

SOUTH SHERMAN HUB NEWS

A publication of the South Sherman Community Planning Team

January ~ February, 2013

SaveONenergy

By Rebecca Doll

Ontario Power is trying to give away \$350,000,000 worth of energy retrofits, because they've crunched the numbers and realized that it's cheaper than building a new power station to meet escalating demand. With broad and generous qualifications for homeowners and in some cases renters, our community is one of the earliest ones to become eligible for up to \$13,000 per home in energy retrofits — free. No payments. No strings attached.

Assessment can include new light bulbs, smart power-bars with timers, insulation for attics or basements, window caulking, replacement appliances such as fridges, freezers or window air conditioners. The goal is to reduce the amount of energy that is consumed in homes across Ontario. You can help, and at the same time benefit from some upgrades that will help to make your home warm and cozy. So, what's the scoop?

What is the saveONenergy HOME ASSISTANCE program?

Horizon Utilities and the Ontario Power Authority have joined together under the HOME ASSISTANCE program to help Ontario homeowners and tenants make their homes more energy efficient.

The HOME ASSISTANCE program is the first of its kind in Ontario, and will be made available through participating electric utilities.

Why does it matter if my home is energy efficient?

An energy-efficient home is a more comfortable home — plus it will use less energy, making it easier for you to manage your energy costs.

Who is eligible for the HOME ASSISTANCE program?

You are eligible for the HOME ASSISTANCE program if you own or are a tenant in residential housing — such as a detached or semi-detached house, a townhouse, a mobile home or a unit in a duplex, triplex or other multi-residential building — provided it is:

- a maximum of three storeys high, and
- less than 600 square metres (6,400 sq. ft.).

AND

Your annual household income (before-tax income of all household members, age 18 or older) is the same or less than the amounts shown:

| Number of people living in the home | Before-tax annual household income† |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 person | \$29,931 |
| 2 persons | \$37,261 |
| 3 persons | \$45,810 |
| 4 persons | \$55,617 |
| 5 persons | \$63,081 |
| 6 persons | \$71,144 |
| 7 or more persons | \$79,209 |

OR

You have received one of the following for the past 12 months:

- National Child Benefit Supplement
- Allowance for the Survivor
- Guaranteed Income Supplement
- Allowance for Seniors
- Ontario Works
- Ontario Disability Support Program

OR

You have received Utility Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) grant within the past 12 months.

Important note: If you live in social and/or assisted housing, please ask your housing provider to apply, and pick up the HOME ASSISTANCE brochure for social housing providers.

If you live in a larger building, please visit horizonutilities.com

for the RETROFIT PROGRAM information.

AND

Your name appears on the electric utility bill (unless you live in social housing).

AND

If you are a tenant, you have the written consent of your building's owner or manager to join the program.

How do I apply?

To apply call Horizon Utilities at 1-855-319-3457.

Home Assistance Program Steps:

1. Customer calls 1-855-319-3457
2. see if you are eligible
3. schedule appointment

Home Energy Expert Visit Includes

- Verify eligibility
- Inspection for energy saving opportunities
- Install small upgrades where needed/eligible
- Schedule other work if needed/eligible
- Delivery and Replacement of Appliances
- Draft-proofing and insulation
- Follow-up visit with Home Energy Expert.

If you are a social housing provider, please see our HOME ASSISTANCE program for social housing providers brochure, also available online.

Subject to additional terms and conditions found at saveonenergy.ca/homeassistance †The information is subject to change to align with Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) updates. Funded by the Ontario Power Authority and offered by Essex Powerlines Corporation. A mark of the Province of Ontario protected under Canadian trade-mark law. Used under license.

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Cathy Wever and Pinky Lewis

By Sean Gibson

Community is nothing without “U” and “I” in it. Pinky Lewis and Wever Hub can't be spelled without a “U” or an “I” either. Both the community centre and the school stand side by side, and for some they represent an oasis of recreation and sanctuary in an otherwise lively neighbourhood.

For those who are not familiar with either facility, I would like to introduce you to both. Norman Thomas “PINKY” Lewis was born in Hamilton Ontario in 1898 where he was a manager, trainer, and scout. Lewis partook in several sports including basketball, hockey, and soccer. His community dedication was unsurpassed by his benevolence, and dedication to the youth. Pinky persevered and made our community better through our young people.

Today Pinky Lewis Recreational Centre stands as one of the only community centres serving hundreds of kids daily; such an accomplishment surely makes Norman proud.

Just across the way, about 10 feet, stands Cathy Wever Elementary School. Cathy Wever, the Schools name sake, was a Hamilton Police Officer who regularly patrolled the Sanford area. Cathy recognized the lack of services, lack of representation and overall suffering and hardship that was experienced by the community in general. Cathy knew she could make a difference in the lives of residents in this area, with

“The winning doesn't matter much! But if we can teach the kids how to win and lose gracefully, how to be good sportsmen, and if we start them along the road to good citizenship, I, for one, will feel satisfied and happy.” — Norman Pinky Lewis

much emphasis on our youth. That's exactly what she did from there on in, Cathy dedicated to working closely with teachers,

principals, students, and parents to effect local change the best way she could. Providing our youth with programs and activities changed their lives forever, in concert and collaboration with the school things began to change.

With two magnanimous advocates for our youth it was somewhat serendipitous that both facilities would be located side by side each other. It was also vital that some organization aid in the advancement and welfare of the kids and families in this neighborhood. The Wever Hub has done just that, the hub navigates through bureaucracy and politics to try and meet the needs of residents in the area. On this given day I met with Wave program assistant Joahna Cruz, 3rd year sociology McMaster Student who happened to take that program because of her experience and history at Pinky Lewis. Johanna explains that Wever Hub has managed to network with

many partners like the City of Hamilton, Rotary Club of Hamilton, Partners in Nutrition, Hamilton Wentworth School Board, United Way, McMaster University, just to name a few, which is likely the secret to their success. While the Hub is extremely successful with 90–100 kids passing through the doors daily, staffing, funding and programs are challenging. The Hub is always looking for volunteers and finding funds to operate and continue to serve the plethora of youths who patronize the facility daily. Thanks you to Joanna Cruz, Pinky and Wave staff, Wever Hub executive, Pinky and Wever volunteers, Cathy Wever & Pinky Lewis and their Legacy and all those who make our community better by being invested and involved. Cathy Wever and Pinky Lewis are likely looking down on us all as we continue to forge ahead making a difference daily.



What to look for in a Heating and Air Conditioning Contractor

by Penny Ulbinas

Are you looking for a Heating and Air Conditioning Supplier? When selecting an HVAC Contractor it is important to find out how reputable they are. Be aware of 'Cash Grabbers' claiming to give you a better deal by paying cash to keep the price down. Generally these Contractors are unlicensed and when something goes wrong or follow-up support is required, they are no where to be found.

Be sure you hire a reputable firm with strong values and integrity. A Contractor who plays by the rules makes payments through employer's tax contributions that in turn fund government programs such as pensions, employment insurance, education and infrastructure (to include water, streets, roads, sanitation etc) maintenance and improvements that we all benefit from. A reputable Contractor contributes to our society through regulation and legislation but also by supporting local charities and other local initiatives.

Referrals and recommendations from friends and colleagues may be helpful. Another way to be certain that a Contractor is reputable is to check with the industry's professional association. Members of the HRAI (Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Institute of Canada) have been pre-screened to ensure they possess the necessary up to date Trade Licences, Insurance Coverage and Technical Certifications to perform work to your home or business. You can verify a Contractor's membership by searching www.hrai.ca.

TSSA (Technical Standards & Safety Authority) administers the Technical Standards & Safety Act as it pertains to fuel related safety services associated with the Heating and Refrigeration Industry. This includes (but not limited to) Safety Legisla-

tion and Regulations, Technical Certification and Product Recalls related to Contractors, equipment and appliances that use fuels.

An HVAC Contractor must be registered with TSSA. These Contractors should have a TSSA number on all company vehicles and must comply with Safety Standards. The TSSA also monitors the quality of work performed by its registered Contractors. Look for the TSSA number on your Contractor's vehicles. For more information go to www.TSSA.org.

Call the Better Business Bureau to see if your selected Contractor is a Member or if any unresolved complaints are listed. Check Contractor's websites for the history of the company, testimonials, clients and projects, community involvement and related associations.

Ask if any government rebates and incentives are available. Find Energy Star qualified products online by entering 'Energy Star Purchasing Guide' for information on energy efficient appliances and tips to improve your home's energy efficiency.

Never feel pressured into a 'panic' decision – take the time to get written itemized estimates to compare cost, warranties and energy efficiency ratings before you sign any written contract with your selected Contractor. The contract should include the equipment's make, model number, warranty information, price and any negotiated terms or miscellaneous items.

We are fortunate in the 'Golden Horseshoe' area to have several highly regarded HVAC Contractors with proven track records and many years of experience. Take the time to find and support them!

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Provides interest-free loans to a maximum of \$50,000 for restoration of heritage attributes on properties designated under the Ontario Heritage Act
Find the HCHF guide and application here:
<http://www.investinhamilton.ca/incentives-programs/municipal-programs/#Heritage>

Please Note: *Applications are accepted throughout the year.*

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HAMILTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Communication Relationships Engagement

By Rebecca Doll

Diversity makes a community rich in assets. Our area is rich in diversity not only of ethnic or cultural differences, but diversity of age, of ability, of income and education, and a plethora of variations of what constitutes a family.

Density makes a community sustainable. It needs a critical mass of people who are shopping at the commercial strip, paying taxes, using services etc in order for those assets to be supported and maintained.

Our neighbourhood is different than many areas where people tend to be in the same economic class, or the same cultural group. What makes the diversity possible here, is beauty and affordability; the beauty of the area, the trees, the big old houses, the walking distance to downtown and amenities like Gage park means that everyone wants to live here; the affordability means that anyone can.

Many people prefer to rent part of a house rather than live in a block tower and the appeal is certainly obvious. Some of us rent the whole house. Some of us bought houses here but still have to commute a good distance to the job that lets us pay for our house. It's a good thing those other municipalities don't restrict jobs to people who live there or we would be up the creek. Many of us are third generation or more in the same family home with long story memories of the various changes that Hamilton has undergone throughout its history as a centre of innovation. All of these differences are what make it so rewarding to know our neighbours, and the differences

are what make it possible for us to help each other. Betty cuts my grass because she gets to it way faster than I do. I pick up her groceries because I have a car. You get the picture.

When I look to examples of communities that have undergone revitalizations in Toronto or Montreal, I observe that there is a sweet spot between diversity and density in the most vibrant communities like St Henri in Montreal, Roncesvalles in Toronto. These communities have an abundance of 1-3 unit homes and a small number of larger buildings. In these communities it seems that people are more connected to each other than in more homogenous communities full of tall buildings or gated singles.

As our neighbourhood continues to undergo changes that seem inevitable with the ebb and flow of jobs, we have opportunities to engage with each other and talk about what matters to us, to build on our assets so that we don't lose sight of them, and lose them. When we are introducing policy changes that will affect so many, we need to ask ourselves if we're targeting issues or if we're targeting individuals. We need to ask ourselves if the solutions we're demanding actually address the problem that we're talking about. If we want to build the density that we need to support the community we imagine, if we want to maintain the richness of the diversity that we already have, then we need to remind ourselves that people are what's important.

ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

By David Derbyshire

Counting My South Sherman Blessings

As the temperatures continue to dip, the days grow shorter, the line ups at the stores get longer and the every TV special is about a jolly old man in a red suit, I am reminded that we are once again completing another trip around the sun. I beg your indulgence as I recollect some of the South Sherman moments that we have had the privilege of sharing over the past 12 months.

- The Block Champions were imagined and created. These are ambassadors who are committed to building relationships with their neighbours and to connecting them with events, activities and projects of interest in the community. Thank you Sarah for your initial work on this and Patty for continuing the journey.
- Our second Community Asset Mapping Day; a chance for the community to come together to identify the people,

places things and attitudes that make South Sherman a great place to live, work and raise a family. Thank you to the McMaster students for their support on this.

- The Health in the Hubs initiative which brought the McMaster School of Nursing to our neighbourhood to learn with and from our community, many thanks to Dyanne and Steve for your ongoing commitment.
- The ever-strengthening partnership between the South Sherman neighbourhood and the Hamilton Community Foundation, who continues to provide funding to assist our service provider partners in providing their programs to the families in our neighbourhood. Sharon and Matt we are very appreciative of your support.
- Our active participation in the Accommodation Review Committee and the outstanding job we did in assuring the decisions being made that would tremen-

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dously affect our neighbourhood were reflective and informed by the parallel work that is being done to improve the quality of life for people living in downtown neighbourhoods. Steve you were a dog on a bone with this one.

- Our community garden entered its second season. Igor and Joanne you are our inspirational green thumbs.
- Environment Hamilton's Good Food Box was introduced to the community and has become a monthly resource for healthy affordable produce. Thanks to Bill and all the folks at HARRRP for being our local depot.
- The Downstairs Kitchen with the help of grants from the Heart and Stroke Association and the Hamilton Community Foundation continues to offer monthly dinners for our neighbours. Thanks to Cathy and Helen and their team of volunteers.
- The South Sherman Community Planning Team has selected a logo, which is currently being adapted for electronic replication and will soon adorn all SSCPT documents. A big thank you to Carrey for her dogged determination to bring the selection process to completion and to Rueben for his graphic talents.
- Project Video and the dedicated team of volunteers who created a 70 second trailer and are still working on the short feature on asset-based community development in the South Sherman neighbourhood. Rebecca, Celeste, Fraser, Sarah, Cathy, Anna, Darin are but a few of the team of neighbours who have worked on this project, special thanks to Sarah and Jan for their guidance and ever-lasting patience as we learned this new skill.
- The creation of a five-year, asset-based action plan for addressing the priorities of our neighbourhood and the engagement of hundreds of local voices in its creation. The assistance offered through the Neighbourhood Strategies Office from Paul and Suzanne and the planning support from Jocelyn were critical in the completion of this plan.
- The Second Annual South Sherman BBQ was held in June and we used it also as an opportunity for the broader neighbourhood to have input and prioritize the plan. Tara and her amazing team of volunteers took a leadership role in the

planning and implementation of the day; 250 South Sherman neighbours showed their support by joining us for vegetarian, halal, gluten free and regular, old-fashioned hot dogs and hamburgers.

- I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the support offered by Councillor Morelli's office and his assistant Nick. They were always there to assist wherever a shortfall or roadblock was being presented.
- And finally the vehicle I am using to share my thoughts with you today, the South Sherman Hub News. Created through the vision and dogged determination of a South Sherman resident, our own Rebecca and made possible by team of volunteers including; Greg, Mary, Steve, Neal, Lynn, Kathy, Charlie, Lynlee, Anna, and all the contributors.

And the list can go on and on but I hope you get my drift. Some amazing things have happened in South Sherman over the last year and more amazing are the people who have helped make these things happen.

Our team was also blessed by the presence of a number of partners whom I would like to acknowledge, thank and invite to continue our journey together.

Duane from the Boys and Girls Club, Leanne from Elizabeth Fry, Ruta, Olive, Nancy and all the students from the McMaster School of Nursing, Faye, Cindy and Nelly from the CASTLE project, Liliana from Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion and Donna from the John Howard Society. I know I may have left some out and for that I am truly sorry. When we all bring our assets together we can and do make a difference. So as I count my blessings on this the end of our current trip around the sun I invite you to count and share yours as well. I also invite you to bring your assets to our conversation and share in the possibilities the next trip around the sun brings. It is you, the people, who are our greatest assets.

Happy New Year my South Sherman friends and lets all make helping South Sherman become a better place to live work and raise a family one of our New Year's Resolutions.

David.derbyshire@wesleyurbanministries.ca

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

By Carolyn McCann

Sherman Avenue Travellers: In the Beginning

As you walk, drive, or bike along Sherman Avenue, you may wonder about others who preceded you on this journey. Let's look back at the past of this fascinating street.

Native peoples, known as Attiwandaronia or Neutral Indians, were the first known inhabitants. The land was primarily forest, with many trails following the streams from the bay towards the escarpment. Since the bay had so many streams and marsh lands close by, the majority of the Native settlement was probably to the south, at the base of the escarpment. Sherman Ave was most likely one of their trails.

During the Huron and Iroquois Wars, the Attiwandaronia refused to take sides, thus becoming known as the Neutral Indians. This, however, did not protect the tribe from becoming victims of the conflict. Many were killed and others taken prisoner, then adopted into the warring native nations. When the Europeans arrived, the Attiwandaronia population was diminished, and the diseases brought by the Europeans were the final blow, leading to the extinction of this people. The first residents who had roamed, hunted, fished and lived near the Sherman area disappeared. They had been visited by Etienne Brule and Robert de LaSalle during each one's explorations in the 1600's, but Europeans did not settle here until the next century.

Following the American Revolution, many families who had supported the British side rebuilt their lives in British North America. Known today as United Empire Loyalists (UEL), they became

the first immigrant group to reside here.

Robert Land, Richard Beasely and John Depew are the 3 main UEL contenders for First Settler at the Head of the Lake (Hamilton). All three men arrived in 1786, but no one knows who was actually here first. Land's and Depew's grants shared a common border along today's Sherman Avenue, while Beasely claimed land at today's Dundurn Castle. In 1791, Augustus Jones, the Crown surveyor of this region, divided the area into lots, concessions and side roads. Sherman became the side road between lots 8 and 9. The entire area was named Barton Township in 1792. A later surveyor, named Shearman, gave his name to this side road. It is often thought that Sherman was named for the Sherman brothers of steel company fame. In fact, Shearman had already been misspelled and become known as Sherman long before their arrival.

While Beasely was primarily a fur trader with the natives, Land and Depew were farmers. Land built his home at Leeming and Barton Streets and Depew at Burlington and Depew Street. Land, a United Empire Loyalist fighter, escaped probable execution in the United States and came here alone, thinking that his family were all dead. They had escaped to New Brunswick where they eventually learned that a single man, named Land, was at the Head of the Lake. After a long, exhausting journey into the wilderness, the family was reunited.

Over time, the Shearman side road became a thoroughfare for the newly arriving settlers. Dr. Case, the first doctor at the Head of the Lake, settled south and east of Sherman, and would have used it to get to "emergencies". Meanwhile, the

Musical Journey

By Darin Martin

Have you ever been somewhere or have been doing something when "that song" comes on and you get totally lost in the moment? For me this happens on a regular basis and I love it. In fact, some songs can actually take me back to a time and place in my life where I can remember everything from the people in the room to the smell in the air.

For several years I have been trying to find myself in music. When I tell people that I am a full time musician, they often ask, "What style are you?" or "Who do you sound like?" In the quest to try and be original, music listeners need to put you into their framework in order to see where you would fit, and I totally understand that because I do it too.

lands to the far south-west of the Sherman area developed into a village and were more intensively settled. In 1816, that area was recognized as a town with 668 residents. The nucleus of our city had been established and begun to grow.

The Sherman area remained outside its city limits until 1891, when the avenue was named as the farthest east border of the city. By 1903, the city limit extended to Ottawa Street. Early expansion included new industries, homes for the workers and services such as schools, churches, stores, a library, theatres, restaurants, banks and all the amenities needed to make life pleasant for the mainly immigrant population along and around Sherman Avenue. The story of this growth will be continued in the next issue.

Carolyn McCann is a member of The City of Hamilton History Board.

The truth is, when I sit down to write a new song, I don't try to sound like Bob Dylan or Leonard Cohen but in reality, I have listened to artists like Neil Young for so many years that his music influences elements of my songs. As a guitar player I want to sound like John Mayer, and in becoming a better performer, why wouldn't I look at Michael Jackson's ability to entertain such a wide range of audiences?

Lately, I have found myself getting lost in the music all of the time. Even as I write these words, I am sitting at the Cannon Coffee Shop with my laptop and headphones on. Although there are about 12 people here right now, I am able to lose myself in the song that is playing, which happens to be a song by an artist from England that I really love called Imogen Heap.

I've been quite aware of this "being lost in music" thing lately, especially while watching a movie. It doesn't seem to matter what I am watching, I get fixated on the sound track, the sound effects and the mood being created by the brilliant producers. Although I can't often recall too many details of the storyline, I remember how a song moved me or contributed to my feelings of anger or regret.

As I seek to find myself in music, I realize it is less about trying to be original and more about expressing myself, and writing songs that truly reflect who I am as an artist.

As a young boy I loved to play hide-and-go-seek because there is so much enjoyment in finding someone who was hiding, or being caught by someone who was looking for you.

I hope that as I share my music, people will find me and get lost in my songs.

CYCLING IN HAMILTON

By Heidi Vanderkwaak

As part of our fall routine, we, like most people, are raking our leaves, sealing our windows and putting away our air conditioner to get ready for winter. Instead of saying goodbye to our bicycles, however, by cleaning them and moving them to the basement, we are taking steps needed to make bicycle commuting through the winter not only manageable, but fun and exciting. Bicycling can be a year round activity and remains a great option for transport throughout the winter — plus it can help you to stay fit and active through the colder months.

It isn't always easy to hop on the bicycle when the snow is piling up, or when that cold morning air first shocks your lungs, or when it is still dark as you head out the door in the morning — but with a little preparation, winter riding can be quite simple. My husband Reuben and I have commuted by bike through Hamilton winters for the last 7 years, and only rarely have one of us needed to hop on a bus due to ice on the roads which would make our commutes unsafe. Most snowfalls in an urban area are light, and on

any road with moderate traffic, the snow is cleared within a reasonable time period. Within a few minutes of hopping in the saddle, my body warms itself up — many times faster than waiting for the heat to start coming out of the car vents while shivering in the driver's seat.

If you want to give winter cycling a shot, here are some tips to get you ready for the season:

- The cold can affect your bike's performance, so make sure your bicycle is in good working order. Ensure that your gears are shifting properly, your tires are properly inflated, your chain is lubricated, your brakes are functional, and that your bike is equipped with a headlight and taillight. If you don't know how to maintain your bicycle, check out a reputable bike shop, or learn how to do your own maintenance at New Hope Community Bikes (1429 Main St. East : www.newhopebikecoop.ca), or through the Hamilton Womyn's Bike Collective (<http://hamiltonwomynsbikecrew.tumblr.com>)
- Organize a variety of winter riding gear

(gloves, hats, scarves, waterproof jacket/pants, footwear) in an accessible place in the house. When you are ready to leave, you will be able to look out the door and have the proper warmth and weather protection required. Extra insulation on your hands and feet will keep you comfortable and a scarf or balaclava will keep the cold air off your neck, ensuring your core stays warm.

