

THE LAND ECONOMIST



1963 ANNIVERSARY 2023



Association of
Ontario Land Economists

THE COMPANY WE KEEP



The Association of Ontario Land Economists

30 St. Patrick Street Suite 1000, Toronto, ON M5T 3A3

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FEATURES

PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL



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Happy 60th Anniversary AOLE!

By Leslie Savlov

Front Cover and article header design by Benito Del Monte Medina, GFDL

On June 27th we celebrated the 60th Anniversary of AOLE at the Annual General Meeting held at the Royal Canadian Yacht Club.

Although the weather was wet outside the spirits were high inside as there was a reason to celebrate. I actually think the camaraderie and good spirits helped chase the rain clouds away as the weather soon cleared up.

A debt of gratitude is owed to AOLE's founders, so let's look back to Past President Andréa Callà's comments at the 50th Anniversary where he paid tribute to them and gave some background as to why they started the organization.

Andréa said at the time, "Gerry Young, Jim Farr, Sam Craig and others had this 'little idea in 1963 - this vision-of an Association

that would leap the boundaries between the many disciplines expressing opinions professionally on the 'use and economics' of real property'. A vision 'based on being committed to improving the quality of life in urban regions and continually driving innovation, practical and effective change.'¹

On this very same occasion Sam Craig sent this message from California. "It is a source of some pride that 50 years on the efforts of Gerry Young, Jim Farr and (to a much smaller extent) myself to install a modicum of professionalism to the multi-faceted practice of 'Real Estate' is still with us, continuing to 'fight the good fight.'"²

For this 60th Anniversary we got in touch with Sam Craig, the only surviving member of the founding trinity, to ask him to provide us with some details of his career and life. He wrote us back and generously provided us with a fountain of information on his very interesting life. You will find an article about it on page 11 in this issue of The Land Economist.

During the 50th Anniversary Andréa Callà asked "So, what have we accomplished through this Association?" He remarked, 'look around you tonight at the city skyline.... at the impressive communities within communities that are being realized - communities that have been shaped by the core philosophies and ideals of the AOLE.' Through sharing of ideas in meetings, seminars, research reports, and the Journal, we 'have come to influence the way communities are being built, and helping to evolve how we live, work and



Commemorative pin
60th anniversary.

¹ The Land Economist Summer 2013 Issue 43 No 2 page 3

² The Land Economist Summer 2013 Issue 43 No 2 page 6, Greeting from Founding Member Sam Craig

play, in dynamic centres.’ There have been ups and downs over the decades, but ‘our members have not just sat back and watched, they have worked to understand, change and improve the urban landscape around them and the way it is governed ...Today, we continue to lay the groundwork for tomorrow’s communities.’³

Andréa also talked about the 1960’s as a time of rapid expansion and about concerns that were gaining currency then, such as about the environment being threatened, that “bigger wasn’t necessarily better and that old buildings might be worth protecting.”⁴ Those same concerns of the 60’s that Andréa mentioned are still on people’s minds today.

Andréa further remarked that, “new public sector planning, building standards and service requirements were also driving how we would build our communities.”⁵

Our current President, Stefan Krzeczunowicz, builds on these remarks. He writes “It is 10 years since Andrea spoke at our 50th Anniversary and his views, while still prescient, might have been tinged with more urgency had he spoken today. Our environment is clearly under threat and climate change mitigation, and adaptation, increasingly pervades our work as land economists and city builders. Ontario is growing at a rate surely not even envisioned by Sam Craig and his colleagues back in 1963 and concerns about housing are the very top of the political agenda. Moreover, we just emerged from a pandemic that upended the daily lives of everyone on Earth and exposed deep-seated vulnerabilities in our economy and society. As such, we



Toronto Harbour 1964. *Wilford Peloquin Attribution (CC BY 2.0)*



View from CIBC, Toronto 1964. *Wilford Peloquin Attribution (CC BY 2.0)*



Canadian National Exhibition Toronto 1965. *Wilford Peloquin Attribution (CC BY 2.0)*



View from CIBC, Toronto 1964. *Wilford Peloquin Attribution (CC BY 2.0)*

³ The Land Economist Summer 2013 Issue 43 No 2 page 3

⁴ The Land Economist Summer 2013 Issue 43 No 2 page 3

⁵ The Land Economist Summer 2013 Issue 43 No 2 page 3



Toronto Island 1964. Circled is the Fairmont Royal York. *Wilford Peloquin Attribution (CC BY 2.0)*



2023 Toronto skyline, circled is the Fairmont Royal York, covered by layers of buildings. *Photo by Benito Del Monte Medina.*

need to plan and build with more care than ever before. However, let there be no doubt that AOLE members, who have made such huge contributions to the growth and development of our great Province over the last 60 years, will continue to play an important role in confronting these challenges over the next 60.

“In closing, I would reiterate the message I delivered to our Membership at the recent AGM: ‘Surviving and thriving for 60 years is no mean feat for a non-profit organization that relies entirely on the goodwill and volunteerism of its members to sustain itself (as well as a very modest membership fee). 60 years is a long time—and if you want an illustration then consider that in 1963 the average house price in Ontario was \$17,500 and the GTA in 1963 was home to 2.3 million people. The population has more than tripled to be more than 7½ million today and has become the world’s most diverse metropolis. But after six decades, I feel strongly that the promise of this organization still holds true: **that kindred professionals benefit when they mingle and share ideas with each other.**’”⁶



Villiers Island view of the 2023 Toronto skyline, *Source Toronto Waterfront handout.*

Well, a lot has changed in the 60 years that passed, especially Toronto’s skyline and we thought it would be interesting to contrast the “then” with the “now pictorially. So here for all the good, the bad and the ugly are some photos interspersed with the narrative. ➤

⁶ This paragraph and the former written by Stefan Krzeczunowicz, President of AOLE

AOLE's 60th Anniversary Celebration and Annual General Meeting

At the Royal Canadian Yacht Club on June 27th 2023

Photos by Benito Del Monte Medina



The Land Economist magazine's Editor-In Chief John Blackburn (R) with his creative team Leslie Savlov (L) and Benito De Monte Medina (C).



Brian Bridgeman, Jameson Chee-Hing, Mark Zemel.



Larissa Klepatch, Clarence Poirier.



Michael de Lint, John T Glen, Paolo Brindley-Pantalone.



Michael Cane, Matthew Cory.



John Allen, Andy Manahan, Stefan Krzczunowicz, Christina Kalt.



AOLE Board Members: Michael Cane, Bonnie Bowerman, Matthew Cory, Christina Kalt, Jameson Chee-Hing, Andy Manahan, Stefan Krzeczunowicz, Andréa Callà, Ed Sajecki.



Russell Mathew, Nataliya Kelbas, Andrew Mirabella.



John T Glen, Michael Cane, John Blackburn.



Bonnie Bowerman, Pat Brennan.



Andréa Callà, Michael Kraljevic.



Peter McCallion, Mark Zemel.



Brian Bridgeman, John McDermott, Ed Sajecki.



Francisco Cordero, Cameron Macdonald, Paolo Brindley-Pantalone.



Bonnie Bowerman, John Blackburn, Rosanna Bullock.



Frank Clayton, Wendy Nott.



Ed Sajecki, Michi McCloskey, Morgan Dundas.



David Amborski, Mark Conway, Michael Kraljevic.



Philip Smith, John Blackburn.



Jamie Tate, Jameson Chee-Hing.



Scott Walker, Alex Beheshti.



Peter McCallion, Vinkie Lau, John Blackburn.



Royal Canadian Yacht Club clubhouse veranda.



WHERE IT ALL BEGAN:

The Association of Ontario Land Economists ([AOLE](#)) was founded in 1963 and was officially incorporated in 1964. Its name reflects a long-standing position as the only body in Ontario open to all qualified professionals who work in the field of land economics. Since its incorporation, each full voting member has been known as an Ontario Professional Land Economist, with the right to use the letters PLE in their title.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR PLE DESIGNATION

In order to receive the PLE designation, candidates must qualify as a voting member of the AOLE.

TO QUALIFY YOU NEED:

- 1. To have held a position within the industry, in an occupation requiring competency in land economics.**
- 2. Academic study in a related discipline evidenced by a degree, diploma or certificate from a recognized educational institution.**
- 3. All students pursuing approved coursework can also qualify for Student or Graduate Membership.**

For complete qualification guidelines, please contact us at:

admin@aole.org

THE COMPANY WE KEEP

As a marketing benefit designed to assist our members in promoting their companies, we are introducing periodic eblasts that will highlight various member's activities.

Should you want to take advantage of this promotion opportunity please send an email to admin@aole.org

INTRODUCING

Sam Craig

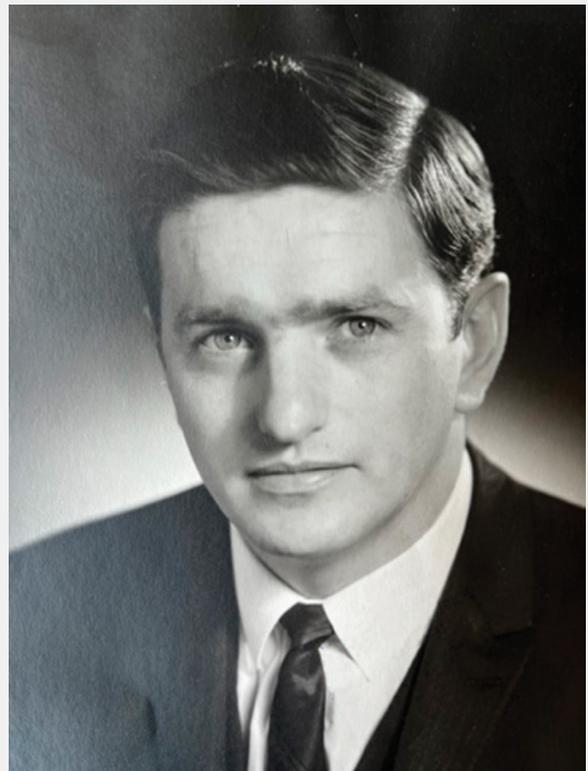
FRI, PLE
Retired

AOLE Co-Founder

by Leslie Savlov

While "The Company We Keep" is the name of this column, we feature Sam Craig in this issue for the organization that he helped to create. Sam co-founded AOLE sixty years ago, together with Gerry Young and Jim Farr. Sam's name is listed as one of the founding directors on the Letters Patent (see images of the Letters Patent document and a transcribed version on pages 13-14).

Today, Sam is 88 years old and shares with us his career and life events and his sense of humour. He jests, "My short-term memory is terrible, also, so is my short-term memory. I told my youngest sister (she's only 86) that, recently I've been thinking a lot about "hereafter". Patricia immediately misconstrued my reference, assuming that I was contemplating visiting "the other side! I had to correct Pat's misconception of my comment, and inform her that she had taken my "hereafter" reference out of context. What I wanted to say: Almost every day, when I walk into a room, I have to stop, and think, " what am I here after?"



Sam Craig.

Sam began his career right out of high school with the Property Division of The Ontario Hydro Electric Power Commission (OHEPC) in 1954. At the same time, he enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts programme at the University of Toronto 's night school. Sam writes "Ontario Hydro was designated as the Canadian Operating Agent in the expropriation of the requisite lands to build the "St Lawrence Seaway". To facilitate this historic project, whole towns, farms, businesses had to be acquired (fairly). I had the privilege to be relocated to Cornwall, OHEPC's Seaway headquarters for an interesting challenge (e.g., how does

one value a cemetery, 200 years old, with the “remains “being moved to higher ground.).

After this project in Cornwall, he found the job mundane and then joined W.H. Bosley & Co on the appraisal side of their business, working with Jim Farr, FRICS. Two years later Sam moved over to Bosley’s Property Management Department and subsequently was made head of Bosley’s Management Portfolio which consisted of approximately 90 clients, from single homes to 8-20-unit apartment buildings to 10 storey commercial warehouse to high-rise office towers.

Sam writes” During this period (1959 +/-) I completed the new RE course offered by Real Estate Professionals (e.g. Murray Bosley) and became the youngest Associate of the Realtors Institute. I had to wait until I had attained the age of 30 years, and then I was elevated to “Fellow” of the Realtors Institute.”

He then moved over to Toronto Industrial Leaseholds (TIL) as Property Manager and managed properties across Canada (Toronto, Montreal, Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton, and Vancouver).

Later, Sam joined Alex and Harry Rubins (the founders of TIL) and 5 other employees to start a public real estate company called Revenue Properties Limited which he writes was a relatively new concept at the time. He relocated to Los Angeles and thereby created the first American subsidiary of a Canadian public real estate company.

In 1969, Revenue Properties Limited was taken over and Sam was offered the Senior Vice -President position from Cabot, Cabot and Forbes (CCF) an American firm headquartered in Boston. He was relocated to San Francisco and was responsible for Northern California. Sam writes that “The deal included the understanding that in the future I would lead the CCF foray into “The Great White North. Toronto was on a par, volume-wise, with LA, but the Executive VP, whose sole authority was corporate expansion, was irretrievably opposed to a non-American entity.” Sam noted that they had left their son as a boarder at Upper Canada College but since both his wife and he came from large families, their son had lots of relatives to visit each weekend.

After 3 years living in the San Francisco Bay area, Sam yearned to come home to have the family re-united in Toronto and since it appeared that CCF was not going to come north anytime soon, he accepted a senior position with Orlando Corporation and returned to Toronto. Sam writes “It’s been said that “In life, timing is every thing “. In Oct 1972, I was back in Toronto (and) Orlando, for the calendar-year built

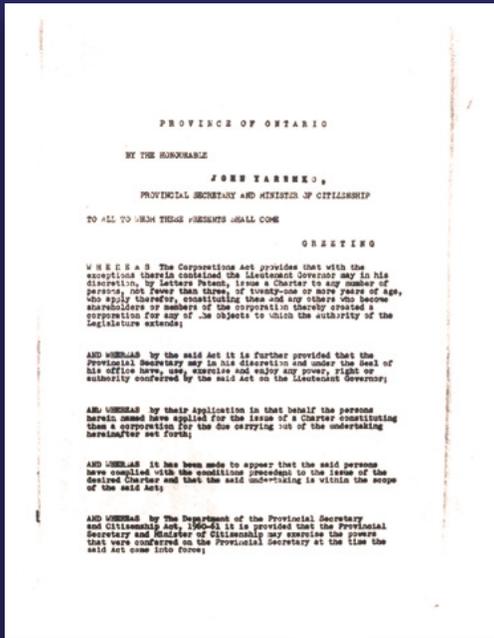
just 44,000 sq ft. By happenstance, the market exploded, we did 2,600,000 sq ft (not one sq ft of spec). Needless to say, I enjoyed my time with Orlando (and) Orey Fidani became one of my closest friends. But, after 9 years, and blood thicker than water the teenager (referring to Orey’s son) became a man, and I was no longer #2! Fortunately, Cadillac Fairview was making a change (and) I was hired as Sr. VP Industrial.”

When The Bronfman Family sold Cadillac Fairview to a Chicago Investment firm called JMB, Sam’s responsibilities changed dramatically. He had to divest the company of \$100,000,000 worth of unwanted assets throughout North America. Sam writes “because of the financial importance of this project, and the fact that our resident VP was “leaving and the fact that I was racking up the flying miles (One year, 1990 +/- 400,000 miles) in 1993, I was asked to relocate once again.” Sam added that his family had grown, and his wife had grown tired of Toronto winters. He mentioned that” in any event the previous CF office was already closed, had no staff - except the 4 individuals here in San Diego.”

Sam remarked that “when CF was sold... to the Ontario Teacher’s Pension Fund the academics decided, regardless of the cost, to dump the property in order to staunch the blood flow, rather than work our way out of the morass. I, with a “good times/bad times” experience, did not agree. Their intransigence cost them. I recognized what the future would hold for me, in the shibboleth “Golden Rule: Those who have the GOLD, make the RULE!”

Sam retired in 1996. In addition to his career, he was also active in Toronto Montessori Schools for 40 years, the National Association of Industrial and Office Parks, and local and international rowing groups, and volunteered with the Canadian Opera Company Board, Toronto Symphony Orchestra and National Ballet of Canada according to an article on page 6 of [The Land Economist, Summer 2013](#) issue.

We would like to thank Sam Craig for taking the time to provide us with his life history and Michael Cane for reaching out to Sam.



