Climate Change Rising on the Political Agenda

“In fact, more than half of the carbon exhaled into the atmosphere by the burning of fossil fuels has been emitted in just the past three decades. Which means we have done as much damage to the fate of the planet and its ability to sustain human life and civilization since Al Gore published his first book on climate than in all the centuries—all the millennia—that came before.

The United Nations established its climate change framework in 1992, building a political consensus out of a scientific consensus and advertising it unmistakably to the world; which means we have now done as much damage to the environment knowingly than we ever managed in ignorance.”

David Wallace-Wells, The Uninhabitable Earth, Life After Warming, Penguin Random House, NY, 2019

Human Society Under Threat from Loss of Earth’s Natural Life

“Human society is in jeopardy from the accelerating decline of the Earth’s natural life-support systems, the world’s leading scientists have warned...

From coral reefs flickering out beneath the oceans to rainforests desiccating into savannahs, nature is being destroyed at a rate tens to hundreds of times higher than the average over the past 10 million years, according to the UN global assessment.

The biomass of wild mammals has fallen by 82%, natural ecosystems have lost about half their area and a million species are at risk of extinction — all largely as a result of human actions, said the study, compiled over three years by more than 450 scientists and diplomats.”


Celebrating Grassroots Health Care

By Kara Peters Unrau

The 32nd Mayors’ Dinner was a full evening of community connections at Marshall Hall at Bingemans. Almost 1000 people crowded into the hall to hear stories about three grassroots approaches to health care.

Dr. George Berriegan and Evelyn Gurney RN were recognized as the heart of the St. John’s Clinic, the health care clinic located at St. John’s Kitchen. (On page 4 of this newspaper, you can read Dr. Berriegan’s moving presentation at the Mayors’ Dinner.)

Dr. Chris and Michelle Stein-gart were recognized for their work founding Sanguen as a charitable Hepatitis C clinic which has grown to provide harm reduction and health care services throughout Waterloo Region and in Guelph.

Dr. Michael Stephenson (Dr. Mike) and Margaret Brockett are the physician and associate director of Sanctuary Refugee Health Centre who have established this integrated medical hub for refugees.

Highlighting these community-based efforts was enlivening for all who attended. The evening demonstrated how dedication and vision are essential for efforts that work from the ground up. Together these three initiatives demonstrate how dedication, compassion, harm reduction, and the ability to support people through complex systems can create real change and new services that put people in the centre.

To start the evening, Margaret Nally offered a blessing, followed by a song of thanksgiving by the Gatako Singers. The four Gatako singers, Patrick, Seth, Deborah and Mika arrived in Canada on September

continued on page 3
“On Wednesday, the British House of Commons, led by the Conservative Party, voted to declare that the planet was in a “climate emergency.” The day before, a CNN poll found that, in the US, Democratic voters care more about climate change than about any other issue in the upcoming Presidential election: more than health care, more than gun control, more than free college, more than impeaching the President.

Having followed the issue closely since I wrote my first book about climate change, thirty years ago, I think I can say that we’re in a remarkable moment, when, after years of languishing, climate concern is suddenly and explosively rising to the top of the political agenda. Maybe, though not certainly, it is rising fast enough that we’ll get real action.”

Bill McKibben author of Falter: Has the Human Game begun to play itself Out? (2019), writing in the New Yorker May 1, 2019

“Global emissions could be cut by a third if the richest 10 percent of humanity cut their use of energy to the same level as affluent, comfortable Europe. One prospective technique to sequester carbon from the atmosphere would cost $3 trillion a year, a colossal amount — but significantly less than the current level of subsidies paid out globally for fossil fuel, estimated at $5 trillion. Taken all in all, solutions are “obvious” and “available.” The only obstacle to implementing them is political will.”


Water Street House Update

By Stephanie Mancini

Last spring The Working Centre responded to the community need for a creative response to the growing impact of debilitating drug use, at a time when landlords were unwilling to host a potential Safe Consumption and Treatment (SCT) site location. We purchased an old degrading rooming house on Water Street with the goal of creating a place of welcome for people who are using drugs. This vision could include the SCT, but also includes an 8 bed house to provide interim housing. The house will be a welcoming and supportive environment for drug users (especially those without housing) to help them find rest and space in the midst of their addiction. By focusing on the unique needs of drug users, we hope to create a place of practical, supportive and restful supports.

Our understanding of this issue has grown from the reality of the drug crisis that we see each day at St. John’s Kitchen. The Water Street house is a block away from St. John’s Kitchen and will build on the work of the Water Street House Update. W e purchased an old school building on Front Street with the goal of creating a place of welcome for people who have died in our community. Over 40 people have died in our community since December, many from the direct and indirect results of an unsafe drug supply; drugs that rapidly over and underdose, are essentially dead, and then are alive again. “We die, we live, we die, we live… I can’t bear to live like this anymore.” How to escape this deep and tragic cycle of addiction, poverty and homelessness?

