

# GOOD WORK NEWS

The Working Centre, 58 Queen St. S. Kitchener, ON N2G 1V6

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Subscription: A Donation Towards our Work

## Inside This Issue:

- Renovations Begin on Queen Street Apartments
- Shelter and Housing with Eyes Wide Open
- Remembering Larry Crawford
- Fatima's Story
- The Synthetic Drug Era is Here
- Heat Pumps to the Rescue
- The Road to Unfreedom
- Closing the Market Garden



The photo above shows the three distinct buildings that stretch from Charles St. to Halls Lane along Queen St. South. The buildings were built separately between 1898 – 1920 by Aaron Bricker and are collectively known as the Bricker Block.

The Working Centre converted the second floor of the corner building (66 Queen) into apartments in 2006. The newly announced Rapid Housing Initiative-2, funded by the Federal Government and the Region of Waterloo will result in 19 new units and 2 units refurbished on the second and third floors of 58 and 44-54 Queen St. South.

*Photo via The Waterloo Region Record*

## Shelter and Housing with Eyes Wide Open



### By Stephanie Mancini

Every night this winter I have gone to sleep noticing the weather; thinking deeply of the growing number of people who are living without housing, living without shelter, alongside of those who are living without housing security.

The numbers of people make this reality palpable and urgent. The *September 2021 Point in Time* count documented 1085 people without access to housing. These numbers have names, and are people we see every day.

For The Working Centre this has been an unprecedented winter

providing different kinds of shelter for up to 230 people each night beyond the daily work of St. John's Kitchen:

- 80 people at University Avenue Interim housing
- 60 people per night at our shelter at St. Andrew's church
- 10-20 people a night who gather in the entrance way at St. Andrew's shelter to get warm, to access a hot drink or meal
- 70-80+ people in motels supported through The Working Centre
- Many more people camping

*continued on page 4*

## Renovations Begin on Queen Street Apartments

By Joe Mancini

The Working Centre is pleased to announce that it is building 19 new units of housing on the second and third floors of 58 and 44-54 Queen Street South.

This project will not only expand affordable housing downtown, but also brings together the three Queen Street South buildings that were built by Aaron Bricker between 1898 – 1920. The Working Centre purchased and revitalized 58 Queen South and 66 Queen South two decades ago. By purchasing 44-54 Queen Street South, we are able to join and integrate the second and third floors for housing. We will continue to support the vibrant storefronts on street level, including our Job Search Resource Centre, the Downtown Kitchener BIA, Black Arrow Cycles, and ABC Surplus.

This project became possible through the Rapid Housing Initiative-2 (RHI-2) which was announced in early summer 2021, with applications due in August. The Federal housing grant for this project was approved through Waterloo Regional Council and provides a \$3 million grant towards the purchase of the building and renovation costs.

We saw a tremendous opportunity to use this grant to purchase a downtown building right next to our main offices and to create 19

units of single occupancy, affordable housing, preserving this beautiful block of buildings and adding to the affordable housing spaces in the downtown.

During the early months of the pandemic, we looked for ways to maximize housing in our buildings and one of the ways we identified was converting the second floor of 58 Queen South into 4 apartment units. Since the early 1990's, the second floor has housed our bookkeeping office, Good Work News production and office space for many of the Community Tool projects. The Wright Room looked out over Queen Street and was full of computer classes, Local Democracy courses, Working Centre Board meetings, staff meetings, university courses and many other activities over the years. These spaces had originally been apartments when the building was built in 1920. 100 years later, we are excited to return them to their original purpose.

When RHI-2 was announced, we were ready to submit drawings for permit for the four 58 Queen apartments. However, at this point we realized that it was possible to design similar units on the second and third floors of 44-54 Queen South. By combining the two buildings into one RHI-2 application we could apply to build 19 units. Importantly, 44-54 Queen South

*continued on page 5*



## Remembering Larry Crawford

1936 – 2022

Read on page 3

## Thirty Eighth Year

Issue 148

March 2022

# Good Work News

Good Work News was first produced in September 1984. It is published four times a year by The Working Centre and St. John's Kitchen as a forum of opinions and ideas on work and unemployment. Four issues of Good Work News constitutes our annual report. There is a circulation of 13,000 copies. Subscription: a donation towards our work.

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## A Better Tent City Receives 2021 Barnraiser Award



A Better Tent City is an incredible metaphor for an actual barnraising, an event and symbol that has come to define Waterloo Region and its values. A Better Tent City and the many hands who put it together are Barnraisers and this year we are naming them 2021 recipients of the *Waterloo Region Record's Barnraiser award*.

Each year, since 2008, The Record has selected a person or institution that best embodies a community barnraiser. We recognize many hands coming together to serve a greater good, people working collaboratively to benefit a larger cause without regard to personal gain. A Better Tent City is that and more, accomplishing what a single individual could not, at a time of great need when our cities, our region and beyond are facing a crisis that is clear and present.

Read more: <https://www.therecord.com/news/waterloo-region/2022/01/17/a-better-tent-city-is-2021-barnraiser.html>

## Grateful for Our Community Support



Paul Bulla presents Joe Mancini a cheque for \$7,250. Bullafest 2021 raised the money for St. John's Kitchen. Thank You for your continued support!



On behalf of the Rotary Club of Kitchener, General Manager of William Knell and Company Ltd. Rob Dippell presents a cheque for \$5,000 to Joe Mancini.



At Maurita's Kitchen, Michael receives a large donation of food items from the St. Anthony Daniel Roman Catholic Church community. The items were collected as part of their Sweets and Snacks Collection.