LETTERS PATENT ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO LAND ECONOMISTS DATED MARCH 20, 1963

Directors:

- Frank W. Helyar
- Walter Manthorpe
- Drury MacKenzie - Vice President
- Stewart Ripley
- Gordon Hepditch
- James Edgar Farr - Secretary
- Lloyd Thornton
- Samuel Craig
- Gerald Ivan Miles Young - President

Head Office:

Room 902, 347 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario

Now therefore know ye that under the authority of the hereinbefore in part recited Acts, I DO BY THESE LETTERS PATENT issue a Charter to the persons hereinafter named that is to say: Frank William Helyar and Lloyd Thornton, both of the Township of Scarborough, in the County of York, Province of Ontario, Land Economists; Walter Manthorpe and Drury MacKenzie, both of the City of Toronto, in the said County of York, Land Economists; Stewart Ripley, James Edgar Farr and Samuel Craig, all of the Township of North York, in the said County of York, Land Economists; and Gordon Hepditch, of the Village of Pickering, in the County of Ontario and Province of Ontario, Land Economist. Constituting them and any others who become members of the Corporation hereby created a corporation without share capital under the name of:

ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO LAND ECONOMISTS

For the following objects, That is to say:

- (a) To provide a body of persons competent to express opinions, give advice, undertake administrative services and give expert testimony and arbitral services in all matters involving the economies and use of land and buildings thereon;
- (b) To establish, preserve, protect and promote the professional status of the members of the Corporation and to establish and recognize standards consistent therewith; and
- (c) For the objectives aforesaid: 1. To provide or assist in the provision of educational courses through university or other educational media and to prescribe examinations in conjunction therewith, 2. To establish a library or collection of books or other publications, maps, models, drawings and designs; 3. To establish, construct and maintain suitable quarters for the Corporation and to permit the same to be used gratuitously, or on such terms that may from time to time be agreed upon. 4. To hold conferences, meetings and exhibitions for the dissemination and exchange of views in the aforesaid matters, and 5. To institute studies, inquiries and programmes of research.

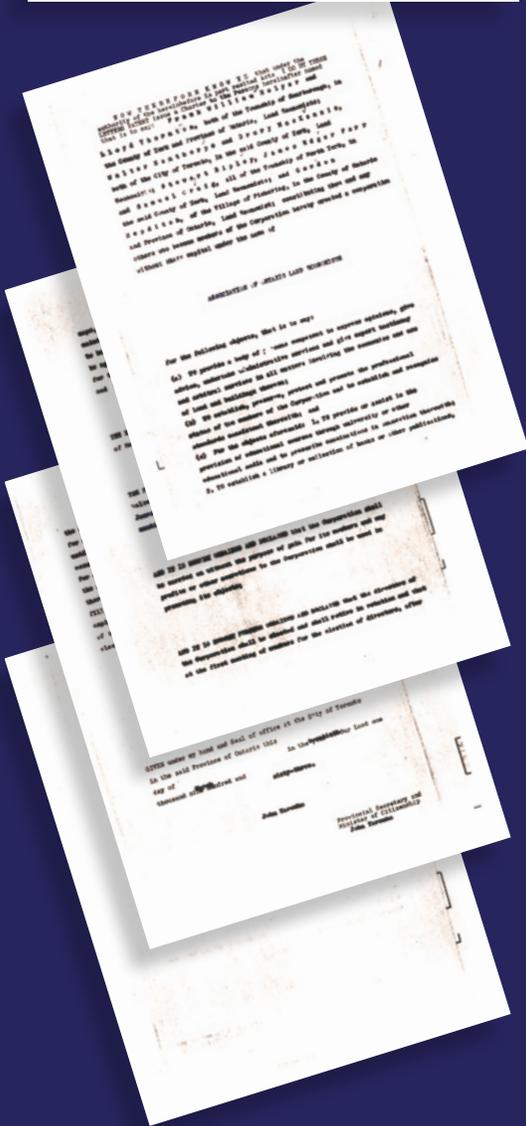


Image of original version of the Letters Patent is above and to the right is a transcribed version done by Michael Cane.

The head offices of the Corporation to be situated in the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto in the said County of York; and

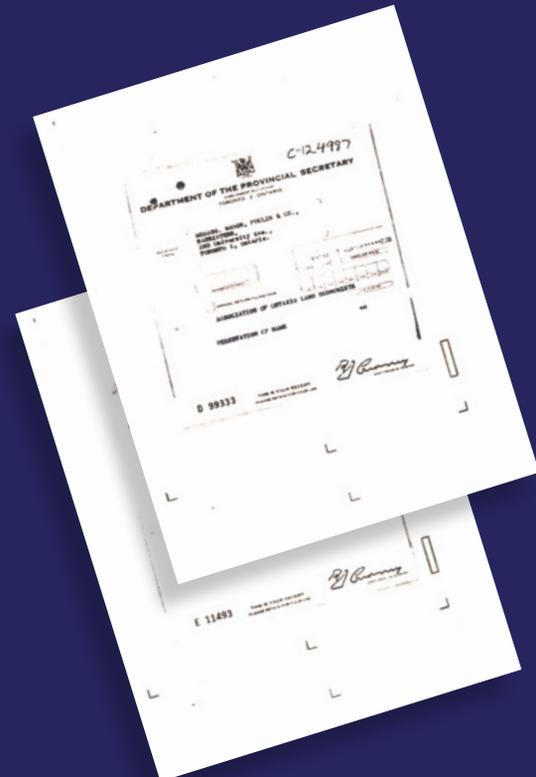
THE FIRST DIRECTORS of the Corporation to be Frank William Helyer, Walter Manthorpe, Drury Mackenzie, Stewart Ripley, Gordon Hepditch, James Edgar Farr, Lloyd Thompson and Samuel Craig hereinbefore mentioned.

And it is hereby ordained and declared that the directors of the Corporation shall be elected and shall retire in rotation and that at the first meeting of members for the election of directors, after the date hereof, four (4) directors shall be elected to hold office for a term of two (2) years from the date of their election or until the second annual meeting of members after such date, whichever occurs first, and four (4) directors shall be elected to hold office for the term of one (1) year from the date of their election or until the first annual meeting after such date, whichever first occurs, and thereafter at each annual meeting, directors shall be elected to fill the positions of those directors whose term of office has expired and each director so elected shall hold office for a term of two (2) years or until the second annual meeting after his election, whichever first occurs.

Given under my hand and Seal of office at the City of Toronto in the said province of Ontario this day of in the year of Our Lord one thousand nine hundred and sixty-three.

John Yaremko

Provincial Secretary and Minister of Citizenship



20-3-65 124987

ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO LAND ECONOMISTS
 250 UNIVERSITY AVE., TORONTO 1, ONT.
 RETURN TO PROVINCIAL SECRETARY, ONTARIO
 Information and particulars as of March 31, 1963

1. NAME OF THE CORPORATION
 ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO LAND ECONOMISTS

2. INCORPORATION
 Ontario

3. DATE OF INCORPORATION
 March 20th, 1963

4. OBJECTS
 providing a body of persons to administer and manage the affairs of the said corporation

5. DIRECTORS

Name	Date Elected	Residence Address	City/Town	Province
Frank W. Helyer	20 Mar/63	277 Queen St. E. Toronto	Toronto	Ontario
Walter Manthorpe	20 Mar/63	174 Waverley Drive	Scarborough	Ontario
Drury Mackenzie	20 Mar/63	31 Grosvenor Crescent	Toronto	Ontario
Stewart Ripley	20 Mar/63	5 Broadview Ave.	Toronto	Ontario
Gordon Hepditch	20 Mar/63	174 Waverley Drive	Scarborough	Ontario
James Edgar Farr	20 Mar/63	10 Truman Road	Villanova	Ontario
Lloyd Thompson	20 Mar/63	5 Broadview Ave.	Toronto	Ontario
Samuel Craig	20 Mar/63	5 Broadview Ave.	Toronto	Ontario

6. OFFICES

Name	Address	City/Town	Province
Gerald Ivan Miles Young	10 Truman Road	Villanova	Ontario
James Edgar Farr	174 Waverley Drive	Scarborough	Ontario
Drury Mackenzie	31 Grosvenor Crescent	Toronto	Ontario

7. HEAD OFFICE
 Room 902, 387 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario.

8. REGISTERED OFFICE
 c/o Messrs. Hanson, Howds, Armp, Walter, Meir & Associates, Solicitors, 250 University Ave., Toronto, Ont.

9. CAPITAL
 None yet held.

1. CERTIFICATE TO BE COMPLETED FOR ALL CORPORATIONS
 OSRAID IVAN MILES YOUNG, President, ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO LAND ECONOMISTS

I hereby certify that the return information and particulars herein contained is verified as true and correct. Dated this 20th day of March, 1963.

2. CERTIFICATE TO BE COMPLETED FOR ONTARIO PRIVATE COMPANIES ONLY

I hereby certify that the said Company has not issued any prospectus to the public to subscribe for any of its shares or securities. Dated this 19th day of March, 1963.

IMPORTANT ALL QUESTIONS MUST BE FULLY ANSWERED IF ANY QUESTION IS NOT APPLICABLE IT SHOULD BE SO STATED

FEES

Description	Fee
(1) Subject to subsection 2, the fees payable on the filing of returns are as follows:	
(a) for corporations with share capital, except shareless corporations:	\$ 5
(b) where the authorized capital does not exceed \$40,000:	\$ 10
(c) where the authorized capital exceeds \$40,000 but does not exceed \$100,000:	\$ 20
(d) where the authorized capital exceeds \$100,000 but does not exceed \$500,000:	\$ 30
(e) where the authorized capital exceeds \$500,000 but does not exceed \$1,000,000:	\$ 40
(f) for corporations without share capital:	\$ 5

FILED WITH THE PROVINCIAL SECRETARY ON OR BEFORE JUNE 1, 1963 AND THE OTHER POSTED UP IN A CONSPICUOUS POSITION IN THE HEAD OR PRINCIPAL OFFICE IN ONTARIO OF THE CORPORATION.

Frank Clayton's Keynote Address to the AOLE AGM, June 27, 2023

The Importance of Shovel-Ready Land Inventory to Increase the Greater Golden Horseshoe's Supply of New Housing Faster

Notes for a presentation by;
Frank Clayton, Ph.D.
Senior Research Fellow
Centre for Urban Research and Land Development
Toronto Metropolitan University (formerly Ryerson University)



I was pleased with the invitation to participate in the 60th anniversary celebration of the establishment of the Association of Ontario Land Economists. Initially, I thought that since my career covers most of the time the Association has existed, I was invited to provide a historical overview of the Toronto region's real estate and urban evolution—a dreary topic which would require a lengthy speech. Then I realized with only a 30-minute time slot that, I must have been invited because the organizers believe in the adage that wisdom comes with age. Therefore, they rightly presumed, in my opinion, I would convey lots of wisdom to you. You will have to be the judge.

My topic this evening is “land,” which seems appropriate for an organization with land economics in its name.

Introduction to the topic of shovel-ready residential land

Convinced: What governments have done to the housing land supply is a primary cause of the affordability crisis in the GTA.

Residential land: Not just any land. Refers to land with approvals for what the market wants (zoned suitably for financial viability), serviced & ready to go (shovel-ready).

- If a shortage of shovel-ready sites – housing prices up
- If a surplus of shovel-ready sites – downward pressures on prices

My first interest in land issues: When I moved from Ottawa to join CMHC as its Winnipeg-based economist for the prairie region in the latter 1960s, I was struck by how affordable home purchase was in Winnipeg and the four other metropolitan areas in the prairies compared to Toronto. Differences in the land markets helped to explain the sizeable affordability gap:

- Winnipeg and its counterparts in Saskatchewan and Alberta could expand on flat land in all four directions, and they did so.
- While Toronto could grow in three directions, the supply of developable land was reduced by the concern about water quality, which resulted in the closures of smaller upstream sewage treatment plants in favour of massive lake-based plants – this resulted in less developable land than before.
- Montreal was an oddity: Canada's second-largest metropolitan area with physical constraints like sizable rivers intersecting the region – at the time, Montreal dumped its raw sewage in the St. Lawrence River, which allowed more land to be developed with a much lower cost base than Toronto.

Land availability and its cost base became apparent major factors in housing affordability.

My 1987 study of the evolution of the housing industry in Canada

The pivotal role of land in housing affordability was reinforced in a 1987 study I conducted for CMHC dealing with the housing industry's evolution in Canada from 1946-1986. All of the major factors of housing production other than land – labour, materials, entrepreneurship and mortgage funding – are subject to the pricing mechanism of the marketplace. When their prices rise, supply will follow along. On the other hand, land supply depends on a political process independent of the pricing signals of the marketplace.

Shovel-ready land - what is it?

Shovel-ready land is land with all planning permissions and servicing in place for viable residential projects. It's a concept increasingly used in the economic development arena regarding industrial land.

Frank Clayton giving his keynote address at the AOLE Annual General Meeting on June 27th, 2023



More details are contained in a recently completed [CUR study](#) of shovel-ready residential land in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH).¹

In this study, we approximate shovel-ready land with the definition of short-term land in policy 1.4.1b) of the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS): land suitably zoning to facilitate residential intensification and redevelopment plus land in draft approved and unbuilt registered plans.

Using the PPS definition overstates the shovel-ready land inventory, but it's the closest definition with data available.

Do we have ample shovel-ready sites for new housing in the GTA and GGH?

Certainly not for ground-related housing (singles, semis and townhouses): just a 1.9-yr. supply of short-term ground-related land in GGH.

Apartment land, yes: about a 7-yr. supply of short-term land.

Likely a shortage of missing middle apartment land too: While there is no breakdown of apartments by the number of storeys or type, anecdotal insight suggests that most of the apartment land inventory is for higher density structures, not missing middle types like stacked townhouses, duplexes and garden apartments (4 storeys or less).

Remember: Exaggerating the supply of shovel-ready land by using the short-term land definition from PPS.

Why do some planners say we have enough residential land?

Neptis Foundation: First to say yes, several years ago - it concluded there was 100,000+ ha available for urban development in the GGH.

Kevin Eby, for Alliance for a Liveable Ontario: Earlier this year, concluded there is enough residential land supply (existing capacity) to accommodate 2.1 million housing units in the GGH.

Regional Planning Commissioners of Ontario: Its data shows land approved or in the development process to accommodate 1.2 million units in the GGH. However, just 286,000 units (24%) were on short-term sites (our proxy for shovel-ready),

I conclude that many planners don't fully understand the dynamics of housing and land markets (both demand & supply) and the impacts of their planning actions on markets, especially by unit types. Their approach seems to be: even though many households prefer a ground-related home, if we build mostly apartments, people will have no choice but to live in them.

The reality is that municipalities can control the type of housing built within their boundaries, but they can't control where people live or the type of housing they live in. Thus, the continued suburbanization of the population in the GGH.



¹ Clayton, Frank. (2023). Expanding Housing Supply and Improving Housing Affordability in the GGH Are Pipedreams Without an Ample Inventory of Shovel-Ready Sites. Available [Online]: https://www.torontomu.ca/content/dam/centre-urban-research-land-development/CUR_shovel_ready_land_May_2023.pdf

The root of the shovel-ready land shortage problem

Land (approved, serviced) is the only factor of production not driven by market forces/price mechanism: The supply is determined by a political and planning process, which is excessively onerous in the GGH. A CMHC study documented that the Toronto CMA (and the Vancouver CMA) has the lowest responsiveness of new housing supply to increases in prices of the metropolitan areas it examined.

Why does this shortage persist?

There is an adage: "What gets measured gets managed".

There has not been an inventory of residential land by development stage and unit type compiled in the GTA (let alone the GGH) since 1993, the year before the Liberals were elected on a platform which included environmental activism.

This lack of land data is astonishing since the PPS has included Policy 4.1.2.1b) since the mid-1990s. The policy continues to be included in the Proposed Provincial Planning Statement, now out for consultation.

Equally astounding is that I can't recall the provincial government ever requiring reporting by municipalities of their short-term land inventories or any penalties or incentives provided for municipalities not reporting.

A few municipalities have reported on the adequacy of their years' supply of short-term land, but it is usually in terms of total units, not types. The analyses often use past starts or building permits to proxy for future demand.

I am perplexed why planners and politicians don't connect the need to maintain an ample inventory of shovel-ready sites for various housing types and densities in multiple locations with the issue maintaining housing affordability.

A likely answer

My hypothesis – housing is more affordable in urban regions with a single municipality or two-tier government than in municipally fragmented regions.

By urban region, I mean a commutershed where most people work and live. Statistics Canada refers to commutersheds as census metropolitan areas (CMAs).

Municipal boundaries in the Toronto CMA do not correspond with the commutershed boundaries, unlike back in 1953 when Metro Toronto was formed.

Metro Toronto established in 1953

Metro Toronto and the Toronto CMA boundaries coincided. Metro Toronto was a two-tier municipality with several local municipalities amalgamated. In addition to representing the commutershed, the division of responsibility recognized economies of scale and uneven property tax resources across the region. The upper-tier municipality provided infrastructure for a massive housing expansion.

The linkage between municipal and Toronto commutershed boundaries had broken down by the early 1970s.