- Store your locked bike overnight in a covered area (or better yet, indoors) so that snow and ice don't build up on parts that need to be moving. If you store it in an accessible place that is not time consuming for you to access, you are more likely to ride.
- Have a backup plan for when you wake up and a blizzard has foiled your regular commute. Know what time you need to catch a bus or call a co-worker for a ride so you're not panicking at the last minute.

Rules of the road still apply for cyclists, regardless of whether it's winter or not. Here are a few tips that will help keep you and everyone else safer on the roads:

- Follow the rules of the road, which include riding with the direction of traffic, using hand signals, waiting for red lights and stopping at stop signs. Being predictable and consistent in traffic is the best approach to keep you safe.
- Never ride on the sidewalk. Studies have shown that riding on the sidewalk is actually more dangerous than riding with traffic, especially around intersections. If you feel you have no other option, dismount, walk your bicycle on the sidewalk and hop back on the road on a quieter street.
- Plan your route before you go. Pick quiet through-streets and bike routes. The safest and fastest route for a bike is not always the same as the fastest route for a car.

Staying active will keep those endorphins flowing, which can make those dreary winter days seem not so blue. By the time spring comes around, you'll feel you've earned the warmer temperatures and sunshine. Keep safe and have fun while riding this winter!

Mustard Seed Grocery Co-Op

By Jim Ruxton

My partner, Anna, and I recently moved to the South Sherman area and have felt very welcomed by the community. Six months ago we gave birth to our beautiful daughter, Frida, and feel confident this area will be a wonderful place for her to grow up.

When leaving Toronto a year ago I knew that one of the communities I was going to miss most was my local food co-op, Karma Co-op. I have been a member of the Co-op for over 20 years. The Co-op itself has been around since 1972. We have remained members of Karma and continue to do large shops whenever we are in Toronto.

In October I heard some very exciting news — that a food co-op is opening up in Hamilton in the spring of 2013. Once I heard about The Mustard Seed Co-op, I immediately signed on as a volunteer to help bring the co-op to fruition. A committee is looking at a few possible central Hamilton locations.

Member owned co-ops are not new to Hamilton. CarShare is another co-op that has been in Hamilton since 2009. I

recently learned that the Canadian Co-operative Association, a national association made up of Canadian co-ops, actually began in Hamilton in 1909. 2012 has been declared by the UN as International Year of the Co-op. Another interesting fact about co-ops is that they typically have longer lives than conventional businesses. A 2008 study of co-ops in Quebec showed that 44% of co-ops survive after 10 years where 20% of traditional businesses survive. As a member of a co-op that has been around for 40 years, this statistic doesn't surprise me.

Unless you have been a member of a food co-op, it may be difficult to appreciate the wonderful sense of ownership and community you experience when shopping there. Member owned co-ops are managed democratically, whereby each member gets a vote in the election of the directors. The purpose of the co-op is to provide its members with affordable and nutritious food while supporting local farms and businesses as much as possible. Unlike commercial enterprises, a co-op's main goal is not to maximize

profit for its shareholders. Committees are formed for critical issues to research such as which products will be carried in the store. Members can make suggestions of what they want to see on the shelves or can make special orders of some products that the co-op may not carry on a regular basis. Mustard Seed plans to hold food related workshops on a variety of topics.

Over the years, it has been interesting for me to watch children grow up and take active roles at Karma. I've seen youth that I remember as babies now working as a cashier behind the cash register. I'm looking forward to seeing Frida grow up, take an interest in where her food comes from and learn about community based projects. I see The Mustard Seed playing an active role in that part of her education.

By the time this goes to press, The Mustard Seed Co-op will have held its membership kickoff meeting at Central Library. Each household membership requires paying a \$100.00 loan to the Co-op, which is redeemable (minus a \$10.00

processing fee), should you decide to leave the co-op at any time after the first year. While non-members will be able to shop at the co-op, members will get a discount at the cash register. For more information on Hamilton's new community-owned grocery store take a look at their (our) website

<http://mustardseed.coop/>. I can't wait till spring!!

You can register online now to become a member of Hamilton's first non-profit grocery store, The Mustard Seed at <http://my.mustardseed.coop>. Your \$100 household membership will help us open our doors in downtown Hamilton May 2013! You can read more about membership and as well as our community loan investment option on our website. Show your support for local, wholesome food options in Hamilton and Join the Co-op!

PROPOSED RENTAL LICENCING

CITY OF HAMILTON PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Parking and By-law Services Division

TO: Chair and Members, Planning Committee

WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE

COMMITTEE DATE: December 11, 2012

SUBJECT/REPORT NO: Rental Housing Licensing Model (PED10049(j)) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item)

SUBMITTED BY: Tim McCabe, General Manager Planning and Economic Development Department

PREPARED BY: Joe Xamin (905) 546-2424 Ext. 6656

RECOMMENDATION

- That the Rental Housing Licensing Model proposed in Report PED10049(j) and the draft Rental Housing Licensing By-law, attached as Appendix "B" to Report PED10049(j), form the basis for public consultation and public and Planning Committee input for the December 11, 2012 Special Meeting of the Planning Committee;
- That staff be directed to prepare a final recommended Rental Housing Licensing By-law with any revisions to the draft By-law, attached as Appendix "B" to Report PED10049(j), taking into consideration all public input received at the December 11, 2012 Special Meeting of the Planning Committee;
- That the final Rental Housing Licensing By-law, referenced in recommendation (b) above, be considered by the Planning Committee at a Planning Committee Meeting to be scheduled no later than March 2013;
- That the associated staffing and budget impacts and recommended Licensing Fees for Rental Housing be considered as part of the 2013 Operating Budget process.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The need to license rental housing has been an on-going issue for Committee/Council for many years. To assist in the decision, Council approved an 18-month proactive enforcement pilot for Wards 1 to 8 which exposed illegal rental properties and a serious level of substandard living conditions in many units. Report PED10049(h) presented to Planning Committee on September 18, 2012, attached as Appendix "D", summarized the results of the enforcement pilot and concluded there was a justifiable need to move forward with licensing of rental housing.

As a result, Planning Committee, therefore, directed staff "...to prepare comprehensive recommendations, a draft by-law amendment and cost-recovery analysis to be presented to a Special Public Meeting of the Planning Committee to be held before December 15, 2012".

The licensing model and draft by-law involved in this Report have been developed for the purpose of obtaining public comment and receiving direction from the Committee related to considerations for preparing a final recommended Licensing By-law. Staff intends to bring back this final recommended by-law to Planning Committee for final Committee decisions at a March 2013; however, any associated budget impact must be considered as part of the budget process if Council decides to

proceed with Rental Housing Licensing. Alternatives for Consideration — See Page 10

FINANCIAL/STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (for Recommendation(s) only) Financial: Implementation of the proposed Rental Housing Licensing Model and draft By-law would have a net levy impact estimated to be \$600,000 in 2013 and reduced to \$450,000 net in 2014 (based on 30% cost recovery from fines and fees as experienced through the enforcement pilot during 2011 and 2012). The net levy impact could potentially reduce over time as more units are licensed under the program.

In order to provide an incentive to encourage landlords to license, staff is recommending lower license application fees for an initial six-month, intake application period commencing once the by-law comes into force. The proposed fee during this transition period would be limited to only \$100 per rental dwelling unit. However, if the property owner fails to apply during the initial, six-month intake period or the City identifies an unlicensed rental property after this period, then the fee would be the full-cost recovery fee per unit, which is estimated at \$192 per unit. Once the rental property is registered and licensed, the annual renewal fee would be \$100 per unit (adjusted by annual Corporate User Fee increases).

Other additional fees may be required on a case-by-case basis either initiated by the City or independently by the landlord, such as Zoning verification (\$103) per property address or an Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) inspection. Appendix "A" to this Report outlines the potential fees per unit as well as the calculations for full cost recovery.

Staffing: Seventeen (17) new FTEs would be required to effectively administer and enforce the proposed Rental Housing Licensing By-law. It is proposed that the new staff would be phased in over a three-year period based upon careful monitoring of activity and the corresponding need and demand for staff.

While it is proposed that the by-law be approved in the short-term, it is recommended that the by-law not come into force and effect until the Spring of 2014. Staff requires approximately one year lead time to prepare for the by-law coming into effect (i.e. design, plan and develop necessary tools/forms/processes, implement technology, hire staff, and provide landlord/tenant education, etc.).

The initial staff requirements will be to establish the proactive enforcement team (6.0 FTEs - 5 Enforcement Officers, 1 By-law Clerk). As well, licensing specific staff (3.0 FTEs - 1 Senior

Project Manager, 1 Application Analyst and 1 Fire Inspector) will be required to undertake the significant planning and development for the Licensing Program.

Once the by-law comes into force and effect (estimated April 2014), the following administrative and enforcement staff would then be required:

8.0 FTEs (4 Enforcement Officers, 1 Fire Inspector, 1 Licensing Clerk and 1 Licensing Facilitator) phased in as application activity warrants; and,

Hamilton Fire Department requires one (1) FTE in the Fall 2013, and a second FTE Inspector would be hired the following Spring (2015) if the volume of applications warrants additional staff.

Staff expect a flood of applications from landlords to legalize or recognize their buildings. This will have to be monitored and may result in a temporary staffing increase in the Planning Division to accommodate peak demand commencing in 2014.

It should be noted that once the significant effort at the "up front" work is concluded and the demand for Zoning Verifications normalizes, it is anticipated that one Licensing Facilitator position could be eliminated.

Legal: The City has the authority to license the business of renting dwelling units under the Municipal Act, 2001. Staff is proposing a City-wide approach to licensing rental housing which is consistent with the recommendations of the Ontario Human Rights Commission for municipalities considering such a program.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (Chronology of events)

On October 15, 2008, City Council established a Residential Rental Housing Community Liaison Committee (CLC) to investigate regulating rental housing in Wards 1, 8, 10 and 12. The "Neighbourhood Residential Rental Housing Community Liaison Committee" (NRRHCLC) began its work in January 2009. A City-wide CLC to investigate rental housing issues across the City was also established in 2009; however, Council deferred it until the NRRHCLC reported back. On September 8, 2009, the NRRHCLC presented eight recommendations to the (former) Economic Development and Planning Committee and staff reported back on those recommendations throughout 2010. One of the key recommendations was to proactively enforce existing by-laws before considering the creation of new regulations for rental housing. As a result, in March 2010, Council approved an 18-month enforcement pilot for Wards 1 to 8 (subsequently

continued on pages 6 & 7

PROPOSED RENTAL LICENCING

named "Project Compliance") which commenced in July 2010.

On September 14, 2011, City Council extended "Project Compliance" until the end of March 2012, and further directed "that staff report back on licensing options based on the experience of other municipalities, including but not limited to a hybrid of a rental housing license/proactive by-law enforcement".

On February 14, 2012, Council extended "Project Compliance" until December 31, 2012 to allow additional time to investigate, analyze and consult on the potential licensing models.