## Thank You for Your Support!

We want to thank all the volunteers, donors, and community partners who have supported our efforts to produce and distribute over 600 meals each day during the past year.

This winter we have supported 230 people in interim or temporary shelter at the University Avenue Dorm, St. Andrew's shelter and motels. Thank you to all those sharing the spirit of community through these challenging times, especially the 2,500 people and groups who donated over the Christmas season.



# Remembering Lawrence (Larry) Crawford

## 1936 – 2022

By Joe Mancini

With deep sadness we announce the death of Lawrence Crawford, after living a life of music, discipline, and kindness for 85 years!

Larry's family includes Ernie in Brantford, Mary in Toronto, Tom in North Dakota, Steve in Vancouver (and all of their families); dear friends Shirley Crawford Speers and Chris Entz, along with his adopted family at The Working Centre, his church community at Grace Communion International, and his endless music-making friends and co-musicians.

Larry's parents settled and raised their family in St. Catharines after immigrating from Barbados-St. Kit's in the 1910's. His father was a minister in the British Methodist Church and the children were raised in a disciplined religious environment. The lessons of equality were deeply ingrained in Larry. When someone questioned whether he was a Canadian, Larry would look the person in the eye and state that he was just as much a Canadian as they were, because this is where he was born. We are all equal here.

Larry was long an active member of the Central Ontario, Stratford, and Toronto Musicians' Associations. For 30 years it was always his intention to attend the local meetings. We would often see Larry rush out to the meeting at 7:00 and return back to the office

*Larry was always a spirited and enthusiastic performer on the bandstand - with a special gift and passion for Jazz standards. His tempos were often challenging for fellow musicians to keep up with. Larry enjoyed keeping people on the edge of their seats.*

- Dan Brennan

at 10:30 and then he would settle in for a long night. In the 1970's and 80's, Larry worked day jobs in the printing industry, and at night he was an accomplished jazz musician with regular gigs around Kitchener, Brantford, Hamilton, Niagara Falls, Buffalo, and Toronto. He was known and respected as a talented musician and was a highly skilled Jazz trombone player. He told us stories of playing in a coffee house at the Press Club on Queen Street in the early 1960's, in a building that he remembered to be close to 58 Queen, possibly in one of the buildings torn down to make way for Charles Street. We always knew that Larry's jazz work was extensive and his record album from the 1970's reinforced his accomplishments. After Larry died we heard many stories of musical collaborators who remembered playing with Larry in the 1950's. We were incredibly lucky to have Larry put together the Centro de Trabajo, a jazz ensemble

that added music and atmosphere to the annual Mayors' Dinner for 22 years.

A commitment to service inspired Larry to become a valuable co-worker at The Working Centre in the early 1990's after he was laid off from the printing trade. For 30 years he worked more than twenty hours per week in the resource centre assisting people with faxes, photocopies, recording and posting after-hour phone messages, organizing the public message board, assisting users of the public access computers, directing resource centre traffic, sorting newspapers, and keeping the space organized. Countless people in downtown Kitchener knew of Larry's immensely friendly presence. In the evenings, Larry watched over the building while connecting with friends and fellow musicians. We fondly remember the way the late night crackle of the US shortwave radio programs that Larry liked to tune into filled the resource centre.

There was a time when access to public newspapers was a dear service that many appreciated. For Larry, newspapers were a valuable form for community knowledge. Where else could you find the want ads or check out what was happening in KW and world news. Larry had an expectation that by providing



*I met Larry 35 years ago in London on a gig when I was still a Humber Music Student. We hit it off musically and personally right away. I have been lucky to make music with Larry for all these years. He was one of the warmest and most generous people I have ever met, and he always had a great music story from yesteryear to share. Rest well old friend.*

- Joe Amato

free newspaper access, there was a corresponding responsibility to return the newspapers to their proper place. Though often disappointed, he cared deeply about providing that access to people and was dedicated to helping ensure free access to newspapers for so many.

There has always been an eco-system at 58 Queen Street South during the evenings and late into the nights. There was constant activity - community meetings, Local Democracy classes, computer work and repair, Board meetings, accounting, employment counselling, preparations for events like Mayors' Dinner - and the one constant over all those years was that Larry was always around on the main floor. He was always there to help people out to the parking lot. He was always there for a closing conversation to end the night.

This February, after Larry had died, walking past 58 Queen Street South late at night, it was so unusual that all the lights were off. We felt it viscerally. For 30 years, Larry had been the light, a constant light at night, a light that anchored a culture of service at 58 Queen.

On March 3, a beautiful memorial service was hosted at Walser Funeral Home with Larry's minister Leo

continued on page 5

*Growing up in the Waterloo Region under the tutelage of Gary Tomlin, I was exposed to some of the jazz giants whose shoulders I now stand on. The Fritz-Patrick Trio with masters Fred Bagley, Pat Ludwig and of course Gary Tomlin were the "real deal". Later, I would begin my association with The Working Centre and St. John's Kitchen through my mother Arleen. It is now 30 years since Arleen introduced me to Larry Crawford at The Working Centre. I soon learned that Larry was one of those local jazz giants to whom the local jazz community owes a great deal of gratitude.*

*I had the opportunity to play with Larry several times; the most memorable were spontaneous concerts at the Queen Street Commons Cafe when Larry would drop in after work "from across the street" with his trombone and a band set of photocopied lead sheets of standards that he would suggest we play. My favourite of these, which my group plays regularly still today, is "Beautiful Love". I can't play this song without thinking of Larry. It is a traditional standard swing tune. By "standard", I mean that practically every jazz player knows this tune. Larry proposed that we play this tune as an upbeat samba, breaking the mould, and ultimately endearing him and his music style to me. That was Larry: "the real deal", steeped in the tradition, and bringing his own style and interpretation to every performance.*