Over time housing and population growth spilled over to adjacent municipalities. By the early 1970s, the Province opted to create four new municipal regions whose boundaries in all or part were part of an enlarged Toronto CMA instead of expanding the boundaries of Metro Toronto. These new regions were two-tier municipalities similar to the original Metro Toronto, with the upper-tier municipality responsible for infrastructure like sewer and water. Since the mid-1990s, the Toronto CMA has consisted of the enlarged city of Toronto, four regional governments, two counties (all or in part), and 28 local municipalities. All these municipalities have land use planning responsibilities.

In the mid-1990s, there was support for a regional GTA government. However, the provincial government of the day opted to leave the regions alone but amalgamated the Metro Toronto municipalities into a single-tier expanded city of Toronto.



Frank Clayton at the AOLE Annual General Meeting at the Royal Canadian Yacht Club's clubhouse.

The linkage between municipal boundaries and the larger commutershed was broken for good. In fact, with the imminent dismantling of Peel Region into its three local municipalities, the Province is moving away from regional government and creating more single-tier municipalities.

Ottawa: a single-tier municipality with boundaries similar to its commutershed

The expanded city of Ottawa was created in 2001 when the local municipalities were amalgamated into an enlarged city of Ottawa and the regional municipality of Ottawa-Carleton disbanded. Both the former region and the expanded city of Ottawa had boundaries close to the commutershed borders, like Metro Toronto back in 1953. Since 2001, Ottawa has had a single municipal council and land use planning body. Before that, the regional municipality had responsibility for major infrastructure to accommodate growth.

Comparison of Toronto and Ottawa CMA housing markets

In the mid-1980s, housing affordability was the same in the Toronto and Ottawa urban regions.

Affordability deteriorated in both areas, especially after the mid-2000s, but much more so in Toronto. Commutershed-wide planning for new development and infrastructure resulted in Ottawa's Council and staff being more forward-thinking about the region's current land inventory and future residential land needs. Ottawa, for example, produces an annual inventory of vacant greenfield lands by planning status and unit types, which is unavailable in the Toronto region.

Ottawa, for decades, monitored land supply in the development pipeline annually and related its housing requirements. It expanded urban boundaries too. Ottawa was not subject to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, which negatively impacted housing development in the Toronto CMA. Ottawa implemented policies about intensification and densification, but these policies were locally based.

Conclusion

It cannot be stated that housing will automatically be more affordable when an urban region has a metropolitan government covering its commutershed. Based on our Toronto CMA/Ottawa CMA comparison, we can say that it is much more likely that urban regions with metropolitan governments will have more affordable housing.

Where do we go from here in the Toronto CMA

Three suggestions for the Province:

- Take on the role of the upper-tier municipality in the Toronto urban region (CMA) and assume responsibility for growth-related infrastructure, including its financing.
- Municipal housing targets are a good beginning. Still, they must be disaggregated by broad types. Otherwise, a flood of multi-unit apartment towers reaching 100+ storeys will be the easiest way to achieve the Province's targets, but these will not provide the kinds of housing the majority is looking for.
- Monitor and enforce (incentivize) municipal compliance with Policy 1.4.1b) of the current PPS (Section 2.1.2b of the Proposed Provincial Planning Statement) – a prerequisite for greater housing affordability is a plentiful inventory of shovel-ready land.

Thanks for listening. This is all my wisdom on land supply and housing affordability now. ➤



Frank Clayton, Ph.D.

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Frank Clayton, a Ph.D. graduate in economics from Queen's University, has devoted his career to the analysis of urban and real estate market issues and policies, initially with CMHC and then as head of his own economic consulting firm, Clayton Research Associates Ltd. Dr. Clayton is a co-founder and Senior Research Fellow at Toronto Metropolitan University's Centre for Urban Research and Land Development.



166 Year Old Ship to be the New Star of Kingston's Marine Museum

By Pat Brennan

Keewatin going past Detroit and under the Blue Water Bridge in Sarnia. Photo by Pat Brennan.

The world's oldest cruise liner is back on the waves.

The 116-year-old S.S. Keewatin - five years older than the Titanic - rounded Tobermory last week to leave Georgian Bay and head out onto Lake Huron on its way downstream to the Welland Canal. S.S. Keewatin - also called The Kee - is headed to Kingston to star at the [Marine Museum of The Great Lakes](#).

The last time the Keewatin went through the Welland Canal, it had to be cut in half as its 105-metre length was too long for the canal's locks in 1907. After being built and launched on the Clyde River in Glasgow the Keewatin headed to Canada to join the Canadian Pacific Railway's fleet of passenger liners connecting Southern Ontario to [the Lakehead](#), as there were no connecting roads through Northern Ontario.

The vessel stopped in Sorel, Quebec to be cut in half. After clearing the canal the two halves went to Buffalo to be stitched back together again.

It then headed to Owen Sound to join the CP fleet of similar-sized cruise vessels. However, a fire in 1912 destroyed CP's grain elevators in Owen Sound, so the passenger service was transferred to Port McNicoll near Midland on Georgian Bay.

For 60 years The Kee and its fellow cruise liners made the two-day cruise from Port McNicoll to Fort William - now known as Thunder Bay. A dock-side train station deposited passengers from Toronto beside the Kee in Port McNicoll.



Crowds watch the Keewatin alongside the Welland Canal. Photo By Pat Brennan.



Keewatin going past the second oldest lighthouse on the Great Lakes as it enters the St. Clair River. Photo by Pat Brennan.

Eventually new roads made the trip to the Lakehead and further west easier and faster than CP's passenger fleet. After its last cruise to Fort William in June, 1966 The Kee was scheduled to be scrapped. However, Michigan entrepreneur R.J. Peterson stepped in and bought the ship, towed it to Saugatuck, Michigan where he operated it as a floating museum for 44 years.

Peterson worried that his sons were going to turn The Kee into razor blades and car bumpers upon his death, so he sold it to Toronto land developer Gil Blutrick, president of Skyline Developments, who planned to use the ship as a floating community centre for a \$1.2 billion resort community he proposed to build on the shoreline in Port McNicoll.

The vessel arrived back in Port McNicoll in June 2012 - exactly 46 years to the day it last left the port. At least 1,000 private boats were out on Georgian Bay to welcome The Kee back home.

Skyline's housing project never happened, and the developer donated the vessel to a Port McNicoll volunteer group. They hoped to operate it as a museum, but that village is well off the beaten path and sees very few tourists. To give The Kee a long, healthy future Skyline got a hefty tax relief by donating the ship to the Marine Museum of the Great Lakes.

Two dozen volunteers spent 7 weeks preparing The Kee for its voyage through the Great Lakes to Kingston.

McKeil Marine's 1,000-horsepower tugboat Molly M towed The Kee and the 81-year-old U.S. tugboat Manitou joined the flotilla to help guide it get through the narrow and busy St. Clair River. Another McKeil tugboat hooked onto the stern of the Keewatin to act as a brake as Molly M pulled the vessel through the Welland Canal.



Empty drydock at the Marine Museum of the Great Lakes in Kingston which the Alexander Henry occupied for more than 40 years and will eventually be occupied by Keewatin. Photo By Pat Brennan.



The retired icebreaker Alexander Henry passing under a lift bridge on the Welland Canal on its way to Thunder Bay. Photo by Pat Brennan.

After entering Lake Ontario from the canal, The Kee was pulled into Heddle Shipyards in Hamilton Harbour to undergo a \$2 million refurbishing before continuing on to Kingston. ➤



Pat Brennan is a freelance writer and former real estate editor at the Toronto Star. You can reach Pat by phone at 647-898-9717 or at travelswithlefty@gmail.com

How the Covid Pandemic has Changed Panhandling

By Jim Ward

Panhandling, i.e. begging for small change on the street has been under considerable threat since the coming of Covid. In these times very few people carry cash with them. In fact, many retailers will not accept cash, since it may well be 'dirty money'. The term panhandling has its origins, so I'm told, during an economic depression in the United States in the late 19th century. That depression hit the panhandle area of northern Texas particularly hard and it caused many workers to head to New York City, where the 'Buddy can you spare a dime?' request was given birth. They became known as the panhandlers.

Back in the early 1970s I conducted studies of panhandling approaches in six North American cities, one of them being Toronto, and I found the most effective methods included something of a believable hard luck story, such as, "I need to get the bus fare to such and such a place because I know I can get a job there." Here in Toronto, this approach was particularly successful if the panhandler was located by the Bay Street Bus Station. The more believable the pitch, I found, the more successful was the request for spare change. Nowadays, there seem to be very few panhandlers out there with well-crafted stories. Some sit behind notices that state something like, "Homeless and hungry." And often, the same location is occupied day after day. Whereas, in the past, successful panhandlers tended to move from location to location, largely depending on the levels of pedestrian traffic, particularly of the type of pedestrians who were likely to have 'spare change' in their pockets. However, although the poetry and mobility of panhandling is lost and likely leads to less success, the major problem is that even those who may have some sympathy for the panhandler and would likely pass them some spare change if they had it, but their pockets and wallets simply hold plastic credit cards or a cash ready app on their phones.



"Beggar" by Vincent Albanese is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#)

So what's the solution? Is this the end of panhandling as we know it, after 150 years of existence?

Three obvious solutions are: (i) training courses for panhandlers, whereby the art of believable story telling is taught; (ii) equip panhandlers with credit card readers; (iii) work towards the provision of a universal basic income. This last one may not be a solution, since some folks may simply like the challenge of panhandling. And, as is often the main argument against a universal basic income, some of the money may be spent on 'non-essential items'. I experienced this kind of thinking at my local LCBO during their 2020 fundraising campaign for

the United Way. When I responded to a request from the cashier for such a donation on top of my purchase, I said, "No, I'm giving my donation to the person outside." The cashier's response was, "Why? He'll probably just spend it on booze." "Well," I responded, "that's just what I'm doing." And, after all, during this period of Covid lockdown, when only purveyors of essential items, such as alcohol, are allowed to carry on as normal who is to deny someone the pleasure of spending their hard-earned money on alcohol? ➤



Dr. Jim Ward

Dr. Jim Ward holds a PhD in Social Geography from the University of Maryland. He has taught Urban Sociology in universities in the United States, Australia and Canada and has published two books on urban homelessness in the United States, Canada and Australia as well as a book on small town life in Australia and a book on the geography of Yellow Fever in Latin America. For 20 years he was a consultant on social issues that led to projects in Canada, the USA, Armenia and Russia.



Transforming Collingwood's Grain Elevators & Harbour

By Pat Brennan

Collingwood Grain Elevators. Photo by Pat Brennan.



Rendering of proposed Grain Terminals redesign by Streetcar & Dream. Source Town Of Collingwood Website - Engage Collingwood.



Rendering of Restaurant & Event Space. Source Town of Collingwood website.

On one of his many trips to Collingwood to take his kids skiing on Blue Mountain, Les Mallins learned the town planned to tear down the huge grain elevators at the mouth of Collingwood Harbour.

Mallins asked town council to take a second look at the 100-foot-high silos and consider their potential for a future life.

Council listened.

It then asked a half dozen developers to suggest ideas on what to do with the 93-year-old grain elevators.

Ideas rolled in from six different developers, including one from Mallins, president of [Streetcar Developments](#) in Toronto in partnership with [Dream Unlimited](#), also of Toronto. They both specialize in putting new life into old, heritage buildings.

Council liked their joint proposal best and the old concrete towers are now destined to become a combined waterfront hotel and condo residence, plus a community centre surrounded by a Georgian Bay destination marina.

Mallins said not all the agreements with the town have been finalized and he can't yet comment on all the features of the new waterfront resort, but his [renderings](#) show a luxury hotel at the top of the silos and condominium residences added to the east side of tower.

He proposes a community centre at the top of the silos offering panoramic views of Collingwood, its iconic ski hills on the Niagara Escarpment and the wide expanse of Georgian Bay.

The grain silos sit out at the end of an isthmus that was built in 1853 to carry the Ontario, Simcoe and Huron Railway line which connected Georgian Bay to Toronto. The 126 silos were built in May, 1929 to hold 2 million bushels of wheat.

The last train left the grain terminal in 1986.

Marine Drive is a rural-type road along the isthmus, and it will be upgraded to a wide, modern road to accommodate retail shops and bring visitors out to recreational facilities and accommodations in the former grain elevators.

Mallins said he wants to see a luxury marina at the base of the grain terminal to be the ultimate destination for boaters on Georgian Bay.

Mallins has hired Copenhagen architect [Dan Stubbergaard](#), the founder of [Cobe](#) to design his vision for a new life for the grain terminal.

Stubbergaard designed a similar project on the Copenhagen waterfront where a 17-storey grain elevator was converted to a waterfront apartment tower with 38 suites, some as large as 4,200 square feet with 22-foot-high ceilings. Many of the suites retained their interior walls of concrete.

Dream Unlimited is listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange and a principal shareholder is Duncan Jackman, son of Toronto financier Hal Jackman, former Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario.

Streetcar and Dream Unlimited are joint partners in the renovation and restoration of two of Toronto's oldest hotels - the [Gladstone House](#) on Queen Street West near Dufferin that first opened in 1890 and the 130-year-old [Broadview Hotel](#) on Queen Street East at Broadview Ave.

The two firms are currently renovating and converting the 108-year-old [Clock Tower](#) at 180 Main Street in Newmarket into a boutique hotel with 55 rooms. The clock tower opened in 1915 as the town's central post office. ➤



"The Silo" an apartment building converted from a former grain silo in Copenhagen, Denmark. The project was designed by Cobe.



Gladstone Hotel.



Broadview Hotel Bistro+Bar.



SUNKEN TREASURES SURFACE

All A-board for Wonderful Wet Wood

By Mike O'Dwyer

The Log Drive, Figure 2.47 <https://ottawariver.org/pdf/0-ORHDC.pdf>

Watch this short video before reading the article it will show you how log drivers used to move logs down the river and also bring a smile to your face.

Click image to watch.



As a moderately competent woodworker (I still have all my fingers and *most* of my toes. Don't ask.) I like to source wood that has character. Often, I choose reclaimed lumber over the new stuff from places like Home Depot.

Typically, reclaimed lumber comes from old dismantled barns, mills, factories, warehouses, and such.

But now I've discovered another source for some of the most beautiful wood I've ever seen: The bottom of Ontario's rivers and lakes.

And yes, I am late to that particular party because reclaimed sunken logs have been finding new life in new markets for 25 years or so. From floors, ceilings, indoor paneling, and exterior siding to cabinetry, furniture, and musical instruments, carpenters, builders and DIY folks like me have been going overboard for what lies beneath Ontario's waters ... and beyond.

Sunken timber is being reclaimed from rivers and lakes across North America and around the world.

It has been estimated that there is more than 100 billion board feet of recoverable submerged wood worldwide.

Underwater timber is valuable and prized because of its age and condition. Most was cut down 200-300 years ago and many are 'old growth' hardwoods.

Softwoods – pines and other coniferous species – grow fast, blocking out the light to hardwood trees which stunted their growth. Consequently, 'old growth' hardwoods took hundreds of years to grow to a diameter of 3-4 feet and have a superfine grain with 40 to 70 growth rings per inch compared to six to 10 growth rings per inch in today's harvested trees.

The result is a finer, tighter and more aesthetically pleasing grain pattern in the 'old growth' hardwoods. And because they've been underwater for a couple of centuries or more, they are coloured differently than today's wood and may also have been tinted or stained by the minerals on the bottoms of lakes and rivers.

Their beauty, density, and resistance to 'shrinkage' are why *unsunk* hardwoods are so prized today.

LIQUID LOGGING RESURFACES

In Ontario, the Ottawa River and its tributaries have long been logging super highways. I can tell you something about their logging history because way back in the day, I wrote the script for a documentary on logging in the Ottawa Valley that focused mainly on the square timber era (1800-1850).

