

# SOUTH SHERMAN HUB NEWS

*A publication of the South Sherman Community Planning Team*

October, 2011

## Are Ontario's Parties Up to the Challenge?

By Peter Graefe

Elections are important times of choice for communities. It is a chance to decide what can be done collectively to face the challenges before us. And there is no shortage of fundamental challenges facing Ontario and Ontarians that need to be considered before Election Day, October 6.

The question is whether our parties are providing us with ways of confronting these issues, or are trying to sway us with cheap gimmicks and catchy slogans that do not really get at the heart of things. Below, I will set out four challenges that I believe are central to our future well-being in Ontario, and reflect on what the parties have to say about them.

### 1. Inequality and Poverty

Ontario has become a more unequal society over the past twenty years. Despite strong economic growth over that period, the benefits of that growth have largely ended up in the hands of the top 10% of the income distribution, and indeed especially in the top 1%. For people in the middle of the income distribution, economic growth has brought no benefit: real wages have stagnated, as have family incomes. Families are working more weeks and more hours, but more to make ends meet than to get ahead.

The result has been an increase in inequality. This can also be seen geographically: in a city like Toronto, where once most neighbourhoods had incomes near the middle, we increasingly see neighbourhoods rising well above or falling well below the middle. In Hamilton, both the Code Red series in the *Hamilton Spectator*, and the Social Planning and Research Council's Incomes and Poverty Report, underline that inequality is creating two cities. For new Canadians, this inequality means that they take longer, on average, to reach the Canadian average in terms of income, and for the first time we can observe this disadvantage extending to the outcomes of their children.

Meanwhile, despite economic growth and increased employment rates, poverty rates have remained largely unchanged. In 2008, the Ontario government made a commitment to reduce child poverty by 25% in five years. The Ontario Child Benefit and increased minimum wages have made a difference for families where

parents find steady jobs. But progress has been slower and more modest than in neighbouring Quebec where more emphasis has been placed on eliminating poverty.

We can deplore this on moral grounds. But even from a dollars and sense perspective, it is a problem: poverty costs us all in terms of its links to the use of health and other services. It also costs us in the longer term when it limits people from reaching their full potential because they are not included in all social opportunities.

There are a variety of measures to combat poverty. We could make the tax system more progressive. Recent research shows that the wealthiest are not paying a bigger share of their income in taxes than those with modest incomes. We could improve public services, which tend to provide a disproportionate benefit to those who are less well off. This would include investments in public housing and social assistance, but also public transportation, libraries and childcare. Finally, we could re-regulate work, both in terms of increasing minimum wages, but also in better enforcing employment standards and strengthening them to protect personal and family time in the 24/7 work world.

None of the parties is offering much to combat inequality and poverty. All parties promise to consider the report of the current Social Assistance review committee. The NDP and Liberals both promise to continue to work on poverty reduction and social housing, with the NDP being a bit stronger in its commitment to bring in a housing benefit. In promising to upload social service costs to the province, both the NDP and the Liberals also open space to think about improving these services, something that would be financially impossible if left on the municipal tax base (as the Conservatives propose). The NDP stands along in trying to increase child care spaces in Ontario, although the Liberals have made noises to the effect of increasing after-school care for 6-12 year olds.

### 2. Health Care

Health care is perhaps the biggest program that reduces inequality in our society,

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## Ontario Election: Issues to Vote On

By Nathan Ellis

The provincial election marks the third rush to the polls in less than a year. We have a new mayor and city council, have re-elected Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his conservatives to a majority government, and now we will vote again on October 6 to elect our next Premier and the government that will lead our province.

Some people love politics, and are informed on all the major issues, while others don't follow the political stories at all. This article is meant to inform the average voter about the major issues in this election. It is possible that you may not have a strong opinion on all the issues, however, consider picking one issue, and determine which party makes the strongest case on that issue, and give them your vote. The parties have put forward platforms that involve healthcare, jobs, transportation, the environment, energy, food, families and seniors. Many of us have strong views on at least one of those subjects, and should take the responsibility of voting seriously.

### Here is a breakdown of the issues:

#### Health

The Ontario Health Care system is one of the main portfolios of the next Ontario government. With our aging population, there are serious questions that need to be answered about how the system will manage increased usage.

The Liberals are promising an improved home-care system for seniors, complete with house calls from their doctor, more access to personal support workers, and a health-care coordinator whose role would be to facilitate care from the Hospital, specialists and family doctors working with individual seniors. They are also offering up to 8 weeks of paid leave for family members who care for a loved one in their home. Also, they would provide a renovation tax credit for renovations that make living space more accessible for seniors, like installing ramps or chair lifts. The idea for Liberals is to allow seniors to age where they are most comfortable: at home.

As for the Conservatives, they are promising a large \$6 Billion investment over the course of their four-year term into health care. Part of their plan to ad-

dress the aging population is to add 5000 beds for long-term care. Some other highlights in their platform include guaranteed hospital wait times, enforced by having higher accountability on Hospital CEOs. Wait times would be made available on-line and through tele-health.

The NDP are also focused on wait times, promising to cut them in half by redirecting funds away from administrative processes and into front-line care. They are also preparing to add 50 new healthcare clinics by 2015. It is also their priority to ensure every Ontarian has a family doctor, and to make healthcare accessible for everybody, suggesting things like eliminating Ambulance fees.

#### Families

Which party is watching out for the best interests of your family?

The Conservatives would take care of families by lowering taxes and put more money in the pockets of average families. They would allow couples to share up to \$50,000 of their income in order to pay less in taxes. They would lower income taxes by 5% for the middle-class family.

The Liberals are taking a more programmatic approach for families. They want to ensure every school offers after-school programs for kids aged 6-12. They would also double the children's activity tax credit from \$50 to \$100 per child. Finally, they would increase the Ontario Child Benefit from \$1100 to \$1310 by 2013. The NDP will assist families by increasing minimum wage to \$11.00 this year. They are also making efforts to make everyday living more affordable by freezing transit fares for the next four years, and by taking the HST off of your home heating and hydro bills.

#### Jobs

The recession has taken a toll on our city's employment. Many people have lost jobs and many families are counting on a stronger economy, where there are more jobs. What are the Candidates doing to create more jobs?

The NDP want to make life easier for small business owners by reducing their tax rate, so they can hire more employees. They would reward companies who

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Illustration courtesy Anna Borstad

# EVENT LISTINGS

## It's Happening in the Hubs

**South Sherman Planning Team**, 7:00 pm. Oct. 3 at St. Giles United Church, 85 Holton Ave. at Main St. E. [www.southshermanhub.wordpress.com](http://www.southshermanhub.wordpress.com)

**Barton Bibliophiles Book Club**, 6:30 p.m., Oct. 3 at Barton Library, 571 Barton St. E. Join us for good company and great reads. Call 905-546-3450 for details. Also at the Barton Library: **Saturday Gaming**, 2 p.m. (Oct. 8, 15, 22, 29). Join us for fun and Wii. Call 905-546-3460 to find out more. **Knittin' Around**, 6:30 p.m., Oct. 17. Bring your knitting projects and share tips and techniques. Children are welcome with adult accompaniment. Call 905-546-3460 if you're interested in learning more. **Romance Readers**, 10 to 11 a.m., Wednesday, Oct. 26. If you love romance, this is the place to be. For more information call 905-546-3460.

**Community Connections Newcomer Welcoming Centre**, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesdays (Oct. 4, 11, 18, 25), at St. Peter's Harrp, 705 Main St. E. at St. Clair Ave. Call 905-544-0500 for details. Also at St. Peter's Harrp: **Coffee and Community**, 11 a.m. to noon on Thursdays (Oct. 6, 13, 20 and 27). Enjoy a cup of coffee and meet your neighbours. St. Peter's Harrp has many programs and activities; <http://harrp.ca/home-2/st-peters-community-centre/> or phone 905-544-0500 for information.

**Welcome Baby** at the Sanford Neighbourhood Site, 735 King St. E. at Sanford; enter at the back (there is a ramp). Learn about healthy eating and a healthy pregnancy, along with feeding and caring for your new baby. Enjoy snacks with other soon-to-be and new moms. Bus tickets and grocery gift certificates will be provided. To register, call Health Connections at 905-546-3550. The site is open Monday to Thursday from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and Friday from 9 a.m. to noon. Call 905-525-5855 to learn more about the Ontario early years center.

Also at the Sanford Neighbourhood Site: **Building Routines for Your Baby**, 10 to 11 a.m., Wednesday, Oct. 26. Join a public health nurse in this program developed for parents and caregivers of children, newborns to 12 months old. Find out why routines are important and how to create a friendly one for your child. **Wednesday**

**Make and Take Literacy**, 1:30 to 2:30, Wednesday, Oct. 26. An Early Years facilitator will guide you in hands-on literacy-based activities; you can take them home and share with your family and friends.

**Alcoholics Anonymous**, 8 p.m., at St. Giles United Church, 85 Holton Ave. at Main St. E. This group offers support for one another. Also at St. Giles: **The Ontario Mental Health Society Rec Program**, 6:30 p.m. every Wednesday (Oct. 5, 11, 18, 25). **Bible study**, 1:30 p.m. every Wednesday (Oct. 5, 11, 18, 25). For those interested in coming out, you are more than welcome to attend. **Busy Fingers Craft Group** meets at 10 a.m. every Wednesday (Oct. 5, 11, 18, 25) All skills welcome. Call 905-549-3068 if you would like more info. **Cocaine Anonymous**, 7 p.m. every Thursday. We are here to help and support each other. **Koffee Klatch Seniors Club**, 10:30 a.m. every Thursday. **Choir practice**, 7:30 p.m., Thursdays (Oct. 6, 13, 20, 27). We always welcomes new members who love to sing. **Worship**, 11 a.m. every Sunday. Open to all. If you need transportation please call the church office. The sanctuary is accessible to all. If contemporary services are more to your liking, they are held the last Sunday of every month. For any questions, call the church office at 905-549-3068. St. Giles United Church, 85 Holton Ave. at Main St. E.

**Project Safe Neighbourhoods**, 1 to 2 p.m. on Tuesdays (Oct. 4, 11, 18, 25), at Barton Library, 571 Barton St. E. Meet with fire prevention staff to find out how to keep your home and family safe from fire. Also learn about fire safety assistance for low-income or disabled persons. Call 905-546-3450.

**Hamilton's Children's Museum Hosts the Wednesday Wiggles**, 10 to 11 a.m. and 2 to 3 p.m. (Oct. 5, 12, 19 and 26) at 1072 Main St. E., in Gage Park. There will be story time, music and crafts. Regular rates apply: adults \$1.50, children \$3.50, family \$8. For the themes call 905-546-4848, or email [childrensmuseum@hamilton.ca](mailto:childrensmuseum@hamilton.ca) for more information.

**Vote**, 9 to 9 p.m. 6 Oct.. Get out and vote. Check your card to find out where you vote. Let your voice be heard, vote, and car pool with neighbours who may need a ride.

**Adult Drop In Knitting Club**, 7 to 9 p.m., Oct. 6, 13, 20 and 28 at 134 Gibson Ave. Led by Grace Campbell. Men and women of all levels are welcome. If you have low vision or are blind or deaf, Grace can teach you. The club is free; needles can be purchased inexpensively. Come along and have fun. Please call 905-544-2572 (leave a message if no one answers) or email [grace-campbell@hotmail.com](mailto:grace-campbell@hotmail.com)

**Ticats play at home** against the Winnipeg Bluebombers; kickoff is at 7 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 7. Get your tickets at Ticketworks, 433 Main St. W., call 905-526-6566 or visit [www.ticketworks.ca](http://www.ticketworks.ca) to get them online. You can also get tickets from Rock Express, 963 King St E. Call 905-545-8559.

**Life after Breast Cancer**, Wednesday, Oct. 19, Hamilton Convention Centre, organized by Hamilton Health Sciences Juravinski Hospital and Cancer Centre. Please visit [www.jcc.hhsc.ca/LABC](http://www.jcc.hhsc.ca/LABC) or call 905-575-6398 for more information.

**The 91st Hamilton Fall Garden and Mum Show**, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Oct. 21 to 30, Gage Park Greenhouses. There are more than 200 varieties of chrysanthemums into this year's show; the theme is "Fire." The new 20,000-square-foot greenhouse has new workshops, seminars, an expanded marketplace and a new children's area. Admission at the door. [www.hamilton.ca/mumshow](http://www.hamilton.ca/mumshow) 905-546-2489 Come enjoy Hamilton's finest horticulture!