*Larry was a respectful musician and human being; he respected the traditions, the music, the people, the audience, the profession, and all the players sharing the stage with him. Larry was the real deal, a local jazz legend. Rest in peace Larry.*

- Andy Macpherson



# Shelter and Housing with Eyes Wide Open



continued from page 1

through the winter months, or crashing the with others as people focus on survival in the cold months

- Providing 600 meals per day
- At St. John's Kitchen we see 250 people a day inside, and share meals with 200 people through the Garage; in a month we see over 1,100 different people coming for resources, food, showers, laundry, harm reduction supplies, community connections.

Just the effort of providing shelter each night at St. Andrew's could fill this newspaper with stories of the challenges of an environment of high drug use, along with the frustration of coping with sub-zero weather and overwhelming mental health issues. Yet we are so thankful that St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church has opened their space to provide a warm sanctuary for those without housing.

In all our spaces we are seeing the effects of a substantially changed drug supply that overproduces manufactured synthetic drugs and distributes these drugs widely. Sam Quinones, in *The Synthetic Drug Era is Here*, (see page 6) describes a growing phenomenon where, "people came to the shelter hallucinating, in full psychosis, terrified by unseen demons and stripped of personality that does not seem to return with sobriety." This correlates to our experience this winter, as we have seen a growing number of people desperate to find drugs each day. We have seen overdoses that sap oxygen from the brain, experienced over and over again. We have seen psychosis that is drug-induced and layers on top of trauma-induced mental health issues; growing theft between community members, fights, violence. Harsh realities experienced every day.

"Eyes wide open" is a phrase we use regularly – look at this reality and face it with eyes wide open. Fifteen people registered for a shower by 9am; access to laundry wait lists that run until closing and then start again the next day; requests for socks, dry clothes, snacks; connections to the housing system; supports to get ID after it has been stolen or lost repeatedly; getting on lists that only sometimes lead to housing opportunities. People carry their belongings with them from the Kitchen to the shelters, all day long.

Eyes wide open also means being open to the beauty that happens every day. The great humour; the ways people look after one another; the ways hope unfolds as someone accesses dental care to relieve pain; the sharing of a meal together; the ways we sit in the moment and talk together with really resilient and beautiful people who are facing incredible challenges; the solidarity between us as we stand together to help build access to resources and

supports that make the journey a bit better. So many amazing stories of humour, mutual support, community connectedness, over and over again in the small rituals that bind a community of people together. The work is hard and beautiful.

The most stable environment we have seen this year is University Avenue Housing – the interim housing ideas being developed are responsive, dynamic and practical – embedding interim housing, access to health care, access to harm reduction supports, and connection to wider mental health/addictions supports. Here are some comments from the UA team providing daily supports, describing the work we are doing:

- Be present with people and allow them to start fresh each day
- Live in the moment; support movement when it emerges
- People need to feel safe before they can change
- Build relationship and invite people into community
- Get through the day; help people to get through their day
- Step into relationship with people; and show up the next day again regardless
- Offer a place of acceptance and solid ground; transition is slow

What we see at University Ave Housing is that people need sleep, privacy, a door to their room. A feeling of stability, regular food, and a staff team around to support people through the risk of overdose, drug-induced psychosis, access to services and supports.

Housing First is important – people need to be welcomed into a stable housing situation. Isolated units of market rent housing are challenging for people who are moving from volatile and unsafe survival-based sheltering options. It takes time to build a feeling of safety, of trust. The interim housing ideas we have been modelling are an important and practical component of building housing security for people who are ravaged by the dislocation and unsafe realities of being homeless.

It is clear that there is a growing need for long-term supportive housing units, and these are progressively being built. Can we welcome these housing options into our neighbourhoods, living into the importance of recognizing the virtue of housing for everyone? We can build on the vision that inclusion creates the kind of community we all want to live in.

When the only answer is more housing, access to resources and supports are not enough. We need continuous strategic action to create more affordable and supportive housing. In the short term we need more interim housing units similar to the University Ave housing model, or like A Better Tent City. We need to act into the current realities while also building forward on a long-term vision.

Special thanks to Douglas MacLellan for his photographs that capture the important work being done at St. Andrew's Shelter.



## Renovations Begin on Queen Street Apartments

continued from page 1

was not only for sale, but the second and third floors were empty and without tenants. A quick analysis determined that the building could be purchased and the units built within a year to meet the Rapid Housing Initiative guidelines. Bernie Nimer and Dave Seton, the owners, graciously agreed to a selling price that would work with the grant.

44-54 Queen Street South has a footprint of about 4000 square feet per floor which is similar to the square footage of the housing project we competed at 256 King East. Our experience with renovating the 256 King spaces added to our confidence that this was a project that would create much needed housing and could be accomplished within the required timeframe.

We have been recognizing the growing reality of housing scarcity for the new Canadians coming into the Job Search Resource Centre on Queen Street, particularly the clear need for safe housing for immigrant and refugee women, whose marriages sometime break down as they transition into a new country. Affordable connected housing can make a difference for a young, single mother settling into a new culture, making a home after a period of trauma and dislocation.

We also see the importance of creating affordable housing for young racialized New Canadians as they work to integrate into life in Canada. We currently work with large numbers of Arabic and Tigrinya speaking job searchers. But even as the countries change over the years, the need for good quality single occupancy housing for both woman and men remains the same.