That was when the ancient giant white pines of the Ottawa Valley were felled and hewed square to better fit into the holds of the ships that transported them to England where they were used in the construction of British warships. The squared logs were formed into giant rafts and floated down the

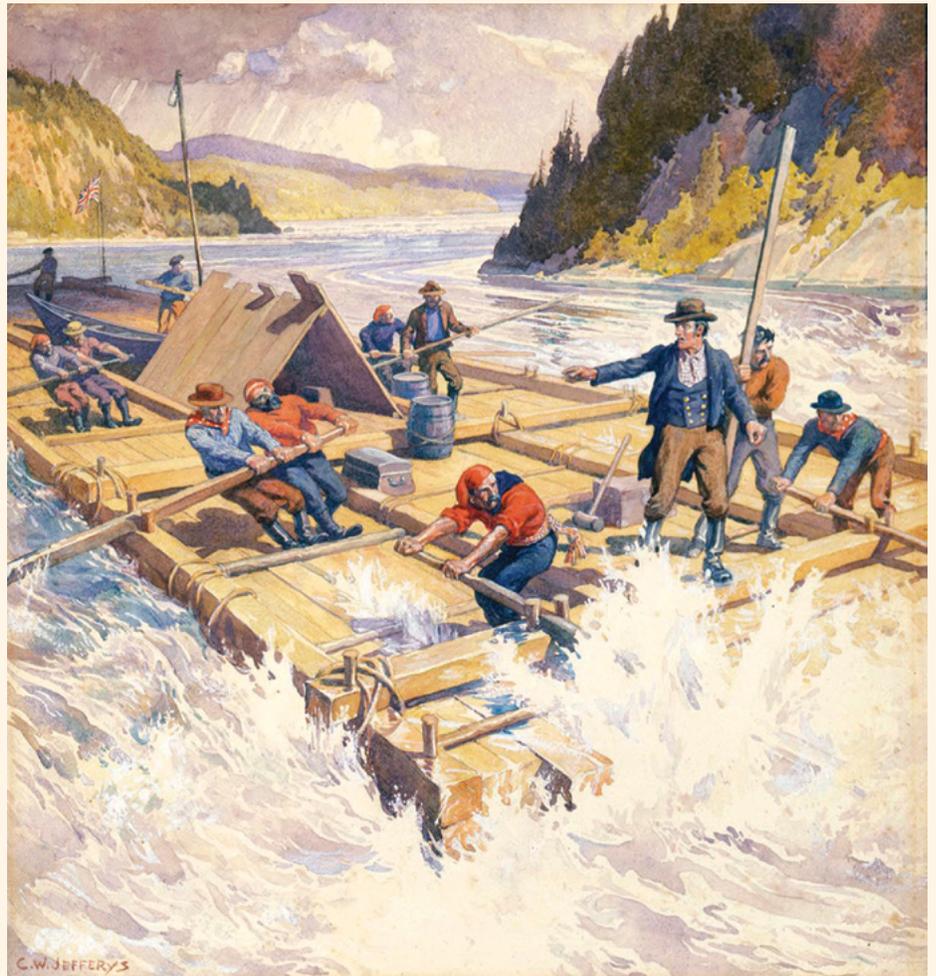
Ottawa and St. Lawrence Rivers to staging areas in Quebec City for loading into cargo ships.

Later, as the demand for sawn timber grew, round pine logs replaced squared timber and were sent down the rivers in vast numbers to sawmills where they were cut into boards for houses, furniture, wagons and lots of other stuff to feed the growing demand from immigration and expansion in Canada and the U.S.A. Along the way, a portion of those logs sunk.

Even later, maple, oak, basswood and other species of hardwoods - [some more than a thousand years old](#) - began to replace softer pine logs and were similarly floated down rivers to mills. Some of those logs also sunk during the river drives.

It took a while - a hundred years or so - but a few intrepid entrepreneurs finally realized that all that wood lying on the bottom of rivers and lakes - some rotted but most remarkably preserved by the cool waters - had value. [And they began to reclaim it](#), usually by donning SCUBA gear, wrapping cables around the submerged logs one at a time and using winches or airbags to bring them to the surface.

It was - and is - difficult and dangerous work. But worth it when a particularly prized hardwood log can garner \$10,000 or more after milling.



The First Lumber Raft Down the Ottawa River, Figure 2.51. <https://ottawariverorg/pdf/O-ORHDC.pdf>

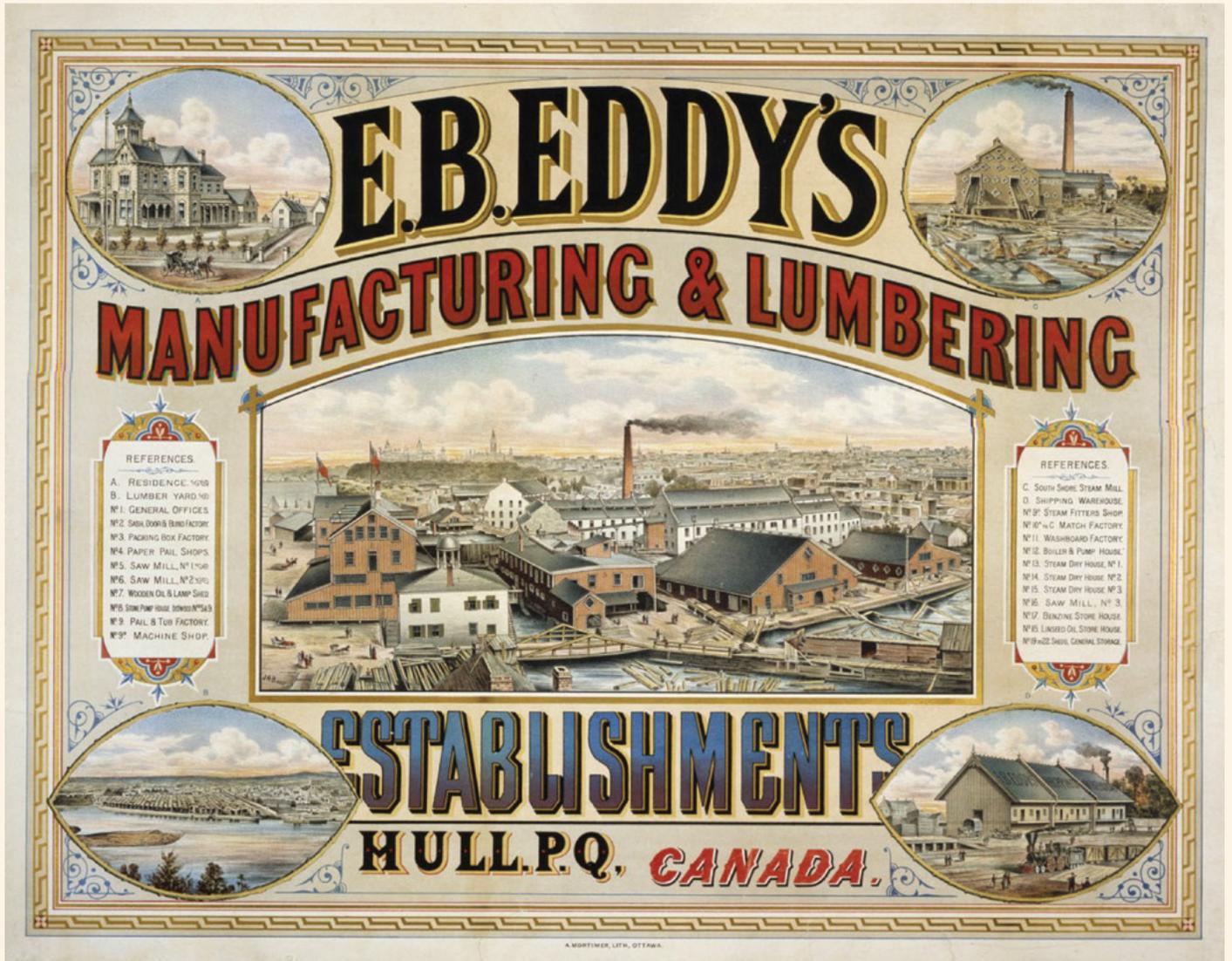
An aside: A long time ago during what I prefer to call my *nomadic years*, I travelled and worked in a lot of places. One of them was at a west coast logging camp. My job was to lug a heavy steel cable down a mountainside and wrap it around a felled tree. We called it 'choking' timber back then and maybe they still do.

I would then hook the 'choking' cable to a second cable attached to a donkey winch which would pull the log up the side of the mountain to a staging area. I did that until the day a donkey winch exploded and a fella's head disappeared and I decided to move on to a safer line of work.

I mention this to underscore how dangerous it is for the men and women who reclaim sunken wood. They not only have to 'choke' and winch the timber, they do it in a very unforgiving environment.



Timber Raft On Ottawa River ca. 1899 Figure 2.48. <https://ottawariverorg/pdf/O-ORHDC.pdf>



E.B. Eddy's Manufacturing and Lumbering Establishment, ca. 1884, Figure 2.58. <https://ottawariver.org/pdf/O-ORHDC.pdf>

It is estimated that there is still 500 million board feet of sunken timber in the Ottawa River. And then there are Ontario's lakes.

Lake Superior alone is said to contain perhaps millions of 300-year-old preserved red oak, maple, cherry, elm, walnut and other hardwood species that sunk from the chain-boomed rafts that were used to transport logs to across the lake to sawmills.

Most river-based underwater log recovery outfits are small businesses. But Robert J. Pierson, Development Director of the [EcoHome Network](#) has written that the reclaimed wood industry is an important creator of jobs and contributor to local economies: *For example, [Logs End](#), a company specializing in the recovery and processing of sunken timber, has created over 50 jobs in the Ottawa Valley. Additionally, the value of reclaimed wood can be quite high, with some estimates suggesting that the sunken timber in the Ottawa River could be worth over \$1 billion.*



The EcoHome Network

A team of engineers, environmentalists and former home builders committed to providing homeowners and builders with essential information to create more sustainable, durable and healthier homes - and to provide the collaborative network used by leading local non-profit groups to facilitate their sustainability mission in green construction and lifestyles.



Late-19th century Canadian lumberjacks. Source: Library and Archives Canada / PA-011632.

THOSE DAM TREES ARE STILL THERE

There is also another source of sunken timber: Dam sites in Canada and around the world.

When the dams were built, vast areas of forest were flooded.

Estimates put the number of underwater dam trees at 300 million and their worth at as much as \$50 billion. But until fairly recently, those submerged trees were a forgotten resource.

Not anymore. Companies large and small are now ‘tree mining’ dam reservoirs from Canada to Ghana, from South America to Australia, and lots of dam place in between. But getting the still-standing dam trees to the surface is hazardous and arduous.

The usual method is to have SCUBA divers cut and cable the trees. Tough and tedious work that results in only a few trees pulled up in a 12-hour day.

An alternate method of cabling a sunken tree and winching it up, roots and all, is also very inefficient.

The Triton Timber Group, a B.C. based company has found a safer and more practical solution: A tree-cutting submarine called the [Sawfish](#).

The Sawfish is an underwater harvester – a 3-tonne, 3.5-metre-long submersible with high-resolution cameras that is directed from the surface. The Sawfish’s powerful pincers grasp a tree, its chainsaw cuts it, an inflatable float bag is attached and filled with compressed air and the tree is floated

to the surface. Capable of cutting a dozen trees in an hour, the Sawfish is one of [a number of innovative methods](#) that are making the retrieval of underwater dam trees safer and more economical.

MEANWHILE, BACK IN ONTARIO SUNKEN WOOD HAS FOUND A NEW HOME

In 2019, EcoHome constructed Canada’s first-ever Platinum Award-winning [LEED V4](#) home. Dubbed the Edelweiss House and located in Wakefield, QC, the home was constructed with cutting edge ecologically and environmentally sound practices and materials – and [200-year-old ceilings crafted from sunken timber](#).

EcoHome’s Robert Pierson says the ceilings are among the many eco-friendly features that make the Edelweiss House so very *green*. “From a sustainability perspective, the reclaimed wood ceilings are a part of the overall package that made Edelweiss the first LEED Platinum V4 home in Canada.

“However there are also challenges and costs associated with the recovery of sunken timber – including the need for specialized equipment and expertise, the potential for conflicts with other water users such as recreational boaters and commercial

fishermen, as well as potential disturbances to aquatic habitats. Regulations governing the recovery of timber are also complex, with multiple levels of government involved in the permitting process.

“Careful considerations of all these factors is necessary [to ensure that the recovery of sunken timber in Canada and Ontario is sustainable, beneficial, and continues to present environmental and economic opportunities.](#)”

WOODN’T YOU LIKE SOME?

If you’re like me and are looking for some uniquely beautiful wood for a DIY project, a home reno, or a new development, here are some sources for reclaimed sunken timber:

AquaTimber

8520 Highway 93
Midland, Ontario
Canada L4R 4K4

Countrywood

935689 Airport Road
SE Corner of Airport Road & Hwy 89
(North of Orangeville)

Logs End

66 Iber Rd, Stittsville
ON K2S 1E8 



Michael O’Dwyer has had careers as a writer and editor – newspapers, magazines, radio, television, websites, marketing/advertising – and as a senior communications practitioner/manager/partner in both government and industry. His film/TV productions have won numerous international awards and have been shown on all major Canadian networks and on television and in theatres around the world.



THE SUMMER OF THE STOLEN BIKES

By Jim Ward

"piggyback" by chrisdustin is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

Toronto had become internationally renowned for the number of bicycle thefts that took place here. This all came to a head back in 2009 when [Igor Kenk](#) was arrested and charged with the theft of almost 3,000 bikes and numerous additional bike parts. The stolen bikes were found piled up in a number of locations. A popular graphic novel *Kenk - The World's Most Prolific Bike Thief* by Richard Poplack and others recounts the exploits of this local colourful anti-hero. So, when you were a bike rider in Toronto, it paid to make sure that whenever you were not riding your machine, you had it securely fastened and as thief-proof as possible. Apparently bike theft is still a big issue in Toronto now, in 2023, but I doubt that it is at the same level as it was in the days of Igor Kenk

Fifteen summers ago (2008) was the peak of bike theft for me. The first loss was when I locked my bike outside one of those close by supermarkets - Sobey's. I spent maybe 20 minutes in there and, when I came out, the bike was gone. This was a particularly tough blow because that bike had become something of a legend in my family. It was a second-hand road bike with *Centurion* written across the black frame in bold white letters. In my family, that bike became known as *The Mighty Centurion*. I would be asked by members of the family if I was driving, taking TTC (public transit) or riding *The Mighty Centurion*. When the weather was fine, when the trip was relatively short and/or when not too many consumer goods - perishable or durable - were not being purchased and carried, then *The Mighty Centurion* was the obvious travelling choice.



Bike in foreground is a Centurion "Part of my stable" by Richard Masoner / Cyclelicious is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.

"Will you be going on *The Mighty Centurion*? Catherine, my wife would enquire.

"Well since the weather is nice, I'm not going far and I'm only purchasing a few comestibles," I would reply, "*The Mighty Centurion* is the obvious choice."

And off I would go, proudly pedaling my black iron steed with the bold white writing across the frame.

So the shock of seeing a broken bike lock and no Mighty Centurion when I came out of the supermarket with my fairly small bag of groceries was as if a mighty tragedy had taken place. Indeed it had! At the time Rebecca, my elder daughter, was living in London. When I emailed her the tragic news she instantly got busy and put up posters around London, with the legend:

*Cyclist pedestrianized!
Mighty Centurion Stolen!
A reward will be given
To anyone providing information
That leads to an arrest
Phone Scotland Yard, at ...*



Stolen Bike Poster. Courtesy of Jim Ward

I still have a photograph of one of those posters that Rebecca sent me. It was a metre wide by a metre high, attached to a lamppost, with the National Art Gallery at the edge of Trafalgar Square in the background, to prove to me that this actually was in downtown London. Rebecca said that she was surrounded by curious Londoners as she attached the poster to the lamppost.

“Bloody cheek,” muttered one onlooker.
“People in London’ll steal anything these days.”

“It’s not in London though love,”
Rebecca responded, “This happened in Toronto, Canada.”

“Oh, interesting, I read in one of the papers that Toronto is the bike theft capital of the world. I used to think it was Australia that ‘ad all the criminals!”

“Not anymore love. It’s in Canada now too.”

“Can’t go anywhere and feel safe nowadays can you?”

There was a general nodding of affirmation among the crowd of Londoners.

“I did ‘ere Burkina Faso is a pretty safe place for a holiday,” another onlooker offered. Nobody responded.

So I went out and bought another second-hand bike. It cost me 80 dollars. This was a bit of a non-descript blue bike and I didn’t have much of a chance to get attached to

it, nor to give it an appropriate heroic name, maybe something like ‘Blue Defender’. Only three weeks after I bought the blue bike, I left it outside a dollar store on Danforth Avenue. I was just popping in to buy a two dollar pair of reading glasses, so I could read the morning paper. I knew it would only take me two minutes to pick through the shoe box full of two dollar glasses, so I didn’t bother locking up the bike. It was hardly worth the bother.

So, I didn’t. I came out of the store with my new glasses just in time to see the thief vanishing around the corner on my blue bike. I was furious. I used my anger-fueled energy to run half a block after him at what was not much less than four minute mile pace but he was going much faster so that was the last I saw of that bike. I resolved never to leave a bike unlocked again, no matter for how short a time I intended to leave it.

So this time I bought a new bike. It wasn’t one of those super-expensive, several hundred, if not thousand, dollar bikes but it was for a couple of hundred, from Canadian Tire. It was shiny and new and a bright aqua-marine colour. And emblazoned along the diagonal bar of the frame in three-inch high block silver letters was the word MEDALLIST. This was truly a bicycle that I could ride with pride. When I stopped at traffic lights people even said to me things like:

“That’s a really beautiful looking bike, where did you get it?” or

“How much does a bike like that cost?”

