a spot might become lower," he said. "I could also see this working very well near LRT stations — which, especially when we build LRT phase 2, will likely have more private properties near

stations available to rent out. This would allow people to drive to a suburban station, park the car and roll into downtown by LRT."

On the other hand, making more spots available might also increase traffic into the downtown core, he said.

Pre-booking a parking spot is actually a very effective way to cut down on both road congestion and carbon emissions, maintains Mastronardi.

About 10 per cent of the carbon emitted per day is caused by people driving around looking for parking spaces, she said, and if every driver planned their parking spot ahead of time, road congestion would be reduced by about 30 per cent.

The company isn't looking to cause any problems, Mastronardi says. "We look forward to working with the city, and to look at the regulations and review them and revise them, so that CityParking can operate legally there... and we've been told that we can start working with them in the New Year."

Clothiers join forces for holiday campaign

By Lia Pizarro

A common ground of ideas brought two contemporary apparel shops together this holiday season in pursuit of a shared charitable goal: hosting a community clothing drive for youth in need throughout Ottawa.

The Common Concept Shop in Centretown and the Stomping Ground in the Glebe have joined forces to create what they call the Common Ground holiday clothing drive.

All items brought in for donation will go towards the Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa — a youth-focused, registered charity in the city.

The stores have received more than 500 pieces of clothing and footwear for the drive and expect more donations to come in as Christmas approaches.

Common Concept Shop employee Kevin Belanger said that the collaboration between the two stores is a unique way of giving back to the city, where many of the employees from both shops were born and raised.

"Not many clothing stores in Ottawa do this type of stuff, so it was good to get together and do an event like this," Belanger said.

Both shops admire the work that the youth bureau has done for the city.

"This is the first time for us that we've done something with the Youth Services Bureau," Belanger said.

Read the full story at centretownnews.ca


Yasir Naqvi, MPP
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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



Jamie Pashagumskum, Centretown News

Bandana-clad protesters assembled at Ottawa City Hall to protest screenings of the controversial film *The Red Pill* earlier this month.

Job action thins ranks at labour film fest

By Mac White

Barb Stewart couldn't help but laugh at the irony. The treasurer of the Workers' History Museum in Centretown had finally solved the question that had stumped many of her colleagues: Why were there only 25 people in attendance at Ottawa's version of the Canadian Labour International Film Festival?

"One of our smaller crowds, I think it's our smallest ever," she said.

"It could be because PSAC (Public Service Alliance of Canada) is on strike. They're arguing with the federal government. They went out yesterday so I gather that's why nobody came in — normally there'd be a lot more."

The film fest was held at the Centretown headquarters of Canada's largest federal public sector union, PSAC.

As fate would have it, a group of PSAC workers (under the Alliance Employees' Union) had been protesting outside the location, creating an ethical blockade for any potential guests from the parent union.

Those who did attend the festival were treated to free popcorn and a handful of films illustrating different labour-related issues in the modern world.

The board members say they are thinking of holding another event in early 2017 to screen certain films they didn't get a chance to show this time around.

Divisive documentary stirs protests

By Jamie Pashagumskum

A group of protesters wearing bandanas over their faces protested a film screening at City Hall in early December because they said it is anti-feminist and misogynistic. The masks, they said, were for their protection.

As families skated on the Rink of Dreams nearby, the masked protesters handed out brochures. They stood at the entrance off Laurier Avenue with large red flags that said, "Long live Proletarian Feminism," and "Revolutionary Student Movement."

The movie is *The Red Pill* by the controversial U.S. documentary filmmaker Cassie Jaye.

The title of her latest film is a reference to the movie *The Matrix* and, according to the filmmaker's Twitter page, refers to "seeing the painful truth of reality."

The documentary portrays Jaye, a self-proclaimed feminist, who

begins the film seeking out men's rights activists to understand more about their growing movement, part of a perceived backlash against feminism. Along the way she has a change of heart and discovers that men and women suffer from similar issues.

In the extended trailer for the movie on YouTube, Jaye is interviewing men's right's leader Paul Elam — who has just made a convincing argument about the men's movement — and Jaye says: "I think I agree with everything you said, but there's still some kind of unsettling doubt."

The screening was organized by the Canadian Association for Equality (CAFE) as a fundraiser for their plans to open a men's shelter in Ottawa similar to The Canadian Centre for Men and Families in Toronto.

Meanwhile, outside City Hall, the protesters were angry. One of the brochures they were handing

out said: "City of Ottawa Gives Public Space to Misogynist Organizations!" The organization they referred to is CAFE.

A man with his face covered who would not give his name said that *The Red Pill* was supposed to be a voice for men, and added: "But that's not my voice."

The lone unmasked protestor, Danik Norman, a first-year education student at the University of Ottawa, said they wore masks because they were afraid of a backlash from CAFE and that their protest might be filmed.

The next day a video was, in fact, posted on YouTube named *Protest of The Red Pill Movie at Ottawa City Hall*. The video showed a camera crew filming The Revolutionary Student Movement in what turned into a confrontational exchange of heated words and accusations.

Norman said *The Red Pill* was originally scheduled to be shown

at the Mayfair Theatre in Old Ottawa South, but that showing was cancelled because of complaints from the community.