The provision of affordable housing for New Canadians, refugees and vulnerable individuals often experiencing homelessness has been integral to The Working Centre's housing on Queen Street since we first purchased the 58 Queen building in 1995, and this project continues this tradition. Once this project is complete we will have more than doubled the amount of housing that we provide on Queen Street South. During Larry Crawford's funeral (see page 3), a theme that ran through every story was how Larry was so central

to a resource centre culture that serves more like a neighbourhood space where interwoven supports and connections grow. This new housing project will only add to that culture and help to carry on his legacy.

The quick turnaround and timeline this project requires has been possible due to the dedicated work of many people. Robert Dyck Architect has worked on many projects with The Working Centre, and Robert stepped up in a big way. Robert worked with David McLagan through the summer to produce drawings as quickly as possible. Jeff Van Gysel of Just Work Constructions worked closely with us to ensure that all the necessary pieces were in place to start constructions by February 2022. Just Work Construction did an excellent job completing the new addition at 115 Water Street North. The City of Kitchener has been supportive, offering permit fee exemptions since the project qualifies as new affordable housing, and commitments to process permits in a timely fashion to ensure the project meets its December 2022 deadline. The Region of Waterloo continues to support and help prioritize projects like this.

In November of 2021, we received good news from Trinity United when they donated \$60,000 from their affordable housing fund to support this project. This grant is generated through proceeds from the sale of Trinity United Church, which was a vibrant church on Frederick Street between 1905 – 2017. There is a long-standing connection with The Working Centre's three buildings on Queen Street, which were all built by Aaron Bricker while he was a member of Trinity Methodist Church where he was involved in the construction of the Trinity United Church in 1905.

This is an important project for The Working Centre on Queen Street South as we continue to expand our ability to offer affordable supportive housing. The three buildings of the Bricker Block will become integrated and upgraded, continuing their long history of serving the Kitchener downtown. Good Work News will continue to offer updates, as will our website, as the project develops.

## Fatima's Story

By Ala Abdulkarem

Fatima is a 39 year old woman who came to Canada in 2018 with her husband and two daughters.

Fatima came to The Working Centre with a lot of concern and a sadness in her eyes. It had been 3 months since she stopped working and she had no income, and the weight of her commitments was overwhelming her.

Fatima had stopped working on September 7 because she had suffered an injury to her leg and she had a letter from her family doctor that she had to stop working for 6 months. At that time, she applied to short-term disability through Manulife and after negotiations for 6 weeks, her claim was denied with advice to apply to WSIB. She proceeded to apply and after another 6 weeks, her claim was denied. As well, her landlord was now requiring the late payment of the rent.

We proceeded to apply for EI sickness benefit, which she had not known about, explained the reason for the late application, included the medical certificate, and in four days she received her Access Code. When we tried to make the reports, the website denied access. The next day we made a phone call to Service Canada and explained that this was an emergency because she had three months without receiving income and that her landlord was charging her for the delayed months. That is when she mentioned that her husband had left in August. Being a single mother made her situation more dire. The agent was very supportive of this situation, included a note in her file, placing an emergency alert and told her that in 24 hours she would receive a response to her claim. This call was very successful, as she managed to receive \$5,093 for the 11 weeks behind schedule.

We discussed that the sickness

benefit was for up to 15 weeks, at which point she could work in a different position that did not require strain on her leg, and she could switch to EI regular benefit while she looked for another job. We referred her to a Working Centre employment counsellor to support her job search process.

After finishing the call with Service Canada, we asked if she had filed her income taxes, to which she replied that she did not know, that her ex-partner was the one in charge of that. We checked on Canada Child Benefit, and updated her marital status as separated so that she would receive more money as a single mother. While discussing CCB with the CRA agent, we asked her if Fatima had completed her income taxes, which had been completed for the year 2020 but she was missing the year 2018 and 2019.

We helped Fatima file her 2018 and 2019 taxes, resulting in a refund of \$1,629, as well as \$701 through GST and \$1,620 through the Ontario Trillium Benefit.

We contacted three food banks where she could go to collect food, and gave her a list of places she could go to access daily meals.

Next we applied for OESP, doing a manual income verification because her income had changed compared to the previous year. She was eligible for a \$75 monthly credit applied to her hydro bill.

We also discussed community housing as an option, and Fatima learned that she is entitled to Special Priority Status for her situation, which means she would get to the top of the housing list.

It has been three months since Fatima first reached out to us. We are now at a point where a very challenging and stressful time for her is smoothly coming to an end. Fatima is feeling much better now.

## Remembering Larry Crawford

continued from page 3

Van Pelt from Grace Communion International presiding and offering his blessings and memories of Larry.

Andy Macpherson brought together a jazz quartet made up of friends who had all played with Larry including Andy (drums and percussion), Doug Wicken (flute), Dan Brennan (bass), and Paul Stouffer (piano/keyboard). They



played tribute and added to our memories of Larry, sending him off by playing beautiful reflective jazz.

Many stories were shared, especially about all the people who connected to Larry through his work at The Working Centre's front desk. Larry's brother Ernie, Ramsey Simmons, Peter Moberly, Rebecca Mancini, Stephanie and myself all gave tributes, as did Doug, Andy, and Stan from the quartet.

The highlight was another jazz friend, Stan Grizzle, who also met Larry when he came into The Working Centre to get a photocopy. A friendship developed and Larry, well into his 80's, contributed to Stan's recent album. Stan sang his renditions of What a Wonderful World and Amazing Grace, perfectly using song to reflect the indelible mark Larry left on our community. He will be deeply missed.