When I told them it was a fairly inexpensive Canadian Tire purchase they gasped in surprise. One elderly gentleman pedestrian, waiting to cross at Yonge and Dundas, looked at my bike with something approaching wonder and said,

“If I had a bike like that, I’d want to ride it around the world.”

I rode proudly around the city on my shiny new bike and, two days after I bought it, I locked it to a bike post at the corner of Gerrard Street East and Pembroke Street in the downtown east area. For some years then I had been teaching social science courses at Anishnawbe Health Toronto. My students were young First Nations men and women. My course was essentially a sociology of the city that was designed to help people understand the complexities, challenges and opportunities of being a minority group member and making it in modern urban Canada. Some of them rode bikes to the course. So they came out and admired my new purchase. After a two hour teaching session I came out, all pumped and ready to ride my shiny new bike back the five kilometers up to my home at Broadview and Danforth. But... the bike had gone! It was a repetition of *The Mighty Centurion* experience. All that was left was a broken lock. I was so sad at this turn of events I walked ever so slowly home, head down. What a disappointment! A day that had started so auspiciously with an easy cycle down a sunny Sherbourne Avenue on my sparkling aquamarine bike, with the big white lettering, spelling out MEDALLIST had turned into a slow trudge home through gray streets, under gray skies. What was I to do?



"Uh Oh" by [I Bike Fresno](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#).

That night I walked around the house as though there had been a death in the family. My shiny new bike, gone. Catherine attempted to sooth my sorrows by cooking a great dinner and getting in a good bottle of wine. But my sadness would not abate. I went to bed early that evening feeling totally sorry for myself and, had I been much younger, I would have cried myself to sleep. I decided I would simply give up cycling and use other modes of moving across urban space – walking, running, public transit, cross-country skiing in the winter, driving even.

The black cloud of despond had not yet lifted when I returned home the following evening to the news that Catherine, having felt so sorry for me, had gone out and bought me a bike exactly the same as the one that had been stolen on the previous day. I was so happy! Is that or is it not true love? But now that I had a bike again I needed to use a different strategy for deterring theft.

I hopped in the car and drove down to *Jet Fuel*, a coffee bar on Parliament Street where bike couriers used to hang out. I reckoned that the people to talk to about good bicycle security would be those who depended on having their bikes ever present and available to carry out their work. So, after chatting with several hardened bike couriers at *Jet Fuel*, I had a pretty good idea of what kind of locking system I needed to buy. And, although the recommended system cost almost as much as the new bike, I figured it was worth it. For the next several months, I locked my bike securely with my new and expensive locking device whenever I left it on the street. This got me through most of that summer with no inkling of bike thefts.

Then, one late summer's Sunday afternoon, about 5:53 p.m., I realized we didn't have a bottle of red wine to share with friends who were coming around to eat barbequed steaks with us. As any wine drinker in Ontario knows – the LCBO – the monopoly wine purveyor in Ontario – closes early on Sunday evenings; at 6 p.m. At least, that's the way it was with my local store on Danforth Avenue back then. So I had to leap on my bike and cycle as fast as I could to my local LCBO. By the time I got there it was 5:57 p.m., this hardly gave me time to lock up my bicycle and go into the store. A wasted minute could mean that the LCBO staff person would lock me out and it would be a wineless barbeque. Anyone who has ever had a dinner of barbequed steak *without* a glass or two of red wine would understand how serious the situation was.

As luck would have it the First Nations guy who spends a lot of time outside my local LCBO, ostensibly selling the street newspaper and loudly wishing everybody a "Good day and God bless you", whether or not they ponied up some change, was there.

When he saw me ride up he offered me a "Good day and God bless you," since I was in such a rush I didn't have the time to get into our usual debate about the existence of God, I simply said.

"Look, I don't have time to lock up my bike. If you watch it for me, I'll give you a tooney on my way out."

"Sure thing brother," he said and I passed the bike over to him.

I strode briskly into the store, straight to the red wine area, picked up a bottle and queued up behind the three or four

patrons at the cash register – last minute drink planners like myself. As I waited there, feeling pleased with myself that I'd made it in time, I looked out the front window on to Danforth Avenue and there I saw a tussle going on over my bike. The First Nations panhandler was hanging on to the bike cross bar grimly and a big guy was attempting to pull it away from him. Although I couldn't hear what they were saying to each other, I could see by their contorted faces that it wasn't a pleasant exchange of words that was taking place.

I quickly plonked my bottle by the cash register and rushed out to the street.

"What's going on I shouted?"

The big guy yelled, "This motherfucker here owes me ten dollars and until I get that ten dollars, I'm taking his bike! It's worth at least ten bucks!"

"No you're not!" I yelled, and I pulled the bike away from him and scrambled back into the LCBO store with the bike. It was now only one minute shy of the 6:00 p.m., closing time. The First Nations guy came running in after me. He just managed to squeeze through the door to safety before an LCBO staff person jammed the door shut tight and locked it,

"We're closed!" he shouted to the big angry guy outside. With his face pressed to the window and his huge fists pounding on glass, he yelled at the First Nations guy.

"I'll get you, you motherfucker! You owe me ten bucks!"

And that's how I almost lost my fourth bike that summer.

The First Nations guy smiled sheepishly, obviously relieved that he'd been saved from a beating... for now anyway.

"Got my tooney?" he asked.

"Sure," I said, relieved that I still had my bike.

The next day, I went for a fast 20k ride along the bike track that winds up through the Don Valley to the Sunnybrook stables and the cricket fields beyond. Doesn't get much better than this, I thought as I leaned into a curve that took me through the forest in the valley bottom. A rabbit scurried across the path. The day was hot and sunny. I had my bike at the beginning of it and I had my bike at the end of it. Pretty good, I thought. 🐰

Cruising Under Gordie Howe's Elbows

By Pat Brennan



Gordie Howe International Bridge under construction . Photo by Pat Brennan.

The Gordie Howe International Bridge is starting to show its elbows.

The man was notorious for his elbows.

Although gone 7 years, his elbows are still a concern for both the U.S. Coast Guard and the Canadian Coast Guard. They have patrol boats cruising the Detroit River to keep fishers, tourists, and recreational boaters away from the Gordie Howe elbows - the 20-foot-long extensions of the road deck of the \$5.7 billion bridge now protruding out over the Detroit River from both the U.S. and Canadian shores.

The bridge contractors have asked the coast guards and police to protect and isolate a 150-foot-wide portion of the river from

both shores to keep the public away from construction.

Windsor's harbour master Peter Berry said if a bolt falls off the bridge's road deck it'll be moving at the speed of a bullet when it reaches the water 165 feet below.

Berry said the spring spawning of Detroit River Silver Bass attracts hundreds of fishers in boats in June and July and the coast guards from both nations will be kept busy.

But Macassa Bay obeys all the rules. It carries 200 passengers out onto the river each Sunday afternoon so they can see the progress on the bridge's construction. The two-hour cruise operated by [Windsor Premier Tours](#) has an expert on board to explain the complicated construction procedures and point out the weekly progress.



Gordie Howe International Bridge Pylon and road deck extension. Photo by Pat Brennan.

More than 3,900 people are employed building the bridge which expects to carry its first car in early 2025.

The Gordie Howe is being built about five kilometres downstream from the Ambassador Bridge which opened in 1929.

More than \$300 million in goods pass over the bridge each day.

Howe - considered by many as the finest hockey player ever - was born in Floral, Saskatchewan in 1926 and played 25 years with the Detroit Red Wings in the NHL, leading them to four Stanley Cup Championships.

He was voted an NHL All-star in 23 of his 25 seasons.



Freighter passing along the Detroit River in between the Bridge Pylons and road deck extensions. Photo by Pat Brennan.



Sudbury's Mural Festival

By Pat Brennan

Sudbury - moose mural, Photo by Pat Brennan.



St. Joseph's Health Centre - Sudbury's retired general hospital, Photo by Pat Brennan.

SUDBURY – Get out your crayons; Sudbury seeks more graffiti on its downtown walls.

But first your graffiti talents must pass muster with a panel of curators. If your stuff is good enough, you'll get a huge wall to paint to your heart's content.

The largest mural in Canada is in Sudbury. If you drive by [Science North](#), one of Sudbury's most popular tourist attractions, you can't miss it.

Nearby is St. Joseph's Health Centre – Sudbury's retired general hospital – now an 80,000-square-foot wall mural with a riot of bright colours. Ontario's Ministry of Tourism helped pay for the 700 gallons of paint California artist Kelly "Risk" Graval used to fully cover the six-storey building with bright colours.

Some of the world's best mural painters will participate in a three-day marathon of mural painting in downtown Sudbury August 18-20, which includes three days of musical performances by 50 different bands on a closed off downtown street.

The mural festival is a creation of [Up Here](#) – a division of We Live Up Here – an urban art and musical festival founded in 2015.



Street mural. Photo by Pat Brennan.

Muralists from all over the world will bring their paint brushes and spray cans to Sudbury, but don't need ladders, scaffolding and aerial platforms. All types of lifting devices to paint the high walls are donated by [Equipment World](#) in Sudbury.

So too are thousands of gallons of paint - mostly by [Barrydowne Paint](#), a Sudbury paint store.

Jaymie Latham is general manager of Up Here and she conducts walking tours of Sudbury's decorated downtown. The Ontario Association of Architects held their annual convention in Sudbury last week and dozens of delegates followed her around the city's core.

They saw a huge mural on the side wall of Sudbury Secondary School depicting one of its most famous graduates - Alex Trebek, the late host of Jeopardy.

Alex's is looking across the street at his elementary school and Latham says appropriately at a public library where the answers to all his TV questions can be found.

Alex never got to see the mural finished in 10 days in 2021 by Montreal artist Kevin Ledo.



Working in progress. Photo provided by UP Here.



Alex Trebek, the late host of Jeopardy, by Montreal artist Kevin Ledo. Photo by Pat Brennan.

Rainbow District Board of Education applied to Up Here to get its wall in contention. Dozens of wall owners apply to get a mural painted, but there are a lot more applications than there are approved artists and budget.

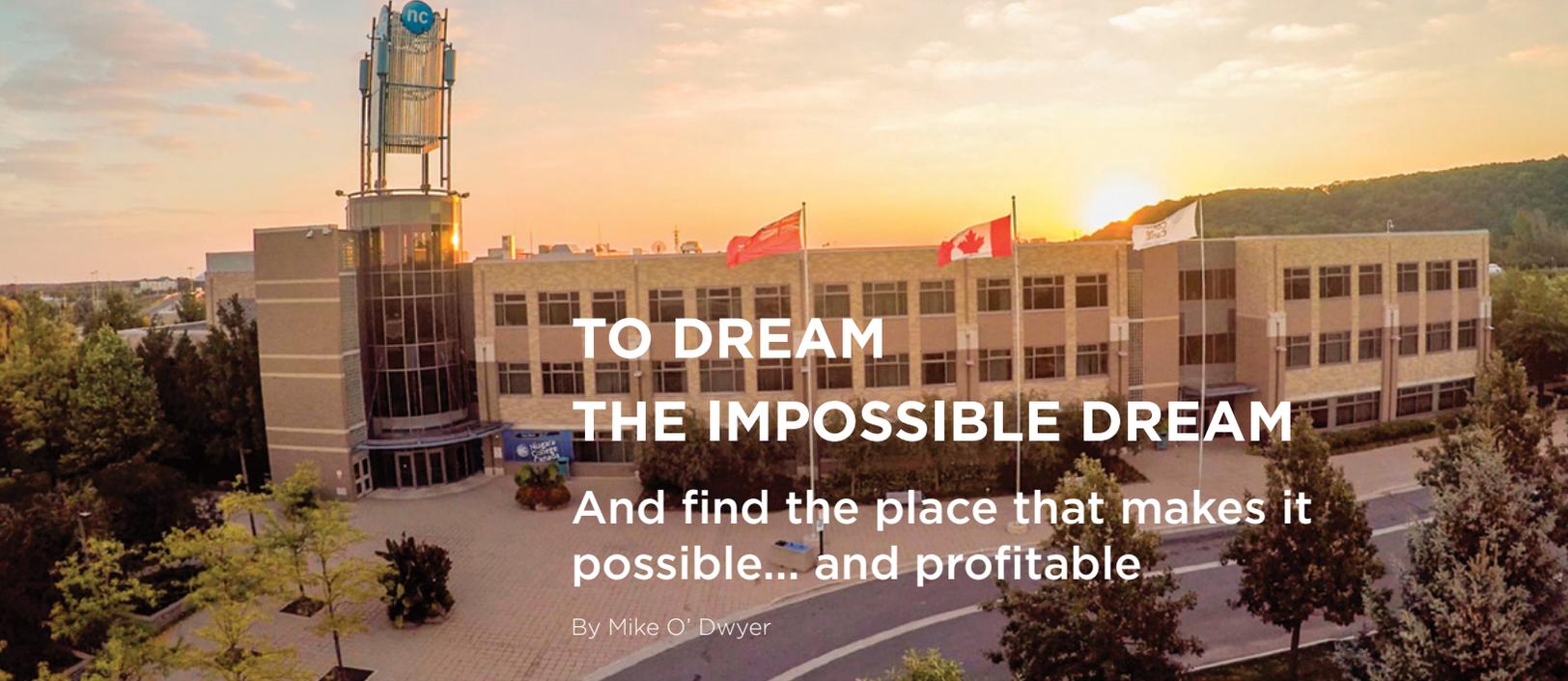
Sudbury Hydro has offered up 6 of its power boxes to be painted. They've asked that local and northern Ontario artists be chosen for the power boxes.

Up Here has assigned its 5 big walls to artists [Juuri](#) from Tokyo, [Jean Paul Langlois](#) from Vancouver, [Katie Green](#) from Calgary, Yum Yemi from Toronto and [Maxine Lemieux](#), a Sudbury native and Metis now a film producer and artist in Toronto.

When they're done there'll be 50 large wall murals bringing wild colour to one of the world's principal mining centres. 🐦



Wall mural. Photo by Pat Brennan.



TO DREAM THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM

And find the place that makes it possible... and profitable

By Mike O' Dwyer

DJP campus.



Miski Brewing gluten free beer. Photo courtesy of Miski Brewing.

This is a story about entrepreneurs with big dreams. One dream began with a beer. Another required distillation.

The question for both was how to make their dreams into profitable realities?

And the answer was the same for both.

Every new business venture begins with an entrepreneur and a dream. A successful business makes that dream real and... doable.

The doable part is the hardest and even the most entrepreneurial entrepreneur probably can't do it alone. Smart entrepreneurs know that and seek out teams with the specialized knowledge and experience to build innovative bridges between their dreams and doable success.

The entrepreneurs behind [Miski Organics](#), [Wild Lot Farm Distillery](#), as well as many other Ontario-based small and medium-sized businesses found what they needed to succeed at [Niagara College's Food & Beverage Innovation Centre \(FBIC\)](#) located at the Daniel J. Patterson Campus in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario.

FBIC is one of four Innovation Centres (along with advanced manufacturing, business & commercialization and horticultural & environmental sciences) in the Research & Innovation division and is part of a recognized Beverage Centre of Excellence.

The Centre has supported innovation in established small- and medium-sized

enterprises (SMEs) with successfully bringing new products to market for more than eight years, offering a full suite of services from new recipe and concept development to shelf-life testing, prototyping, and small batch processing at their Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) certified beverage processing plant. The Business & Commercialization Innovation Centre (BCIC) offers label design, market research, business strategies, primary research, media execution, promotional plans, and brand development.

Kristine Canniff, FBIC's Research Program Manager and Acting Associate Director, says, "We have a winning formula where everyone benefits. Each project starts with a client and an idea. Next, we put together a project team that combines students, graduates, and researchers with expertise in either food science, chemistry, microbiology, food safety, regulatory, processing, winemaking, brewing, distilling, or culinary arts, depending on the project needs.

"We then look at leveraging government funding and run the project. The result is that clients get products on shelf; students improve their skills and resumes; researchers stay at the top of their game; the economy has more profitable businesses; highly



Kristine Canniff, FBIC's Research Program Manager and Acting Associate Director.



Niagara College's Teaching Distillery Photo Courtesy of Niagara College.



Niagara College's teaching Brewery, Photo Courtesy of Niagara College.

qualified grads enter the labour force; and Niagara College continues to be a world-class leader in applied research.”

Niagara College also boasts its own brewery and hop yard and an artisanal distillery – which is why Miski Organics and Wild Lot Farm Distillery came to FBIC to realize their entrepreneurial dreams.