He said to try to stop the showing at City Hall, he and fellow protesters emailed Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson and used social media.

"This really isn't the sort of thing the City of Ottawa should be supporting and endorsing," Norman argued.

At the screening inside City Hall, CAFE CEO Justin Trotter said he was thrilled as they sold out two shows at a capacity of close to 100 people. "We feel (*The Red Pill*) is a great vehicle to try to bring people together and engage in dialogue," Trotter said.

A third screening of *The Red Pill* is scheduled for 2 p.m. on Dec. 18 at the Main branch of the Ottawa Public Library on Metcalfe Street.

Read stories in full at centretownnews.ca

Music hobbyists celebrate abundance, allure of vinyl records



Viewpoint

Alex Parsons

Sometimes it's good when history repeats itself.

Over the last few decades there have been leaps and bounds in the development of the technology we use to listen to music. From the late 19th century to the early 1980s, record players were among the most popular ways to listen to music at home. From there, the compact disc was invented, and then mp3 players in the late 1990s. Since then, mp3s have been the dominant storage method, as you can listen to them on your computer and phone.

However, over the past several years there has been a vinyl renaissance. It has become trendy to buy records again, which I think is a wonderful thing. If you are a music nut or are even just curious about music history, you really ought to try listening to vinyl.

Yeah, yeah, this probably sounds like something a hipster would say. But this stigmatization is part of the problem. A lot of people miss out on the vinyl sound because it's outdated and many think it's just a fad. Well, if it's a fad that previously dominated the music market for 90 years, there must be something to it.

So just why should you pick up a record player? Well, the key factor is the sound quality. Part of the appeal of records are the slight pops, crackles and hisses that come from playing them.

For some, this may trigger nostalgia, but as someone who never listened to records growing up, I just find it to be a warm, comforting sound that complements the music in a pleasing way.

Another plus comes from the range of records currently available. More and more bands and solo artists are releasing albums on vinyl nowadays and their records are usually pretty easy to find online or in stores such as HMV. The only downside is the price, as new records can cost upwards of \$40.

Fortunately, the real fun comes from buying used records — which can be a great way to discover music — and Centretown is a great hunting ground. There's Compact Music on Bank Street and The Turning Point on Cooper Street — and this is just to name a few. Elsewhere in the central part

of the city are The Record Centre on Wellington Street West and Vertigo Records on Rideau Street.

These stores offer a plethora of old records, many of which can be bought for \$10 or less.

The Turning Point's Shawn Laverie says business is booming. "Some days our vinyl sales outsell our CDs and DVDs. It's definitely a thriving medium for things that should have been gotten rid of, out of print 20 years ago. They've definitely come back."

There's a national celebration of vinyl called Record Store Day held every April 16 since 2007. The event has seen members of the community line up outside record shops for the chance to get their hands on limited prints and other special products.

The Ottawa underground scene makes great use of old technol-

ogies, too. Centretown News recently reported that local label Low Noise had just released its first compilation on vinyl.

Cassette tapes also have a following, and indie bands distribute them through Bandcamp.com. Sound quality on tape players can be pretty close to records, and they're often available for peanuts at thrift shops. The only challenge is finding one that works well.

Aside from quality and availability, record players are just plain fun to use. Placing the needle gently on the record is a satisfying ritual. For those not worried about damaging their discs, records can also be scratched to create that classic DJ sound.

You don't need to be a music nerd or audiophile to enjoy music on a record player. I encourage you all to get spinnin'.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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Photo courtesy of Erin Chapman

Ventilation, Chapman's short film screened at the Mirror Mountain Film Festival, brings mental illness to the forefront for discussion and focuses on the use of art as a coping mechanism.

Local artist conveys struggles via dance

By Sidney Weiss

The studio is dark and silent. No one else is around, no distractions or responsibilities to stress about.

Erin Chapman is alone in the room for that moment.

Letting her thoughts and emotions take over her every limb, she begins to dance and forgets about the outside world for a fraction of time.

Dance has always been there for Chapman. Growing up under the wing of her mother, a professional dancer, Chapman has been performing ever since she could walk.

And after suffering her first depressive episode at 17, she realized dance was also something she could turn to in the darkest moments of her life.

Art, and all its forms, whether music, dance, drawing or writing, are sometimes used for therapeutic reasons, providing an opportunity to express emotions and experiences through creative platforms.

But people like Chapman are now using their work to bring mental illness to the forefront of public discourse.

As the 22-year-old communications student at the University of Ottawa nears the final months of her academic career, Chapman's multimedia and film class final projects allowed her to transform her long-awaited ideas into existence.

She had always wanted to enter one of her dances into a film festival, and start her own website, and recently has had the chance to do both.

On Dec. 4, Chapman's dance film *Ventilation* was screened at the Mirror Mountain Film Festival in downtown Ottawa held at the Arts Court Theatre.

The five-minute screen dance, a collaborative project between Chapman and two fellow film students, Chelsea Ellis and Gregory Chan, focused on the theme of feeling stuck and finding a way to release that feeling.

The festival strives to acknowl-

edge and represent independent and underground artists and filmmakers.

Chapman's piece was entered in the "Local Heroes" category, a collection of up-and-coming work from creators in Ottawa and its surrounding regions.