# The Synthetic Drug Era is Here: Canada Should Take Notice Before It's Too Late

By Sam Quinones

*This article, reprinted with permission from Sam Quinones, was originally published in The Globe and Mail, January 2022.*

I recently met a woman who runs a shelter in Tennessee and has worked with the homeless for decades.

She was disheartened. There was a time, she told me, when we could help people recover from drugs and alcohol addiction through therapeutic intervention. This, in part, involved teaching life tools: how to prevent relapses, apply for jobs and rent apartments, recover drivers' licenses and, above all, repair relationships with loved ones. It was hit and miss, but there was reason for optimism. "Recovery is possible" was the upbeat catchphrase.

Over the past few years in the United States, though, the drug stream has changed and social workers in homeless shelters such as hers have seen its graphic effects. Record overdose deaths grabbed the headlines – but it was more than that. People came to the shelter hallucinating, in full psychosis, terrified by unseen demons and stripped of personality that does not seem to return with sobriety. Many, she said, were so devastated by these drugs that they no longer had the mental capacity to use the tools they had been given.

It's unclear to her whether this is the work of one drug – meth from Mexico, in particular, that began arriving in her region in unprecedented volume in 2017 – or that fentanyl is everywhere now, too. Or that so many folks on the street seem to use a variety of drugs, often at once. Or that so many in this situation also have long histories of trauma. Whatever the case, she fears that the people her shelter sees are never going to be able to overcome the physiological toll these substances have taken on their brains.

Canadians would do well to notice the warnings that are only now being recognized in the United States when it comes to the threat and complexity of the illegal drug pipeline. Increasingly, we are realizing that North America has quietly entered the era of synthetic drugs – those made in labs with chemicals, no plants involved.

The foundation of this change is the demand created by an unprecedented supply of opioid pain pills prescribed by doctors at the urging of drug companies over many years. Yet this is not the opioid epidemic. And it's only secondarily about responding to demand.

The synthetic drug era is above all about what benefits traffickers. They can make, smuggle and sell

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***The synthetic drug era is above all about what benefits traffickers. They can make, smuggle and sell synthetic drugs with less risk and far more profit. No need for land, sunshine, irrigation and farmers.***

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synthetic drugs with less risk and far more profit. No need for land, sunshine, irrigation and farmers.

They need only access to shipping ports and, through them, world chemical markets. Through two ports on Mexico's Pacific Coast, traffickers are making drugs – primarily fentanyl, an opioid, and methamphetamine, a stimulant – year-round, in staggering quantities. The unprecedented supply is creating demand in a way similar to what those overprescribed opioid painkillers did.

The U.S. drug stream is just about saturated with fentanyl and meth. Remarkably, even as Mexican meth is, for the first time, in every region of the U.S., its price has fallen 80 per cent or more in the past few years, according to conversations I've had with narcotics officers and addicts in several parts of the country. In Tennessee, one homeless addict told me, an ounce of meth cost US\$1,250 five years ago; now it's closer to US\$225.

One tragedy of COVID-19 was that it hit just as the Mexican trafficking world had covered the United States with the two most dangerous street drugs we've ever known. This left addicts and those in recovery isolated and at enormous risk of death – in particular from fentanyl, a synthetic opioid far more potent than heroin. We were oblivious, focused on the virus, until November, when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced that for the first time we had tallied 100,000 overdose deaths in a 12-month period: April, 2020, to April, 2021.

The onslaught is fuelled by the wild free market of producers in Mexico, by those imports of chemicals from around the world, by a criminal justice system crippled by corruption, and by guns bought easily in the U.S. and smuggled south.

The largest Mexican trafficking organizations – Sinaloa and Jalisco New Generation – make much of their money selling permissions to others to cook these drugs in their

regions, along with the chemicals needed to do so. Drug-cartel sources and agents with the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) both tell me that in the past half dozen years labs have proliferated by the dozens, perhaps hundreds, in the states of west and northwest Mexico.

This unprecedented supply has changed the drug world.

I have been writing about the U.S. drug crisis for more than a decade. My reporting shows that Mexican traffickers had to shift the way they made methamphetamine about a dozen years ago. The new way relies on combinations of widely available, legal, industrial chemicals – and this is what has allowed the meth supplies we're seeing. This meth has been accompanied by scary, rapid-onset symptoms of schizophrenia – florid hallucinations and severe paranoia – and, thus, homelessness, even in areas of the United States where housing prices are low and homelessness was rare.

Fentanyl, meanwhile, is so cheap and plentiful that for the first time in the history of drug use in the U.S. we're seeing a street drug widely mixed into others, such as cocaine.

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***By adding fentanyl a dealer can turn cocaine customers, who typically only buy occasionally, into opioid addicts who must buy daily to keep withdrawal sickness away.***

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By adding fentanyl a dealer can turn cocaine customers, who typically only buy occasionally, into opioid addicts who must buy daily to keep withdrawal sickness away.

But mixing potent fentanyl safely is a delicate task beyond the capacity of most traffickers and street dealers. This is part of what is fuelling our overdose-death numbers.

Production of "fentapills" – counterfeit Percocet, Xanax, Adderall and generic 30-milligram oxycodone pills that contain only fentanyl – has also increased geometrically since Mexican traffickers began making them in 2017. Police in Scottsdale, Ariz., seized a record 1.7 million such pills from a home in December, along with 10 kilograms of fentanyl powder. That's more than the DEA reported seizing (1.2 million pills) in the Los Angeles metro area in all of 2020.