On September 18, 2012 staff presented Report PED 10049(h) ("Regulation of Rental Housing") to the Planning Committee which contained much of the justification for requiring a rental housing licensing by-law. Committee approved the following direction:

- a) That the concept of licensing rental housing in low-density buildings, as detailed in Report PED10049(h), be received;
- b) That staff be directed to prepare comprehensive recommendations, a draft by-law amendment and cost-recovery analysis to be presented to a Special Public Meeting of the Planning Committee to be held before December 15, 2012 and that the report be released to the public one week prior to the public meeting;
- c) That all future reports related to the Vital Services By-law be submitted to the Planning Committee with notification provided to the Emergency and Community Services Committee; and,
- d) That staff report back to the Special Public meeting of the Planning Committee with a comprehensive report on proactive enforcement:
 - (i) Rentals/Singles;
 - (ii) Any limitations within the Landlord Tenancy Act as to whether or not a landlord can apply licensing and inspection fees to a tenant's rent;
 - (iii) Does the tribunal have authority to enforce non-compliant landlords to live in non-compliant units;
 - (iv) Report on the City of Waterloo's successes and issues;
 - (v) Reconsider our residential care facilities by-law with rental licensing by-law;
 - (vi) Feasibility of utilizing a longer compliance order;
 - (vii) Review fire codes pursuant to current technology; and,
 - (viii) Constitutional use of the rental licensing by-laws as means to gain access without search warrant through justice of the peace.

The items listed in item (d) above are reported on in Supplementary Report PED10049(k), also placed on the Planning Committee's December 11, 2012 meeting agenda.

As part of the November 20, 2012 Planning Committee agenda, staff are requesting, through Report PED10049(i), an extension of Project Compliance and continued funding from the Parking Reserve until the end of December 2013 or sooner if a decision is made regarding Proactive Enforcement and Rental Housing Licensing.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

N/A

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Extensive consultation was undertaken with Building, Planning/Zoning, Fire Prevention, Public Health Services, Housing Services, Neighbourhood Development, Urban Renewal and Legal in the preparation of this Report. Staff also consulted with representatives of the Housing Help Centre, Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton, and Hamilton Community Legal Clinic.

ANALYSIS I RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

(include Performance Measurement/Benchmarking Data, if applicable) The concentration and mix of rental accommodations varies across the City as does the condition ranging from poor to well-maintained units. Complaints are regularly received from tenants and neighbourhood residents about poor living conditions and safety, density of rental housing, illegally zoned buildings, property maintenance issues such as illegal dumping, hoarding, long grass and weeds, graffiti, pest control, etc.

As identified through proactive enforcement efforts, a total of 3,629 property standard deficiencies were identified from July 2010 to October 2012 of which 2,349 (65%) of these deficiencies were associated with the 551 rental properties and 1,280 (35%) of the deficiencies were identified with 402 non-rental properties. Report PED10049(k) "Supplementary Rental Housing Report provides more detail regarding the type and frequency of these deficiencies.

Based on these results and after consultation and due consideration to all of the issues and challenges, staff is proposing to regulate rental housing through the creation of a new licensing by-law category along with continued proactive enforcement.

Proposed Model to Regulate Rental Housing

(i) Licensing Businesses Renting Dwelling Units

The proposed license requirements, as proposed in the draft Rental Housing Licensing By-law attached as Appendix "B" to this Report, include:

- requiring a license for any rental building in the City con-

taining from one-to-six dwelling units, including a building which is a single detached dwelling;

- providing proof of ownership and contact information (including a local contact) of the building;
- providing a premises plan for the entire property which may include, but not limited to, a plan(s) showing the location, as applicable, of: all buildings, structures, parking areas and walkways, all dwelling units to be licensed, all entrances/exits to the dwelling units to be licensed and the building where they are located, and, all bedrooms in each dwelling unit; providing a property maintenance plan identifying the measures a landlord will take to be in compliance with the City's Yard Maintenance By-law (10-118), Snow Removal By-law (09-067) and Solid Waste Management By-law (09-067);
- providing proof of insurance;
- providing, once every three years, a completed "self-certification checklist" (a draft which is attached in Appendix "C" to this Report) to assure the Issuer of Licences that applicable by-laws and legislation are complied with. The City would through subsequent inspections by staff (estimated to be once every three years based on the proposed staffing levels), verify the accuracy of the checklist;
- providing a zoning verification (if deemed necessary); and,
- providing proof of compliance with Electrical Safety Authority requirements prior to applying for a license and once every three years thereafter. It is important to note that the City of Waterloo reported that 81% of the 2,000 rental housing buildings inspected by the ESA were not in compliance.

Other noteworthy requirements of the proposed by-law include:

- that owner-occupied buildings be included in the by-law. While it has been suggested that owner-occupied buildings be exempt based on the opinion of some that they are better cared for, this is difficult to substantiate. However, Council could consider an exemption for such buildings in the future if information and compliance performance supports it;
- that Social Housing rental buildings be exempt as they are already subject to oversight through Provincial legislation;
- that, although technically rental buildings, Bed and Breakfasts, Hotels and Motels, Lodging Homes and Residential Care Facilities be exempt as the public interest is currently protected through existing licensing by-law requirements;
- that the number of habitable rooms be used to regulate rental dwelling use as opposed to limiting the number of bedrooms. Hamilton's Zoning By-law (6593) currently allows for eight habitable rooms such as a living room, dining room, kitchen, and bedrooms. Landlords would need to ensure their properties are in compliance with the occupancy standards, height/bedroom requirements, and parking requirements. Any additional habitable rooms require an increase in parking (0.5 parking for each additional room) and are subject to minimum lot size requirements. This requirement would need to be incorporated into new City-wide zoning to ensure consistent application across the City. The requirement for zoning verifications, premises plans and continued inspections under the new by-law would ensure compliance. This allows more flexibility for larger families who often have difficulty finding rental accommodation;
- that the Fire Department (HFD) undertake a Risk Based Evidence Analysis of all license applications as part of the licensing requirements. This would entail a strategic review of applications utilizing specific criteria that will help identify properties requiring targeted inspections by the HFD. In addition, as enforcement staff undertake proactive and random property inspections they will notify HFD of properties with potential fire risks. Beyond the Risk Based Evidence Analysis, the HFD will continue with its current practice of inspecting complaints under the legislative authority of the Fire Protection and Prevention Act;
- that, as noted in the Staffing Section of this Report, the By-law come into force and effect one year after it is passed in order to allow staff time to undertake the significant planning and development of the Licensing Program and educational initiatives.

(ii) Proactive By-law Enforcement Program

As noted in Report PED10049(h) proactive by-law enforcement is critical to effectively regulate rental housing, especially for the larger multi-residential units (i.e. seven or more units). A proactive by-law enforcement team would continue to conduct audits of multi-residential buildings to address safety/quality issues. Concerns by social housing advocates about poor living conditions in some multi-residential buildings have been validated through recent proactive efforts. As noted in past reports, Project Compliance's audits have had success in dealing with numerous problems in the interior common areas and exterior of the multi-residential buildings/properties. Over 20 audits of multi-residential buildings/properties have been undertaken to date. Some properties have had numerous issues, for example one building which had a 40% vacancy rate due to the extremely poor conditions, while others have been well-

maintained.

Also, in addition to identifying rental properties requiring licenses, the proactive enforcement team would also continue to deal with issues across the City and focus more strategically on key problem properties/areas. As noted in the Staffing Section of this Report, it is recommended that the Proactive Team be established early on in order to commence proactive enforcement initiatives and undertake multi-residential audits.

Issues and Challenges Associated with Licensing Rental Housing

While staff recommend licensing and pro-active enforcement, there will no doubt be challenges and issues that must be considered, including:

(i) Provincial Legislation and Planning Policy

Through The Planning Act, the Ontario Government has required that accessory units in single-detached dwellings be allowed, although they are still subject to zoning. This implementation may provide some opportunity to mitigate any potential loss of housing stock. Currently, Hamilton, Dundas and Stoney Creek's Zoning By-laws allow for accessory units by right; however, in lower Hamilton, secondary units may not be possible as properties do not meet current zoning requirements (i.e. minimum lot size and increased parking).

Approval of the City's Urban Official Plan is expected in a year or so, and once approved, the City's Planning Division will again commence the development of further stages of the City's new Comprehensive Zoning By-law which will include Urban Residential Zoning. Rental housing will be considered through the development of appropriate zoning regulations. In addition to regulating appropriate residential density through a habitable room limit, there are opportunities for more flexibility in allowing for dwelling units. This will create some opportunities to examine options at reducing regulations that can allow for as-of-right accessory units and increasing the opportunities for "pre-zoned" higher density in appropriate locations. However, it is estimated that development, consultation and approval will take two years once the Urban Official Plan is approved.

(ii) Licensing and Property Improvement Costs

Since the on-set, there has been concern that any costs associated with the Rental Licensing By-law will be passed onto tenants. If a property is well-maintained and is in compliance then the financial impact should be minimal. However, where there are numerous or serious deficiencies, the costs of remedying the deficiencies may be expensive, and some of the cost will undoubtedly be passed onto tenants or there may no longer be a business case to continue operating the rental business.

(iii) Loss of Rental Housing

It is anticipated that some properties will need to be rezoned due to illegal changes that have been made without the proper permits, which may not comply with the current zoning regulations. The potential loss of rental units that are not in compliance with zoning is the single biggest concern raised. It is difficult to estimate the exact number, but it is anticipated that if landlords are required to return to the last legal use (e.g. from a fourplex to a duplex) up to 30% of rental units could be lost. The other potential loss is where a landlord may choose to de-convert the properties in order to avoid licensing.

While Hamilton's vacancy rate for purpose-built rentals is modestly high at 4% there would not be enough stock to absorb the estimated losses and displaced tenants of rental units due to licensing, and this may result in a potential increase of homelessness and waiting lists for social housing.

(iv) Taxation

Concerns have also been expressed that there will be increased taxation as buildings and the number of dwelling units per building are formally identified to the City and licensed. The misconception is that properties will now be taxed at the multi-residential tax rate. However, low density rental buildings containing six or less units are taxed at a residential rate, as the multi-residential tax rate only comes into effect for buildings containing seven units or more.

(v) Enforcement/Licensing Tribunal

Enforcement is an obvious component of any regulation of rental housing. Therefore, the increased workload and resource requirements related to the Licensing Tribunal is likely to increase substantially.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

(include Financial, Staffing, Legal and Policy Implications and pros and cons for each alternative)

Change Components of the Proposed Rental Dwelling Units Licensing Model and By-law Provisions

Council may direct various changes to the proposed by-law, such as scope, what is included/excluded, issues dealing with habitable/bedrooms limits, licensing fees etc.

Alternative Implementation Schedule

One option is to identify an alternative implementation time frame for the Rental Dwelling Licensing which aligns with the internal policy changes. Staff would still recommend that a rental dwelling by-law be passed in 2013 and that proactive enforcement becomes a permanent work program; however, that the by-law comes into force at a later date. Phasing in licensing allows an extended time for education and compliance

PROPOSED RENTAL LICENCING

as well as time for other City initiatives, carried out by housing, planning and neighbourhood development staff, to be implemented.