"The dance starts off very trapped in a corner and then becomes more sporadic and angsty towards the end," Chapman said. "There's that release and cathartic moment. We wanted to make the piece a blank canvas, and let people put their own interpretation on it," Chapman added. "For me, it is about mental health, but for my co-partners it was more about graduating and not knowing what to do next."

Following her screen-dance showcase, Chapman's online initiative, *The Ventilation Movement*, hit the web.

The website serves as a creative and supportive hub for artists to showcase their work while initiating discussion on mental health.

The first collection of material published on Dec. 9 featured multiple dance pieces, music, visual art and written and spoken word.

Chapman wanted to create an outlet for artists to showcase their work, especially surrounding the hardships of living with mental illnesses.

Each piece is unique and has its own way to try to break the stigma.

Spoken word and poetic pieces highlight the struggles of living with depression and anxiety, songs and dance allow the audience to interpret emotion and meaning on their own.

"Art is great because you can create something with your own visions, but also allow people viewing it to put their own interpretations on it," Chapman said. "Everyone experiences and interprets things in their own way, but it is always nice to know there is a community behind you who can help you when you need it."

Read the full story at centretownnews.ca

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

NAC's old seats get second act at school

By Anita Brown

Students, teachers and parents at Woodroffe High School can sit back and relax after the National Arts Centre donated 720 of its old seats for installation in the west-end school's aged auditorium.

Heather Esdon, a member of the school's parent council, was attending a show at the NAC's Southam Hall when she heard that the NAC would be undergoing renovations over the summer. Edson wanted to know what would become of the 1,300 seats in the theatre.

"I was sitting at the NAC last spring as a Broadway season ticket holder wondering what they would do with their old seats once they took them out," Edson said. "So I asked... and they replied saying we would be considered (for the donation)."

The project was then turned over to the school administration.

Woodroffe High principal Bill Arden said the school had been considering organizing a fundraiser to renovate its badly worn auditorium prior to the donation.

"It looked a lot like '70s décor. It was sort of plastic and orange, with the stuffing coming out of

the foam," said Arden. "The seats definitely needed replacing. It was a sight for sore eyes."

Before the project could go any further, it had to be approved by the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.

Board engineers needed to assess the NAC seats and the school's auditorium to ensure they were of the right fit and curvature before beginning the renovation.

It was a job, said Arden, that usually takes the board around three years to complete.

In June, the NAC told Woodroffe the seats were all theirs, as long as they were collected by July 1. This posed another obstacle: where would the school store 720 seats before they were ready to renovate?

After brainstorming among the staff, the parent council and the school board, the seats were properly stowed until it was time to renovate.

The school was able to accelerate the required work orders and have the seats picked up and delivered for storage, and returned in time for the renovation.

Once they had received the seats, the school decided to give



Lysia Filotas, Centretown News

Woodroffe High School principal Bill Arden relaxes in one of the 720 cushioned seats the school received from the National Arts Centre after the downtown performance centre refurbished its theatre.

the auditorium a total makeover. The donation from the NAC rushed all of the jobs that the school would normally be on a long waiting list for. The renovation crew introduced a new colour scheme, painted the walls, redid the carpets and added wheelchair accessibility.

Adler said the response has been overwhelmingly positive.

"Everyone loves it. We've gotten rave reviews for the job

we've done," said Adler. "We are so grateful to the NAC and we're happy that the seats are bringing new life into our auditorium."

The auditorium was scheduled to officially open to the community with the staging of the school's musical production of *The Addams Family*, which ran Dec. 8-11.

The high schoolers won't be the only ones enjoying the comfortable chairs. The NAC also donated some of its old seats to community

theatres across Canada. The Studio Theatre in Perth, about an hour west of Ottawa, received 200 of the seats, while the Astor Theatre in Liverpool, N.S., received 450 seats.

"We are so pleased," NAC president Peter Herrndorf said in a press release, "that the National Arts Centre's Southam Hall seats will help extend the lives of three wonderful theatres in Perth, Ottawa and Liverpool, N.S."

Indigenous works grab spotlight in NAC series

By Gabbi Van Looyen

The National Arts Centre says Indigenous stories will take centre-stage at its Canada Scene Festival this summer.

The festival, which takes place from June 15 to July 30, is specially focused this year on celebrating Canada's 150th birthday.

Rosemary Thompson, the NAC's director of communications, said the emphasis on Indigenous works is part of the Elgin Street cultural centre's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

"There was a call to all institutions to embrace Indigenous language and culture," she explained. "We're lucky because we're a performing arts institution and Indigenous performing arts in general are just gorgeous."

Some of this content will include a performance by the legendary Saskatchewan Cree singer-songwriter Buffy Sainte-Marie, an opera on 19th-century Métis leader Louis Riel, and a musical called *Children of God* written by Northern Ontario Oji-Cree playwright Corey Payette on residential schools.

Heather Moore, executive director of Canada Scene, said the opera, *Louis Riel*, is a significant

inclusion. She said the original production by composer Harry Somers in 1967 did not involve Indigenous artists despite the opera being about the life of one of the founders of the Métis nation and leader of two Indigenous uprisings in Western Canada.