These supplies have solved the street dealer's age-old dilemma: Where do I get my dope? Today, anybody can be a kingpin. One fellow I met in West Virginia once dealt grams of meth. After a decade away from the trade, he said, he returned and discovered four connections within 16 kilometres of his house who each would sell him

10 kilograms any day of the week. That's in a small West Virginia town 2,900 kilometres from the Mexican border.

So dealers have a new dilemma: Where do I sell all this supply, particularly during COVID-19 when everyone's at home? They've turned to Snapchat, Instagram and other social-media apps. These are the new street corners, where kids with limited drug experience, living with their parents, buy from anonymous dealers (some still teenagers themselves) who offer home delivery.

All of which is to say that what's been developing in our street-drug world as we've dealt with COVID-19 feels to me as much like a poisoning as a traditional problem of addiction. That's what the homeless shelter director is seeing in Tennessee. And that's what I've witnessed over the past few years.

I spoke with the sisters of Michael Tanner Jr., who struggled with cocaine addiction for a decade in Akron, Ohio, but died, in 2014, within months of dealers adding fentanyl to his drug of choice.

I spent time in Clarksburg, W.Va., population 16,000, which had no homeless people to speak of until the meth from Mexico arrived in unrelenting supplies in the spring of 2017. By 2018, Clarksburg's downtown teemed with raving, meth-addicted and unhoused people, who took to stripping any house left vacant for more than a few days of everything that made it livable.

I attended a rally outside Snapchat headquarters in Santa Monica, Calif., held by parents whose kids had died from phony pills containing fentanyl sold to them by dealers advertising on the app.

We need to understand that the origin of all this is supply. If it's true we can't arrest our way out of this problem, it's also true we can't treat our way out of it, either – not while the drugs are this prevalent and dangerous. So any solution involves a mosaic of responses, which we're not used to deploying in co-ordination: prevention first and foremost, but also expanding treatment and, absolutely, supply reduction, which is harm reduction in its most basic form.

We need to find the tools to work together as a continent. We have a North American agreement governing free trade. We need an agreement to address the vast harm done by unrelieved synthetic-drug production and the easy flow of smuggled guns.

I know the history of sensationalism surrounding street drugs. But the data, and street evidence, are clear. The myths that once swirled around drugs have become reality. As our attention was elsewhere, the era of risk-free recreational drug use slammed to an end. Even the most perfect-looking pill offered by a trusted friend can contain a deadly dose of fentanyl, and every hit is like a game of Russian roulette.

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***The new way relies on combinations of widely available, legal, industrial chemicals – and this is what has allowed the meth supplies we're seeing. This meth has been accompanied by scary, rapid-onset symptoms of schizophrenia – florid hallucinations and severe paranoia – and, thus, homelessness.***

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# Heat Pumps to the Rescue

By Isaiah Ritzmann

We have the power to stop war and help solve the climate emergency if we act now. Bill McKibben argues that installing millions of heat pumps in European homes ahead of next winter will dramatically reduce reliance on Russian natural gas, cutting off a key source of Vladimir Putin's power. Currently oil and gas make up 60% of Russia's export earnings, and 40% of Europe's natural gas comes from Russia. Such a project would not only help slow the Russian war machine, but would contribute meaningfully to lowering carbon emissions and addressing the climate emergency. It's a win-win situation. It finds ways to meet tangible human needs in a way that solves seemingly intractable geopolitical problems, now and in the future.

In his viral, late-February piece "Heat Pumps for Peace and Freedom," McKibben recommends that the Biden administration invokes the *Defense Production Act* to get American manufacturers to produce electric heat pumps en masse, ship them to Europe, and have them installed - all in a relatively short-period of time. Both Trump and Biden have used the Act recently, to ramp up production of ventilators and protective equipment to combat COVID-19. Such a large-scale production effort has precedent in both Canada and the United States. During the Second World War, with Europe under occupation, our governments took the lead in dramatically expanding production at a scope and speed that frankly seems unbelievable

today. With Ukraine under siege, and a changing climate looming on the horizon, a mobilization on this scale seems once again desirable and feasible. Why not manufacture tens of millions of heat pumps in the United States (and maybe Canada?) and send them to Europe in the next 6-9 months? The White House is reportedly seriously considering McKibben's plan.

Heat pumps are a device for heating and cooling homes: one-part furnace, one-part air conditioner. Powered by electricity, they take heat from the air and transfer it - taking heat from the outside-in during the winter, and from the inside-out during the summer. By replacing furnaces they reduce reliance on natural gas, which is both a polluting fossil fuel and a non-renewable resource. While much electricity generation worldwide currently comes from coal, the transition to renewables such as solar and wind promise to be a sustainable means to heating and cooling our homes into the future. Furthermore, combined with retrofits such as better insulation and energy-efficient windows, technologies like heat pumps have a promise of drastically reducing overall energy consumption. With all of these changes, energy use for heating and cooling our homes could be cut by 50 percent. Cutting emissions and energy consumption is an ecological win-win. Creating good, green jobs, providing energy security, and reducing the power of petro-dictatorships (like Russia and Saudi Arabia) make this an

continued on page 8

# The Road to Unfreedom: Undoing the Fragmentation

Excerpts from author Timothy Snyder on the Ezra Klein Show podcast March 15th, 2022

Europeans can only tell the Second World War story for so long, and even so, Putin is warping the story of the Second World War in an extraordinary way. But in a way he is doing people a favour, because he is showing that perhaps it is time for a different reference point. Let's face it, 80 years from now it will not be the Second World War. The reference point will be the war that Putin has just started. I sense that politicians are recognizing this. A new generation of politicians need to seize on the moments of today and create a story that will serve later politicians.