**Malt Shoppe Memories**, doors open at 6:30 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 21, St. Giles United Church, 85 Holton Ave. at Main St. E. A Las Vegas-style musical revue with beloved songs from the 50s and 60s featuring The Satiniques. Draws and a baked good sale are included in the night, all for \$20. A great night of old-fashion fun. For tickets: 905-549-3450 [www.stgileschurch.ca](http://www.stgileschurch.ca), [stgiles@stgileschurch.ca](mailto:stgiles@stgileschurch.ca)

**Community Dinner**, doors open at 5:30 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 26 at St. Giles United Church, 85 Holton Ave. at Main St. E. Make friends over a wonderful free meal. Volunteers to help set up are always welcome; come at 4 p.m. Call 905-549-3068 to offer your help.

**Pre-Halloween Party**, 6 p.m., Friday, Oct. 28, at St. Peter's Harrp, 705 Main St. E. at St. Clair. The Kit Cat Club of Hamilton is hosting this event so children can pick up hand-crafted boxes to take when they trick-or-treat. The boxes are to help raise

money for the ongoing work of the Kit Cat Club. Wear your costumes and have fun. Free treats; draw-prizes for \$1 a ticket. Volunteers and donations of candy would be great. Call Gail at 905-543-8092 to find out more or to volunteer.

**Family Movie Night**, Oct. 28 at St. Peter's Harrp, 705 Main St. E. at St. Clair Ave. There are few places these days where you can take the kids to a free movie and not have to pay a fortune at the concession stand. Please call 905-544-0050 for the time and to find out what movie will be playing.



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## HAMILTON HELPED

By Lynne Mans

Recently while perusing the Hamilton Helps site on Facebook, I noticed a posting from Grace Gilliland-Campbell regarding a knitting group. As winter is approaching and we all seem to hibernate I'd thought this year I'd like to be a part of something involving live people instead of the TV or the internet.

I often check Hamilton Helps as I've found the diversity of what shows up to be interesting to say the least. I e-mailed to find out more and she responded quite quickly that it was an open group, meeting once a week for free, materials provided if need be and that while I could crochet to beat the band, she'd make sure I could not only knit just as well but teach someone else.

After getting directions, she's in the South Sherman Hub area, off I went. I had a blast! I met 4 people the first night from different age brackets and backgrounds. The conversation was lively and I learned how to knit and purl.

Last night I went again and a different group of people were there. It turns out the group is quite fluid. Once again the conversations and laughter were brisk and entertaining and I learned how to cast on.

I've recommended this group to a few people and I for one plan to continue to attend.

I'm still watching Hamilton Helps to see what other groups/ help required/ things for sale/ things needed and comments pop up.

## Hamilton Helps

**Do you have help to offer?** Skills you can teach others? Things you want to learn? Contact Cindy Currie at [itshappeninginthehubs@gmail.com](mailto:itshappeninginthehubs@gmail.com)

Community is all about reaching out and having someone reach back. Facebook has allowed users to connect globally and locally for almost any type of common interest you can think of.

Here in Hamilton, several groups have popped up with the intent of forming communities and creating a better Hamilton. Each group has a different twist but they all have the same goal — to make Hamilton the best city to live in.

Join any and all of these groups to find help or answers you need or to provide your personal experiences to someone who is searching.

Facebook Groups:

- Hamilton Helps
- Lend A Hand – Hamilton
- Hands Together Hamilton

In following issues, we will feature some of

the best resources, ideas and results from these groups. If you have a great group you want to add to the list, email Cindy Currie at [itshappeninginthehubs@gmail.com](mailto:itshappeninginthehubs@gmail.com)

**Cat Rescue:** The HBSPCA needs your help to adopt or foster cats or to volunteer as part of their Trap, Neutre and Return Program. 905-547-7722 [www.hbspca.com](http://www.hbspca.com)

**After-school literacy program:** Looking to create an opportunity for children in Kindergarten to Grade 8. Focus on reading and spelling. Contact Celeste Licorish at [clc1@sympatico.ca](mailto:clc1@sympatico.ca) or 905-544-0903 (leave msg) if you would like to help make this happen.

**South Sherman Property Angels:** A clean, well-kept neighbourhood is one of the assets that make life more pleasant and enjoyable. Graffiti, when sprayed on private or public properties is an undesirable act of vandalism. The Property Angels is a group from the South Sherman Community Planning Team. One of our primary goals is to volunteer to

help with properties in the South Sherman neighbourhood. (If you received this paper at your home or business, you are probably in the neighbourhood!)

We work on the principle of neighbours helping neighbours, and we do what we can as we can. Our first step is to create a list of properties in need of attention and to gather volunteers who are willing to help. If you would like to help, or if there is graffiti on or near your property, we'd love to talk to you. Please contact Steve at: [steve.calverley@gmail.com](mailto:steve.calverley@gmail.com)

**Parent Involvement Committee:** If you have school-age children in the Hamilton-Wentworth School District School Board (HWDSB) and would like to learn more about the Board's role in your child's education and share your feedback, the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) needs you. Monthly meetings, free dinner, free parking. To apply, contact Celeste Licorish at [clc1@sympatico.ca](mailto:clc1@sympatico.ca) 905-544-0903

# Communication Relationships Engagement

By Rebecca Doll

One of the most exciting things going on right now in our community-building efforts is the idea of Block Champions. One part tribal drums, one part porch party and one part town crier, the Block Champions are the links in our communication chain.

What we've articulated so far is that the Block Champion has three aspects to his/her role:

1: Staying in the loop. With the South Sherman Community Planning Team, the events in the area, the bigger picture of the world and all of it or as much as you can. If you're not on top of anything right now, you'll be surprised how those rings of involvement start expanding once you take the first step.

2: Getting to know everyone on your block. Not the whole street or the other side of your block, just your block. While you are encouraged to get to know as many people as you can (and some people seem to know everyone!) by breaking down the areas of responsibility we get more people involved, more coverage of the area and stronger links in our communication chain. And this means really getting to know them, not just their name and address, but what they do and what their hobbies and interests are.

3: Connecting people. Once you know the people and what's going on, you'll be ideally positioned to connect your neighbours with things that might interest them, be it activities for seniors or kids, just their kind of help that is needed on a project or people who share the same passions.

In an elegant twist of fate, the role of the Block Champion parallels the priorities identified at the Imagine Session we held in 2010:

Communication Relationships Engagement

Many of you are already doing these things with and for your neighbours and we hope to recognize some of you here in the Hub News. However, we hope to connect with many of you as we build on this project. There may be as many as 300 blocks in our neighbourhood! We'll start by getting together with people who are interested in helping to build this network.

As part of this project we'll explore ways for people to sign up to become Block Champions, ways for them to connect with each other, ways to track which blocks don't yet have Block Champions and ways to get training about Asset-Based Community Development so that we are all working from the same page.

If it interests you to be involved at the planning stage, please come to the meeting of the South Sherman Community Planning Team on Monday October 3rd at 7 p.m. at St Giles Church or check the website. We realize that many of you won't have received the paper in time for the Hub meeting so to get started we'll use that meeting to book a date for a Block Champions meeting.

Please check the Hub website to find out the date of that meeting and please feel free to sign up for the emails that come out before and after the meetings.

**your ad here**

To request Ad Space, contact [itshappeninginthehubs@gmail.com](mailto:itshappeninginthehubs@gmail.com)

## The Voice of Youth

### The Humming Bird

By Ayla Edited by Jaya

During the summer I found myself spending a week at my grandmother's. She belongs to one of two hundred and ninety Grandmother Groups across Canada that support the Steven Lewis Foundation. Her group is referred to as the "Swaggin Grannies" They raise money specifically to help the children in Africa, orphaned by the last generation lost to AIDS. As I listened to my grandmother tell me about the other groups like hers, one story in particular inspired me. The name of the group I have long forgotten but the story that goes with it I will NEVER forget.

It takes place in a forest, a habitat to many different animals such as bears, deer and ground hogs, just to name a few.

In the forest there was a terrible fire. All of the animals dashed to safety while their homes were being consumed by flames. The animals stayed back and watched with fascination while one tiny Humming Bird continued to fill his beak with as much water as it could possibly hold, and sprayed small amounts of water over the raging flames. The little bird refused to stop, although it was a very dangerous and tiring job. The other animals just watched this tiny bird and finally asked "Why are you flying back and forth spitting drops of water onto the fire? It is impossible to extinguish the flames with such a small amount of water."

All the Humming Bird replied with "I do what I can".

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## A Challenge for the South Sherman Residents

By Marilyn Hill

Congratulations on the publication of the *South Sherman Hub News*! It is an exciting venture.

I wish to present two challenges to residents of the South Sherman area.

Is there anyone who has lived longer than 71 years in the same house in this same area of Hamilton? Also is there any family, through different generations, who has lived for over 99 years in the same house in this area?

My name is Marilyn Hill and our 197 Stirton Street house was built in 1940, the year of my birth. Stirton is a short street going from Barton to King, between Sanford and Birch. In the forties and fifties when I was a child, Barton was a busy, thriving place with small, separate shops for produce, meat, bakeries, dry goods and newspapers. A tall, stately building at Barton and Minto was the library. I well remember being allowed, at age 14, to go to the adult section of the library. It was so quiet there that you could hear the pages of the *Spectator* being turned.

With the coming of malls, supermarkets and the increase in cars, Barton Street is now somewhat deserted. One good feature is the modern Barton Street library that houses an active program of computers, videos, bustling families and books.

A neighbour of mine is David Dugan at 190 Stirton. He has lived in the same

house since his birth in 1948. What is really fascinating is the fact that this home was one of the first built on the street in 1910 and his grandparents moved there in 1912! His parents lived in the same house all their lives and now he and his wife Judy, their daughter Peggy and two grandchildren are carrying on the same tradition. That's 99 years of Dugans!

We would be interested in hearing about other families who have achieved longevity in this Hub. We are survivors who enjoy the history of this unique part of the city. At one time, the north east corner of Barton and Stirton had a large post office where offices such as the Westinghouse on Sanford picked up their daily mail. Now that building is a Southern Baptist Church. Other changes have seen Livingston United Church become a Korean Presbyterian worship centre and Truscott Funeral Home at Barton and Birch rise anew as a Day Care Centre.

Let's share the people who have made this special neighbourhood interesting. Do write or call to tell about families who have lived and strengthened the South Sherman Hub. Can you meet or beat the challenges posted here?

To share your stories send them to Marilyn at 197 Stirton, Hamilton ON L8L 2Z5 or [itshappeninginthehubs@gmail.com](mailto:itshappeninginthehubs@gmail.com)

# the MIDDLE ages

By Sharon Baker

They're gone. I am now officially an empty nester. A single empty nester with a nose piercing. Which by the way, I continue to accidentally knock out of my nose at least once per week, thus reliving the horror as I push it back in. But I digress, back to the empty nest. The only man in my life right now is a large and clumsy dog named Hank.

*How did this happen?  
Just yesterday they were babies!*

The eldest is now living in a house over near Mac as she begins grad school and the youngest has moved to London to begin her BA at Western.

There's no more "how come there's never anything good to eat in this house?" or "mum, can you drive me to...?" or "mum, can I have \$20 for...". Well okay, I'm sure they'll continue to ask for money. But there are no more dirty dishes left on the kitchen counter and no more of the endless overflow of wet towels from the laundry hamper. No more being awoken at 2:00 a.m. as somebody stumbles in the front door and no more discovering that the milk pitcher has been left out of the fridge all night. And there will actually be leftovers for me to bring to the office for lunch the next day.

I can now play "my music" on the stereo, dance around the house without being met with the usual roll of the eyes,

watch documentaries on TV instead of Jersey Shore, eat ice cream for dinner if I feel like it and go to bed whenever I want without worrying about having to pick one of them up at the end of the night.

I've gone back and forth between feeling sorry for myself and reveling in this new found freedom. They and I have both survived their journey to adulthood and it's time for each of us to enter a new chapter of our lives.

**So... now what?**

Well, after taking the advice of a friend who suggested that I "lay down" for the first couple of weeks after they left, I'm now starting to make plans. Some of those plans involve redecorating the house.