"We're saying in 2017, when the NAC is 50 years-old, the theatre that represents our country is English, French and Indigenous," Moore said. "It's something the NAC is taking on as part of our role and it's pretty exciting."

The opera is a joint project between the NAC and the Canadian Opera Company.

Jennifer Pugsley, media relations manager for the COC, said by email that the opera's director, Peter Hinton, was chosen due to his "long-standing relationship and involvement with First Nations artists."

She said the opera will feature Indigenous artists in principal roles. Some of the opera's lyrics will also be translated into Cree and the Métis language Michif.

Pugsley said she is hopeful the COC will be able to recruit a Métis costume designer for the production as well.

Read the full story at centretownnews.ca



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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Museum critter count tops 14M

By Manuela Bárcenas

Curators at the Canadian Museum of Nature have always known that only a fraction of their vast collection of specimens — preserved animals and plants, fossils and many other items gathered during more than a century of research across the country — is on public display.

But now, officials at the McLeod Street museum know exactly how vast that collection is. After a recent inventory-taking project, the museum can confidently boast that there are 14.6 million specimens in its holdings at the main museum and its natural history research collection stored at a repository in Gatineau.

The Natural Heritage Campus in Gatineau opened in 1997, the

same year the museum calculated its collection size for the first and only previous time.

“They counted a collection of 10 million specimens, but the problem is we didn’t know exactly how we came up with that number, so we wanted to know if it was still accurate,” said Jean-Marc Gagnon, who curates the invertebrate collections and is currently the section head of zoology.

Gagnon took the lead in the counting project, which started in April. He said the specimens found vary between the size of microscopic zooplankton and the skeleton of the largest animal on the planet, the blue whale.

As part of the collection, the museum counted 83,600 vertebrate fossils (including dinosaurs), 753,000 fish, 251,000 reptiles and

amphibians, and 143,000 birds. The number of mollusks, crustacea, parasites and worms totals 5.76 million, and the museum’s insect collection includes 1.36 million individual critters.

According to Gagnon, this collection is a valuable resource for research, and maintaining an updated record of its diversity will be essential for future researchers and scientific projects.

“Part of the reason is to be able to express to the government and to the public how much we have here and how important it is,” said Gagnon. “But also for our kids in the future, as they’ll be the ones studying it, and they’ll be the ones trying to save the planet.”

Read the full story at centretownnews.ca



Photos by Martin Lipman, Canadian Museum of Nature

A tray with dozens of bird's eggs (top) is among the museum's holdings. Invertebrates curator Dr. Jean-Marc Gagnon and assistant collections manager Judith Price (now retired), with a multitude of marine specimens at the natural history preservation site.

Greetings



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SPORTS & LEISURE

Older rinks on thin ice

By Michael Nellis

A new multi-pad Sensplex arena at LeBreton Flats — part of the plans to redevelop the sprawling Centretown property west of Parliament Hill — could lead to the closure of McNabb Arena or other central-area rinks, observers say.

And this could drive up costs for not-for-profit minor hockey associations, according to league executives.

Michael Skeggs, president of the Ottawa West Minor Hockey Association, said a new Sensplex facility at LeBreton Flats could lead the city to close McNabb, Brewer or Tom Brown arenas — older rinks that have been in declining condition for some years, according to Skeggs.

“I would bet McNabb Arena will be closed over Brewer or Tom Brown,” Skeggs said. “But one rink will close for sure. Not sure when, but it will.”

Late last week, the National Capital Commission board approved the RendezVous LeBreton proposal for the redevelopment of the historic Ottawa neighborhood LeBreton Flats.

The proposal, put together by a group that includes current Senators owner Eugene Melnyk, includes a “sports training facility with two new ice pads,” according to a recent CTV News report.

The complex would be located close to Tom Brown Arena and



Kristine Lee, Centretown News

Skaters enjoy a glide on the ice at McNabb Arena during a public skating session in early December. Some hockey officials think an older rink may be shut down when a new downtown Sensplex is built.

Bayview Yards.

It would add two ice pads to Hockey Eastern Ontario’s Bytown district, which encompasses the central area of Ottawa. Centretown, located in the centre of the district, only has one arena — McNabb, located on the corner of Percy Street and Gladstone Avenue.

Daniel Danis, chairman of the Bytown district, said losing McNabb Arena would not be good for the local minor hockey associations. It currently relies on city ice rates that are considerably lower than what is charged at private facilities, such as the multi-rink Sensplex facilities in Gloucester and Kanata.

“You’re looking at between \$300 and \$350 at one of the shiny new Sensplex rinks,” said Danis.

“We have the ice with the city at \$180.”

Danis said the Sensplex facilities don’t have to pay property taxes as part of their 25-year deal with the city of Ottawa. He doesn’t find this fair, considering the registration costs imposed by Hockey Canada on parents who pay the fees.

“The Sensplex gets tax free to help them out, but they’re still raking in lots of cash,” Danis said. “It doesn’t help the taxpayers who pay for their kids to play hockey.”

The Bell Sensplex, completed in December 2004, was the first public-private partnership facility to be built under an agreement between the Ottawa Senators and the City of Ottawa. In addition to waived property taxes, the city also removed development charges

for the construction of the first Sensplex.