There is another lesson, that it is time to start again with a lot of things. I have enjoyed talking to you about history, but Mr. Putin has shown that you can reach so far down into the past, that what you come back with is perverted, dirty and destructive. And what we need is less casual references to models, more historical knowledge, but also a sense that the future can be different.

## The Structure of Energy and Global Warming

Thinking forward from this crisis, conceptually this is a hydrocarbon war. If it weren't for a certain hydrocarbon oligarch Putin, there wouldn't have been this war. In the short term we may look for oil supply, but looking into the future, this war is the kind of war we will have in a world which is dependent on the

natural gas, oil and the people who are able to control the profits from them.

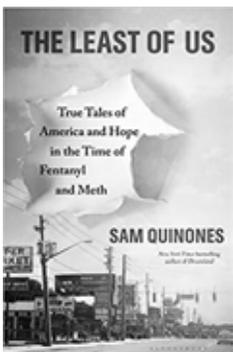
This war is an argument, a strong argument for avoiding the kind of catastrophe which global warming is going to bring to us. There are ways to take this war and use it, not to revive all the various historical analogies but also to use it as a moment, as an impulse, to recognize the deeper lesson about the structure of energy combined with the horror of how Putin has used the past to a logical extreme, reminding us of how we really need a future.

## Democratic Politics

Democratic politics is not just about defense, but if democratic politics is going to be continued, it has to be a practice aimed for the future. If we are to have a future, we have to think of different ways that things can turn out. If the Ukrainians have given us anything it is that they have bought us that time, I feel that every day they have stayed on the battlefield, they buy us a week, a month, a year of thinking of how things could be. Or if you put it the opposite way, if Zelensky had fled, if the state had collapsed, what kind of suffocating, intellectually and morally narrow and hollow world would we be in right now. What would we be talking about right now. Thanks to the bravery of the Ukrainians, they have given us this chance to think bigger and in the last two weeks we really have thought bigger - the EU, North America, the world community have really thought bigger thanks to this.

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**The Least of Us**  
True Tales of America and Hope in the Time of Fentanyl and Meth  
Sam Quinones

From the New York Times bestselling author of *Dreamland*, a searing follow-up that explores the terrifying next stages of the opioid epidemic and the quiet yet ardent stories of community repair. Quinones hit the road to investigate these new threats, discovering how addiction is exacerbated by consumer-product corporations. "In a time when drug traffickers act like corporations and corporations like traffickers," he writes, "our best defense, perhaps our only defense, lies in bolstering community." Amid a landscape of despair, Quinones found hope in those embracing the forgotten and ignored, illuminating the striking truth that we are only as strong as our most vulnerable.

432 pages | \$27.00 hardcover



**Dreamland**  
The True Tale of America's Opiate Epidemic  
Sam Quinones

With a great reporter's narrative skill and the storytelling ability of a novelist, acclaimed journalist Sam Quinones weaves together two classic tales of capitalism run amok whose unintentional collision has been catastrophic. The unfettered prescribing of pain medications during the 1990s reached its peak in Purdue Pharma's campaign to market OxyContin, its new, expensive--extremely addictive--miracle painkiller. Meanwhile, a massive influx of black tar heroin--cheap, potent, and originating from one small county on Mexico's west coast, independent of any drug cartel--assaulted small town and mid-sized cities across the country, driven by a brilliant, almost unbeatable marketing and distribution system. Together these phenomena continue to lay waste to communities from across the United States.

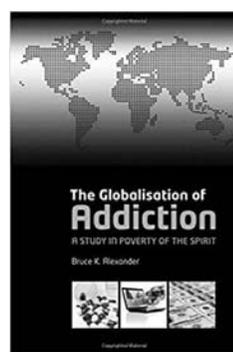
400 pages | \$22.00 softcover



**The Road to Unfreedom**  
Russia, Europe, America  
Timothy Snyder

In this forceful and unsparing work of contemporary history, based on vast research as well as personal reporting, Snyder goes beyond the headlines to expose the true nature of the threat to democracy and law. To understand the challenge is to see, and perhaps renew, the fundamental political virtues offered by tradition and demanded by the future. By revealing the stark choices before us--between equality or oligarchy, individuality or totality, truth and falsehood--Snyder restores our understanding of the basis of our way of life, offering a way forward in a time of terrible uncertainty.

368 pages | \$35.00 hardcover



**The Globalization of Addiction**  
A Study in Poverty of the Spirit  
Bruce K. Alexander

In a radical rethink about the nature of addiction, *Globalization of Addiction* shows that the social circumstances that spread addiction in a conquered tribe or a falling civilization are also built into today's globalizing free-market society. For example, a free-market society is magnificently productive, but it subjects people to irresistible pressures towards individualism and competition, tearing rich and poor alike from the close social and spiritual ties that normally constitute human life. People adapt to their dislocation by finding the best substitutes for a sustaining social and spiritual life that they can, and addiction serves this function all too well.

The book argues that the most effective response to a growing addiction problem is a social and political one, rather than an individual one. Such a solution would not put the doctors, psychologists, social workers, policemen, and priests out of work, but it would incorporate their practices in a larger social project. The project is to reshape society with enough force and imagination to enable people to find social integration and meaning in everyday life.

488 pages | \$39.95 softcover



## Closing The Working Centre Market Garden

### A Message to Our Friends and Supporters

Dear Garden Friends,

As many of you know, the property that we have called home for the past 10 seasons has been for sale for some time. Recently it has become clear that with so much uncertainty surrounding the sale of the property, we cannot continue moving forward as usual. For that reason, we have come to the incredibly difficult decision to close the garden for the season ahead.