The youngest will be back each spring so I can't really touch her room. The oldest's room is a different story, however. It's about to become my new "woman cave". Candles, books, my favourite mug, family photos, my computer, pretty pillows, and my super soft blanket. I wonder how long it will take until Hank discovers it and claims it for his own. It would be nice to have at least one room in this house that does not smell like dog.

I guess I'd better get moving on that "cave". Before long they'll be back for Thanksgiving. I can't wait to see their reaction when they discover that I have painted the dining room RED.

Now if I can only find a spot to hide some of the turkey leftovers....

# Our Environment

## Triple M Fire

By Katie Stiel

As many of you know, there was a fire on the night of Saturday, September 17th, at the Triple M Metal facility on Parkdale Avenue North, which resulted in several north end communities experiencing noxious odours and black plumes.

According to many residents, odours which resembled burnt chemicals began to permeate homes at around 7pm Saturday night, and for some, they continued well past 10pm. Some individuals also reported experiencing burning eyes and throats.

Although the Spec reports the cause of the fire is unknown, we are concerned about the fact that this is not the first fire that has taken place at a Triple M scrap yard. In March of this year, there was a fire that started in a pile of car seats and dashboards at the company's Brampton Street yard. In April of 2009, that same location had a fire — again in a pile of car parts — and believed to have been started by a spark from a metal cutting torch.

Fires are not the only reason Environment Hamilton has been keeping an eye on Triple M's facilities. In addition to ongoing issues with mud being tracked onto the city streets (which creates dust problems) EH began to raise concerns back in 2007 about the company's open air metal cutting practices, which create orange-brown smoke plumes.

In February of 2008, Environment Hamilton used the Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR) to request that the Min-

istry of Environment review two certificates of approval for air emissions from Triple M's Parkdale scrap yard. We found that although the company had approval for two metal cutters, there were no pollution control requirements attached. We subsequently made the simple request that these cutters have the same pollution control requirements as other metal-cutting operations in the city. In May of 2008, the Ministry of Environment agreed to undertake a review of the site's permits. Despite this outcome, the ministry has yet to take action to require the company to stop the open air metal cutting at the site. The characteristic rusty orange emissions continue today, and we wonder whether the open air cutting is increasing the risk of fires at the site.

Recognizing the need to revisit the issues associated with this facility, Environment Hamilton is looking to work with concerned residents and take additional action to resolve Triple M's pollution problems once and for all. If you're interested in helping, please call us at 905-549-0900 or email [contactus@environmenthamilton.org](mailto:contactus@environmenthamilton.org)

Environment Hamilton is a not-for-profit organization that has been helping to provide Hamiltonians with the knowledge and skills needed to protect and enhance the environment around them. To learn more, or to get tickets for "Sustainably Yours — Environment Hamilton Celebrates 10 Years of Environmental Action", please visit [www.environmenthamilton.org](http://www.environmenthamilton.org)

## Election Challenge

Continued from Page 1

transferring resources from the wealthy and healthy to the rest. Health care accounts for roughly half the provincial budget, in part because costs have been rising, and in part because the total amount the province spends as a share of the size of the economy has decreased. As a share of the total economy, health costs have grown less rapidly. And, as we grow richer as a society we should be able to afford to spend a greater share of income on health without having to do with less of other services.

We should be concerned with the growth of health spending, but recognize, following the Code Red report in the *Hamilton Spectator*, that improving health is as important as cutting costs. In other words, reducing poverty, improving housing and investing in prevention are more important in the long run than putting a few dollars here or promising to save a few dollars through rationalization there. Indeed, finding savings in the existing system demands imaginative changes that move health out of hospitals. However, closing and transforming hospitals is almost always unpopular as people rightfully worry about losing access to health care. As such, no party seems willing to discuss this option.

If we look at the party platforms, they are quite similar in promising to increase funding to hospitals, but at a rate which will require some service cuts and rationalizations. None of the parties has much

to say about prevention or doing health differently. The NDP is in favour of spending slightly more than the other parties and capping the compensation of senior health system executives, but the different here is slight. The Conservatives favour cutting the Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs). This too will save little money as the tasks performed by the LHIN will have to be done elsewhere, and will move decision-making further from our communities. Unfortunately, no party is demanding that the LHINs be opened up to much wider community participation.

### 3. Environmental concerns in a car-dependent society

Ontario is a car-dependent society. It is commonly said that one in six jobs are directly or indirectly related to auto production — an exaggeration, but one that captures the economic importance of the car industry. We are also very dependent on cars for getting around, despite the huge economic cost of lost productivity caused by overcrowded highways in the Greater Toronto Area. Dealing with the challenge of climate change in a car-dependent society is a difficult issue.

Part of the answer comes from improving public transportation. All parties promise to invest in this area. The Conservatives talk about reducing congestion, but are not clear on their transit priorities. For the Liberals, the goal is to improve connectivity in the Greater Toronto Area, for instance through extending full-day GO train service into Hamilton. For

the NDP, the goal is to improve transit within cities by capping fares and increasing provincial investment. The relative merits of these plans probably depends on whether you are commuting by GO into Toronto or whether you are taking the HSR cross-town!

Part of the answer comes from encouraging compact forms of urban development. The Liberal party's move to put in place a Places to Grow Act and Greenbelt legislation rank among its most farsighted initiatives. The Liberals and NDP promise to maintain that emphasis, while the Conservatives have been less forthcoming, and indeed promise further highway development in the area, including the Mid-Peninsula highway along the Niagara escarpment.

Finally, part of the answer comes from adopting an overall environmental policy. On this front, Greenpeace has endorsed the NDP package as the most adequate. Others, however, might consider the promise to take the Harmonized Sales Tax off gasoline as a form of climate-change denial by this party.

### 4. Jobs and economy

There was a documentary in the early 1980s called *Shift Change* that looked at Hamilton and asked where the jobs of the future would come from. Ultimately, Hamilton has done alright in terms of creating jobs, and indeed was not too badly hit by the global economic downturn of 2008-2009. We have, however, seen a sharp decline in the incomes of men, probably the result of well-paid manufac-

turing jobs being replaced by less-well-paid service sector jobs. While manufacturing is still a big player in Hamilton's and Ontario's economy, it has shed many workers in the past six years and is in a period of reinvention.

Here, the solution varies between a Conservative promise to create jobs by keeping taxes low, an NDP promise to reward job creators by providing subsidies for new hires and for training, and the Liberal plan of creating "green" jobs through its deal with Samsung. The Liberals plan is the closest to an industrial policy that might re-launch manufacturing in Ontario, but it is small, timid, and restricted to a single sector. Neither the NDP nor the Conservative approaches do much to ensure new jobs will pay well, or will help put in place a strong industrial structure.

### Conclusion

Ontario faces significant challenges to which there are no easy answers. For the most part, our political parties are not offering us much beyond the status quo for facing them. That is disappointing. On the other hand, there are differences between the parties, and so who we elect does make a difference in terms of how we start to deal with these challenges. Ultimately, we can engage with the political system and demand better ideas from our political parties. If we wish the public good to be addressed in meeting these challenges, we cannot leave their resolution to the decisions of powerful private actors alone.

# Successful Pedestrian Places Inspire Hamilton

By Ryan McGreal

## Walkable Streets

As Hamilton makes slow progress on its Gore Master Plan, we need to look for lessons and inspiration to other cities that have successfully created pedestrian-friendly places in their city centres.

On a recent trip to Europe, I encountered three cities that all enjoyed lively pedestrian centres. From a global metropolis of 1.2 million to a small regional node of 50,000, from balmy Mediterranean heat to dismal North Atlantic chill, these cities are very different in their composition, but they all managed to carve out excellent people places.

What they have in common is that they provide public space that is attractive and functional, feels comfortable and safe, mixes a variety of uses (including residential), and de-emphasizes the automobile in relation to other modes, chiefly walking, cycling and transit.

## Dublin

Ireland's dynamic capital city has some 500,000 residents (and another 600,000 in the greater metro area), with a high proportion of recent immigrants (close to 20%). For an historic centre built mainly in the 18th and 19th centuries, Dublin is also a very young city: half of its residents are under 25 years of age.

Dublin is a major cultural centre and a significant share of its economy turns around tourism, music, theatre and the arts. It has produced some of the greatest writers of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Since the advent of the Celtic Tiger years, Dublin has also been the industrial centre of Ireland's high-tech renaissance, hosting the European headquarters of such global companies as Microsoft, Google, Amazon, eBay, Yahoo! and PayPal.

Dublin is home to three significant pedestrianized areas: Henry Street, Temple Bar and Grafton Street.

## Henry Street

North of the Liffey River, Henry Street was pedestrianized in the 1980s and is lined with both street-facing shops and department stores, including two indoor shopping centres. On the day we were there, a farmers' market was operating on a side street.



Farmers' Market just off Henry Street

A block south of Henry, the Luas (Irish for "speed") Red Line tram runs east-west along Upper Abbey Street as part of its 16 km range. Launched in 2004, the Luas has been an amazing success, carrying 90,000 passengers a week-day and 26 million passenger trips a year (as in other cities, ridership dropped a bit during the economic crisis).

The construction was publicly funded, but the service runs without public operating funds and runs an annual surplus in operating revenue. The lines have already been extended, and several more extensions are in the works.



The Luas LRT runs along Upper Abbey Street, north of the Liffey

## Temple Bar

South of the Liffey, Dublin's famous Temple Bar is a narrow, winding, cobblestoned lane of medieval streetwalls hidden behind the Merchants Arch, south of the Ha'penny Bridge over the Liffey. (My eight-year-old exclaimed, "It's Diagon Alley!")

Thick with street performers and given over almost entirely to galleries, pubs and restaurants, Temple Bar feels a bit more touristy than functional. At the same time, 3,000 people live there and it's an important cultural hub, hosting several arts institutes and a weekly book market.

## Grafton Street

A little further east, Grafton Street is paved with red bricks and framed by eclectic 19th and early 20th century four-storey buildings — one of the most beautiful shopping districts I've ever seen. Like Henry Street, it was pedestrianized in the 1980s and is an extremely popular shopping destination. It also commands some of the highest property square footage rates in the world.

Like Temple Bar, Grafton Street plays host to some fantastic street performers. (If you watched *Once*, Glen Hansard's character is seen busking on Grafton Street in the movie's opening scene. Hansard himself started out as a Grafton Street busker.)

## Galway City

On the other side of the country, Galway City in western Ireland sits nestled against Galway Bay, which opens into the Atlantic. With a population of just 75,000, it is the third largest city in Ireland and the fastest-growing. The central business district, based around Shop Street, was converted to a pedestrian-only street in 1998 and has since enjoyed tremendous success as a popular public space for shopping, strolling, browsing, people-watching and enjoying the many excellent street performers.

The pedestrianization happened despite strong opposition from local shopkeepers, who were afraid that removing cars would hurt business. Nevertheless, it has been a tremendous success that has kept downtown Galway City lively and economically viable while other city centres have been bled by cheap box stores in the suburbs.

Astonishingly, despite the fact that the original fears were proven wrong, a 2009 proposal to expand the pedestrian area elicited the very same fears from local business groups as the original 1998 proposal.

Meanwhile, during a debate over the proposed pedestrianization of a downtown commercial street in nearby Sligo

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Photos by Ryan McGreal

Town, the mayor voiced what most supporters of pedestrianization already understood:

"Shop Street in Galway has been a huge success but there was fierce initial opposition to the proposal. I know a businessman, Sean Hynes of Hynes Shoes, who had serious reservations at the beginning, but everyone can now see the obvious benefits pedestrianization had for Galway city in general.

If you create a comfortable, attractive, inviting public space and make it easy for businesses to invest there, people will frequent it.

Galway City has some of the most dismal weather in Europe — it's nearly always cold and wet — but that doesn't stop people from enjoying the beauty and amenity that Galway's pedestrian-friendly core has to offer.



Rain does not deter pedestrians from beautiful public spaces

It is important to note that even those parts of the downtown core that aren't pedestrian-only are still pedestrian-friendly. Elegant streetwalls, wide sidewalks, narrow driving lanes, curbside parking and street trees conspire to produce an environment in which pedestrians feel comfortable and protected.

While myopic business representatives worry that making Galway more pedestrian-friendly might send the message that the city is "anti-car", the lively urban environment continues to attract artists and other creative people.

Like Dublin, it has become a major cultural centre and hosts a large number of music and art festivals and other events. The economy remains strong through Ireland's economic crisis, in part through its role as a major tourist destination.