The process was repeated for the opening of the Richcraft Sensplex in Gloucester in August 2014.

Since the opening of the two facilities, the Sensplexes have hosted minor hockey tournaments sanctioned by HEO. The tournaments have been successful and often fill up with teams from out of town, mainly from Ontario and Quebec, according to Lucas Cacciotti of the Gloucester Hockey Association, the association that includes the Richcraft Sensplex.

However, when teams choose to register in Sensplex tournaments, it can reduce interest in community-run tournaments put on by associations such as the Ottawa Centre Minor Hockey Association, said Cacciotti.

Rideau Hall skating rink gets facelift

By Alanna Smith

Two iconic features of the Rideau Hall estate are getting refurbished for Canada’s 150th anniversary.

The upgraded Rideau Hall rink, the oldest continuously operated skating surface in North America, and the adjacent Dairy Building — which dates back to the 19th century but has received a 21st century facelift — will showcase the ongoing legacy of Ottawa’s vice-regal residence and its longstanding connection to the development of hockey and other winter sports in Canada.

The National Capital Commission and the Governor General’s office partnered to transform the old Dairy Building into the Rideau Hall Winter Pavilion, which is one of seven Confederation Pavilions being unveiled as part of the country’s sesquicentennial celebrations in 2017.

The NCC said it chose unique but under-used sites around Canada’s capital to shine a light on the country’s rich heritage. The pavilions are meant to be a special attraction for both residents of the Ottawa-Gatineau region and visitors to the capital next year.

Nearly as old as Canada itself, the 121-year-old Dairy Building was relocated and refurbished to serve as a heated shelter for visitors to lace up their skates before gliding across the historic rink.

Read the full story at centretownnews.ca

After football and baseball wins, pressure’s on Ottawa hockey



Viewpoint

Curtis Panke

During the Grey Cup a few weeks ago, I was watching the game — like many fans — with a couple of friends at a bar, in front of multiple TVs, with a cold drink in my hand and plenty of food to go around.

After Ottawa’s Bakari Grant batted Calgary’s final overtime pass attempt from the air, sealing the Redblacks’ shocking victory over the Stampeders and earning Ottawa its first Grey Cup championship since 1976, my friend — a lifelong Ottawa Senators fan — made an interesting point about the Redblacks triumph and its potential impact on the city’s other sports teams.

“Imagine the pressure on the Senators and Eugene Melnyk after the Redblacks win the Grey Cup and the Champions winning their (Can-Am baseball league) championship.”

That’s right Ottawa sports fans, a winning culture has been established here in the nation’s capital — without the help, at least in recent years, of the Ottawa Senators or the Ottawa 67’s.

Over the past year, soccer, baseball, and football have taken centre stage over hockey with the success of Ottawa Fury FC, the Ottawa Champions and the Redblacks.

It started last year when the Fury finished tied for first in the North American Soccer League with a 15-11-4 record. The team won its first Fall Season championship and made it to the NASL Soccer Bowl, where the Fury wound up losing 3-2 to the New York Cosmos.

While the team didn’t bring home the trophy, the Fury’s success gave fans in Ottawa a hunger for a sports championship — any championship. It’s something that the city hasn’t experienced since the 67’s won the Memorial Cup in 1999. Before that, in 1995, the Ottawa Lynx won the Triple-A International League’s Governors’ Cup.

Now, the city’s hunger for a champ has been satisfied twice in a single year.

While the Fury failed to capture their first ever championship, the Ottawa Champions picked up the mantle and took home the 2016 Can-Am League honours; in just the team’s second season, the players enjoyed a playoff run worthy of the name on their jerseys.

In the finals, the Champions found themselves down 2-0 in the best-of-five series after losing twice at home. Yet Ottawa pulled

off three straight wins in New York to secure the league title.

The Redblacks capped off 2016 with their underdog victory over the Stamps. Despite becoming the first team to win their division with a losing record (8-9-1), the Redblacks beat the reigning champion Edmonton Eskimos in the East Final and beat the No. 1 Calgary team to end Ottawa’s 40-year Grey Cup drought.

With the success of the Fury, Champions and Redblacks, the pressure is now on the Senators and 67’s to keep the winning going in Ottawa.

Despite being a hockey town first, it has been a rough couple of years for the Sens and 67’s. After making it to the Eastern Conference Semifinals in the 2012-13 season, Ottawa missed the playoffs the following year, lost in the first round to Montreal in 2015 and missed the playoffs again last year.

Meanwhile, the 67’s have been knocked out of the quarter-finals in each of the past two years after missing the playoffs in 2013 and 2014.

However both teams are in good position this season to do some damage in their respective leagues. The Sens are currently second in the Atlantic Division with a 16-11-2 record, while the 67’s are just four points out of second place in the OHL’s Eastern Conference with a 13-15-4 record.

With the recent success of three of its local teams, Ottawa is shaking off its label of being a dull government town where few care about the fortunes of its main sports franchises.

Ottawa is becoming a city of winners. Soccer, baseball, and football have done their part in the rebranding. Now it’s hockey’s turn to pull its weight and keep the good times rolling.

SPORTS & LEISURE

2021 bill tops \$10M

By Jacob Harris

While Ottawa gets ready for a year packed with big sporting events, the city's Canada Summer Games Bid Committee is making plans for 2021.