Many of us are losing a place of belonging, beauty, and peace, a place of hard work, fun, and abundant vegetables. Though we grieve the loss of such a vibrant community space, we can all be so proud of our many accomplishments. There is so much worth celebrating!

The multitudes of volunteer gardeners that have worked the land are, after 10 years, far beyond count – easily numbering in the thousands. Eight cohorts of community-based market gardening interns have spent a season at the garden – that's over 40 people gaining the practical skills, knowledge, and confidence to grow food for themselves and their communities. The garden has also been a place of employment and livelihood – not only for year-round staff, but also for seasonal and casual workers from our community.

Together, we produced over 100,000 pounds of vegetables and grew the Working Centre's Community Supported Agriculture share program from 40 households to over 160! Together, we worked with nature to transform the garden into a thriving and diverse ecosystem, teeming with plant and animal life that feasted on the garden's abundance. Together, we created an open and welcoming community where friendship flourished as we found common purpose in nourishing the land as it nourished us.

Though you may not easily recognize it, each of you has made a unique contribution to the garden and belong to the community that has stewarded it. Many of you have been out in the garden, working hard with your hands in the dirt. Many of you have been in your offices, supporting our work from behind the scenes in diverse ways. Many of you have been gardening your own plots and participating in a community of knowledge exchange and material support that will continue to reverberate throughout our community. And even more of you have enjoyed a meal featuring the fruits of our common work that you received in a CSA share or from the community fridge or food bank. For all our diverse contributions, we can all be proud of what we have accomplished and can only express gratitude to one another for having worked together to help build a more sustainable and equitable community-based food system.

Now, as we move forward together, we will take time to reflect upon seasons past and dream of new ways to engage in the meaningful work of growing food sustainably in community and building the skills, knowledge, and resources to support it. Though we do not yet know what opportunities lie ahead, we invite you to join us as we chart a path forward. Please feel free to be in touch with your support, ideas, or opportunities, and consider subscribing to our email list. We look forward to cultivating new opportunities for community-based ecological farming that will carry on the legacy of the garden!

With pride and gratitude,

Adam, Vanessa, and the Working Centre Market Gardeners

Contact: [garden@theworkingcentre.org](mailto:garden@theworkingcentre.org) | 519-575-1118

## From Gardening to Housing

By Joe Mancini

The closing of the Market Garden is a time to reflect on its success producing over 13,000 kgs of greens, fruits and vegetables per year while teaching hundreds of people the techniques of market gardening. Ron Doyle invited The Working Centre to establish the garden on 2 acres at the Hacienda Sarria. He got the process started by landscaping 72 dump truck loads of soil. The Working Centre dove deeply into the mechanics of operating a market garden. Fr. Toby Collins CR worked with us to lay down 6000 square feet of interlocking brick pathways. The work of creating a beautiful urban agriculture project near downtown Kitchener resulted in lasting friendships.

Ten years later, Ron was focused

on responding to homelessness through a project he called A Better Tent City. Working with Jeff Willmer, they had no luck identifying a site until Ron made the audacious decision to use a building at Lot 42 to allow an encampment to set up. He quickly found support from the Social Development Centre of Waterloo Region and The Working Centre. Fr. Toby immersed himself in the project, recruiting resources through St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church.

A Better Tent City is now into its third year, providing 50 people with interim housing. The relationships of trust and commitment that grew from the Market Garden have blossomed into a housing project. ABTC has become an enduring community providing needed alternative housing.

## Heat Pumps to the Rescue

continued from page 7

economic and social win-win as well.

Such a large-scale mobilization is also needed in Canada. By 2023 we are expected to have over 14.6 million homes across the country, and currently only 700,000 of those have heat pumps (or about 5% of all homes). The challenge is heat pumps are currently more expensive. *Efficiency Nova Scotia* estimates that the price of a new heat pump system would cost close to \$14,000, in comparison to a baseboard heating system which would cost just over \$2,000. With these economic realities it is paramount that governments set strong targets, regulate new housing development, and provide accessible funding (in

subsidy and low-interest loans) for those who need it. The federal government's *Greener Homes Grant* - which offers rebates on a variety of home retrofits, including heat pumps - is a good place to start. But more is needed. We need a bolder vision. Why not mandate that by 2030, for example, 50% of homes in Canada use heat pumps or equivalent technologies and provide the production and funding capacity to meet this goal? This may seem like a massive undertaking. And it is. But it is what the times, and what living in a climate emergency, require. And with a win-win-win technology like heat pumps - which can create jobs, disempower petro-Dictators, and help us live sustainably - what's not to love?



### Recycle Cycles

**Recycle Cycles is a community bike shop teaching hands-on bike repair through co-operation. It offers space and facilities for people to repair bikes with the help of our volunteers.**

**We sell refurbished bikes for children and adults at affordable prices. New and used parts are available for sale.**

**Volunteers provide assistance to members of the public to repair their bicycles. Volunteers also work on refurbishing bicycles donated to us, which are then sold to help support our free services.**

**We accept donations of bicycles, parts, and accessories any time during our open hours.**

**We are open Tuesday to Saturday 10am - 4pm**

**Please email to book a time to volunteer, to set a time to repair your bike, or to purchase a bike.**

**[recyclecycles@theworkingcentre.org](mailto:recyclecycles@theworkingcentre.org)**

**Entrance next to 256 King Street East in Kitchener**