## Carcassonne

Finally, in the south of France, the city of Carcassonne provides another example of a pedestrian-friendly downtown environment. With a population of 50,000, Carcassonne is smaller even than Galway and has a comparatively large suburban ring around the historic downtown. (It also has a medieval castle, restored in the 1800s, overlooking the city from a nearby hill.)

The downtown core of Carcassonne is approximately a seven-by-seven grid of narrow one-lane streets that frame short blocks of two- to four-storey buildings in the French style.

It is surrounded by a ring of boulevards lined with platane trees (similar to the sycamore trees in front of Hamilton's City Hall), tall trees with broad, leafy canopies and mottled, camouflage-like trunks. The boulevards also have angled parking for people heading into town from the suburbs.

The central north-south lane, Rue Georges Clemenceau (colloquially called Rue de la Gare because it runs to the

train station just north of the core), is pedestrian-only and lined with shops, cafes and restaurants.

Right at the centre of town on the west side of the Rue de la Gare is a cobblestone pedestrianized plaza called the Place Carnot, which features a central fountain and statue. Framed with platane trees and surrounded by cafes, restaurants and bars, the plaza is crowded with tables and chairs in which people sit under umbrellas and enjoy life.



Place Carnot

On Market days — Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays — the seating shares space with a lively farmers' market featuring local fresh produce, breads and pastries, cheeses, preserves and other artisanal goods. The market attracts tourists, to be sure, but it's clear that the majority of people frequenting Place Carnot are residents enjoying their city.

As we were preparing to leave, they were just setting up the main stage in the Place Carnot for the Festival de Carcassonne, which promises a hugely diverse roster of performances — including Bryan Ferry, Moby, Iggy and the Stooges and, er, Supertramp. Not bad for a city of 50,000.

## Conclusion

The pedestrian places I visited all had some things in common:

- The public space is framed by intact streetwalls of 2-4 storey buildings.
- Trees provide shade and help frame the space as a vaulted hall rather than an empty space.
- The ground is hardscaped attractively, e.g. using cobblestones or coloured bricks.
- A varied mix of commercial and residential uses is encouraged in the buildings framing the space.
- The uses in the buildings spill out into the public space: patios, market stalls, and kiosks.
- Street performances and other public entertainments are encouraged.
- Automobiles are banned or severely restricted.
- The area is well-served by transit.
- Non-automobile modes of transportation, like bicycles, are allowed and even encouraged.

Places that are attractive, feel safe, and provide a variety of uses and amenities at all times of the day will succeed as people places.

Business owners who fear that the loss of easy motoring access will drive away patrons must remember that they gain far more than they lose: in a city neighbourhood, a beautiful, functional public environment that draws thousands of people every day is better for business than any number of driving lanes or parking spaces.

# A Distant Mirror: 40 Years of Urbanism in Vancouver and Hamilton

By Nicholas Kevlahan

Reprinted courtesy of Raise the Hammer  
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Vancouver and Hamilton were remarkably similar cities 40 years ago, but deliberate choices have put these two cities on diverging paths. This article examines the reasons Vancouver has become a city known for its livability and dense urban form.

I grew up in Vancouver in the 1970s and 1980s before leaving in 1990 for the UK and France. In 1998 I moved back to Canada, making Hamilton my new home.

When I moved to the UK in 1990 most people had only the vaguest idea where Vancouver was. I usually ended up saying it was just north of Seattle.

Today, when you mention Vancouver, everyone has heard of it, many have visited it, and it has a universally good reputation. This is partly due to the Winter Olympics and partly due to its high ranking on various international livability rankings. But it is mostly due to its qualities as a city.

I was recently in Vancouver and was again impressed by the changes since my last visit three years ago. Putting on my amateur urbanist hat, I decided it was time to try to understand better why Vancouver is the way it is, and what we in Hamilton might learn from their experience.

I don't mean to imply that I don't like Hamilton (quite the contrary), but, as we tend to say here, 'it has so much unrealized potential' and seems to constantly under-perform as a city. As Christopher Hume recently wrote in the *Toronto Star*:

'This is a city that has made every mistake in the book, and has the scars to prove it. Few urban centres have managed to inflict as much damage on themselves as has Hamilton. After eviscerating its core in the 1960s and '70s, it seems to have run out of any clear sense of where it was headed and why.'

We owe it to ourselves to examine other cities that seem to have done most things right. By all accounts, Vancouver is one of the few North American cities that has.

## But Vancouver is not Hamilton!

At first glance it might seem absurd to compare Vancouver and Hamilton. After all, Vancouver is a dense, vibrant city that is the economic and cultural centre of its region and province. However, the two cities are actually remarkably similar in population and both have well-defined geographic constraints.

They each also face their own weather challenges: Vancouver gets over a metre of rain a year and has 18 more rainy days than Hamilton, while Hamilton is colder in the winter and gets 126cm of snow to Vancouver's 48cm. Their main differences are in their urban development patterns in the past several decades.

Size: According to the 2006 census Vancouver and Hamilton were respectively the 8th and 9th largest cities in Canada, and both are part of much larger conurbations.

The urban areas and populations of the two cities and their associated conurbations are compared in the table below. Note that the City of Vancouver is entirely urban, while only 20 percent of the total area of the City of Hamilton is urban.

	Hamilton	Vancouver
City population	504,559	578,041
Urban population	647,634	578,041
CMA population	692,911	2,116,581
Conurbation population	6,539,700	2,116,581
Urban area of city	227.7 km <sup>2</sup>	114.7 km <sup>2</sup>
Urban population density	2,844 / km <sup>2</sup>	5,335 / km <sup>2</sup>

The data show that Hamilton and Vancouver are surprisingly similar in terms of total population (although Vancouver's population is growing much faster) and in their locations in very large conurbations (although Vancouver is the centre of its region, while Hamilton is the secondary city).

The main difference is in population density: Vancouver's population density is almost twice that of Hamilton (and the density of the downtown is much greater: 35 000/km<sup>2</sup> for the West End). It is the origin of this difference that we focus on here.

Geography: Both Hamilton and Vancouver are limited and defined by their geography. Hamilton is bounded to the north by Lake Ontario, divided into upper and lower cities by the 'mountain' and by the conurbation of the GTA to the east.

The City of Vancouver is essentially a peninsula bounded by Burrard inlet to the north (and the North Shore mountains beyond), and the Fraser River to the south.

In both cases, there is one direction that is open to 'sprawl' development: to the south in Hamilton, and to the east along the Fraser Valley in Vancouver.

In each case, the provincial government has attempted to limit sprawl by defining a greenbelt. In Vancouver this is called the Agricultural Land Reserve and was established in 1974-1976 by the NDP government of the day. The Greenbelt bounding Hamilton to the south is much more recent: the Liberal government only established it in 2006.

Economy: Although Hamilton's economy was historically based on heavy manufacturing; the city has lost most of its large employers in the past three decades. This has posed a major challenge for the city's finances, which has shifted most of the tax burden to homeowners and small businesses.

This loss of manufacturing base is often cited as a reason for the city's inevitable decline. However, Vancouver has thrived with essentially no manufacturing (what little there was centred on False Creek and was essentially all gone by the 1970s). It is also not a financial or government centre and has relatively few head offices. Vancouver was also economically depressed from the 1930s until the late 1960s. Despite this, Vancouver still has relatively low property taxes and is now economically quite successful.

This demonstrates that cities do not need to be manufacturing or financial centres to thrive. However, they do need to be attractive places to live and work. By focusing on livability, and getting the most return on its infrastructure investment by encouraging density, Vancouver has pioneered a new economic model for North American cities.

## The Freeway not taken

Elevated and sunken freeways carve up the city in this 1960s proposal.

In 1970 Hamilton and Vancouver were

similar in size (300 000 and 430 000) and urban planning principles. Both cities had ripped out their streetcar lines; converted streets to one-way to improve traffic flow and shifted transportation planning to ensure "the free, efficient and rapid flow" of the private automobile according to the transportation paradigm of the day.

Both cities had also begun densification



The freeway not taken

by demolishing many city blocks in neighbourhoods of large houses adjacent to the downtown core (the Durand in Hamilton, the West End in Vancouver). Both cities were simply following the standard American urban development model of the 1950s and 1960s.

However, in the early 1970s Vancouver made a fundamental choice that was to determine its future development. Vancouver refused to build a freeway system through the downtown core. It is now the only North American city without a freeway.

Freeways separate the waterfront from the city. The hotel Vancouver is still the dominant building in the downtown core.

In the period 1954-1967 the City of Vancouver and the Provincial government, together with various private interests, started promoting and planning a massive 8-lane freeway that would enter the downtown core from the east, cutting through the Strathcona, Gastown, and Chinatown neighbourhoods, and follow False Creek before turning north at Thurlow Street to cut through the West End and connect to a proposed third crossing of Burrard Inlet at Stanley Park.

Much of the freeway would have been built in a massive 'ditch' below grade level, and its construction would have involved the wholesale demolition of (mostly poorer) neighbourhoods. This project, known variously as Project 200, or the East End Penetrator, was estimated to cost at least \$300 million (over \$1.5 billion in today's dollars).

It would have been a disaster for Vancouver, destroying much of the downtown and leaving the remainder carved up into isolated islands. It would also have wasted huge amounts of what is now the most expensive real estate in Canada. The first stage of this project, the 6 lane 1km elevated expressway known as the Georgia/Dunsmuir viaduct was built in 1971. It was the only part ever completed.

## What happened?

Although the downtown freeway project had the backing of the mayor, major developers and even prominent architects (like Arthur Erickson), by 1967 it was provoking a massive backlash from resi-

dents who, understandably, didn't want to see their neighbourhoods demolished and replaced by freeways. These public protests were well organized, persistent and ultimately successful in forcing the city to abandon its plans.

## Citizen Engagement

In fact, the freeway protests were a pivotal step in citizen engagement and showed residents that they had the power to decide what sort of city they wanted to live in. The citizens' revolts that stopped the freeways are nicely summarized by Vancouver Councillor Geoff Meggs.

The protests were successful, not because they changed the mind of Mayor "terrific" Tom Campbell (a lawyer and developer), but because they mobilized voters and convinced the Federal and Provincial governments of the day not to share the costs. In fact, Mayor Campbell hated the protestors and dismissed their concerns.

Somewhat ironically, in 1970 Hamilton published an ambitious and detailed design for a network of LRT-like rapid transit lines throughout the city. As far as I know, implementation of this plan was never considered seriously.

Instead, as recently as 2007 Hamilton was still following a 1950s proposal by building a new freeway in the city, and it has still not implemented a rapid transit system. (In the early 1980s they actually rejected the Skytrain system that instead went to Vancouver.)



Freeways separate the waterfront from the city. The hotel Vancouver is still the dominant building in the downtown core.

It is important to remember the Vancouver freeway protests when we in Hamilton are told that our destiny is fixed and we don't have any real control over how our city develops (because of "the economy", "market forces" or simple defeatism).

Interestingly, the freeway protests are the subject of an exhibition at the Vancouver Museum and a Simon Fraser University MA thesis. A strong tradition of citizen engagement is perhaps the most important legacy of the freeway protests.

Here in Hamilton, encouraging citizen engagement is part of our official vision statement, and the city promotes all sorts of engagement exercises — Vision 2020, Setting Sail, Downtown Master Plan: Putting People First, Pedestrian Summits and the Cycling Master Plan.

However, Council largely ignores these exercises when it comes time to make real decisions. For example, individual councillors began vetoing parts of the cycle plan as soon as it was adopted, and the traffic department vetoed the pedestrian scramble crossing at York and MacNab that was supported by public consultations and city planners.

When a general policy framework is adopted, staff and council should have a

# couver and Why it Means So Much to Hamilton

clear idea of what operational changes will be required to implement it. Hamilton has recently put pedestrians at the top of the transportation hierarchy (which has been the case in Vancouver since the mid 90s), but staff does not know how or if this change will affect operational decisions (there is no sign yet that it has).

A better approach would be to recommend specific operational changes together with the proposed policy change. If these changes are too difficult to implement, or are unacceptable, the policy should be changed or eliminated.

## Hamilton has recently put pedestrians at the top of the transportation hierarchy

In this specific case, operational changes could include converting all multi-stage pedestrian crossings to single stage, eliminating prohibitions on crossing certain intersections (and making them safe to cross), increasing the minimum acceptable sidewalk width based on the category of road, and allocating resources with the goal of eventually installing crosswalks at all intersections on major arteries (such as Main, King, Cannon).