A recent report to the city's finance and economic development committee revealed that if Ottawa hosts the 2021 Canada Summer Games, it would need to put \$10.5 million towards the event's budget.

The rest of the \$43-million budget would be split between the provincial and federal governments.

The Canada Games feature the country's top amateur athletes representing their respective province or territory.

The summer games are held every four years, and next year's event is being hosted by Winnipeg.

Ottawa is currently in the second phase of the selection process, with Sudbury, Niagara, and a partnership between the cities of Kitchener, Waterloo, Guelph and Cambridge still in the running to host the 2021 event.

Cyril Leeder, Ottawa Senators president and chair of the bid team, said at the committee meeting there's no better place than the nation's capital to host the quadrennial nation-building exercise.

"This is low risk, high reward for the City of Ottawa," Leeder said.

The committee approved a \$500,000 deposit for the bid to be included in the city's 2017 budget.

Lindsay Hugenholtz, general manager of Ottawa's bid committee, said hosting the games will have significant financial benefits for the community.

Hugenholtz was deputy CEO for the 2011 Winter Games in Halifax, and said the two-week event generated about \$130 million in economic activity for the city, and more than 1,000 jobs.

She added that the impact the games have on the host city goes beyond money.

"There was a huge amount of community pride and an amazing number of volunteers who came out," Hugenholtz said.

The report, filed by planning manager John Smit, said the Halifax bid is comparable to Ottawa's because of the size of the budget and investment in facilities.

"We feel like we are in a good position moving forward," Smit said about the chances of winning.

The report says about \$8 million of the city's contribution to the games would go towards upgrading recreational facilities such as the Nepean Sportsplex and the Terry Fox Athletic Facility at Mooney's Bay.



Courtesy of Ottawa 2017

The Red Bull Crashed Ice competition takes place in March near the Rideau Canal headlocks.

Downtown braces for icy blast

By Carlos Verde

The City of Ottawa will kick off its high-profile Canada 150 events with the sharp sizzle of skates on ice in March, when downtown will be transformed into a downhill ice-cross track for a Red Bull Crashed Ice event.

The two-day event, scheduled to take place March 3-4, will feature a course centred around the Rideau Canal locks and Fairmont Château Laurier hotel.

"This is an exciting event for

Ottawa, and Fairmont Château Laurier will be in the heart of the action, so we anticipate it being very lively around the castle," said hotel spokesperson Deneen Perrin. "It is about more than just our hotel — it is about the entire city and the wonderful promotion it brings Ottawa."

While congestion around the area is a concern, another challenge will be the creation of the sloped, winding ice track on which its racers skate.

"They'll have to have some sort of compressor system, to pump glycol under the ice — you can't skate on water," said City of Ottawa ice manager Tyler McDonald. "They obviously won't have a zamboni, so you have to do home floods — a fine mist or spray — otherwise water will accumulate at low points."

Temperatures in the national

capital region typically hover at or just below zero in early March, which could limit the naturally-aided freezing process Crashed Ice benefits from at other tour stops in Quebec City and northern Europe.

"If they have a proper refrigeration system, they should be able to make consistent ice from the top of the track to the bottom here," continued McDonald. "If they can make NHL-quality ice for outdoor games in California, then I'm sure they can make an ice-cross-calibre surface here."

Assuming the intricacies of ice-making are successfully managed, the international event's first-ever stop in Ottawa could be an economic and touristic boom.

Construction on the temporary track and surrounding venue is expected to begin in mid-February.

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NEWS

Farm site for Civic

By Lyndsay Armstrong

After months of controversy and deliberation, the new Civic super-hospital has found its future home at the former site of the Sir John Carling Building on the northeastern edge of the Central Experimental Farm.

Heritage Minister Mélanie Joly approved the site Dec. 2. She said in a statement that she's asked federal officials to "make all the necessary preparations to make this land available as the future location."

The site was home to the headquarters of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada from 1967 to 2010. The 11-storey building was demolished in 2014.

The decision represents a blunt rejection of a recommendation recently made by the National Capital Commission, which identified a site at Tunney's Pasture, near the corner of Scott and Holland streets, as the best location after months of study and public input.

Tunney's Pasture — currently home to Health Canada — was promptly rejected by hospital officials and other stakeholders who cited a host of problems with the location, including poor patient access on congested streets, potential delays in the building process, and high costs.

Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson and local Liberal MPs and MPPs agreed that the Tunney's Pasture location is heavily flawed, supported the hospital's rejection of

the site and unanimously supported the Sir John Carling choice.

The site was selected because it is centrally located and accessible by a highway ramp at Rochester Street. It's also walking distance from the Trillium Line O-Train station on Carling Avenue and close to the current Civic hospital site just to the west on Carling.

The chosen property is one of four sites originally proposed by the NCC on Experimental Farm land, but is considered the least harmful to ongoing agricultural research.

Somerset Coun. Catherine McKenney said she's happy with selected site. "I am happy as long as the location is accessible by transit and does not support undue traffic impacts on existing neighbourhoods," she said.