City-wide Proactive By-law Enforcement Team

An alternative to licensing would be to create a permanent Proactive Enforcement Team. Similar to their current work, the team would proactively enforce property standards and yard maintenance issues and focus on key problem areas across the City. They could also focus on illegal zoning if directed. Audits of multi-residential buildings and monitoring key problem areas across the City would also continue.

However, appropriate staff would need to be identified for this approach. Currently, as recommended in this Report, staff are recommending 5.0 full-time Enforcement Officers and 1.0 full-time By-law Clerk.

Reactive Complaint Process for Rental Dwelling Units

Another alternative to licensing and proactive enforcement would be to rely on the long-standing reactive complaint basis approach. However, while this is a very cost-effective approach it has not demonstrated an effective resolution to substandard housing to date.

Options to Mitigate Impact of Loss of Rental Units

Some other potential options to mitigate the potential loss of housing is to examine whether or not changes in zoning can allow for an increase in housing options or density; for example initiatives identified in the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan.

One option is to change zoning of certain neighbourhoods or districts in order to create greater density.

The other issue which has often been raised is the potential grandfathering of illegal rental units. Staff cannot support wide-spread grandfathering of illegal units. Each must be looked at on a case-by-case basis to determine acceptability and impact.

Another option is to request senior levels of government for funding for purpose-built affordable housing and/or to improve funding for existing programs or creating new programs that aid in rehabilitating the housing stock.

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN (Linkage to Desired End Results)

Focus Areas:

1. Skilled, Innovative and Respectful Organization,
2. Financial Sustainability,
3. Intergovernmental Relationships,
4. Growing Our Economy,
5. Social Development,
6. Environmental Stewardship,
7. Healthy Community

Healthy Community

Creating a rental housing licensing program, as proposed in this Report, will accrue the following Community benefits which align with the City's strategic direction:

- promotion of quality and safe rental accommodations;
- improved quality of life for citizens living in rental accommodations;
- investment in the local economy as landlords make purchases to bring their properties into compliance; and,
- increased property values for rental and adjacent properties over time.

Licensing Fees and Cost Recovery Overview

The following is a break-down of potential costs per rental dwelling units and/or single dwellings under the proposed licensing requirements.

| Number of Units **(ESA required prior to application) | 2014 | | |
|--|--|----|--|
| | 6 month Transition Period April 7, 2014 – Oct 1 2014 | OR | Following Transition Period Cost Recovery Oct 6, 2014 beyond |
| | Fee per Unit | | Fee per Unit |
| One Unit /Single-Family | \$100 | OR | \$192 |
| Zoning (if required) | \$106 | | \$298 |
| Two Units | \$200 | OR | \$384 |
| Zoning (if required) | \$106 | | \$490 |
| Three Units | \$300 | OR | \$576 |
| Zoning (if required) | \$106 | | \$682 |
| Four Units | \$400 | OR | \$768 |
| Zoning (if required) | \$106 | | \$874 |
| Five Units | \$500 | OR | \$960 |
| Zoning (if required) | \$106 | | \$1,066 |
| Six Units | \$600 | OR | \$1,152 |
| Zoning (if required) | \$106 | | \$1,258 |

*Full Cost Recovery (FCR = total staff salary/# of registered units + Zoning) charged to all units which do not apply for licensing during the first six months of the by-law being in effect voluntarily. Costing calculations are based on the number of rental dwelling units (8,500 units used as a base number to estimate cost recovery). Based on Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation 2011 data, it is estimated that there are 48,113 rental units in apartments (containing six or more dwelling units), row houses and social housing buildings. Based on census data, there are 61,645 renter households in Hamilton. This means 13,532 rental units (61,645 minus 48,113) in buildings containing five or fewer units.

**Electrical Safety Authority Inspection - typical fee is \$266 (2012). Inspections may be required dependent on unit type or if changes are made to the unit(s).

A Message to City Council, presented December 11, 2012

By Steve Calverley

Good afternoon, members of City Council, City Staff, neighbours and other interested people here today. My name is Steve Calverley. I am a resident of the Gibson neighbourhood and a member of the South Sherman Community Planning Team, a Hamilton Community Foundation hub. I am here representing the planning team. We wish to thank you for this opportunity to present our views regarding the proposal to Licence Rental Accommodation in Hamilton.

South Sherman includes a large section in the middle of Ward 3 - between Gage and Wentworth and the escarpment to the industrial area at the bay. We are a diverse neighbourhood with many private single houses as well as many houses that have become duplexes and other multi-units over the years. It is our desire as a community planning team to see a healthy mixed neighbourhood with safe housing for all in our community.

With regard to safe housing for all in our community, we are opposed to a

rapid and wide-scale application of the existing zoning bylaws that could result in evictions and closure of rental units causing some in our neighbourhood to become homeless. We regard many of these people to be particularly vulnerable and we regard it as our duty and privilege to stand with these neighbours against potential homelessness.

However, with regard to achieving a healthy mixed neighbourhood, we agree in principle with regulating rental accommodation to bring standards to what appears to be an unregulated and out of control situation that is presently a detriment to all the people living in our neighbourhood.

We have heard suggestions in the media advocating an amnesty grandfathering of existing illegal units. Because we have just expressed concern about shrinkage of housing stock, we want to go on record as completely against this proposal as it would be counter productive to our other concern which is to foster a healthy mixed neighbourhood. We

believe that an amnesty grandfathering could result in a great many of the existing problem situations becoming entrenched.

Because of the complexity of this issue and the very large effect it will have on the people in our neighbourhood, we ask Council to consider creating a task force or working group representing all the stakeholders. We wonder if a process involving monthly meetings open to public observation over a one year period could offer a method by which all the stakeholders would have opportunity to listen, consider, and speak into the process? If this or a similar suggestion finds favour with Council, we further wonder if quarterly public meetings could be conducted during this process, where the public could have opportunity to ask questions or provide comment?

We recognize an imbalance of power going into this: investors having an advantage of financial resources, experience, interest associations and personal connections. If a task force or working

group is created, we ask that careful attention is paid to ensure the voice of the neighbourhood residents is fully represented including both renters and homeowners and we ask that these suggested working group meetings be conducted during non-business hours so that working people do not need to take time off work without pay to participate.

In conclusion, our message is that the South Sherman Community Planning team is for safe accommodation for all in our community. We are for healthy mixed neighbourhoods. In short, we are for our shared vision of our neighbourhood as a great place to live, work, play and learn. And to achieve those goals, as it relates to Licensing Rental Accommodation, we are for a constructive and respectful dialogue that we believe could unfold within a slowed process that includes the voices of all the stakeholders.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to present our view.

The Origins of Karma Hill at the Birch Avenue Dog Park

By Stephen Rowe

In September of 2009 a beautiful, six month old, Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever puppy, for reasons that will forever escape me, sat on Death Row in Detroit with only an hour to live, when I picked up the phone to call. The volunteers at the shelter had named her Butterscotch and really didn't want to see her put down, but the shelter was overcrowded and the little red dog's time was up.

The shelter agreed to postpone my future best friend's demise until after the weekend with my promise to come to Detroit in the next 3 days to rescue her.

After blowing the engine in my car at the side of the highway, somewhere between London and Windsor, my wife quipped that "perhaps Karma was trying to keep us from getting this dog."

After renting a car and continuing our trip we sprang my companion and spirited her back across the border. She now had a new lease on life, a new country and a new name. Butterscotch was now Karma.

As much as I am sure that I changed her life, little did I know how much Karma would, in turn, change my life and my neighbourhood.

The Groundwork

For the next four months, I would, nightly, load Karma into the car for the 20 minute drive from Wentworth North up to the Dartnall Road dog park. While Karma and I enjoyed our nights at Dartnall Road, I couldn't help but notice that I never saw any of my neighbours there. I thought it would be great if the City would install a dog park in the lower city, so that my friends with dogs in the community could walk to it. I wanted to continue to take Karma to the dog park, but also wanted her to have the opportunity to spend some time with the dogs in the neighbourhood.

I started to do my research and found that there are 82,000 estimated dogs in the city of Hamilton and over 25% of those resided in the lower city wards 2, 3 and 4. At the time there were 3145 licensed dogs in Ward 3, with the estimate of dogs living in the ward being closer to 8000. While all of these dogs lived in the inner city wards, the dog parks were all located on the outskirts of the city, requiring a car to access them.

I began to look around my neighbourhood for areas that might be suitable for a dog park. The two biggest challenges were that the new facility would have to be at least two acres and it could not be

being used for anything else. I had spent a lot of time at Dartnall road and Hill street parks, in Hamilton, and went to several dog parks in other cities as well, to get an idea of what might make a "good" dog park and what might work to make a new dog park unique.

I would spend a month gathering 500 signatures throughout the Keith neighbourhood to make sure that a dog park would be as welcome an addition to the community as I felt it would be. There had never really been any discussion about a dog park, but there were quite a few dogs in the neighbourhood.

By March of 2010, after educating myself on the requirements made by the City to establish a dog park, I met with Councillor Bernie Morelli with my research, signatures and location ideas in hand, to gain his support for a dog park in the Ward. Councillor Morelli had been instrumental in the installation of the lower park at Dartnall Road.

Before I was even able to spell out any of my location ideas for Councillor Morelli, he pointed out that he was greatly in favour of dog parks but that they had to be in the right places. He told me that there had been several attempts made to institute a leash free zone in Gage Park in the past decade, and that there would likely be no appetite for one there now either.

As unfortunate as that fact remains, my support was from the Keith neighbourhood and my best location idea was the hill directly behind the city operations centre on Birch Avenue. This hill was vacant, of suitable size, had already been substantially fenced in an effort to curtail tobogganing and was already most of the way to the start of a dog park. This location would be ideal in that there were no neighbours to be disturbed by the barking dogs. Amongst the industry, any noise would not be a problem. Being a substantial hill, the dogs would run up and down all day and be completely worn out by the time they got home.

Now, with Councillor Morelli's support, my community's approval, my research and my ten person volunteer list, the next step was to gain the support of City council through the Public Works committee, overseen by Councillor Sam Merulla at the time. After presenting everything to the Public Works committee, it was agreed that this location would be acceptable for the installation



Karma and friends on the hill

of a new dog park, but still needed approval from Council before anything could go any further.

October 2010 saw council accept the recommendations of the Public Works committee to see the installation of Hamilton's newest dog park on the property on Birch Avenue.

After the installation of the double gate system, between Christmas and New Years of 2010, three Great Danes, two Huskies, a Fox Hound, a Coonhound, a Border Collie, a Shih Tzu and my little Duck Toller all met in the foot deep snow to celebrate the opening of Karma Hill.

The project had been named Karma Hill from the initial idea phase, right up until the day that the gates were installed. Again, for reasons that escape me, the park was officially named the Birch Avenue Dog Park. The name really ceased to be important though. The important thing was that a new dog park had been opened close by to those who would use it.

Growing Pains

Sharing the parking lot with the city operations centre was quickly deemed a challenge, and required restricted time rules to be instituted, to keep park users from taking too much of the parking lot during the day. It was decided that the prime hours of the dog park would have to be in the evening, during the week. To make these hours more possible, the second stage of development took place with the installation of flood lights. While this development was taking place, one of the amenities that I had seen at other parks, access to water, was also installed along with a bench at the bottom of the hill.