One could also try to define how to balance the competing interests of pedestrians and motorists. If pedestrians really come first, an operational rule might be: “the time of pedestrians will be weighted as 30% more valuable than that of motorists.” So a pedestrian improvement that increases average travel time of motorists by 20% would be fine, but one that doubled the travel time of motorists would be unacceptable.

Because it is very difficult to predict how a given change will affect traffic, the city would officially embrace pilot projects to test out various solutions (as Vancouver and New York have done).

As we will see, in Vancouver there is perhaps less direct input in planning, but they actually do try to build the sort of city that residents want to live in, based on generally agreed principles followed consistently over decades.

### A different path

Once they had rejected the downtown freeway system, Vancouver city council and planners had to come to terms with the fact that the standard auto centric North American urban development model was off the table. They had to think differently.

Beginning in the early 1970s Vancouver developed an urban planning system that is unique and admired internationally. It is this “Vancouver model” that has produced the “most liveable” densely urban Vancouver we see today. As Gordon Price, director of the City Program at Simon Fraser University, notes:

‘All City Councils since the 1970s, regardless of ideology, have reiterated a policy that there will be no more room for single-occupancy vehicles: no more roads, not even any more road-widening, save for the few places not already developed. From then on, resources were increasingly devoted to a priority list that puts the pedes-

trian in first place, followed by cyclists, transit users, and then the car drivers.’

Unlike Hamilton, which seems to resort to empty slogans like “Open for business” and has no clear strategic vision, Vancouver decided what sort of city it wanted to be in the early 1970s and has stuck to this vision for forty years. Note that this period included both left- and right-wing councils (Vancouver politics is highly polarized, and based around municipal parties) and economic booms and busts.

The Vancouver model relies on a planning department that is largely independent of Council influence, and on the entire city staff (including the traffic department) being onside. This is contrary to the case in Hamilton where the progressive ideas of the planning department are often ignored or opposed by council or vetoed by the traffic department.

In addition, residents and developers tend to oppose any and all city planning decisions by appealing to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB). For example, the new official plan proposed by the City of Hamilton fixes many problems with the existing plan, but is the subject of dozens of appeals. One developer, Paletta, is appealing separately every single provision of the plan!

These appeals will prevent the plan from being implemented for years to come. The OMB is peculiar to Ontario, and has made planning throughout the province vulnerable to capricious decisions by the OMB magistrates and encouraged a conservative planning culture in Ontario municipalities (to avoid OMB appeals).

As is often the case, the successful Vancouver model relied on visionary leaders. The Vancouver model was developed by a succession of two idealistic planners: Ray Spaxman (who moved from Toronto) and Larry Beasley.

Spaxman started the change in the 1970s and Beasley continued in the 1980s and 1990s. Vancouver was very fortunate to have over thirty years of consistent, effective urban planning. What are the elements of the Vancouver model?

- Priority of the planning department within city administration: decisions are not overturned by other departments (emergency services, traffic).
- Independence from Council interference on operational decisions (council decides the priorities and strategy, planning staff implements).
- An interventionist and prescriptive approach to planning.
- Built-form control and mandatory mixed use.
- Prioritizing high density residential over commercial and office space downtown.
- Prioritizing pedestrians above all other transportation modes, with through-traffic as the lowest priority.
- Flexible zoning allowing developers to gain increased height or density by providing public amenities (e.g. park space, view corridors or social housing).

Although downtown Vancouver has extremely high population densities, it generally feels comfortable and human in scale. This is partly because the streets are full of people and there are shops and services wherever you go, but it is also be-

cause of the particular “tower and podium” design Vancouver has promoted.

In this model a narrow tower (much narrower than the apartment buildings in Hamilton and Toronto) sits on a podium of three- or four-storey townhouses and shops. This increases the light to the street and provides space for shops, as well as well as giving the street a more human scale.

*People sometimes claim that this can be done only in Vancouver because of the high property values, but it is in fact the other way around.*

Another aspect of the Vancouver model is flexibility in achieving the overall goals of density and liveability. A developer can gain more density by providing public space, a community centre or a percentage of geared-to-income housing.

Although developers were initially hostile to the “over-prescriptive” planning guidelines in Vancouver, they have come to appreciate them as they realized they produce much more desirable communities (and hence increase the price they can charge for their apartments).

### ‘Beggars Can’t Be Choosers’

In Hamilton we are often told we must settle for whatever the developer proposes: a suburban one-storey stucco box with a drive-through in the centre of downtown, a shopping mall with no doors or windows on the street, a subdivision with no shops or sidewalks. We are told that “beggars can’t be choosers” and that if we assert our right to choose the city we want to live in that we will chase development away.

The Vancouver Model shows that developers will adapt to progressive urban plans. In fact, good urban planning builds value for developers because it creates more attractive communities. People sometimes claim that this can be done only in Vancouver because of the high property values, but it is in fact the other way around. Vancouver real estate is so valuable because they have stuck to high, consistent urban planning standards over four decades. We could too!

As pointed out by Mark Chamberlain in a recent Spectator article, basic “City Math” shows that higher density means that city infrastructure is being used more efficiently. Road and utility infrastructure is basically the same for low- and high-density urban forms, so high-density is much cheaper per resident.

In Hamilton most residential development is on the fringes, in the form of greenfield sprawl, which is very expensive (the city loses thousands on each new detached house). More people living downtown on existing infrastructure generate more taxes for minimal investment: it is no wonder Vancouver’s property taxes are so much lower than Hamilton’s!

However, density requires high-level rapid transit, a high quality pedestrian experience and mixed-use zoning. Vancouver has an excellent bus and rapid transit (i.e. Skytrain) system, and has made constant improvements to the pedestrian and cycling networks over many years.

Hamilton sees investment in rapid transit, cycling and pedestrian improve-

ments as pure “costs”. However, we are losing huge amounts of money in “business as usual” and these investments are necessary if we are to put our city on a sustainable model, both financially and environmentally.

### Drawbacks of the Vancouver Model

Despite its advantages, the Vancouver Model has limitations.

The first is clear when you look at the entire Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD). Although Vancouver has no freeways and has favoured high-density mixed use development, most of the rest of the region conforms closely to the standard North American auto-centric model. Apart from a few high-density centres (often near rapid transit hubs), most of the Fraser Valley looks like the suburbs anywhere on the continent.

Interestingly, despite the rhetoric here in Hamilton about everyone wanting a detached home in the suburbs, the City of Vancouver is still the most desirable place to live, with high real estate prices and strong population growth. This suggests that other (suburban) municipalities in the GVRD could successfully adopt the Vancouver Model if they wanted.

Some people seem to believe that Vancouver has always had much higher property prices than Hamilton... this is not the case.

YEAR	VANCOUVER PRICE	HAMILTON PRICE
1960		\$12,942
1965	\$12,964	
1970	\$24,000	\$24,363
1980	\$100,000	\$59,418
1990	\$231,000	\$167,765
2000	\$377,000	\$164,993
2010	\$1,000,000	\$314,501

Data Sources: Vancouver and Hamilton.

Note that Vancouver and Hamilton prices were essential the same until the mid 1970s — precisely the period in which Vancouver shifted away from the auto-centric model to a dense, urban mixed use model. Vancouver did not have high property prices compared to other Canadian cities until the late 1970s.

Another oft-cited drawback of the Vancouver Model is lack of affordability. Real Estate prices in Vancouver are extremely high: the average price throughout the GVRD is about \$800 000 and the median price is about \$600 000. In terms of affordability, the cost in the City of Vancouver is about 11 times average household income compared to about 5.5 times average household income in Toronto.

On the other hand, in 2010 rental prices for a one-bedroom apartment in Vancouver were similar to Toronto (\$1,195 compared with \$1,123), although much higher than Hamilton (\$705).

Of course, to a large extent real estate and rental prices reflect employment opportunities and livability. Places that offer good employment and high quality lifestyle command a premium because people want to live there. Nevertheless, high housing costs are a challenge, especially to those on lower incomes.

Vancouver has addressed the issue of housing affordability by mandating or encouraging (via bonusing) developers to provide a certain number (typically 10-20%) of geared-to-income units in their new buildings (e.g. the Woodward’s building). However, this has not been enough and Vancouver has recently unveiled an ambitious plan to construct

38,900 affordable housing units over the next ten years. This program will be funded using partnerships with other levels of government, non-profit organizations and the private sector.

Although Hamilton real estate is definitely affordable, as far as I know we have no comparable social housing plan and the city has not constructed significant numbers of new units in many years.

The Mayor has said he is the champion of “keeping Hamilton affordable”, by which he seems to mean avoiding infrastructure spending, ensuring our housing costs remain low and property taxes don’t go up. Surely it is preferable to have an attractive city with excellent employment opportunities, rather than relying on derelict buildings, vacant lots and a stagnant economy to depress costs!

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***Walking is the top priority in Vancouver’s transportation plan, and it’s important that we improve the safety and comfort of our streets and sidewalks for pedestrians.***

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Vancouver also suffers from pockets of extreme poverty, associated with drug use and criminality. In fact, Vancouver currently has the highest poverty rate in Canada, and has a growing gap between rich and poor (along with the rest of Canada). The worst area is the downtown eastside, which is the poorest postal code in Canada and has a large number of drug users.

Despite the activities of dozens of social service agencies (both public and private) and various plans over the years, the conditions have only gotten worse. The previous mayor attempted to address the core problem of drug use through his four pillars program (prevention, treatment, harm-reduction and enforcement), and this program has seen some success, although it has been under constant attack from the federal government.

Another area where Vancouver has been less successful is in retaining built and cultural heritage. As I mentioned above, Vancouver, like Hamilton, demolished large parts of its original residential district in the 1960s. In addition, Vancouver is a much newer city with the earliest surviving buildings dating from the 1890s, and not much before about 1912.

Vancouver has designated over 160 buildings in Gastown (the original downtown), but much of the rest of the city has been lost and the Vancouver of today would be unrecognizable to a visitor from the 1950s.

Fortunately, much of the recent development has occurred on reclaimed industrial brownfields (the north and south shores of False Creek, Coal harbour, Yale Town), but it is nevertheless difficult to see a continuity of style or feeling with the Vancouver that went before. For better or for worse Vancouver has decided to re-invent itself as a hyper modern city of glass towers. It is an attractive and comfortable hyper modern city, but it is very different from the small isolated town that preceded it.

#### **The Discussion Continues**

When I lived in Vancouver people were always very proud of the place, believing that it was indeed the “best place on Earth.” They also closely followed each new building, new urban design proposals and debated the merits of different solutions to various urban issues.

I was interested to see that this tradition continues, and would like to mention three issues in particular that were being discussed in the local press.

#### **Pedestrian safety**

Articles in the Vancouver Sun and the local edition of Metro reported that Vancouver will establish a 30km/h speed limit on Hastings Street through the Downtown Eastside (the poorest postal code in Canada).

This recommendation was made due to the large number of pedestrian/vehicle collisions (13 between 2004 and 2009). Longer crossing times and dozens of intersection safety cameras will be installed at other dangerous intersections in the city as part of an overall pedestrian safety initiative.

What interested me about this story was the level of interest (six articles in the Vancouver Sun from July 21 to July 27) and the speed at which it developed.

When I read the first article on July 21 it was just a proposal, and the speed limit reduction was opposed by the police, who felt that “speed is not the primary contributing factor” and that the lower speed limit would eat up to much of their resources in enforcement. They did support engineering changes to the street.

However, by July 26 Council had voted to adopt the changes, with Mayor Gregor Robertson commenting:

Walking is the top priority in the city’s transportation plan, and it’s important that we improve the safety and comfort of our streets and sidewalks for pedestrians.

Contrast this with Hamilton, where pedestrian injuries and deaths are met with indifference, prohibiting pedestrians from crossing, or a stern admonishment from the police and traffic department that pedestrians ‘need to be more careful.’ The police even went so far as to start a campaign to ticket ‘jaywalkers’.

Despite the fact that Vancouver’s streets are crowded with pedestrians and dangerous wet, dark conditions prevail for much of the year, Vancouver’s pedestrian death rate is falling from a high of 14 in 2007. In contrast, despite its far lower numbers of pedestrians, Hamilton has a similar number of pedestrian deaths (e.g. 9 in 2010). Nevertheless, Vancouver considers their rates far too high and is working to reduce them further.