Not everyone is pleased with this decision, however. Friends of the Farm, which works to "preserve, protect, maintain and enhance" the Farm, said: "We were very disappointed to learn that despite the (NCC)'s recommendation of Tunney's Pasture, the federal government will offer land from the (Farm) to the Ottawa Hospital for a new Civic campus. The Friends understand there will always be important land needs to be considered, but continually encroaching on National Historic Sites should not be the easy answer," the statement read.

Read the full stories at centretownnews.ca



Cody MacKay, Centretown News

Dalhousie Food Cupboard volunteer Mike Salter at the scene of the crime: a Bronson Centre freezer.

Friends rally for robbed food bank

By Emma Jiayue Liu

A late November break-in at a Bronson Centre food bank in which more than \$4,000 in food and office supplies was stolen has added to the organization's challenges during what's turned out to be a difficult holiday season.

"I saw things scattered all over the floor. I didn't realize there was something missing right away until I walked in," said Mike Salter,

a volunteer at the Dalhousie Food Cupboard. "I saw the fridge was open and I looked at it. It was obvious there was meat missing. Then I realized somebody came in through the window and helped themselves."

Nearly 90 kilograms of pork and beef was gone.

"I am sure there is more than one person, just by the amount they took. They had to have a car."

Salter said the robbery came at a

difficult time when the organization's volunteers are busy making gift bags for their clients. Thieves not only stole food, but also a laptop, a paper cutter, a container of floor polish and a coffee maker.

The community, including other food banks, rallied help.

"This is just such an awful and heartless crime," said Erin O'Manique, executive director at Gloucester Emergency Food Cupboard.

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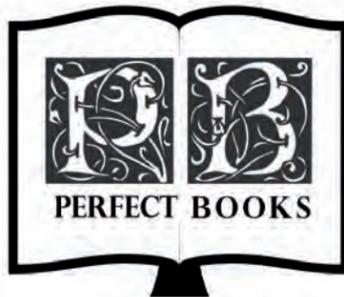


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NEWS

As women mourn, pressure mounts to stare down Trump

By Cassandra Wood

An opposition critic and other advocates for women say they are waiting for federal Status of Women minister Patty Hajdu to send a clearer message to U.S. president-elect Donald Trump condemning his record of disparaging comments and disrespectful treatment of women.

Status of Women Canada recently led a major campaign — The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence — that ran until Dec. 10 and coincided with the annual Dec. 6 commemorations of the 14 women who died in the 1989 Montreal Massacre.

Hajdu has yet to forcefully call out Trump for his sexist remarks on women, such as when he rated contestants on the reality TV show *The Apprentice* by their breast sizes and said which ones he would like to have sex with.

In October, in the final weeks of the U.S. presidential election campaign, Trump's attitude towards women became a major issue in the race after a 2005 video emerged in which Trump recount-

ed trying to seduce a married woman and bragged that as a celebrity he was routinely allowed by women to kiss and touch them and “grab ‘em by the pussy” — remarks for which he later apologized.

In an interview with *CBC Power & Politics* in the midst of that controversy, Hajdu said only that such comments were “not acceptable.” She did not immediately respond to an interview request.

NDP MP Sheila Malcolmson, the party's critic for Status of Women, said it's time for women and vulnerable people to see strong leadership from the top.

“Those of us in positions of power have a special responsibility to give voice where others may not have the same platform that we've been given by the voters,” said Malcolmson. “If I'm the Status of Women minister, I'll be using the voice I'm given.”

That view was echoed by Kim Dubé of the Women's Events Network, an Ottawa-based coalition of women's organizations that hosts the annual Dec. 6 Vigil at Minto Park along Elgin Street to



Kristine Lee, Centretown News

A crowd gathered at Minto Park in Centretown on Dec. 6 to remember the 14 women killed in the 1989 Montreal Massacre.

honour the 14 female engineering students from École Polytechnique in Montreal who were

killed by a gunman in 1989 just because they were women.

“Canadian politicians should speak up, because silence is not an action,” said Dubé. “The 16 days of activism is all about action.”

City to pay NCC \$3M to tunnel

By Michael Sun

A massive sewage and storm-water tunnel in downtown Ottawa has come one step closer to reality after the City of Ottawa approved a payment of just under \$3 million to the NCC for construction beneath its lands.

The Combined Sewage Storage Tunnel project is aimed at reducing the amount of sewage overflow that goes into the Ottawa River and is considered key to the city's most important environmental project in decades.

There are two branches of the tunnel: a north-south section along Kent Street from Chamberlain Avenue to the Ottawa River and an east-west section to run from Stanley Park in New Edinburgh to LeBreton Flats, going mainly along Slater Street through the downtown core.

Construction is already underway at Kent and Chamberlain streets as well as at Confederation Park alongside the Rideau Canal.

The city's finance committee recently approved the easement payment needed to construct the tunnel underground on NCC-controlled lands.