RAISE A GLASS OF GLUTEN-FREE BEER TO MISKI ORGANICS

Ricardo Irvarenren, Miski Organics President, says their dream of bringing to market an innovative, gluten-free beer made from quinoa bubbled up on a Florida vacation with his wife and company co-founder, Mariella.

Mariella's sister, Lia, is also a company co-founder. Both sisters are Peru natives. Lia still lives in Peru and deals with the farmers and producers there that are Miski's suppliers.

Mariella says, “In Florida, we sampled a quinoa beer but it was not gluten-free and it wasn't very good. We decided then and there to bring to market an innovative quinoa-based truly gluten-free beer – and turned to Niagara College's FBIC and BCIC teams to make it happen. We had already worked with the College to develop products that had successfully expanded our product line and realized they had the expertise we needed to develop our beer.”

Miski Organics began as a family-owned Burlington Ontario company combining Peruvian superfoods with local Canadian-grown ingredients. The company's products are organic certified, non-GMO, kosher and gluten-free.

Ricardo says Miski Organics is a small company without an in-house marketing



Peruvian quinoa harvest. Left to right: Ricardo Irvarenren and Mariella Irvarenren and Peruvian Andes quinoa farmer, Saturnina Photo courtesy of Miski Organics.

and product development team. “We needed outside expertise and the Niagara College's BCIC and FBIC teams provided it. They did a competitive analysis, provided branding and promotional strategies, product development and regulatory advice

that resulted in six new products including a cookie mix, smoothie booster, pancake mix, yacon cereal and two natural butters targeting health conscious and gluten-intolerant consumers.



NC Brewery two female students by tanks before Miski project. Photo Courtesy of Niagara College.

“So when it came to developing a gluten-free beer, we came to the College again.”

Niagara College is also home to the Brewmaster and Brewery Operations Management program. Both the program and the FBIC were poised to help Miski Organics craft a tasty brew that would capture a growing segment of beer drinkers. The College’s gluten-free beer team was led by Scientific Manager Ana Cristina Vega Lugo, PhD, and Adrian Popowycz, Brewmaster Professor and Program Coordinator, and included students Rodrigo Ribeiro Meireles and Daniel Fonseca, who have since graduated and been hired on as their Head Brewer and Operations Manager, respectively. It included close collaboration, access to funding sources, regulatory advice, and prototype testing, including sensory evaluation.

“It was groundbreaking for the College and Ana was remarkable,” says Mariella.” There had never been a beer like this, brewed from 100 per cent quinoa, fully certified as vegan, organic, kosher, and gluten-free -- and it tastes like really good beer!”

After the project was complete, they opened their own brewery facility, [Miski Brewing](#), which had its grand opening on July 7, 2023.

Miski’s beer is a new alternative for the craft beer industry in an untapped market and Ricardo says it has found quick acceptance. “We are proud to be a company with big dreams. Our unique, high-quality, environmentally conscious beer can be enjoyed by everyone.

“It was a great achievement and we intend to ramp up to four types of beer: Belgian, Light, IPA and a non- alcoholic version.



Miski Grand Opening in July 2023 - Kristine, Rodrigo, Daniel, Adrian Photo Courtesy of Niagara College.

RAISE A COCKTAIL TO WILD LOT FARM DISTILLERY

When Ryan Fowler and his life partner, Taylor McIndless, were fired from their corporate jobs it fired up their passion for distilling their dream.

Ryan says they had long dreamed about opening a food and beverage business. “So when we were fired, we said ‘Let’s do it!’ and left Toronto for a 35-acre farm we had purchased in Prince Edward County, determined to convert it into a distillery serving small batch spirit-based cocktails.”

“My background is in marketing and Taylor is a chef, but we had zero capability in the research and development of spirit-based products. We definitely needed help and, after looking at a number of options, we decided that Niagara College’s Food &



Ryan Fowler & Taylor McIndless.

Beverage Innovation Centre (FBIC) offered our best shot at success.”

Kristine Canniff says that Wild Lot started working with FBIC’s team in the summer of 2021. “We partnered with Ryan to create



Miski Brewing. Photo Courtesy of Miski Brewing.



Wild Lot project_NC distillery Stephanie and male student mixing. Photo courtesy of Niagara College.

various spirits and mixed beverages, bitters, and even helped consult on some aspects of their new distillery. Since that time Ryan has made incredible progress with a grand opening this June,” she said.

Ryan says the goal was the ability to craft a number of unique, small-batch vodka and gin spirits, cocktail bitters, spirit-based ready to drink beverages (RTD), and non alcoholic alternatives. “We wanted to use locally grown ingredients and botanicals farmed on site or grown locally as much as possible.

“Our product line-up includes a variety of flavors including peach white tea, Haskap apple, pear chai, and cherry. Full bar-strength cocktails were also developed including a Bloody Mary inspired cocktail, a hard iced tea and a kombucha, a gin and tonic, along with stand-alone botanical bitters. All are compatible with potential future sales in the LCBO.”

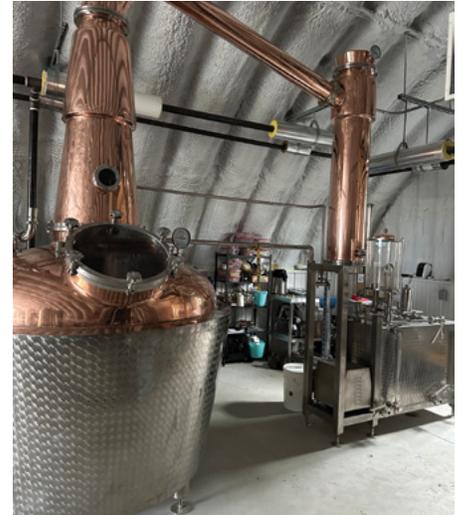
The Wild Lot Distillery is located in Ontario’s agricultural heartland near Sophiasburg, Prince Edward County. Ryan’s crew converted a century-old barn and tractor drive shed into 5000 square feet of space containing a retail shop, tap room, event space and, most importantly, a state-of-the-art distillation facility.



Photo Courtesy of Wild Lot Farm Distillery.



Photo Courtesy of Wild Lot Farm Distillery.



Wild Lot Farm Distillery.



Photo Courtesy of Wild Lot Farm Distillery.



Dr. Ana Cristina Vega Lugo, Scientific Manager, Food & Beverage Innovation Centre

“The FBIC team, under project leads including Scientific Manager Ana Cristina Vega Lugo, PhD and Distillation Research Lead Jaclyn Harriman, provided us with everything we needed to make Wild Lot Distillery a reality -- the whole package from product research and development to regulatory requirements and guidance. We couldn’t have done it without them.”

Here’s to entrepreneurial dreamers and those who help make their dreams into profitable realities. Cheers! 🍷



Bayfield's Virtual High School Educates Students Around the World

By Pat Brennan

Bayfield's Virtual High School. Photo by Pat Brennan.

Stephen Baker was teaching biology to his Grade 11 students at Goderich High School using textbooks that had no mention of DNA.

He asked his school principal to upgrade the texts but was told there was no money available.

Baker decided to build his own accurate biology course and let his students access it on computers in the school's computer lab.

It was popular with the students and Huron County's director of education liked it too. He asked Baker if his digital biology course could be used in all the county's schools.

He has 70 employees – all qualified Ontario teachers – guiding students across Canada and around the world to an Ontario High School Graduation Diploma.

In much of the world an Ontario high school diploma is the equivalent of a university degree.

Many of the graduates of [Virtual High School](#) – a former hotel in the charming resort village of Bayfield on the coast of Lake Huron midway between Goderich and Grand Bend – have earned scholarships to universities in Canada and elsewhere.

Mohammadamin Tabari Nia was 15 when he left his home in Iran to come to Canada in search for a better education to fulfill his dream of becoming a brain surgeon. After graduating from Baker's virtual school, he earned a \$100,000 life sciences scholarship to the University of Toronto.

Cassena Detmar and her three siblings were home schooled by their mother in Brantford starting in kindergarten. But to get into college Cassena needed some particular credits so she enrolled in Baker's Virtual school for grades 11 and 12.

After graduating as an Ontario Scholar, she is studying at Niagara College to be a paramedic – a field she always enjoyed while growing up and training as a lifeguard fully accredited across Canada.

Today more than 8,000 students from around the world are taking Baker's digital courses on a full range of high school subjects.

"I decided to enrol in VHS to get the prerequisites needed for the college programs that I wanted to apply to. I loved being able to stay at home and remain a part of my homeschool group while earning credits and my OSSD. This made application to colleges easier," Detmar told Baker.

For its first 10 years the school was centred out of the basement of Baker's home in Bayfield, but then the 100-year-old Ritz Hotel burned down on Bayfield's Main Street.

Baker chose to renovate the famous hotel and open it as Canada's first virtual high school.

About the same time Ontario's Ministry of Education granted Baker's school full authority to issue credits and graduation diplomas.

Being the first of its kind required the Bayfield school to jump through many hoops and survive many assessments before recognized by the ministry as an accredited private school.

One of its courses that helped earn its diploma-granting status was its Canadian Literature Course winning 2nd prize as the best on-line course in North America

The literature course was created by John Smallwood, a fellow teacher with Baker at Goderich High School. Now retired from that job Smallwood has been teaching at Baker's school since it opened.

He lives in Goderich and despite being 78 years old often runs the 21.1 kilometres between his home and Bayfield.

Smallwood said one of the best features of the virtual school is that students can do their studying and work assignments at any time, at any place and at any pace. And they have a one-on-one relationship with the teacher.

Each course at the school costs the student between \$299 and \$900 and most are in the \$600 range. Bursaries are available to students in need and one of them is named after and funded by John Smallwood.

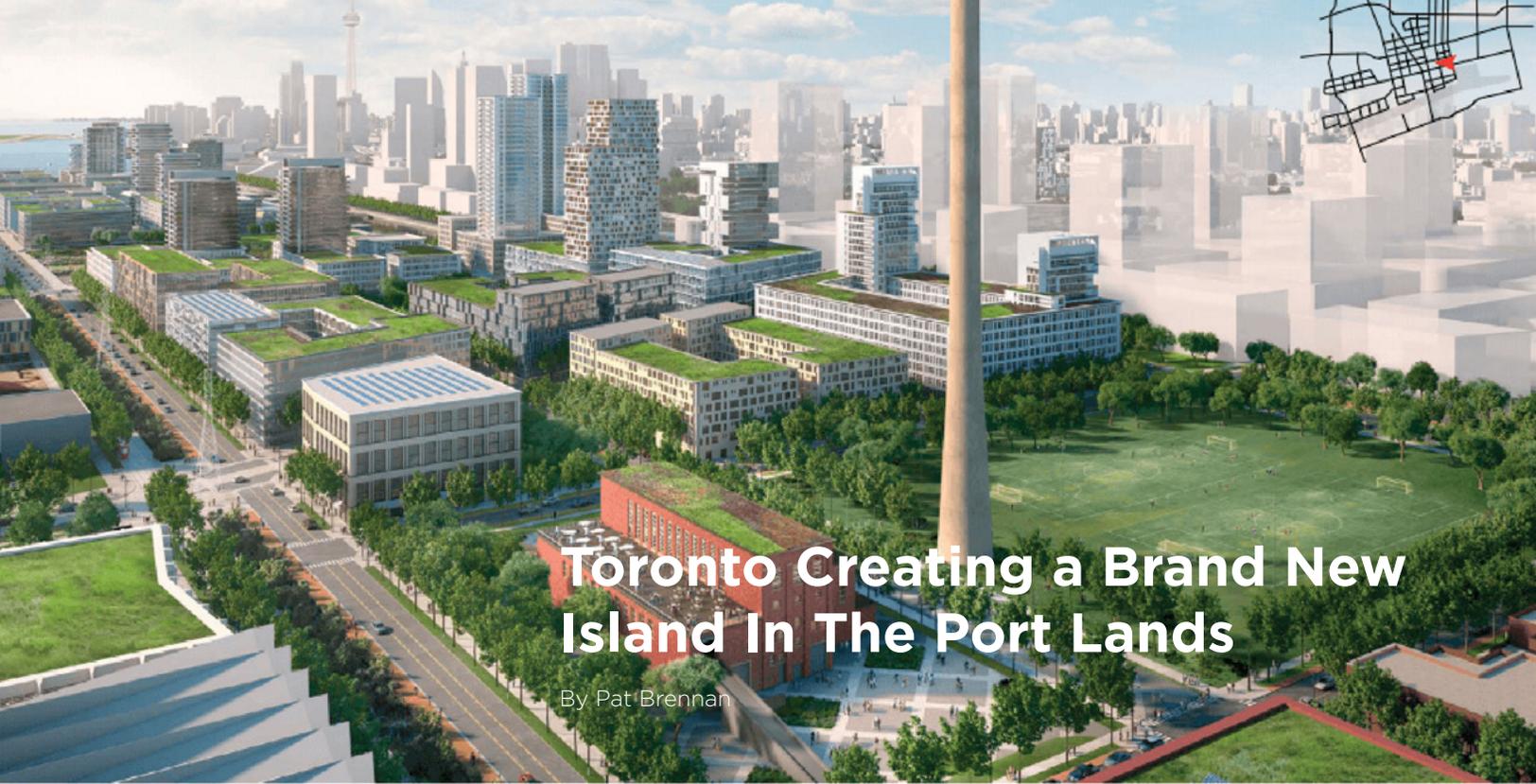
Smallwood had his Mennonite friends with a sawmill harvest white pine trees from their forests in Michigan and brought across Lake Huron to Bayfield to be installed as exposed timbers in the Virtual High School. ▶



The big brass bell being rung by Steve Baker was cast at the same refinery near Bayfield operated by the Mennonite carpenters that processed the white pine timbers for the school. Photo by Pat Brennan.



Steve Baker and John Smallwood, a teacher at the school since it started. Photo by Pat Brennan.



Toronto Creating a Brand New Island In The Port Lands

By Pat Brennan

Villiers Island Illustration -source WaterFront Toronto.

Two ferocious storms – one in 1852; another six years later – created some of Toronto’s finest features.

The raging storms ripped apart the long, sandy peninsula stretching along the city’s eastern shore and blasted out the Eastern Gap creating a pocket of 15 islands separating the city from Lake Ontario.

The Toronto Islands became a famous recreation and vacation paradise that attracts millions of visitors annually.

Now the city is in the process of creating island #16 in its harbour and is inviting its citizens to recommend how the new island should look and function.

The new island will be created by returning the Lower Don River to its 19th century wilderness originality. Industrial development all down the Don River Valley for the last century has turned the river course into practically a sewage canal.

Instead of having the river spill into the Keating canal, it’ll meander through naturalized wetlands laced with parklands and hiking trails before emptying into Toronto Harbour.

The new route will carve off an 83-acre chunk of the 880-acre Port Lands and create Villiers Island.

The new mixed-use community to grow on Villiers Island will be the most ambitious environmental renewal project in North America.

The island will eventually be home to 10,000 residents living in 5,000 homes – mostly midrise apartments with about 1,000 square feet of space.



Villiers Island view of the 2023 Toronto skyline. Source Toronto Waterfront handout.

Villiers Island is named after British Army officer [Major Villiers Sankey](#) who was based in Toronto and was one of the city’s first surveyors.

The environment plays a major role in the design of the [Villiers Island Precinct](#) – the first of several design precincts for the \$1.2 billion redevelopment of the 880-acre port lands.



Villiers Island Birds-Eye View. Source Waterfront Toronto.

No combustible engines will operate on the island. Electric vehicles – including public transit – plus personal cars will be electrically driven.

Bicycles get a high priority for transportation on the island with bike paths designated on roadways and throughout parklands, which account for 20 per cent of the entire island.

Villiers will be surrounded by water. That's why four ultra-designed bridges were built in Nova Scotia and shipped up to Villiers on barges on the St. Lawrence Seaway.

It'll be a 30-minute walk to Toronto's city core, or you can ride on ferries to service only Villiers. There's also talk of creating an aerial tram connecting the island to the city – similar to one in Portland, Oregon.

Waterfrontoronto.ca has scheduled several meetings in the future – such as July 19 – to hear the views of Toronto citizens on what Villiers Island should look like and how it should operate.

Among the 62 acres of parkland planned for Villiers Island will be an outdoor public art trail funded by a \$25 million donation from Toronto's [Pierre Lassoude Foundation](#).

The free open-air art gallery will be operated and curated by the foundation and world-renown artists will be invited to submit creations for the art trail.

"It has always been a dream of mine to put great art within reach of the public," said Pierre Lassoude, founder of the



Villiers Island art trail. Source Waterfront Toronto.



Bridge being Installed connecting Cherry Street to Villiers Island.