#### **Bike Lanes**

In the last ten years or so Vancouver has added bike lanes on many streets, but the downtown has been missing many links in the cycling network. This changed last year when the city set-up a pilot project converting a lane of the Burrard Bridge to a physically separated cycling lane, and adding separated cycling lanes to Dunsmuir and Hornby Streets downtown.

Although there was initially a lot of opposition from motorists and local business (due to the loss of parking spaces in front of the stores) a follow-up study has shown that traffic times are virtually the same, cycle trips are way up (from 14 000 to 50 000), collisions dropped 18% and businesses have suffered only “minor ill effects.”

#### **Burrard Bridge bike lane trial project.**

When I walked back downtown along Burrard Bridge one afternoon at 5:30 p.m. I saw throngs of walking commuters on the sidewalks, as well as groups of commuter cyclists. Motor vehicle traffic was flowing freely.

Interestingly, the city tried dedicating a lane of the Burrard Bridge to bicycles back in the mid 90s, but the outcry from mo-

torists was so severe that they quickly back-tracked. Nevertheless, they have tried again and the lanes have been well accepted this time around.

Here in Hamilton when I asked the traffic department why the Main St bridge bike lane just disappears at the east end of the bridge, they said “oh, we tried it twenty years ago and there was a huge outcry... we won’t try that again!” Another difference with Hamilton is that the traffic department claims that they cannot do pilot projects (at least they did when the Durand Neighbourhood Association asked about setting up some traffic calming pilot projects).

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**The current greenfield development model favoured in Hamilton (and most other cities) is both economically and environmentally unsustainable. Density is only possible in pedestrian-friendly neighbourhoods, and these neighbourhoods require high-level public transit (like LRT).**

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#### **Separated bike lane pilot project. Georgia Viaduct**

The Georgia viaduct is the only part of the Vancouver’s massive freeway project that actually got built, and now the city is planning to tear it down eventually.

What impressed me was the calm, reasonable way the issue is being discussed, unlike the similar Gardiner issue in Toronto.

The city planners and traffic engineers have already established they can move goods and traffic without the viaduct. Even the trucking companies aren’t worried. Now they are asking citizens to imagine creative and inspiring uses for the space now taken up by the elevated expressways.

If only two-way conversion of our downtown streets (including Main, King and Cannon) could be discussed and evaluated in such an open way.

Essentially, most councillors believe the viaduct will be gone within 10-15 years, once new rapid transit lines are built to take their place. Perhaps surprisingly, despite the huge population growth in the downtown, motor vehicle traffic on the viaducts has actually decreased.

Since the area around the viaducts is being developed as residential, they are now seen more as an obstacle (and a relic from a backward era) than a useful piece of transportation infrastructure. They also prevent now-valuable land from being developed.

#### **What Have We Learned?**

Vancouver is not Hamilton, we don’t necessarily want to make the same choices and Vancouver’s development was shaped by its own conditions and history. In particular, it has a spectacular geographic location and has not been defined by any particular industry.

Its recent extremely high density and tall towers were in part the result of the purchase of 84 ha of brownfields for \$320 million over 15 years by Hong Kong developer Li-Ka Shing in 1988, and an influx of immigrants from Hong Kong in the 1990s.

However, the most important lessons from the Vancouver Model are generally applicable:

**1. Residents have the power to decide what sort of city they want to live in.** Vancouver residents deliberately rejected an urban freeway-based proposal, and eventually developed a dense, mixed-use pedestrian-based alternative.

This is despite the common belief that North Americans never willingly settle for anything ‘less’ than a suburban detached home and rapid car access throughout the city.

**2. Effective city planning requires deciding on a strategic vision and sticking to it.** Vancouver has followed the same basic urban planning strategy for 40 years now, regardless of changes in council and city administrators. This consistency allows the city to learn gradually how to do things right, and lowers the risk to developers. However, it needs all city staff (and council) to work together.

In Hamilton, all too often strategic plans (e.g. Vision2020) are not implemented, different city departments work at cross-purposes and council interferes in staff decisions. Planning and public health are busy promoting walkability, while traffic and economic development promote auto-centric models, and veto the progressive ideas of the planners (because they would slow traffic, or are not favoured by certain developers).

**3. Sustainability and livability are achieved in dense, mixed use, pedestrian-oriented development.** Vancouver is consistently rated one of the most attractive and liveable cities in the world because it has focused on these qualities. Density makes cities more financially sustainable because it costs much less to provide services for a given number of people in a dense neighbourhood.

The current greenfield development model favoured in Hamilton (and most other cities) is both economically and environmentally unsustainable. Density is only possible in pedestrian-friendly neighbourhoods, and these neighbourhoods require high-level public transit (like LRT).

**4. Planners must be insulated from council and flexible in achieving strategic goals.** Vancouver’s planners operate largely free of direct council (and OMB!) interference, and have the power to mandate mixed use and particular built forms. Planning is prescriptive and interventionist.

However, they are flexible in achieving their goals. In Vancouver, developers can gain more density or height by providing public amenities (such as community centres, green space, or a percentage of geared-to-income housing).

In Hamilton we are afraid of scaring developers away by imposing high urban design standards, but the experience in Vancouver shows that insisting on high standards actually creates value for developers and that the right developers will (perhaps reluctantly) go along with them.

Keeping standards low to ‘attract’ developers has not served Hamilton well. It hasn’t even been successful in attracting low-quality urban development!

## In Celebration of Gifts

By Rebecca Doll

If we had a superhero in our neighbourhood, she would look like Wilma Andres and be called the Parish Nurse. She would approach people gently and encourage them to acknowledge a problem that is painfully obvious to others. She would empathize with their situation, learn about their challenges to getting help and suggest options for treatment, care or attention. She would understand that problems aren't solved overnight, that they come in layers and that sometimes you have to deal with one at a time. She would understand that lifestyles don't change overnight and that isolation and fear are the biggest barriers to making those changes. If we had such a superhero, people who don't even know they need her would come to trust her, rely on her, and slowly become part of the world around them in a way that they haven't been before, or at least, not lately. If we had such a superhero we'd want more of her. And more of them.

Since 2008 the South Sherman Health Cabinet has been proactively intervening in what I call "Street Health". All too often people are so busy coping with daily life that there is no room left in their heads to even think about taking care of their long-term health. Also prevalent in our community is a sense that a million things are more important than ourselves, with the result that emergency issues don't get dealt with until they are critical. The Parish Nurse goes out into our community to offer care, wisdom and expertise that is making a difference in our lives.

November 4th marks the 3rd annual Parish Nurse Gala. The Gala Fundraiser is the primary revenue source for the South Sherman Health Cabinet, which this year, is able to employ the Parish Nurse for 16hrs/wk. The tickets are pricey. The space is lovely. And when we dance at the end of the night it is to thank our lucky stars that we can.

On November 4th, come dance with us if you can.

## AN EVENING TO REMEMBER



THE SOUTH SHERMAN HEALTH CABINET  
presents the 3rd annual

## PARISH NURSE FUNDRAISING GALA



FRIDAY NOVEMBER 4, 2011  
SCOTTISH RITE CLUB OF HAMILTON  
SILENT AUCTION, RAFFLE, COCKTAILS  
LIVE JAZZ MUSIC BY NIGHT CLASS  
6 — 7:30 PM

DINNER — 7:30 PM

TABLES OF 8 — TICKETS \$100/SEAT  
FOR TICKETS, PLEASE CALL:  
CLAIRE PEACE: 905-518-6492  
PAM HEWITSON: 905-573-2306



## URBAN DOGS The Importance of Socialization

By Sandy Greenberg

A happy well socialized dog makes for a more enjoyable relationship with our 4-legged companions. Being Urban dogs there are a number of stresses that come with living in the city and it is recommended to expose your dogs to as many possible stimuli as soon as possible. Socializing your dog is so easy and so much fun that a lot of people fail to take it seriously. However, without adequate socialization, your dog may become fearful and is likely to develop serious and hard-to-resolve problems, biting and fighting. Whether your dog is a puppy or older dog interactions with other dogs in your home, park or dog daycare setting is imperative. As well take the time to expose them children loud noises, traffic, bicycles and skateboards.

### Tips for socializing your dog Squabbles

Don't expect your dog to be best friends with every dog; after all, we aren't with every person! A well-socialized dog may still chase, hump and argue. However, socialization ensures your dog has the social savvy to enjoyably and confidently interact with unfamiliar dogs that he may meet and to resolve arguments with other dogs without doing damage. So do get them out and about where they can meet other dogs.

### On-leash interactions

Don't be afraid to let your dog greet dogs you encounter on the streets. Be careful not to tighten the leash when another dog approaches (unless you feel this dog is aggressive, remove your dog from such a situation) your tension is often relayed to your dog. The dog growls, you tighten the leash and over time, the dog becomes conditioned to get tense, as he makes the association between other dogs approaching and your anxiety.

Remember, the more your dog is exposed to these things the less stressful they will be for them.

[www.Showmethewaydogtraining.com](http://www.Showmethewaydogtraining.com)  
905-515-7443

## Midwives Are Worth It

By Lynlee Spencer

In the current economic climate, where countless are without jobs and many teetering on the poverty line, it's difficult to ask the government for a raise. That midwives make a decent wage, however, does not negate their demand for pay equity.

Midwifery became legislated and funded through the Ministry of Health in 1994. At this time, the plan was for midwives to earn a salary between registered nurses and family physicians. In the last 11 years, however, midwives have not seen any increase in pay, which translates to a 20% discrepancy between midwives and other comparative health care professionals. As Katrina Kilroy, Registered Midwife and President of the Association of Ontario Midwives remarks: "Typical of care giving professions and women's work historically we did not successfully put our own needs or the needs of our own families on the govern-

ment agenda. Midwives went 11 years without any pay increase at all. Let me be clear — while others were receiving 2, 3 and 4 per cent increases, midwives received, zero, and zero."

In response to the government's fail-

**Midwives are subsidizing the health care system to the tune of 20% of what they should be paid — what other profession has been asked to do this**

ure to acknowledge the issue of pay equity for midwives presently and in the past, she adds: "It's just not good enough... it's just something govern-

ments have been able to get away with. Is it because midwives are a small, powerless profession made up of women? Is this government content to pay midwives as little as they can get away with? Midwives are subsidizing the health care system to the tune of 20% of what they should be paid — what other profession has been asked to do this?"

The lack of response by the government is concerning. Despite its recent increase in funding to the Midwifery Education Program, the government has not supported midwives as workers, which does not bode well for attracting young people to this profession and accommodating the 40% of women in this province who want a midwife but cannot get access to one. We are in danger of reaching a point where midwifery services are undervalued; an outcome that would be unfortunate, given what mid-

wives bring to the health care system. As Kilroy illustrates, "Midwives deliver excellent results. We provide 24 hour coverage, care in the home and a reduction in visits to the ER. We support normal birth. Women in midwifery care have a c-section rate approximately half of the rate for the rest of the province, our induction rates are lower, our epidural rates are lower, our instrumental delivery rates are lower and our hospital length of stays are much shorter."

On Thursday October 6th, at the 40th Ontario provincial elections, please consider voting for a government that will support midwifery services in a sustainable way. Even if you don't foresee utilizing midwifery on a personal level, you will ultimately benefit from the savings it brings to the health care system.

For more information, please visit [www.ontariomidwives.ca](http://www.ontariomidwives.ca)

# The Bakers

By Sharon Baker

Fall has always been my favourite season. One of the reasons I love it so much is because it's the time of year when I enter a full-on baking mode.

My mother, who passed away just as I was becoming a mother for the first time, was a pie baker extraordinaire. Many of my childhood memories revolve around the countless hours I spent at her side in the kitchen. When she died, there were only 3 things that I asked my father for: her engagement ring, her cookbooks, and her rolling pin.

Once I had my own family, I discovered that I was pretty darn good at baking. Except for pies, that is. Over and over again I followed her recipe as I attempted to get the pastry just right. But, it seemed that no matter what I did I just couldn't get it. Sure, I was great at brownies and cookies and cakes, but there's something just so therapeutic about pie pastry.

One day, like magic, it all came together. The pastry felt different in my hands. It rolled out smoothly and didn't break apart as I placed it ever so gently into the pie plate. It even seemed to smell different as it baked in the oven. I smiled as I marveled at its golden, flaky perfection.