The early days on the hill were cold and windy, and another of the things that I had seen in Karma's and my travels to other dog parks, was a shelter to protect the patrons from the wind, rain and snow. Other parks had a lean-to or sun shelter, but the openness of the top of the hill would not be suitable for these, and any shelter would need to be proven to weather the elements well.

This explains what we jokingly call "the bus stop at the edge of the universe."

With financial support from the Keith community and some from my bank account, an order was placed with the City to have a bus shelter installed at the top of the hill, but this would be delayed for several months due to a major flaw in my vision of the best dog park possible.

After several months of further discussion and design to figure out how to make the Birch Avenue dog park wheelchair accessible, the third stage of development to the park, installed in November of 2011, would consist of a new, wider gate, a concrete ramp and path into the park and two new bus shelters. One shelter built at the bottom of the hill and one at the top.

In 2012 the park would endure, and recover from, vandalism and a fire that burned the grass from 40% of the hill. Through all of this, the Birch Avenue Dog Park has survived, thrived and continued to become more popular.

Today

From those early days of the ten dogs on the hill in the snow, the park has grown to an estimate of 125 to 150 regular users. Every breed of dog imaginable has been seen at the park and, for the most part, they all coexist without problems.

As the park approaches its second anniversary, I still work closely with the Parks department to develop the park further. My plan is still to have the best dog park possible and to make it inviting to all.

Those 82,000 estimated dogs in the city still stay on my mind with only 3 dog parks and 3 leash free zones available for them to run. I still continue to look for city properties that might meet the requirements for a future dog park. So far I haven't hit on one. There is always some issue that gets in the way. But, eventually one will come up. Then Hamilton's fourth dog park will be under way.

My favourite will always be Karma Hill, but those 82,000 dogs could really use more space to call their own.



Stephen Rowe and Karma at the Birch Ave. Dog Park

Places That Matter

Neighbourhood Gathering Places and Sense of Place

By Jeanette Eby

“A ‘sense of place’ means that where I am matters to who I am”. This is the definition of “sense of place” that I came up with five years ago when I was writing a term paper about my experience in Hamilton. I live in the Beasley neighbourhood, right in the downtown core, which I have come to know and love in my seven years living in Hamilton. For my Masters research in Human Geography, I wanted to explore what sense of place means for others in the city who live in different neighbourhoods and have different backgrounds and circumstances than me. Over the past two years, I have explored the neighbourhood sense of place and experiences of local gathering places of single women living in the South Sherman neighbourhood. I have been welcomed and accepted by so many different people as I have come to know and appreciate this part of the city.

Sense of place is about the relationships that people form with places, and it encompasses a variety of factors such as someone’s memories of a place, their social relationships, their knowledge of a place, and their sense of identity in relation to that place. It is a concept that touches on many aspects of individual and community life. Gathering places are basically defined by their name — they are places where people can come together. They can be, but are not limited to public places. My research questions were as follows: What meaning do neighbourhood gathering places hold for single women across the life course? and What is the relationship between gathering places and their neighbourhood sense of place? My hope is that the results of this research be included in discussions of neighbourhood planning and development.

The results you will read below are based on the responses of the fifteen women between the ages of 24 and 84 who participated in my research. They all live in or close by this neighbourhood and spend time in local gathering places which they identified and described. I recruited single mothers and single older women (self-identified). Some of the participants have lived in the neighbourhood for less than a year, while others have been here for decades. Given this diversity, the participants had different feelings and opinions about the neighbourhood, and there were a variety of factors that influenced their sense of place, including: the people; how the neighbourhood and buildings in the neighbourhood are cared for; their knowledge of the place; feelings of fear and safety; and the reputation of the place. The women described this as a neighbourhood where people are friendly and down-to-earth, where people know each other and look out for each other; they thought that it has an unfair reputation from the outside, and hoped that others would give it a chance, that a sense of pride and belonging would grow, as Emily shared:

You’ve got to have some ways that people can have some pride in that they live here... There’s got to be a sense of belonging... it would be good to see some success stories of people living in this neighbourhood.

In learning about the gathering places that matter to the participants, I heard many such “success stories” about accessible places that provide a sense of safety, connection and purpose for those who spend time there.

Gathering Places

There were a variety of gathering places that the participants frequented and that were meaningful to them. The important qualities of gathering places that participants described were that they were friendly and welcoming places of connection and social support, convenient in terms of a walkable location, they were affordable, and they were places where the women could just be themselves. The following are the types of gathering places, listed in order of how often they were mentioned and discussed in the interviews: schools, parks, restaurants/café’s, churches, recreation and leisure spaces, and homes.

Schools

The existing elementary schools are meaningful gathering places and important landmarks to the mothers as well as to some of the older women, because they can participate in programs and volunteer there. Schools are community spaces as much as they are educational spaces. As Jill described:

That’s where I spend all my time, it’s where I’m sociable, it’s where I actually get to see other adults not just my kids. It’s nice to be with other moms. And it’s comfortable there, you know, we’re all laughing and joking and just being ourselves.... And we all live in the neighbourhood so we could even go to each other’s houses if we wanted to. Because we all live close by, within walking distance.

Parks

Participants loved the various parks in the neighbourhood and were eager to see more parks or to see improvements to current parks. The mothers were quite enthusiastic about the recent makeover to Woodlands Park, which now has an outdoor exercise gym. Gage Park was a favourite place of many of the participants, with the festivals, the Children’s Museum, and as a place for all ages. Powell Park was another popular park, which had its first ever community garden this past summer. Kristin explained her attachment to Gage Park:

It’s always been that, growing up, like hanging out at the fountain you know with everybody when you’re teenagers or whatever, I like going for bike rides around it, I like going to the park, I’ve just always loved Gage park... If they ever took Gage Park out, I would be heartbroken. It’s just part of a lot of people’s lives. You know, even just taking the kids to the park or meeting your friends there as teenagers...

Restaurants/Cafés

Restaurants and cafes were friendly and familiar places. Several participants mentioned the Big Top Family Restaurant at Main and Sherman, which was applauded for its friendliness and affordability. Tim Horton’s was also mentioned as an affordable and comfortable place to hang out and have a treat. Rachel talked in depth about The Heart of the Hammer, which unfortunately has closed, but her description of it speaks to the importance of having a place to just be:

You always felt welcome, you never felt rushed. And it was friendly for everyone ... you could just be there, you didn’t have to sit down for formal dinner or anything like that; you could just have cookies or cheese and crackers. So it was easy and comfortable... you knew everybody that was there, it was a safe place to be... it wasn’t designed to be high-end or low-end; it was just to be.

Churches

Most of the older women and some of the single mothers attended a local church, whether for Sunday services or for other activities like a weekly lunch/drop-in. Marcella did not know what she would do without her church and the sense of home and community it provided her:

I mean if I don’t have my church, I’m lost. I don’t know what day it is ... I can go there and I feel like all my troubles have been, well, when I walk in there, it’s all the children. I’m the Grandma...

It’s like home for me there, you know.

Recreation & Leisure Spaces

There is one neighbourhood recreation centre in particular, Pinky Lewis, which has a variety of programs for all ages that many of the women attended with their children. Many of the women also used the Pinky Lewis or Jimmy Thompson swimming pool for their own fitness and recreation and mentioned this as an important part of their weekly routine. The participants also appreciated the free skates at the Scott Park arena. The library was also a valued gathering place in the neighbourhood for a range of participants. The Barton branch hosts activities and programs for children and adults such as a women’s group, a book club, music lessons, and movie nights. Marjorie talked about the library as one of her favourite places in the neighbourhood:

Well it’s like every [other] place in this neighbourhood, they’re basically very friendly. And people know you name.

Homes

Homes are also gathering places, as places to connect with neighbour-friends and family. While houses are traditionally considered to be “private” spaces, the women talked about visiting their friends and having family close by and being invited to each other’s homes. They also mentioned that neighbours frequently gathered on each other’s front porches. Marcella’s front porch was like a public

space in itself, where children and adults alike would drop by and visit her, and where she welcomed anyone:

But everyone was welcomed in this house, and everybody to this day. Even our Alderman calls me Ma, from the City Hall. The police even had their lunches here, um, I don’t know what else I can tell you... I see it, the way you want to be treated, that’s the way you treat other people... I’ve never had trouble.

Places that Matter

There is indeed a relationship of mutual influence between neighbourhood gathering places and neighbourhood sense of place. There are examples of women who initially felt isolated and disconnected from their surrounding community, and needed to encounter other neighbours and find a place where they felt comfortable in order to then have a relationship with their wider neighbourhood. Other women, because of their many years of experience in their neighbourhood, had a strong sense of place and thus actively sought out opportunities in the community and found places to stay involved and connected with neighbours. Neighbourhoods need local gathering places in order to fill a variety of social and material needs and strengthen a positive sense of place. The South Sherman Hub, as it moves forward with its Neighbourhood Action Plan supported by the City of Hamilton, can support existing gathering places and work to create more accessible, safer spaces that respond to the diverse needs of the residents.

*Note: The names of the participants have been changed to protect their confidentiality.

Jeanette Eby is completing her Masters in Human Geography at McMaster University, supervised by Dr. Allison Williams from the School of Geography and Earth Sciences. Her research has been supported by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and ECHO: Women’s Health in Ontario’s Institute of Gender and Health through Dr. William’s Mid-Career Scientist Award. Feel free to contact her with any comments or questions: jeanetteeb@gmail.com.

Bringing People Together:
Gathering Places and Food Security
Understanding the experiences of single women in the Gibson and Stipleby Neighbourhoods: Wednesday, February 13th, 2013, from 5pm–7pm at Parkview Secondary School, 60 Balsam Avenue North (close to Gage @ Cannon). You’re invited to hear Jeanette Eby and Yui Hashimoto present their research findings, and participate in a community discussion about what this means to the neighbourhood and where to go from here.
Jeanette Eby’s research is about single women’s neighbourhood sense of place and experience of gathering places in the neighbourhood.
Yui Hashimoto’s research is about the experiences of food insecurity for single mothers in the neighbourhood.
Refreshments will be provided.
Please RSVP to Jeanette by
January 30th, 2013



News From Ward 3

By Bernie Morelli

Let me begin by wishing you and your families a very happy New Year! I hope you had a rewarding Christmas holiday. Here are some updates as we move into 2013:

Every winter, my office receives phone calls about property owners who do not clear the sidewalks in front of their properties. Under the Snow Removal By-law, property owners are required to clear their sidewalks of snow within 24 hours after a snow fall stops. For more information on the Snow Removal By-law, or to report properties that have not cleared snow off the sidewalk, please contact the City's Municipal Law Enforcement office at 905-546-2782, mle@hamilton.ca, or you can call my office. The City of Hamilton and Volunteer Hamilton will be running the "Snow Angels" volunteer snow removal service again this year.

This service is available to seniors and persons with disabilities. For more information on this program, please call 905-523-1910. The "Snow Angels" program is also looking for volunteers to assist in clearing sidewalks, porches, etc.

I am pleased to announce that after working with staff, I have secured the following road construction projects. At this point, reconstruction/repaving is scheduled to occur in 2013 on the following roads: Burriss (from Delaware to Main), Clyde and Wright Streets, Connaught (Barton to Southern Limit), Garfield (King to Main), King (Main to Sherman). As well, there are plans to install a new sidewalk on the East side of Gage Avenue from Cumberland to Maplewood.