We have come to see the shifting role of the Water Street house as a blessing. Safe consumption will happen around the corner on Duke Street, but the Water Street house will focus on wellness, healing; rest and the deep relationship-based care than help people to be as well as they can be.

In early June, renovations will begin. We will be creating 8 rooms for interim housing - 3 beds operated in collaboration with WRPS to ensure people are safe without using important Emergency Department and/or Police resources, 3 beds that align to hospital care for those using injectable drugs requiring prolonged IV antibiotic therapy, and 2 respite/rest beds.

We are excited to continue with our work around access to health care, but also to consider wellness work and alternative therapies. We hope to support conversation circles, drumming circles, cognitive behaviour groups, and links with hospital-based healing and rest.

In collaboration with our partners in the Inner City Health Alliance, we will expand the ideas of the local village, where we will humbly walk along-side people, listening and learning while providing timely, comprehensive health care that honours the whole person - physical, mental, spiritual and emotional. Together we will work to honour the strength of this collective knowing, creating greater capacity to serve the growing needs in our inner cities. We have lots to learn as we work together, creating a place of hope and practical supports in response to the devastating realities of these powerful drugs.

A Sharp Rise of Global Carbon Dioxide Levels

Climate Change Rising on the Political Agenda

Climate Change Rising on the Political Agenda

“a carbon tax and the political apparatus to aggressively phase out dirty energy, a new approach to agricultural practices and a shift away from beef and dairy in the global diet; and public investment in green energy and carbon capture”

source: NASA Vital Signs
32nd Mayors’ Dinner

continued from page 1

13, 2017 as refugees from Burundi, where their family lived in a large refugee camp for fifteen years. It was there that Patrick led a choir of some 40 young people singing songs that encouraged hope and expressed thanksgiving. Today they are all students at Eastwood Collegiate and it was an honour to receive their song of thanksgiving.

Neil Aitchison was once again our extraordinary Master of Ceremonies providing context on these projects and lots of humour along the way. Neil, as the live auctioneer, helped to raise $5700 on six auction items. Overall the dinner raised $60,000 for The Working Centre.

By far, the biggest success was the telling of the stories of Sanctuary, Sanguen, and St. John’s Clinic. The Working Centre’s Commons Studio produced four short videos that described this work. These videos capture grassroots health care in action, showing how this work is not about simply offering a menu of services but rather about following the person by offering the help each person needs in a way that is helpful and connected. The videos, combined with the words of the Guests of Honour are now on our website. Visit the ‘What’s New’ section on our main website for a link – www.theworkingcentre.org.

The Mayors’ Dinner was an excellent forum that also served to highlight the spirit behind the Inner City Health Alliance. All three organizations are part of this alliance that sees itself as a responsive local village of health and social supports serving those living in vulnerable conditions, specifically the homeless and those at risk of homelessness, and refugees. Health issues for these individuals are complicated by lack of housing, experiences of poverty, family support, trauma and care.

Community based health care that can follow the person’s journey involves creative problem-solving work, which confronts each challenge as it emerges. This is a new way of offering health care, especially for people who are often left out.

All six Mayors’ Dinner honourees saw the issues in front of them and responded in ways that make their community a better, kinder, healthier place. Thank you to the many people who helped to make this a meaningful community celebration.

Special thanks to the Gatako Singers and MC Neil Aitchison

Our Homonees with Mayors McGarry, Vrbanovic, and Jaworsky

Our Homonees shared compelling stories of providing grassroots healthcare to those in our community
Learning from Service

By Dr. George Berrigan

Editor’s Note: On March 30, 2019

Dr. George Berrigan officially retired from St. John’s Clinic after serving 10 years. The Mayors’ Dinner was a wonderful opportunity to thank George Berrigan and Evelyn Gurney for their commitment. The following is George’s Mayors’ Dinner speech.

“We were asked to tell you why we decided to work at St John’s Kitch en back in 2009. The honest answer is we saw back then clearly there was such a drastic need to improve medical care for the homeless in our city that we felt we should at least make the effort to do something in spite of our total lack of experience in this field. We discovered that the Working Centre and St John’s Kitchen (SJK) had already created a functional venue with a staff of nurses, a social worker and a team of 9 outreach workers. We had no bureaucratically designed program or procedural guidelines to work under. In effect, what we did was use the approach of the famous professional tennis player, Arthur Ashe, who tackled his problems using the SUD method: START where you are; USE what you have; DO what you can! Our first barrier was gaining trust. This took a lot of listening, attention, being adaptable, open-minded and especially non-judgmental. We worked hard at keeping our promises. We realized our care had to be backed by consistency, respect and kindness. We accepted that even if we couldn’t solve complex addiction, mental health and medical problems, we could lessen the harm, at least enough to keep them alive. At SJK, survival is our most immediate concern; the rest of the work is mostly finding ways to progressively lessen suffering one on one, one day at a time.