After that there was no stopping me! I experimented with different types of fillings and even branched out into tarts (I make a killer butter tart, by the way!). I'm not sure why I conquered pie baking that day, but I think it has something to do with the fact that I finally stopped trying to be my mother.

For me, baking pies starts with a morning drive out to Niagara to buy peaches, then a stop at the Ottawa Street Farmers' Market for apples on the way back, followed by an afternoon in the kitchen, listening to a Sinatra CD. There's nothing quite like the smell of pies baking in the oven, with Frank crooning in the background!

I'm sharing my pastry recipe, along with a couple favourite seasonal fillings. Enjoy!

## PASTRY

5 cups flour  
2 1/3 cups of shortening  
1 tsp. baking powder  
1 egg  
1 Tbsp. vinegar  
1/2 cup cold water (more/less, depending on size of egg)

## Instructions:

- Combine the flour and baking powder in a large bowl. Blend in shortening, using a pastry cutter or two knives, until the shortening is crumbled to the size of small peas.
- Break the egg into a measuring cup, and whisk lightly. Add the vinegar, and then enough cold water to bring the level up to the 3/4 cup line in your measuring cup. Mix well.
- Next, pour the egg/vinegar/water mixture into the flour mixture and blend well.
- Divide the dough into five parts and proceed as your pie recipe directs.

Yield: 5 single crusts.

(If you wrap it well, the pastry will keep for 2 weeks in the fridge and up to 3 months in the freezer.)

## PECAN BUTTER TARTS

Preheat oven to 350F

### Filling

3 eggs, beaten  
2/3 c brown sugar  
3/4 c light corn syrup  
2 Tbsp. milk  
2 Tbsp. butter  
1 tsp. vanilla

### Instructions:

- In a large bowl, mix beaten eggs, sugar and syrup, and blend well. Add the remaining ingredients and mix together.
- Roll out pastry dough on a floured surface. Cut the dough into 3- or 4-inch rounds (depending on the size of your tart pan), using a cookie cutter or a glass. Press the rounds into a tart pan.
- Place a few small pieces of pecans into the bottom of each tart shell, and carefully pour filling mixture over the top of each shell.

Bake approximately 15-20 minutes.

You may substitute others kinds of nuts if you like, or for something even more tasty, Skor bits (or another favourite toffee) makes a really yummy tart.

## FRUIT PIES

Preheat oven to 450F

Note: For fruit that is juicy (peaches), you may need to increase the amount of flour used. For apple and peach pies I like to add cinnamon and nutmeg to the fruit mixture.

### Filling

4 cups of fresh fruit (peaches, apples, berries)  
1/2 c brown sugar  
1/4 c flour

### Instructions:

- Cut or slice fruit into 1- or 2-inch pieces (if using berries, leave them whole or slice in half). In a separate bowl, combine sugar and flour and toss lightly, then blend into the fruit mixture.
- Roll out pie dough on a floured surface and then carefully lift into a 9-inch pie plate. Roll out a second amount of pie dough for the top crust.
- Fill the bottom crust with the fruit mixture, then top with the second round of dough. Carefully seal the edge of the pie, using your fingers and/or pressing a fork into the pastry to join the top and bottom crusts.
- Cut a couple of slits in the top of the pie to let steam escape.
- Dot the top of the pie with a small amount of milk and then lightly sprinkle white sugar over the top (this helps the pie to brown).
- Bake at 450F for 10 minutes, and then reduce the heat to 350F. Bake approximately 30-45 minutes longer until the crust is golden in colour.



Photo: Danielle Dingle

# KITCHEN GARDENER

By Joanne Kasprzycki

The summer of 2011 was a gardening season extraordinary at the Gage Park Community Garden. Despite the drought-like conditions in the early summer, the harvest was bountiful beyond my wildest dreams. The only problem with successful gardening is that when it rains, it pours! We had almost more tomatoes than we knew what to do with. Thankfully, our Garden Assets include a certain Chef Danielle who is skilled in many aspects of food production including food preservation. St. Giles church kindly allowed us the use of their kitchen, Danielle provided the specialty implements and invaluable know-how, and the Gage Park Garden first annual Canning Workshop was born.

We began with two bushels of Plum tomatoes (these and the San Marzano type are the best for canning, as they have the most natural acidity and least water content) that we lovingly washed and then coarsely chopped into giant pots, which were then simmered for about three quarters of an hour over medium-high heat. The wafting aroma of the gently simmering tomatoes was divine.

While we were busy chopping Danielle sterilized the implements we were going to use (like the ladle and the measuring cups), and heat sterilized our glass jars in the oven. Jars can be sterilized by submersion in boiling water as well, instead of being put in the oven, but since we had industrial size ovens at our disposal sterilization was short work. The lids were also boiled in a separate pot and special care was taken to lift them out without touching, a feat made possible by a magnet-on-a-stick implement which Danielle pulled from her cooking chest. As you can see, all care was taken to impress upon us students the absolute importance of sterility and cleanliness while canning, a habit which will keep our jars free of botulism, a rather unpleasant and serious bacteria.



Joanne Kasprzycki

Once our tomatoes were boiled down and had softened, we put our chopped and reduced tomatoes through a food mill, which is something like a hand-cranked colander that in essence pureed the tomatoes, leaving the skins and seeds behind in the mesh. Still paying very close attention to sterility we gently poured the amazing smelling puree, called the Passata as Danielle told us, into the sterilized jars which each held a single basil leaf at the bottom. Putting the one-use lids on hand tight we then dropped the jars into another large pot of simmering water, which was lined with cloths at the bottom to stop the jars from knocking around. After about 45 minutes Danielle lifted out the jars with a jar-catcher, another novel canning implement, and placed them on the counter to cool. The next hour was punctuated by the pop of the jars sealing themselves, preserving their contents for us to enjoy long after the last fresh garden tomato is gone.

This workshop was a bit of a watershed moment for me. It was the moment when the whole of the gardening season came full circle. From readying the earth, planting and taking care of our tomatoes, to picking them by hand, processing them in my neighborhood, (along with my neighbors) followed finally and gloriously by a bowl of delicious tomato sauce. I felt, for the first time, the joy and pride of a true kitchen gardener.



St. Giles United Church downstairs kitchen

# To Everything There is a Season

By Chef Danielle Dingle

Hamilton has the good fortune of having four distinct seasons. As soon as you get tired of the weather, it always changes. For those of us who have a low threshold for boredom, this is a good thing.

Summer's profusion of salads and barbeques soon grow tiresome and I long for cool nights and rich, comforting food. Fall has always been my favourite time of year. October is a time for hearty soups and stews — for flavourful red wines and lush desserts.

Comfort food does not necessarily mean unhealthy food either. The stands at our farmer's markets are groaning with fruits and vegetables. They don't call October the harvest season for nothing. The apples are crisp and ripe and there are so many varieties it would be almost



impossible to try them all, although I wouldn't mind a crack at it. Squash, pumpkins, cabbage and all manner of root vegetables are available to flavour any soup or stew you might be making. And if the thought of making soup from scratch seems daunting, try this squash and apple soup recipe. You can't go wrong with six ingredients. Finish it with a sprinkle of parmesan cheese and you won't know what hit you. Squash and apples for the body and cheese for the soul. It's the perfect balance of simplicity and luxury.

## Squash & Apple Soup

1 medium yellow onion, chopped  
1 Tbsp butter or canola oil  
1 butternut squash, peeled, seeds

removed, chopped  
2 apples, peeled, cored, chopped  
4 cups chicken broth  
(or vegetable broth if vegetarian)\*  
1 cup water  
Pinch of nutmeg

### Method

- Melt the butter in a large saucepan over a medium high heat. Add the onion, and sauté for 5 minutes, taking care to turn the heat down if the vegetables begin to brown.
- Add squash, apple, broth and water. Bring to boil. Cover, turn the heat down to a simmer and cook for 30 minutes or until squash softens.
- Puree in a food processor, with a hand blender or mash directly in the pot
- Add nutmeg and season with salt and pepper to taste

Serves 4-6

If you are finding the weather far too nice to stay inside and cook, the area offers lots of great opportunities to go apple picking or pumpkin hunting for the whole month of October. Puddicombe Farms in Winona has apples, pumpkins and lots of cool things for the kids to do, including mini train ride through the orchards. Meanwhile, the grown ups can sample some lovely wines at Puddicombe's winery.

Carluke Orchards in Ancaster offers an abundance of pick your own apple varieties. I defy you to try them all. My favorite is the Jonagold. It is a crisp, sweet apple with a thin skin, ideal for eating fresh. They are also often freakishly large which makes them even cooler in my book, but I digress. Carluke Orchards not only has apple picking, it also has a great pumpkin patch and wagon rides through the farm. A kind of agricultural triathlon that children will surely enjoy.

Autumn in our region is just not complete without the Rockton Fall Fair. The fair has been around since 1852 and is always held Thanksgiving weekend. It's truly a hoot, and I don't use that term lightly. I could fill an entire newspaper with the events, anything from goat shows to demolition derbies. I think we, as urban dwellers, should head to an agricultural fair once in a while to remind



ourselves where our food comes from. The shiny urban grocery store has disconnected us from agriculture and makes us forget that our food, our good food, comes from farms and farmers, not from shrink wrap bags and Styrofoam trays.

Since I simply cannot resist sharing a recipe that I love, I will leave you with pumpkin scones, a perfect treat for Thanksgiving weekend! Bon appetit!

### Pumpkin Scones:

2 cups (260 grams) all purpose flour  
1/3 cup (75 grams) light or dark brown sugar  
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger  
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1/2 teaspoon baking soda  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1/2 cup (113 grams) cold unsalted butter, cut into pieces  
1/3 cup (50 grams) raisins  
1/4 cup (30 grams) toasted and chopped pecans or white chocolate or both! (optional)  
1/3-1/2 cup (80-120 ml) buttermilk  
1/2 cup (120 ml) fresh or canned pure pumpkin (if using canned pumpkin make sure there are no spices or sugar added)  
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

### Egg Wash:

1 large egg  
1 tablespoon milk or cream

- Preheat oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C) and place rack in middle of oven. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
- In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, sugar, spices, baking powder, baking

soda and salt. Cut the butter into small pieces and blend into the flour mixture with a pastry blender or two knives. The mixture should look like coarse crumbs. Stir in the raisins and pecans/ white chocolate, if using. In a separate bowl mix together the buttermilk, pumpkin puree and vanilla and then add the buttermilk mixture to the flour mixture. Mix just until the dough comes together. Do not over mix the dough.

- Transfer to a lightly floured surface and knead dough gently four or five times and then pat the dough into a circle that is about 7 inches (18 cm) round and about 1 1/2 inches (4 cm) thick. Cut this circle in half, and then cut each half into 4 pie-shaped wedges (triangles). Place the scones on the baking sheet. Brush the tops of the scones with the egg wash.
- Place the baking sheet inside another baking sheet to prevent the bottoms of the scones from over browning. Bake for about 20 minutes or until golden brown and a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean. Transfer to a wire rack to cool.

Makes 8 scones.

### Carluke Orchards

2194 Shaver Road S. Ancaster, ON, L9G 3L1  
Tel: 905-648-2775  
Email: al@carlukeorchards.ca  
Web: www.carlukeorchards.ca

### Puddicombe Estate Farms & Winery

1468 #8 Hwy, Winona, On. L8E 5K9  
Tel: 905-643-1015  
Web: www.puddicombefarms.com  
Email: info@puddicombefarms.com

### Rockton World's Fair

812 Old Hwy 8, Rockton, Ontario  
Tel: 519-647-2502  
Email: rasfair@golden.net  
Web: www.rocktonworldsfair.com

All Photos: Danielle Dingle



## Election Issues

Continued from Page 1

invest in buildings, machinery, equipment, and training for staff to upgrade their skills with a 10% tax credit. They also have a "Buy Ontario" policy that would have all government contracts awarded to Ontario-based companies, which would result in more Ontario jobs.

Meanwhile the Conservatives are offering to create more apprenticeships for skilled trades-people. They are also proposing a tax credit for companies who sponsor language training for newcomers to Ontario.

The Liberals are targeting small business as well, by putting forward a plan to reduce the small business tax rate. Also, they are encouraging businesses to hire skilled newcomers by offering tax

breaks to companies who do so. They are also focused on increasing international trade that would open up new markets for Ontarians.