As we move into Budget season, taxes continue to be a major concern to me

and area residents. Ward 3 continues to experience the lowest overall increases relative to other Wards. Nevertheless, it remains a substantial concern to me. I will continue to do my best to minimize any increases.

I look forward to sharing information in the near future with respect to a "Design Charrette" process for the Barton Street Corridor. My office will be working with City staff, area businesses, the Barton Village Business Improvement Area and residents to discuss improvements to Barton Street and potential, additional re-development incentives. Also, very recently, two new gateway features were installed on Barton Street (East of Ferguson Avenue and at the corner of Barton and Earl Streets).

This past month a report on Rental Licensing was sent to Committee and

Council. Let me assure you that I am in full and very strong support of this concept. I and my office receive numerous calls about property standards issues, which are sent to staff for follow-up ASAP. Rental licensing will be another tool to assist the City in trying to get a handle on many of these multi-unit properties, many of which are illegal. We need to eradicate this major neighbourhood issue.

Lastly, thank you to the many residents who called my office asking for blue boxes to replace existing damaged ones. If you need a replacement blue box, please call my office and I would be happy to deliver one to you. As always, please do not hesitate to call me or my office at 905-546-2702 if you would like to discuss any issues which you feel I can be of some assistance.

Safe Communities

By Tharsika Paramsothy, Cristina Silvestri, Thunnisa Sivananth & Yvonne Tse

We are students from McMaster University who recently had the wonderful experience of getting to know the South Sherman community! We participated in a course called "Partnering with Hamilton Neighbourhoods for Health," which was developed by the McMaster School of Nursing as part of the Health in the Hubs initiative. This course involved partnering with the neighbourhood planning teams of Crown Point, McQuesten, and South Sherman to understand the neighbourhoods' unique issues and concerns.

The South Sherman planning team identified "Goal 1, Objective 3: Enhance traffic safety" from the South Sherman Action Plan as a priority for the community. This includes:

- Working with police and by-law enforcement to increase compliance with traffic laws
- Advocating for reduced traffic speeds along key streets and the designation of school traffic zones

Community members particularly emphasized the importance of child pedestrian safety. With six elementary schools located in the neighbourhood — several of which are mere steps away from busy arterial roads, such as Cannon, Main, and King — it's easy to understand why residents are so concerned about pedestrian safety in school areas!

In line with the values of assets-based community development, we as McMaster students brought our asset of academic research to the community. We worked closely with our community consultants, Tara Aucoin and Sarah Merritt, and community developer David Derbyshire to gather insight and feedback on our research.

We examined several potential strategies to enhance school traffic safety, such as implementing school zone speed lim-

its, installing dynamic speed display signs, the conversion of one-way streets into two-way, school-based education programs, and encouraging students to walk to school as part of a 'walking school bus'.

On November 21st, a dissemination event was held at St. Giles Church to present our findings to the wider South Sherman community. Prior to the event, we visited South Sherman's six elementary schools to distribute flyers for our event, as well as initiating conversations with parents about the topic of traffic safety.

The event was organized in a way that allowed the residents in the community to be informed about the research around traffic safety and strategies to promote pedestrian safety. There was also an opportunity for the community to ask questions, and express their opinions and concerns directly to the members of the city. There were great discussions during the event among residents, Councilor Bernie Morelli, and members of the City staff involved in traffic planning.

The dissemination presentation concluded with contact information being shared by those who wished to further pursue the issue of traffic safety. An information package was prepared that provided a summary of the presentation. Copies were shared with those who came to the event, and it should be available on the South Sherman website for anyone who is interested. If you are interested in finding more information on what was discussed or becoming involved, please contact the South Sherman Hub.

Working with the South Sherman community over the past few months has been a truly amazing experience that we will never forget. It helped us recognize the strength that can be found in communities; we can accomplish much more

when we work together to pool our assets than when we try to go at it alone.

South Sherman, thank you for always making us feel welcome in your neighbourhood and we wish you the best on all your future endeavours!

Identifying the core of the problem

Is there a problem?

- 2010: 261 Pedestrian injuries in Canada
- Sherman to Gage: 43 collisions in 5 years

Why school zones are areas of risk

- 5-9 age groups are the proportion of the population at high risk of pedestrian injuries
- Higher population density, increased traffic volume correlated with rush times makes school zones a primary site of concern

Traffic/ Rush Hours

Rush hours:

- Times of the day when traffic is at its peak [7-9 a.m., 12-1 and 3-5 p.m.]
- Greater than 50% of the collisions coincided with rush times
- If the number of cars passing the schools are high then the risk is also high for the children if it happens to be at the same time

Success of designating school signs in defined school Areas

- Signs of reduced speeds results in reduced accidents
- Following roads of reduced speeds with signage, London incurred a drastic decline in pedestrian injuries
- Australia: compared studies of before and after implemented signs suggests the effectiveness of signs with designated school areas in decreasing injuries

Compliance

- Driver compliance to 40 km/hr is lower than to 60 km/hr
- When the speed on the sign is greater, the approach time is also greater thus suggesting a support

Social Programs to Enhance Traffic Safety

Children Pedestrian

- Child pedestrian injuries is related to age, gender and economic status of the child

- Younger children do not crossing behaviour

Parental Modeling Behaviour

- Less than 10% of parents directly taught safe pedestrian behaviour skills to children.
- Parent's model safe crossing have the mature thinking capability to determine safe routes and behaviour greater when crossing with sons compared to daughters.

Crossing guards are the most effective in demonstrating safe crossing behaviour

School-based Traffic Safety Programs

- In Guelph Ontario, a talking car named Pee Cee Herman was used by police officers to teach Grade 1 children about safe pedestrian behaviour
- After 2 months, 98% of children remembered the information and showed improved behaviour on the streets

Walking School Bus

- Structured means of transportation where an adult "driver" at the front of the group guides the children with the "conductor" at the back.
- Children are picked up at designated stops along the route
- 30% reduction of vehicles near school zones
- Encourages sense of community and physical

Infrastructure Strategies

Traffic Calming Devices

- Definition: The combination of mostly physical measures to alter driver behaviour and improve conditions for non-motorized street users
- There are many discussions about the definition of what traffic calming devices are, however, the definition provided above captures the main ideas of the function of these devices.

- Examples of traffic calming devices include Roundabout, Humps/bumps, Traffic islands, Road narrowing and Reconstruction of roads.

- There are two types of traffic calming devices measures:

- To reduce speed
- To improve the street environment and safety

continued on page 12

LITTLE BUNDLE OF MISERY

What Midwifery Didn't Teach Me

By Lynlee Spencer

I gave birth to my first son at the end of June. Overall, my pregnancy was amazing. Labour and birth were typical for a first timer (in other words, long and painful). The postpartum period has been even more challenging than what I already feared.

Some people have acted surprised when I tell them how difficult I am finding it. They think that, because I'm a midwife, I know how to take care of babies. In reality, midwives only see babies until 6 weeks of age, a time when they are generally straightforward. I had no idea what happened after I said goodbye to my clients, and some times it's not pretty. In fact, some times it's downright miserable.

My son definitely taught me a few lessons I didn't learn in midwifery; things only real-life experiences can bring home. I had envisioned the newborn period as a time when babies eat and sleep, whilst performing other bodily functions, of course. My main concern was post-partum depression, as I expected motherhood might bring up the loss of my parents, not to mention the fact that 1 in 3 post-partum women develop it. I was also worried about the initiation of breastfeeding, as it's not as easy as most people think. What didn't cross my mind was that I would have a fussy baby, who didn't really nap in the day, did not settle when being worn in a carrier, wrap or sling, preferred a soother over my nipple when seeking comfort, and who would be plagued by acid reflux severe enough to disturb his feeding and impede his growth.

While people asked if I was enjoying

my "baby moon," I was actually living a nightmare with my little "bundle of misery." And I felt like nobody really wanted to hear the truth. My own internal judge screamed "What kind of mother thinks of their baby as miserable?" It also sounded exaggerated in the context of a baby who, in the presence of company, babbled happily. Relatives, friends, and health care professionals empathized with how hard the first 3 months can be, assuring me that it would improve. So, I gave myself a little pep talk, held my breath, and just kept swimming.

At 3 months, however, things got worse. My son went from a happily breastfed baby to one who cried at the breast, latching on and off, and ultimately refusing to feed during the day. Thus began a pattern of him only feeding well at night. I was absolutely baffled, and turned to Google for answers, despite previously discouraging my clients from seeking information of this nature online. My search, of course, yielded an overwhelming number of possibilities. Could it be early weaning; something in my diet; teething; an illness? When my son had only gained a couple of ounces over the course of a week — babies at that age average 6 ounces per week — we went to our family doctor who suspected reflux. She started him on a medication called ranitidine (Zantac), which stops the burning sensation in the throat from stomach acid coming up.

Prior to this experience, "reflux" was an abstract word to me. All babies have reflux, which is the medical term for "spit up" and "heartburn." Some babies spit up

after every feed, are not fussed by it, and gain weight appropriately. Others don't spit up, but still have heartburn — this is called "silent reflux" — which leads to poor feeding and inadequate weight gain. The rest of babies fall somewhere in between. The reason for reflux in babies is purely anatomical — the muscles around the esophagus are not fully developed, and their relaxation causes stomach contents to back fire — and is something that usually resolves over time. How long it takes depends on the baby, but reflux is usually a distant bad memory by one year of age.

The use of medication to treat reflux depends on the situation. I prefer a holistic and natural approach, especially for babies, but after trying everything (and I'm not exaggerating), I decided to try my son on medicine. At first, the ranitidine worked well, and then we needed to increase the dose to the maximum for babies. Things improved for a short time, and then our family doctor suggested a medication called omeprazole (Losec), a proton pump inhibitor (PPI) that reduces the production of stomach acid. At present, my son seems to be doing better on that, but not 100% yet. We're seeing a pediatrician next week to rule out a cause other than reflux.

For anyone who has a similar experience with their babies, I urge you to read *Colic Solved: The essential guide to infant reflux and the care of your crying, difficult-to-soothe baby* (available at the Hamilton Public Library) by Bryan Vartabedian, an American pediatrician specializing in acid reflux and other digestive issues. Although I discovered this book late in the

game, and had already stumbled across most of its information through my online research, it was incredibly affirming. For one, Dr. Vartabedian describes and explains the poor feeding my son exhibited as a function of acid reflux (and that other babies will overfeed for the same underlying reason). Secondly, he recounts the frustration of many parents who face the minimization of their baby's struggles by well-intentioned doctors, family, and friends who dismiss the behaviour as normal. It's especially hard to convince others there is a problem when a baby looks well and is meeting all his developmental milestones. And, lastly, it was this pediatrician who spoke about babies with acid reflux as "little bundles of misery," which validated my experience.

Parents of older children — nostalgic for a time when their babies were containable and didn't talk back — have advised me to enjoy my son now because he will grow up so fast. Although I will certainly miss holding a newborn (thankfully I will get to do this a lot when I go back to work), my son can't grow up quickly enough. The last five months have gone by at a snail's pace, as I anxiously await the maturation of his digestive system, and for him to gain independence in his physical space. No doubt his ability to crawl and walk will bring new challenges to motherhood, but he seems less frustrated each day as he masters the necessary motor skills to reach these milestones. And I really look forward to understanding the meaning of his cries and babbling, even if it's something I don't want to hear.