Read the full stories at centretownnews.ca



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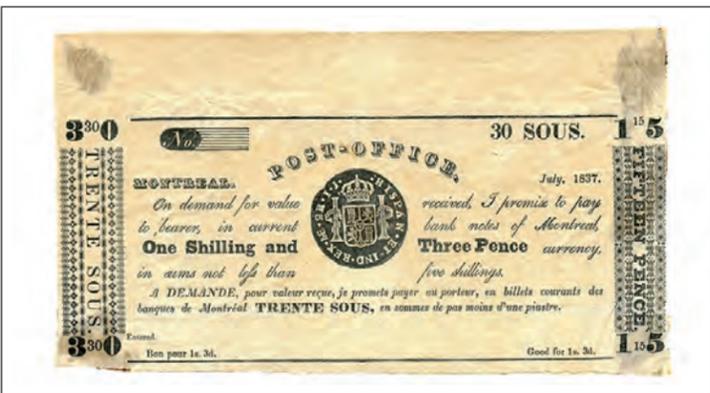
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NEWS



Courtesy Bank of Canada Museum

A rare 15-pence post office note issued in 1837 in Montreal was among items recently acquired by the Bank of Canada Museum.

Museum lands rarities

By Mateo Peralta

After a three-year closure the former Canadian Currency Museum on Wellington Street has begun to stir back to life with a series of acquisitions in advance of its grand reopening and rebranding as the Bank of Canada Museum.

The museum is set to reopen in 2017 with a glass pyramid marking its new entry and an expanded set of temporary and permanent exhibition halls.

Paul Berry, the chief curator of the museum, joined monetary history enthusiasts from around the country for a two-day auction in May at a collectibles store in Montreal. In November, Berry published a post describing his acquisitions.

After spending more than \$20,000 at the auction, Berry had acquired a variety of items, including three rare pieces of French regime money distributed during the ongoing wars in North America between France and England in the mid-18th-century.

"It turned out to be very profitable as we acquired these very significant pieces for the collection," Berry said. "They will go long ways to help fill certain voids we had in the collection as they give us more depth in terms of the materials."

One of the most significant items Berry purchased was a Montreal post office note issued in 1837. While the museum already has a six-pence note from that time, the 15-pence note Berry acquired at the auction is only the second known to exist.

During its three-year shutdown, the museum sought to expand its collection from just currency to display more information and artifacts related to Canadian history.

The new attractions include Canadian stock certificates, a cash register and the earliest credit cards in Canada, according to Berry.

Steve White, a political science professor at Carleton University, said the revamped museum will have an important role to play. "By educating the public about social, economic, and political issues, museums can certainly play a role in promoting civic engagement," White said.

Jenny Giang, a frequent visitor to the former currency museum, echoed White's comment.

"The Bank of Canada has been a pillar of sustaining our economy and I think that the reopening of the museum will help educate Canadians about the history behind the economic policy decisions that impact them every day," Giang said.

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NEWS

Tree allies fight for canopy

By Maxine Betteridge-Moes

The Centretown Citizens Community Association and Dalhousie Community Association have teamed up with four other neighbourhood groups to voice their concerns about the protection of Ottawa's urban forest.

On Nov. 21, the group submitted a report to the city highlighting issues in the Ottawa Urban Forest Management Plan 2018-2037, which was launched in September 2015. The coalition also made several recommendations to ensure the city takes an action-oriented approach to protecting trees in the downtown area.

"If provisions aren't included to immediately and urgently apply the proper planning that we need to establish trees in the community, we may lose much of the canopy," said CCCA president Tom Whillans, who is also chair of the association's trees and greenspace committee. "I don't think anyone in the city would say that's OK."

In addition to the CCCA and DCA, the coalition known as the Urban Core Community Associations includes the Glebe Community Association, Ottawa East Community Association, Low-

ertown Community Association and Action Sandy Hill. The coalition drafted the report as part of its participation in the second phase of the consultation process, which began in May.

The UCCA, led by the Glebe's Angela Keller-Herzog, said it is pleased that the city has taken on the urban forest project. However, she said one of the group's main concerns is whether the city's plan has teeth and whether the recommendations will ultimately lead to action. Of the plan's 30 recommendations, only six are action-oriented and they are not scheduled to start until 2022.

"This lag is disheartening at a time when development is so intense in the area," said Wendy Hunter, chair of the DCA's greenspace committee. "We are strong advocates for increased urban density and public transportation but refuse to accept that this means that our urban core streets are to become increasingly treeless."

One gap in the city's plan that the coalition would like to see addressed is a proactive tree replacement strategy for streets and parks. Other areas of improvement include increased

use of green infrastructure and storm-water management.

The UCCA also suggests creating bylaws to enforce the protection of the city's trees. Whillans said the many mature trees found throughout Centretown and in the Golden Triangle are particularly vulnerable.

"Without a coherent protection of larger trees and smaller trees, there's a very large generational gap in the forest canopy," he said.

The city regulates trees with a 50-centimetre diameter at breast height (DBH). The coalition would like this provision to be reviewed and updated in accordance with other municipalities in Ontario that regulate trees with a DBH between 20 and 40 centimetres. The coalition also suggests the city require tree disclosure information for applications to infill projects, as well as providing tools to ensure tree protection during urbanization, intensification and infill proceedings.

Hunter said the rapid loss of tree canopy as well as space for healthy growth of replacement trees has become a growing problem due to major construction downtown, including the LRT and LeBreton Flats developments.



Kelsey Curtis, Centretown News

Urban forest advocate Angela Keller-Herzog framed by towering trees along Frank Street in Centretown's Golden Triangle area.

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