Pierre Lassoude Family Foundation. "If one wishes to have a profound and lasting impact on the wellbeing and happiness of Torontonians, the waterfront offers a multitude of philanthropic opportunities." ➤

Association of Ontario Land Economists Award

AOLE established an award to provide financial assistance to Seneca Polytechnic students which is awarded to full-time graduating students in the Real Property Administration or Real Property Administration Accelerated program. The recipient will have high academic standing in the Microeconomics course, along with making valuable contributions to the classroom environment. The recipient will be recommended by faculty.

The 2023 Recipient of the award is Jung Woo (Scott), Kim who is enrolled in the Real Property Administration Accelerated program.

Jung Woo, sent us a very appreciative letter, letting us know the impact winning the award has had on him. We share his letter with our readers.

Dear Association of Ontario Land Economists.

I am humbled and grateful to have been selected as a recipient of the Association of Ontario Land Economists Award. Receiving this award is an incredible honor and I am extremely thankful for this recognition and support.

Currently, I am enrolled in the Real Property Administration Accelerated program at Seneca. This award will not only alleviate some of the financial burden that comes with pursuing higher education, but it will also motivate me to continue my academic journey with even more determination.

Your organization's commitment to promoting education in the field of real estate is truly inspiring, and I feel privileged to be a part of your mission. As someone who is passionate about this industry, I know, the skills and knowledge I gain from this program will help me make a positive impact in the field.

Of all the courses I have taken so far, two of my favorites have been The Appraisal of Real Estate and Statistical & Computer Applications in Valuation. These courses have provided me with a strong foundation in the principles and practices of real estate valuation, which I am eager to apply in my future career.

Again, I want to express my sincere appreciation for this scholarship award. It will not only help me achieve my academic goals, but it will also give me the confidence to pursue my dreams with enthusiasm and dedication.



Thank you for the Association of Ontario Land Economists' generosity and support.

*Sincerely,
Jung Woo (Scott), Kim*

Introducing AOLE's Administrator Rosanna Bullock, CCP, DTM



AOLE welcomes Rosanna Bullock as our new Administrator. Rosanna has been working for Peel Region for over 20 years in the Corporate Finance division.

She is also A Certified Coach Practitioner and entrepreneur.

Rosanna is a Distinguished Toastmaster and has a humanitarian passion for volunteering and serving those in need in our community. Her creative talents include being a vocalist who enjoys singing various types of music.

Annual General Meeting Highlights

The Association's Annual General Meeting was held June 27th, 2023 at the Royal Canadian Yacht Club, President Stefan Krzeczunowicz, presided.

Stefan remarked that AOLE is in the best financial health it has been for years. The organization ran a surplus in 2021-22 of \$10,991 which left our fund balance at \$19,807 as of March 31, 2022.

Joining the board of Directors are Nazreen Ali, Ian Ellingham, and Philip Smith.

We have been continuing to produce the Journal with the look of a high-end

magazine that covers the full spectrum of our members' diverse interests with a dedicated team of researchers, writers, and graphic designers. The members of the team that were in attendance at the AGM included Editor-in-Chief John Blackburn, writers Pat Brennan and Andy Manahan and the graphic design team of Benito Del Monte and Leslie Savlov

Once the business part of the meeting was adjourned we had the pleasure of listening to our keynote speaker, Frank Clayton, Ph.D. who spoke about the Importance about increasing the supply of shovel ready land in the Golden Horseshoe.



AOLE President Stefan Krzeczunowicz, addressing the Annual General Meeting

Our New Board Members



Dr. Ian Ellingham, BArch, MBA, MPhil, PhD, OAA, PLE, FRAIC

Dr. Ellingham is currently a land economist at the [Quartek Group](#), a full-service integrated design firm based in St. Catharines. His career background and achievements are covered more fully in another article in this issue about him winning the Randy Roberts Service award from the Ontario Association of Architects. But we would like to add here a mention of all the contributions he has made in helping students over the years. He has mentored

graduate architects from time to time and for about ten years he has mentored University of Cambridge graduate students in Land Economy. Ian has participated in the Niagara Society of Architects scholarship programme, and has ensured that each recipient gives a lecture to the society about some aspect of their work or studies. He said that some of those talks have been fascinating and brilliant.



Philip Smith, FRICS, AACI, PLE

Philip Smith is a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, an Accredited Appraiser and a Professional Land Economist. Philip has over 36 years experience in the commercial real estate market and has been involved in the leasing, management, sale, acquisition, financial analysis, strategic planning and valuation of a variety of assets in real estate markets across Canada, the U.S. and the Caribbean. He has completed numerous valuations and market studies for clients across Canada. In addition, he has also developed and coordinated real estate strategies for a wide variety of corporate, government and non-profit clients.

Philip is currently an independent real estate consultant after retiring from the Altus Group in December 2022. In his previous role at the Altus Group, Philip was an Executive Vice President in the Research, Valuation and Advisory division where he was responsible for national operations and the

public sector services team based in Toronto. Prior to this he had held senior positions at Cushman & Wakefield, Colliers International and Richard Ellis (Canada) Inc.

Philip has previously served in several different volunteer capacities over many years at the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors including Chapter Chair for Ontario Region, Ontario Region board member, Development Series Committee Chair, National Board Member and Continuing Professional Development Coordinator. Philip is also a member of the International Right of Way Association and the Ontario Expropriation Association. He also volunteers part time at the Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital. Philip is looking forward to making a meaningful contribution to AOLE and its members and excited to be serving on the board for the first time after over 20 years as a member.



Nazreen Ali, ICD.D, PLE, MBA

Nazreen Ali has an ICD.D designation from the Institute of Corporate Directors & the University of Toronto, Rotman School of Management, and graduated from Queen's University Canada with a Masters of Business Administration.

Nazreen is the Chief Operating Officer and Director of Skymark Management Corp., Industry Advisor for the Falcon Real Estate Trust which has the objective of investing in a diversified portfolio of real estate assets. Nazreen has executive level experience in financial services, mobile commerce, e-commerce, fintech, innovative conference and international delegations planning and sport management.

Nazreen is an experienced Board Director with extensive leadership and served as President and Chair of the Ontario Motor Vehicle sales regulator

(OMVIC) and was instrumental in setting the strategic direction to modernize OMVIC to a more digital and high functioning organization. Nazreen also served as Chair of the Motor Vehicle Dealer Compensation Fund, a consumer protection fund. Nazreen has served on numerous Boards of private companies and NGOs including United Way and Global Growth Assets Inc. which has an AUM of approximately CAD\$800 million. Nazreen was a founding member and first Treasurer of the Organization of Women in International Trade Ontario (OWIT).

Nazreen was recently appointed to serve as a member of the Board of Directors of AOLE and her interest is to drive a strategic growth plan to provide stable and long-term capital for fully staffed and high functioning organizations.

Dr. Ian Ellingham wins an Award for exceptional contributions from the Ontario Association of Architects

We are delighted to report that AOLE Board member Dr. Ian Ellingham has won the G. Randy Roberts Service award from the Ontario Association of Architects (OAA). We share the following details from the OAA's media release.

Toronto, ON – The [Ontario Association of Architects \(OAA\)](#) is announcing Dr. Ian Ellingham as the recipient of the G. Randy Roberts Service Award for exceptional contributions to the membership and profession, particularly his dedication to the [Niagara Society of Architects \(NSA\)](#).

The OAA regulates the architecture profession in the public interest. Its annual G. Randy Roberts Service Award is given to individuals who exemplify care, compassion, integrity, enthusiasm, and a sense of humour in their service to the membership.

An esteemed mentor, architect, and ambassador for the profession, Dr. Ellingham has been involved in the NSA for more than a decade, serving as its Chair since 2016. During his tenure, he has been active in promoting lifelong education and skills development, and ensuring members had opportunities to connect. He also promotes architecture and the built environment in the Niagara region by assisting with walking tours and encouraging architecture students to participate in NSA activities.

Dr. Ellingham is currently a land economist at the [Quartek Group](#), a full-service integrated design firm based in St. Catharines. His passion for architecture is evident in his multifaceted contributions to both academia and the community. Noteworthy contributions to the built environment include his involvement in the creation of more than 20 social housing projects across the province. Non-profit housing projects with which he has been involved include the non-profit seniors' centres Suomi-Koti Toronto, Stay at Home in Leaside (SAHIL), and Momiji Seniors Residence in Toronto, as well as Lutheran Homes Niagara in Niagara Falls and Faith Lutheran Villa in St. Catharines.

In addition to his work with the NSA, [this year's Service Awards Jury](#) was particularly impressed by Dr. Ellingham's extensive collection of publications and writings, which have significantly contributed to the public's understanding of architecture in the Niagara Region and beyond. His unwavering dedication and fervour for his craft are evident in his ongoing projects, which led the jury to acknowledge his "tireless efforts and exemplary contributions toward the Niagara Society."

*Dr. Ellingham has spent the majority of his architectural career as a non-traditional practitioner, working behind the scenes as a developer with an emphasis on research and academics. An accomplished writer and author, his research focuses on decision-making in the built environment using real option pricing methods, as well as studying human responses to buildings and urban spaces. He has published works such as *Whole Life Sustainability* (2013), *100+25 Years: OAA Perspectives on a Quarter Century* (2014), and *Understanding Ugly: Human Response to Buildings in the Environment*, *Whole Life Sustainability* (2020).*

"Research is always the way we uncover new ways of doing things and how we move the profession into the future," he explains. "Education doesn't end when you pick up your degree or your licence. There's always another challenge. You're always learning something. Architecture is a constant learning process. This is actually one of the delightful parts of architecture—it's one of the reasons why people stay in it forever."

Dr. Ellingham holds a Bachelor of Architecture from Carleton University and an MBA from the University of Western Ontario (now Western University). He later attended the University of Cambridge, earning a Master of Philosophy in Land Economy and a PhD from the Martin Centre for Architectural and Urban Studies. He has played a crucial role in mentoring doctoral students in land economy at the University of Cambridge and is affiliated with its Cambridge Architectural Research.

A member of the Association of Ontario Land Economists and the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC), serving on its Syllabus Program, Dr. Ellingham's career in architecture also includes several accomplishments working with the OAA, including chairing its now-sunset Perspectives magazine committee for more than a decade and previously sitting on the Public Information and Awards Committee throughout the 1990s.

The G. Randy Roberts Service Award, named in honour of the late 2005 OAA president, will be presented to Dr. Ellingham on Thursday, June 22 at [a special event at Science North's Vale Cavern](#) in Sudbury that also celebrates the selections of the SHIFT2023 Health and Architecture Challenge. The event is part of the OAA's Conference, ["Designing for Dignity."](#)



Dr. Ian Ellingham is on the right, holding the G. Randy Roberts Service award.

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2023-24

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NEWS BLASTS

Researched by **John Blackburn**, AIHM, PLE

MUST WATCH: PMA|CIBC SUMMIT: THE BROKERS SUMMIT

Real estate is always on the move, and this month, we tune in with some of Ontario's top brokers for an inside look at the market! Things are heating up across the GTA, and we're eager to find out what our partners have to say.

[Watch Video](#)

MUST WATCH: PMA|CIBC SUMMIT THE BUILDER'S VOICE – HEAR FROM OUR INDUSTRY LEADERS!

Three distinguished leaders from three of the country's top development firms will give us some insight into the state of the market and industry. We will discuss the top issues facing these decision makers and learn from them where we should be sighting our focus moving into the summer market and remainder of 2023. Their insight is sure to shine a light on the nuance behind the market! Don't miss this one!

GUEST SPEAKERS: Brad Carr- Chief Executive Officer, Mattamy Homes Canada, Marc Thibault -Senior Vice President of Housing, Brookfield Properties, Scott McLellan – Chief Operating Officer, Plaza Corp. **MODERATOR:** Andrew Brethour – Executive Chairman, PMA Brethour Realty Group

[Watch Video](#)

Bennett Jones: Economic Outlook: Playing the Long Game –Report & Recorded Webinar

The report reviews recent developments, short-term prospects and risks to assist business planning, and describes some of the context for the longer term and key tasks ahead for Canadian governments and businesses.

The webinar features Bennett Jones senior advisors David Dodge and Serge Dupont. David Dodge was a past Governor of the Bank of Canada (2001- 2008) and he was Deputy Minister of Finance (1992-1997) . He has also held senior positions in the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the Anti-Inflation Board, and the Department of Employment and Immigration.

Serge Dupont served as Deputy Clerk of the Privy Council and Deputy Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (2016-2017), was Executive Director in the International

Monetary Fund (2014-2016) was Deputy Minister, Natural Resources Canada(2010-2014). He has continued to work under specific mandates as Senior Executive Advisor in the Privy Council Office.
[Watch recorded webinar or download report](#)

Quarter 1-2023 GTA High Rise Land Insights Report- Bullpen Research & Consulting & Batory Management

[Read Report](#)

Toronto under Constructions Podcasts

A residential real estate podcast hosted by Bullpen Consulting's Ben Myers and co-hosted by Steve Cameron. This monthly podcast will dive into the nitty-gritty of Toronto Real Estate, with a specific focus on housing policy and economics.

[Access Podcasts](#)

The 2023 National Edition of the Annual –What the Apartment Industry needs to know.

The *ANNUAL* is an industry specific periodical that provides relevant, timely information and data based focused on “What does the apartment industry need to know?” Information was sourced from industry experts, association executives, government sources, and apartment owners & managers from coast to coast. It is produced by RHB Inc, in collaboration with the Canadian Federation of Apartment Association (CFAA).

[Read Report](#)

Wayne Tuck, Yardi report

Wayne Tuck appears on RHBTv and shares details from the Yardi National Multifamily Report. He gives us insight behind the numbers and how the free data and information is not only impressive but vital to our industry.

[Watch Video](#)

BILD Awards celebrate people and companies that shape the GTA

[Read Article](#)

The Well leads new charge for purpose-built rental in Toronto

According to an article in REXX on April 19, 2023 “Purpose-built rental construction is gaining momentum in Toronto and the new mixed-used downtown development The Well could be part of a new wave of badly needed housing options.”

[Read Article](#)

To help solve the housing crisis, waive or defer sales tax on purpose-built rentals

This article appearing in The Globe and Mail on July 20th is by Benjamin Tal, the deputy chief economist of CIBC World Markets Inc

[Read Article](#)

Just How Many Office Buildings in Canada Have Residential Conversion Potential?

[Read Article](#)

Provincial government takes further steps to address housing supply

[Read Article](#)

Mississauga approves action plan for new housing

[Read Article](#)

Centre for Urban Research and Land Development (CUR), Toronto Metropolitan

The CUR May Newsletter reports on: housing affordability, shortage of shovel-Ready land, Toronto being the second fastest growing city in population increase in both the United States and Canada and on other topics.

[Read Newsletter](#)

What a shortage of affordable housing means for the future of work

According to a Globe and Mail article dated April 18th“A lack of affordable housing can cost companies money even if employees don't quit. When workers can't afford to live in the same city as their employer and must instead make a long daily commute, the company loses out on employee productivity.”

[Read Article](#)

At the Venice Architecture Biennale, architects tackle the housing crisis

[Read Article](#)

Labour Shortages, Construction Costs Lead To Drop In Housing Starts In May

[Read article](#)

Canada Is Facing A Severe Construction Labour Shortage, And It's Poised To Get Worse

[Read Article](#)

Modular housing gains traction as Canada's immigration numbers soar

[Read Article](#)

New Details Revealed For Transformative 7-Tower Quayside Development

[Read Article](#)

Elevator congestion creating vertical traffic jams

According to a Globe and Mail article "a push for increased density has led to taller buildings, but residents struggle with elevator wait times."

[Read Article](#)

Why are so many condo elevators out of service? Experts say just four companies control most of the market — and oversight is poor

[Read Article](#)

IHA Canada Appoints Industry Veteran Asif Khan as CEO to Complete the \$900 Million Retirement Master Community Construction Near Ottawa

This 54 acre land project known as Glengarry Hills Village is located in the village of Alexandria which is only a short commute to both Ottawa and Montreal. Glengarry Hills Village is a meticulously designed Senior Village with 750 residences and a commercial core.

[Read Article](#)

How the workers won: Why we're never going back to the office full time - and Toronto never will be the same.

[Read Article](#)

Canada's downtown office vacancy rate hits 19 per cent as workers embrace remote work

[Read Article](#)

To carve a new Path

This Toronto Star article appearing in the May 14, 2023 issue examines Toronto's underground retail network which it states was prime real estate before Covid and explores whether hybrid work has humbled it for good.

[Read Article](#)

What Toronto can learn from London's Elizabeth Line

This Globe and Mail article published on June 3rd says that Toronto residents should not despair about the traffic mess, delays and cost overruns of our transit projects but instead should glance over at London's new line that opened over a year ago that also experienced its own construction delays and cost overruns but is now a transit jewel.