Professor William Starling, James Street North, Hamilton

Dear Citizens of Hamilton,

It is with great pleasure that I, the eminently knowledgeable Professor William Starling, have the distinct opportunity of informing you of my recent arrival in your fair city. I have been fortunate to secure handsome lodgings in the city centre and have begun to initiate and engage in various forms of inter-species dialogue, to share my extensive knowledge of (and ongoing research on) adaptation to changing environments, the phenomenon of "invasive species" and habitat loss, and to explore citizen's concerns about their community. It is my hope that my presence will be welcomed and that some of you will wish to be my guide as I explore my new environs and that you will even deem it proper to share with me your experiences and what you consider the chal-

Starlings

lenges and opportunities confronting this fine metropolis.

As you may no doubt be aware, my line of the family *Sturnus Vulgaris* emigrated, with some assistance from your species, to North America in the late 1870s. Fifty of us arrived in New York City (along with an equal number of Japanese Finches) at the invitation of the New York Acclimatization Society, an organization that believed the introduction of my species would be of great benefit to agriculturalists. The society's president (a rather unusual and eccentric individual named Eugene Schiefelin), inspired by his desire that all of the songbirds appearing in the works of William Shakespeare be brought to American shores, arranged to have more of us introduced to Central Park in the late 1880s. Whether we have been of benefit remains open to debate, however, North America is a land where we have thrived and flourished; and we have adapted to a wide variety of landscapes and habitats including dense urban areas and your sprawling suburbs with their extensive lawns and gardens.

While my kind is in shocking decline in our home range of Northern Europe and the United Kingdom, we have spread widely and remain ubiquitous across North America where our vast undulat-

ing flocks (called murmurations) can be a common occurrence. The hundreds of millions of us that now live in all corners of North America all descend from that small community introduced to New York City. While I have chosen to reside in Hamilton for the time being, my travels are extensive and I must say unique for a Starling, as I regularly venture back and forth across the Atlantic and maintain a link with Starlings wherever they continue to flock. I have most recently returned from a delightful visit to the United Kingdom where I was able to undertake a series of perambulations of inquiry in Norfolk, London and Oxford. I ventured to Windsor this past May and am pleased to say that I have made arrangements to visit Central Park in New York City in the coming months.

To date, I have been out and about in Hamilton on a number of occasions, visiting Farmer's Markets, local museums, and various street festivals. I have been guided through the city by youth from Notre Dame House and was most fortunate to be allowed to engage in an afternoon of conversation with citizens hosted by the Mulberry Coffee House. It was during these proceedings that I met an octogenarian gentleman who had spent his formative years living on Rosslyn Avenue,

attending Memorial School and then Central Tech, apprenticed as a tool and die maker, and then worked in the city's once substantial manufacturing industries. Known as William John "Bill" Hunter, he informed me of the dramatic changes in this city's economic and working life. I am looking forward to exploring with him the areas he described and I share this with you as the interesting places and sites he has directed me to all fall within the community of concern to this fine publication.

Again, it is my hope that the citizens of Hamilton will welcome my presence and feel comfortable conversing and corresponding with me. I must say I remain deeply concerned for your species and your ability to adapt to the dramatic changes to our shared habitat that we face. I encourage any who wish to share with me stories of their community, or be my guide through their neighbourhood, to contact me at their convenience. I look forward to sharing with you my observations and findings in a future issue of the South Sherman Hub News.

With Kindest Regards,
Professor William Starling
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professorstarling@gmail.com
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EVENT LISTINGS

It's Happening in the Hubs

Send your event listings one month before each issue to:
itshappeninginthehubs@gmail.com

South Sherman Community Planning Team Meeting

St Giles Church, 85 Holton Ave at Main Enter at the West doors — ring buzzer Child-minding available.

Join the planning team and/or get involved with one of the many projects emanating from our Neighbourhood Action Plan

Monday, January 7th, 7pm

Monday, February 4th, 7pm

Bringing People Together: Gathering Places and Food Security

Understanding the experiences of single women in the Gibson and Stipley Neighbourhoods Wednesday, February 13th, 2013, 5pm–7pm, Parkview Secondary School, 60 Balsam Avenue North (close to Gage @ Cannon)

You're invited to hear Jeanette Eby and Yui Hashimoto present their research findings, and participate in a community discussion about what this means to the neighbourhood and where to go from here.

Jeanette Eby's research is about single women's neighbourhood sense of place and experience of gathering places in the neighbourhood.

Yui Hashimoto's research is about the experiences of food insecurity for single mothers in the neighbourhood.

Refreshments will be provided.

Please RSVP to Jeanette by January 30th, 2013

SalsaSoul Sundays

Join us for fun and friendly evenings of social salsa, cha cha and casino rueda dancing. Introductory lessons provided. No experience or partner necessary. Every 1st & 3rd Sunday of the month. Lessons begin at 6:30 p.m. St. Luke's Anglican Church, 454 John Street North (at Macauley St. East). For more information: www.salsasoulproductions.com or salsa@salsasoulproductions.com

St. Peter's HARRRP: regular activities 905 544-0050 stpeters.harrrrp@gmail.com 705 Main St E

Programs at HARRRP — St Peter's Hatha Yoga (Thursdays 7:00–8:00 pm)

A class for all levels. Yogi Vyatas and Melissa lead the class in this ancient exercise designed to connect you to your breathing, to stretch and relax. Namaste!

Hamilton Art Society Art Class (Tuesdays 6:30–8:30 pm)

Bring your imagination and you will be introduced to sketching, water colours, and acrylics by local artist Royston Maybery. Expand your creativity on the canvas!

Women's Aerobics (Tuesday 5:45–6:45pm, Thursdays 6:00–7:00pm, and Saturdays 10:30–11:30am)

Led by Janice Morgan of Heart & Sole, enjoy a great workout combining Pilates, weight training, aerobics and yoga.

Pottery Class (Saturdays 2:00–3:30 pm)

Substitute clay and a kiln for paint and canvas for an extraordinary sensory experience in the art of pottery. Led by instructor Keith Hamilton.

Tai Chi (Thursdays 10:00–11:00am)

Join Jerry as he leads Tai Chi for all levels. Derived from the martial arts, Tai Chi

combines flow, movement, and breathing to improve your balance and posture.

Laughter Yoga (Tuesdays 7:30–8:30 pm or Wednesdays 1:30–3:00 pm)

Laugh your way to better health through unconditional laughter. Join Joan as she leads the laughter to feeling really good. Try it, laughter is infectious!

Internet Cafe (Drop in during centre hours)

Want to check out the internet? Or log in to your e-mail. No need to go to the library and wait. Come in to the HARRRP Internet Cafe and check your mailbox!

Orff Music Instruction for 3–5 year olds (Saturdays 10:00–11:00 am)

The goal of the Orff Music Program is to develop a child's musical literacy and creative potential. Activities involve singing, listening, and instrument playing.

Aikido Martial Arts (Tuesdays and Thursdays 8:00–9:00 pm)

Take part in a Japanese martial art form. Whether you are looking for self-defence techniques, spiritual enlightenment, physical health or peace of mind, this is for you.

January and February events at the Barton Library
571 Barton St. E.

For Kids

Wii Gaming — all ages — every Saturday @ 2:00 p.m.

Reading and Homework Club — Children in grades 1–6 can get help in any subject. Mondays from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Wednesdays from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Starts again the week of January 14.

Family Storytime — Tuesdays, 10:30

a.m. (from January 8 – February 26)

For Teens

Consider volunteering with the Reading and Homework Club. Help kids with their homework, play games and earn your volunteer hours! Check out our volunteering page for more information:

hpl.ca/volunteering

For Adults

Noble Health Bus — The Health Bus is a mobile clinic that brings health screening right to the corner of Milton Avenue. Visit them on Tuesdays @ 2:00 p.m., starting January 8. The service is free to the public and everyone is welcome.

Project Safe Neighbourhood — Fire prevention staff will be at Barton Library Tuesdays from 2–3 pm, starting January 8. Learn how to keep your family and home safe from fires and how to educate your children about fire safety. Drop in with your questions or concerns.

Book a Librarian — Book an hour with library staff to get help with your eReader, or basic computer uses and functions. Ages 18+, by appointment only. Call 905-546-3450 for information.

Book Club — If you are interested in reading and discussing great books, check out the Barton Book Club. Monday, January 14 @ 6:30 p.m., Monday February 11 @ 6:30 p.m.

Knitting Club — Bring your knitting projects and share tips and techniques with other knitting enthusiasts. Monday, January 21 @ 6:00 p.m., Monday February 25 @ 6:00

Magic, the Gathering — Bring your own cards, or use ours. Tuesdays from 1–3, starting January 8.

The Barton Street Library

By Kathleen Shannon

There is always something exciting happening at the Barton Branch of the Hamilton Public Library at 571 Barton St. E. If you haven't been here in a while, please stop by, say hi, and take advantage of our amazing programs and services. You can also enjoy many of our services from the comfort of your home, like eBooks, databases, Freegal free music downloads, and our brand new online service through Zinio to download free magazines — check out hpl.ca 24/7 for details.

In addition to the great materials that you can borrow, we have amazing programs for people of all ages. From homework help to bookclubs to computer training, there is something for everyone — come in and see us or check out our website for all the details about our programs and other events happening all across the city.

Do you have a library card? A card is your key to accessing all of our great resources. Anyone who lives, works or goes to school in Hamilton can get a library card, and it's free! All you need is either a valid driver's license or two pieces of identification, at least one showing your name and current address. Did you have a card a long time ago and you don't know where it is anymore? Or maybe you suspect that you have some old fines on your account, and you've been avoiding us. Please come in and talk to one of our fantastic staff members and we'll see what we can do about getting you set up to borrow again.

What can you borrow with a library card?

- Books and eBooks for adults, teens, children & babies
- DVDs & Blu-Rays
- Video Games
- CDs
- Magazines, graphic novels & comic books
- Museum Passes – provide free access to our civic museums for two adults and two children

• Books on CD, Playaways & eAudio books

What else do we provide?

- Free computers with internet access and free open wireless
- Help with research on all topics, for people of all ages
- Help figuring out what book to read next
- Amazing, helpful and patient staff & so much more!

If you have any questions about the library's programs, collections or services, please feel free to contact any of the staff of the Barton Branch by phone at 905-546-3450 or drop by and speak to us in person!

Safe Communities

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Road humps

• In considering speed reduction and speed control, road humps are the most effective traffic calming measure

Reconstruction of roads: One-way vs. two-way streets

• Of the 586 reports, 16 controlled before and after studies found that there was a 11% decrease in road traffic injuries with traffic calming devices

• Comparing data from 1978-1994, 75% of all child pedestrian injuries occurred on one-way streets and only 48% of all injuries occurred on two-way streets

Significance of findings:

• Traffic calming has the potential to prevent road traffic injuries. However future rigorous evaluations is required to understand the impact of these devices on reducing traffic related injuries

Factors to consider:

These traffic calming devices might affect:

- The neighbourliness of the community
- Affect other neighbourhoods
- Cost, Time
- Others: number of lanes? (Is there a difference between 4 lanes one-way streets and 2 lanes of one-way streets?)

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