### Environment

The Liberals want to institute more measures to ensure the Great Lakes are clean by reducing water pollution, and keep beaches open.

The Conservatives want to invest in provincial parks and the Bruce Trail. They are also concerned with the province's water quality and will continue to support measures that protect its clean water.

The NDP have always been a strong environmental party, but have faced some criticism from supporters for letting that reputation drop. They still make a fairly strong environmental case, given their plan to invest in cycling infrastructure, phasing out coal-fired electricity, and offering \$5000 in home-energy

retrofit rebates.

There is another option, especially if the health of the environment is an issue important to you. The Green party would focus effort on energy efficiency, and reduce energy consumption, as well as secure a responsible energy supply. They would also implement a transportation plan that would reduce the amount of gridlock.

### Energy

Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals will finish replacing all of the coal plants with clean energy options. They are also wanting to invest \$80-million to support the use of electric cars.

Tim Hudak and the Conservatives would focus on energy technology using natural gas, hydroelectric and nuclear sources. They believe there are wasted dollars spent on the Ontario Energy board and would eliminate it. Ultimately, they want to make energy more afford-

able and would help out by removing the HST from your energy bills.

Andrea Horwath, the leader of the NDP and our representative for Hamilton Centre would expand support for energy-saving home upgrades. She also opposes nuclear plants, and would provide environmental assessments on all new electricity plans. They also want to make energy more affordable by removing the HST from your electricity and home heating bills.

### Vote

There are other election issues, like transportation or food supply, but the biggest question for you this election is, "Are you going to vote?" 61% of eligible voters cast their ballot for the federal election in May. This means nearly 40% of the population went voiceless, even though decisions made have an effect on their everyday living. Let your voice count by voting on October 6.

# THE ELECTION: What You Need to Know

By David Dyke-Hart

Lawn signs are sprouting like weeds after a good rain. News and public affairs shows are inundated with people who believe they know more than you about nearly everything. “Best friends” you haven’t seen in the four years since the last provincial election haunt your doorstep. People who have worn elbow grooves in the bar at the corner pub suddenly metamorphose into entirely new creatures known as “candidates”, and appear regularly in churches they haven’t attended since their christening, or perhaps a funeral. Yes, folks, once again it’s Provincial Election time!

It’s been said that you get the government you deserve. We’re hoping this link-loaded overview will help you deserve a good one. If we can’t answer your questions about the election directly, we’ll give you a link that will.

Maybe you find the whole idea of an election somewhat disengaging. You’re not alone. Ontario’s last election produced the lowest voter turnout in the province’s history. That might suit some people (usually the ones with a lot to gain from the status quo), but it’s not so great for the rest of us. Fortunately, there have been several changes in the Election Act that will make it easier to vote. Particular attention has been paid to students and people with special needs. The net result is that just about everybody who really wants to vote should be able to do so.

And for those people who say it’s not worth voting because all the choices suck, that sound you hear is your last excuse to sit on your butt and do nothing taking a spectacular public face-plant: Elections Ontario isn’t talking, but you have a right to decline your ballot. A declined ballot is counted separately from a vote for a candidate or a spoiled ballot. A declined ballot is a vote for “None of the Above”. Section 53 of the Election Act says, “An elector who has received a ballot and returns it to the deputy returning officer declining to vote, forfeits the right to vote and the deputy returning officer shall immediately write the word “declined” upon the back of the ballot and preserve it to be returned to the returning officer and shall cause an entry to be made in the poll record that the elector declined to vote”. Democracy Watch, which has tried for years to get Elections Ontario to be more up-front about this, also advise that provincial elections in 1985 and 1990, as well as many local ones, have proved that voters can surprise all the experts.

Since the three levels of government are legendary for blaming each other for whatever’s wrong, let’s start with a quick-and-dirty breakdown of what each level is responsible for. There’s no point in lecturing your provincial candidate about things he or she has no control over while giving them a pass on issues they deserve to be grilled on.

The federal government is responsible for defence, criminal law, employment insurance, postal service, census, copy-rights, trade regulation, external relations, money and banking, transportation, citizenship and Aboriginal peoples of Canada.

The province looks after property and civil rights, administration of justice, natural resources and environment, education, health, and welfare.

Municipalities are responsible for water, sewage, waste collection, public transit, land use planning, libraries, emergency services, animal control and economic development.

That’s the theory. In practice, of course, things aren’t quite that simple. For example, Prime Minister Harper is

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*... let’s  
start with a quick-and-dirty  
breakdown of what each level  
is responsible for.*

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quite happy to enact criminal laws that will put lots of people in jail. The provinces, which are responsible for the administration of justice, are going to get stuck with the “hotel bill”. And certain standards of medical care are enforced right across Canada, even though it’s a provincial jurisdiction. The feds, of course, pay for the privilege of calling the shots. The provinces, in turn, give money to cities because the cost of municipal responsibilities has risen quite high in relation to the limited ways they’re allowed to raise revenue. If you want to learn more about how this works, go here: [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian\\_federalism#Distribution\\_of\\_Legislative\\_Powers\\_in\\_the\\_Constitution\\_Act.2C\\_1867](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian_federalism#Distribution_of_Legislative_Powers_in_the_Constitution_Act.2C_1867)

Now, down to the nuts and bolts.

## Electoral Districts and Parties

Hamilton has four Electoral Districts, which are currently the same for both federal and provincial elections. These are: Hamilton Centre, Hamilton Mountain, Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, and Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale. Nine of Ontario’s 13 registered political parties are fielding candidates in some or all of them. These parties are:

Communist Party of Canada  
[www.communist-party.ca](http://www.communist-party.ca)  
Email: [info@cpc-pcc.ca](mailto:info@cpc-pcc.ca)

Family Coalition Party of Ontario  
[www.familycoalitionparty.com](http://www.familycoalitionparty.com)  
Email: [mainoffice@familycoalitionparty.com](mailto:mainoffice@familycoalitionparty.com)

Freedom Party of Ontario  
[www.freedomparty.on.ca](http://www.freedomparty.on.ca)  
Email: [rmetz@freedomparty.on.ca](mailto:rmetz@freedomparty.on.ca)

Green Party of Ontario  
[www.gpo.ca](http://www.gpo.ca)  
Email: [admin@gpo.ca](mailto:admin@gpo.ca)

New Democratic Party of Ontario  
[www.ontariondp.com/](http://www.ontariondp.com/)  
Email: [douellette@on.ndp.ca](mailto:douellette@on.ndp.ca)

Ontario Liberal Party  
[www.ontarioliberal.ca](http://www.ontarioliberal.ca)  
Email: [info@ontarioliberal.ca](mailto:info@ontarioliberal.ca)

Ontario Libertarian Party  
[www.libertarian.on.ca](http://www.libertarian.on.ca)  
Email: [info@libertarian.on.ca](mailto:info@libertarian.on.ca)

Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario  
[www.ontariopc.com](http://www.ontariopc.com)  
Email: [questions@ontariopc.on.ca](mailto:questions@ontariopc.on.ca)

Reform Party of Ontario  
[www.newcanada.ca](http://www.newcanada.ca)  
Email: [info@newcanada.ca](mailto:info@newcanada.ca)

## Hamilton Centre Candidates

Lib - Donna Tiqui-Shebib  
PC - Don Sheppard  
NDP - Andrea Horwath (Incumbent)  
Green - Peter Ormond  
Freedom - Christopher Lawson  
Family Coalition - Steven Passmore

## Doing the Deed

Although the Elections Ontario website is spectacularly quiet about how to decline your ballot, it provides a wealth of information about how, where and when to vote. They also have a “We Make Voting Easy” [www.wemakevotingeasy.ca](http://www.wemakevotingeasy.ca) page that pretty much does what it says. The Elections Ontario website is here [www.elections.on.ca](http://www.elections.on.ca)

And here’s the Notice of Election, including how to get on the list of electors, when nominations close, advance polls and a bunch of other stuff: [www.wemakevotingeasy.ca/en/notice-of-election](http://www.wemakevotingeasy.ca/en/notice-of-election)

One of the ways they’ve made voting easy is by replacing the proxy vote with a special ballot. A special ballot lets eligible voters cast their ballot at any time during the 28-day election period, either by mail or in person. If you can’t get to the polls on Election Day and can’t get to the Advance Polls, this might be your ticket. It’s especially handy for disabled people, the aged and students. The primary advantage for students is that you can either vote in the area where you’re going to school and living temporarily, or you can vote in your home town. If you have mobility issues, Elections Ontario can send somebody to your residence to get the necessary paperwork done.

Find out more about the special ballot here (A live link on this page will allow you to download a PDF application form for a special ballot): [www.wemakevotingeasy.ca/en/special-ballots](http://www.wemakevotingeasy.ca/en/special-ballots)

When it comes to voting, you’ll find out pretty quickly that Elections Ontario likes to know you are, in fact, entitled to do so. That means they want to see some ID. So what identification will make them happy? If you’re on the Voters List, official documents with your signature will be enough. They already have your address. If you don’t have proper ID with you, you’ll have to complete a “statutory declaration” before they hand over a ballot.

People who aren’t on the Voters List have to give more. You’ll have to supply one or more official documents proving where you live and who you are. When you show the proper ID, they’ll put you on the Voters List and let you vote. You can do this right at the polling station on Election Day, but it’s better for all concerned if you look after things a bit earlier than that.

So what’s “acceptable identification”? Elections Ontario has three lists of acceptable ID. They’re like the Gold, Silver and Bronze of documents. List A, the “gold standard”, consists of documents that confirm both your name and address. An Ontario Driver’s License, a cancelled personalized cheque and a rental agreement are examples of List A documents. A Canadian passport doesn’t qualify because it doesn’t include an address. List B provides your name and signature, but no proof of address. It

includes all the documents on List A plus others, such as a credit or debit card, a Certificate of Indian Status and your Social Insurance Number card. List C provides your name and residential address. It includes documents such as those issued by your school showing proof of campus residence, a cheque stub or pay receipt issued by an employer, and a Statement of Direct Deposit from Ontario Works.

Basically, “acceptable ID” is one List A document, a List B document plus a List C document.

For a full list of List A, B and C documents, go here: [www.elections.on.ca/en-CA/FAQs/IDRequirements/#List%20A](http://www.elections.on.ca/en-CA/FAQs/IDRequirements/#List%20A)

## More Information

If you prefer not to be added to the Voters List, you can still vote by applying for a Certificate to Vote. ID requirements are the same, and somebody can do it on your behalf. To find out how, go here: [www.elections.on.ca/en-CA/FAQs/IDRequirements.htm#OnVotersListID-toVote](http://www.elections.on.ca/en-CA/FAQs/IDRequirements.htm#OnVotersListID-toVote)

Do you want to find out if you’re on the Voters List? Each time there’s an election, a Voters List is compiled from the Permanent Register of Electors. To find out if you’re in the Register, go here: [www3.elections.on.ca/internetapp/aiotl.aspx](http://www3.elections.on.ca/internetapp/aiotl.aspx)

The interactive tool in the link above only works if the name you enter is an exact match to the one Elections Ontario has for you, so if your search doesn’t work, call 1-888-668-8683 ( TTY: 1-888-292-2312) toll free for assistance. You’ll know you’re on the Voters List if you get a Notice of Registration Card in the mail. These are mailed out within a few days of the election being called. The Notice of Registration Card identifies your voting location for Election Day plus the dates, times and places of your advance polling locations. You should take it with you when you go to vote, along with a piece of ID with your signature on it (as described above). If you aren’t on the list, no problem. You can still vote, but the procedure is a bit different. This link shows you what to do: [www.wemakevotingeasy.ca/en/how-to-vote.aspx](http://www.wemakevotingeasy.ca/en/how-to-vote.aspx)

To find your Electoral District, and where you cast your vote, go here: [www.faq.elections.on.ca/faq/performsearch.do?type1QuestionId=1](http://www.faq.elections.on.ca/faq/performsearch.do?type1QuestionId=1)

Biographical information on the candidates is available from the parties. At deadline, several candidates hadn’t yet made such information available.

It has never been easier to vote. A special ballot lets you cast your vote any time from now almost until the polls close on Election Day. Students and people with special needs have never had more support for their particular circumstances. It’s even possible to officially record your disenchantment with the system or candidates and vote “none of the above” by declining your ballot. It takes us only a few minutes to exercise a right that less fortunate people literally die to achieve. Let’s exercise that right.