[Read Article](#)

Toronto's future tallest intersection is not where you'd think

[Read Article](#)

Huge rental complex to completely transform Toronto intersection

[Read Article](#)

Bouwinvest enters Canada, invests in major Toronto redevelopment

According to an article appearing in REXX on April 20, 2023, "Dutch-based global investor partners with Woodbourne, takes stake in First Capital REIT's Yonge-Roselawn project"

[Read Article](#)

Steelport reimagines Hamilton's historic steel-producing port

This Globe and Mail Article that appeared in the June 6 2023 issue reports on the acquisition of "nearly 800 acres of historic - but underused - Stelco industrial land acquired by global investment firm Slate Asset Management." Slate recently submitted its application to the City of Hamilton for a "massive redevelopment project... to develop up to 12 million square feet of Hamilton waterfront that was home to the century-old steelmaker Stelco... Its

master plan aims to take advantage of the site's railway, road and port connections to build a modern, intermodal neighbourhood that's primarily industrial with some commercial and recreational amenities."

[Read Article](#)

Golden Mile Master-Planned Community Sparks JV Partnership Between Dream, CentreCourt

[Read Article](#)

BMO's New Urban Campus Transforms a Former Sears

[Read Article](#)

Allied Properties REIT to sell \$ 1.35 billion Toronto data centre portfolio to KDDI Corporation

According to an article in REXX on June 21st, "the portfolio includes freehold interests in 151 Front St. W. and 905 King St. W. and a leasehold interest in 250 Front St. W." The properties "comprise a major hub for Canadian internet operability. KDDI is a Fortune Global 500 company which owns and operates data centres in Asia, Europe and the United States through its subsidiary Telehouse"

[Read Article](#)

Starlight JV enters U.K. with plans for \$1B BTR platform

According to an article in REXX on May 2nd "Starlight Investments says it has joined with a group of global institutional partners to create a new build-to-rent platform (BTR) in the United Kingdom, and the venture is being kicked off with three BTR communities comprising 922 suites and valued at about \$381 million (all figures Cdn).

[Read Article](#)

Canadian developers slow to adopt construction technology: KPMG survey

[Read Article](#)

Prca Global uses tech, innovation to cut construction times

[Read Article](#)

W.P. Carey pays \$468M US to acquire Apotex GTA properties

[Read Article](#)

Concert names Vancity's Christine Bergeron as new prez, CEO

[Read Article](#)

Questions of how to protect communities from wildfire risk loom large as thousands flee homes nationwide

[Read Article](#)

Wildfire nearby? It could complicate how much you pay for your new home

[Read Article](#)

Brookhouse Gate Clarington's first Geothermal Condo

Diverso Energy in the June Issue of their digest celebrates the 5th anniversary of their geothermal system being operational at Brookhouse Gate a luxury condominium complex in the Newcastle community of Clarington, Ontario. Diverso Energy writes "We take pride in knowing that residents have been living comfortably and conserving energy for half a decade. This chic low-rise condo by BrightStar Corporation is Clarington's first geothermal heated condo! It offers the perfect balance of natural & lifestyle amenities, each combining small-town charm with big-city feel. Lush gardens, walking paths, and a complimentary club room, kitchen, and pet spa, just to name a few..."

[Read more about Brookhouse Gate here](#)

Putting high-rises on a low-carbon diet

An article in the Globe and Mail on May 19th takes a look at building high rises in a sustainable way. It states that "...reinforced concrete is a ... major culprit in the climate crisis. According to recent research...only about 20 to 25 per cent of a building's lifetime emissions come from heating and air conditioning and other operational sources; approximately half comes from "embodied" carbon - the carbon used to make and transport building materials such as concrete, steel, aluminum and glass."

"In fact, in recent years, a growing number of architects and builders have been looking for ways to reduce embodied carbon by using less concrete without sacrificing its promise of strength and durability. Toronto city council this week backed a [motion](#) to add embodied carbon assessments to the Toronto Green Standard."

[Read Article](#)

The Garbage King

"Green For Life's founder built a garbage empire on \$9 billion in debt. Now interest rates are rocketing up - is he worried? GFL founder and CEO Patrick Dovigi's appetite for risk helped him to build one of the largest waste management companies in North America in just 15 years. Here's how he did it - and what's coming next" (Toronto Star April 1, 2023)

[Read Article](#)

Canada's farm czar

A Globe and Mail article published on Sept 10, 2022 remarks that "Canada's largest farmland owner Robert Andjelic sees opportunity in a growing global population, fast-growing middle class hungry for protein-rich foods and a decline in available farmland brought on by urbanization and extreme weather"

[Read Article](#)

First Irish Famine Refugees Arrive in Toronto

The Globe and Mail Moment in Time looks back at the date June 6, 1847 when 700 immigrants from Ireland arrived in Toronto "They had survived not only the devastating potato famine in Ireland that ended up killing over a million Irish but also the weeks-long journey across the Atlantic during which many died of typhus." Included in the article is a photo of sculptures at Ireland Park located at the foot of Bathurst Street in Toronto.

[Read Article](#)

Is a new online University a cure for what ails the humanities?

[Read Article](#)

What can these real estate organizations do for me when I'm buying a home?

Joe Richer writes in the Toronto Star that "the real estate sector can be a bit of a mystery to anyone interested in buying or selling a home. It doesn't help that there are at least four different organizations, all commonly referred to by their acronyms, which you may encounter when researching the housing market. RECO, TRREB, OREA and CREA all play important roles in real estate, but what exactly do they do?"

[Read Article](#)

New AI translator can make you seem multilingual in an instant

[Read Article](#)

The University of Niagara Falls Canada (UNF) will be ready to welcome new students in 2024.

[Read Article](#)



The Legislative Beat The Musical Version

By Andy Manahan, PLE

Two reports on our housing crisis:

When Scarborough band Barenaked Ladies first sang “If I had a million dollars, I would buy you a house [plus a nice chesterfield or an ottoman]” the average price of a Toronto resale home was a quarter of a million dollars. Inflation has finally caught up with this [1988](#) song, with [the real estate board reporting that the 2022 average was about \\$1.2 million.](#)

- (1) [In a 77-page report](#) prepared for the Regional Planning Commissioners of Ontario, Hemson Consulting offers a detailed review of the Province’s objective to build 1.5 million homes in Ontario over the next decade. In “How Many Homes Do We Need, Built Faster?” the authors conclude that “while Ontario needs about 1.0 million homes to accommodate population growth over the next 10 years, it does not need an additional 0.5 million homes to compensate for a theoretical housing shortfall accumulated over several decades.”

Further, the study finds that the housing targets set by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for 29 large municipalities in southern Ontario are unnecessarily high. In these 29 municipalities, 425,000 housing units have been built over the past decade. Based on official plans for these 29 municipalities, 755,000 housing units are planned in the next decade, which is a stretch.

The targets are particularly high in the following communities:

- Windsor: 10 times the current rate of construction
- Brampton: 7 times
- Burlington: 5 times
- Guelph and Newmarket: 4 times
- Mississauga: 3 times

Factors impinging against the aspirational target of 1.5 million homes include ongoing

labour shortages and construction capacity constraints.

Ontario’s affordability crisis will not be solved by policies to increase supply. In fact, the report boldly states that “the idea that Ontario can induce the market to ‘supply the way out’ of the affordability crisis is a flawed premise of the Province’s 1.5 Million More Homes ... initiative.”

Evidence from previous housing bubbles in 1974 and 1989 demonstrated that house price corrections occurred only “when high borrowing costs, combined with a recession, led to a large decline in demand.” Tellingly, the report notes that, beginning in the second half of 2022, condominium unit pre-sales fell precipitously in the Greater Toronto Area. Hemson concludes that until affordability improves, higher rates of apartment construction will not happen.

In a York Region [article](#), Paul Freeman, RPCO chair of the Greater Golden Horseshoe caucus and chief planner for the region points out that supply is not the only issue. When a large portion of the proposed units in the pipeline are well over a million dollars, there needs to be more discussion on how to bring prices down for everybody – all ages and income levels.”

Finally, the report points out that significant capital expenditures would have to be made by municipalities to expand infrastructure. This is a risky proposition as the Province has reduced the ability of municipalities “to use traditional funding tools, such as development charges, to pay for this spending.”

What the report does not explicitly state is that immigration levels to Canada and to its major urban areas are expected to remain high which will fuel demand. We know that families are doubling and tripling up in Million Dollar homes, so we have a “Crowded House” (the band) situation.

- (2) The Ontario Chamber of Commerce has released [“Home Stretched:](#)

[Tackling Ontario’s Housing Affordability Crisis Through Innovative Solutions and Partnerships”.](#)

which argues that the province’s high housing prices are having a negative ripple effect on the broader economy. The OCC takes as a given the Province’s target of building 1.5 million homes by 2031 by stressing that an “all-hands-on-deck approach is necessary to meet that goal. A “housing continuum” methodology is put forward whereby a mix of housing types will be required to meet need, especially at the lower end of the continuum (see graphic on p. 6).

A focus on infrastructure and land use planning is also promoted by, for example, having more timely approvals. The report calls for a reduction in the friction in the planning process “without compromising an appropriate level of public accessibility to project consultations and the integrity of the environment, protected areas, and agricultural lands.”

American blues artist John Lee Hooker’s “House Rent Boogie”, released in 1951, tells the story of someone who loses his job and cannot pay rent.

Breaking Up Is Hard To Do:

In the spring, it was announced by the Province that the three constituent municipalities of Peel Region would be allowed to become independent. The [legislation](#) was named after former Mississauga Mayor (and honorary AOLE member) Hazel McCallion who had been a proponent of greater autonomy for her city.

In mid-July, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Steve Clark appointed a five-person panel to oversee the dissolution of Peel Region. Responsibilities will include disentangling the responsibilities of regional services such as police, sewer and water, waste and long-term care.

A tight timeline has been set for January 1,

2025 whereby Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon would then become single-tier municipalities. While on the surface it might appear that eliminating a two-tier structure would be straightforward, it will be a tough task to arrive at fair distribution of assets and liabilities.

A fitting RnB song for Mississauga mayor Bonnie Crombie is *"I Feel Like Breaking Up Somebody's Home"*, originally sung by Ann Peebles, while Brampton's Patrick Brown might be grooving to *"Let's Stick Together"*, ala Bryan Ferry.

If the rollout doesn't go well, the lyrics of Neil Sedaka might come into play: *"Instead of breaking up I wish that we were making up again."*

Are 'Friends' Electric?:

In an effort to land electric battery plants, the federal government, with one-third funding from Queen's Park, has decided to support our automotive sector so that these plants would not be located in the U.S. [PowerCo](#) SE (Volkswagen Group) will build its first gigafactory outside of Europe, employing 3,000 workers in St. Thomas.

Another factory is to be built in Windsor as a joint venture between Stellantis (Chrysler, et al.) and South Korea's LG. When Stellantis heard about the \$13 billion in subsidies to VW, it then held out for more government largesse.

The goal of course is to be ready to meet future demand for electric vehicles. Gary Numan's new wave, electronic hit *"Are 'Friends' Electric?"* concerns alienation but the lyrics about "little deals" resonate.

More electricity in the air: Energy minister Todd Smith has announced that Ontario is betting heavily on [expanding the nuclear footprint at Bruce Power](#) on the shore of Lake Huron. It will be at least 10 years before a new nuclear reactor is built. In the meantime, six of the eight Bruce reactors are undergoing [refurbishment](#).

[The Saugeen Ojibway Nation has expressed concern over nuclear power and the waste that is generated.](#) Eddy Grant's hit song, "Electric Avenue", is not only about race and equality but also refers to a street in the south London district of Brixton which was the first to be lit by electricity.

It is worth noting that Min. Smith also supports the construction of three small modular reactors at Darlington. SMRs

are a relatively new technology but the Minister is confident that [Ontario Power Generation](#) will be able to deliver. While it is heartening that a long-range approach to clean power is being taken, [Mark Winfield argues that higher-risk options](#) (nuclear) should be considered only where it can be demonstrated that lower-risk options are assessed first such as wind/solar/hydro and relationships with our neighbours (Quebec) to access low-impact energy resources.

Assessment: based on Ontario's rising population and the general shift away from carbon, more nuclear and other sources will be necessary, otherwise we will be *"Slippin' Into Darkness"* (a song by the band War).

"KC" and the Sunshine Band:

One day prior to Canada Day, the Attorney General announced that it had brought back the special designation of "King's Counsel" for lawyers, marking the coronation of King Charles in May. Previously, the honorific Queen's Counsel had been applied to distinguish competent litigators but was discontinued by former Premier David Peterson in 1985. In a Toronto Star article, Peterson said that he scrapped the designation because it became "corrupted", stressing that "it's unbelievable that the [Ford government] would reinstitute this."

Opposition leaders criticized the government, with NDP leader Marit Stiles accusing Ford's ministers of giving themselves fancy new honours. Liberal front-runner to become leader, Bonnie Crombie pointed out that these "patronage appointments" were made without any consultation or warning.

The [press release](#) listed 91 appointees, including Attorney General Doug Downey and former Attorney General Caroline Mulroney, but indicated that future nominations for the designation of King's Counsel will be announced at a later date.

Late last year, several prominent lawyers had been agitating for the KC designation with the proviso that it "should be based on merit with quality control." The Law Times [article](#) further stated that the KC designation would help Ontario lawyers in the international legal arena.

Personally, while I always thought that the QC designation had a nice ring to it, my initial thought was 'who wants a KC designation as it sounds like a disco/pop band from the 1970s, KC and The Sunshine Band?

Ontario Science Centre:

In the spring, the Province signalled its intention to shutter the Ontario Science Centre so that more housing could be built on the site at Don Mills Rd., south of Eglinton Ave. The award-winning Raymond Moriyama-designed building would be demolished, and a smaller science facility would be accommodated at Ontario Place/Exhibition Place. During the Toronto Mayoral campaign this was raised by many candidates as a bad idea, with winner Olivia Chow stating that "The Science Centre should be revitalized in consultation with the local community, and it should happen alongside a meaningful investment in improved services and affordable housing."

By way of background, when the Ontario Line transit project was announced by the Province in 2019 it was promoted as connecting the Ontario Science Centre with Ontario Place. Even though the OSC will have greater connectivity with the opening of the Eglinton Crosstown LRT, Premier Ford wants to move the institution to the waterfront because it is "run down."



Ontario Science Centre new transit station entrance . Photo by Andy Manahan.

Ontario Place:

In a Newscast 1010 [interview](#), urban planner Ken Greenberg says that a satellite Science Centre along the waterfront would be acceptable but points out that if the entire OSC is moved to Ontario Place it would be dramatically reduced in size and not contain many of the popular exhibits. He also said that serious concerns have been raised about a proposed mega spa at the west island of Ontario Place having 2,700 underground parking spaces.

A municipal class environmental assessment will be conducted for the Ontario Place redevelopment, but two major components have been excluded: the Therme spa and the Live Nation concert area.

Relevant songs: “*She Blinded Me With Science*” by Thomas Dolby and “*Big Yellow Taxi*”, with lyrics “They paved paradise and put up a parking lot” by Joni Mitchell.

Our unofficial anthem A Place to Stand, a Place to Grow” (*Ontari-ari-ari-o!*) written by Dolores Claman, is another noteworthy song that Ontarians were likely humming when these two attractions were opened 50+ years ago.

Procurement Reform:

Treasury Board president and MPP for Brampton South, Prabmeet Sarkaria, will be leading roundtables this summer to reform Ontario’s procurement processes. As [reported](#) in the National Post, the government’s procurement division is being transferred to Supply Ontario (SO). The agency will be responsible for operating the vendor of record program and the tenders portal. To achieve purchasing efficiencies,

SO will manage and oversee purchases related to fleet, computers and mobile devices.

This modernization is expected to help improve Ontario’s business environment through better public sector supply chain management. As it could also keep Ontario’s budget in check, these lyrics from “*Low Budget*” by The Kinks fit the bill: “Times are hard but we’ll all survive I just got to learn to economize.”

Audit of Development Charges:

As cited in the Spring 2023 edition of The Legislative Beat, Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Steve Clark had promised that the freezing of development charges (DCs) under the *More Homes Built Faster Act* would be accompanied by an audit of municipal finances and DCs. The Minister has followed through on this promise by announcing that the following municipalities

would have a detailed review: Toronto, Peel Region, Mississauga, Caledon, Brampton and Newmarket. Since the [announcement](#) was made in early May, there has been no update on which third-party firms have been selected to conduct the audits.

Top pick: Pink Floyd’s “*Money*” with the lyrics “Money. Get Back. I’m alright, Jack, keep your hands off of my stack”, followed by “*Take the Money and Run*” by the Steve Miller Band. ➔



Andy Manahan is President of Manahan Consulting Services and a member of AOLE’s Board of Directors



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