I would like to tell you about one of the over 2000 patients I encountered over the last 10 years. I’ll call this patient Ray though that’s not his real name. Ray is 66 years old, earned skill. He has a room in a local senior residence. When the nurse brought him to his new place in late October he walked around his nice clean room with a big smile on his face and sat on his nice comfortable bed. He looked all around his room and then did something very telling: he began crying so hard he was shaking the bed. This lasted many minutes. This sudden release of pent up tension and stress indicates to me just how extremely difficult living on the street really is. Ray couldn’t solve his problems by himself, but we could make the difference by reaching out and working together with others to get him into safety. Happily, Ray is now permanently housed and has his alcohol use under control. Sadly, too few of our cases have the same outcome as Ray.

While working with the homeless you start to appreciate that the most common factor in their background is a traumatic childhood of abuse and neglect. During their childhood development they often lacked a reliable adult to love them and provide them with the basic needs of acceptance, belonging and caring. This deprivation consistently has disastrous life-long consequences for their mental health and predisposes them to addictions. Moreover, they continually have to contend with the marginalization and stigma their mental health and addictions bring. We at SJK see their broken lives as a consequence of their circumstances rather than of their character! Make no mistake! Marginalized people are marginalized by people! The homeless don’t self-marginalize, they don’t choose poverty. Marginalization requires “marginalizers” who actually have their own vulnerabilities one being their tunnel vision preventing them from seeing the whole picture. The homeless are no less human than the rest of us. They have the same hopes, worries and needs as any other segment of society. Their personalities and talents vary just as much as any other social class. Prolonged stress harms them just like it harms any other social class. Prolonged stress harms them just like it harms any other social class. Prolonged stress harms them just like it harms any other social class.

One of the great rewards of working with the homeless is acquiring all the wonderful friends you work with and for. We work not just for the love of it, but for the love that’s in it. If we give the marginalized attention, caring and love when they desperately need it, we will get it back eventually, not tit for tat, but exponentially.

Here are three lessons I have learned working at SJK:

Lesson 1
One of the great rewards of working with the homeless is acquiring all the wonderful friends you work with and for. We work not just for the love of it, but for the love that’s in it. If we give the marginalized attention, caring and love when they desperately need it, we will get it back eventually, not tit for tat, but exponentially.

Lesson 2
Those who work with the poor are frequently amazed by the depth of character and personal strength of spirit many homeless people have. I believe this spirit is a product of the intensity and duration of their own personal suffering. Resilience isn’t just a gift; resilience is a tough hard-earned skill.

Lesson 3
The homeless population need more than just sufficient funds to survive, they also need to keep their hope alive. The good example and humane behaviour of the SJK staff helps the homeless stay hopeful. The staff and volunteers at SJK share a special gift that doesn’t cost any money and indeed is worth far more than money. It is more essential and accessible than cleverness, creativity or courage. It’s the basic human gift of COMPASSION. Compassion is at the heart and core of every healthy functioning family and every proficient healthy community. Compassion is also at the heart and core of all that is good, effective and meaningful at SJK. If we are to solve our marginalization problem we need to stop focussing solely on the homeless and also deal with what causes our society to marginalize. SJK is living proof that the primary answer to poverty is not just money, but sharing more of our compassion and our humanity.

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Bigger is Sometimes Worse

Why is the cost of bigger bureaucratic structures not taken into account?

By Isaiah Rittman

The amalgamation debate in Waterloo Region has sparked passionate arguments for and against combining our communities into one, big city. Despite the strength of both arguments no one is addressing a vital, underlying assumption: that bigger is better. The amalgamation movement builds on the idea that bigger, more centralized government will be more efficient. Those against amalgamation question whether local democracy is a worthwhile price. The problem is that the shared, underlying assumption is an unwarranted one: bigger is only sometimes better. Sometimes bigger is actually worse. If combining cities leads to efficiencies and economies of scale, it can also result in increased cost, reduced efficiency and less democracy. Bigger is sometimes worse for cities because bigger is sometimes worse for all aspects of human society. Since the change, for cities as well as other human institutions, is looking not for the biggest but for the best size.

A Right Size for Everything

In the middle of the 20th century a group of decentralist thinkers felt alarmed at the inability of our culture to distinguish between sometimes and always when it comes to bigness. They began to promote the idea that to every aspect of human society there is an appropriate size or scale. One of these thinkers, Leopold Kohr, wrote in point-making exaggeration that “whenver something is wrong, something is too big.” Technically this isn’t true; there are other sources of dysfunction including being too small. The point, however, stands: there is a right size to everything and in a world of increasing complexity and knowledge, for cities as well as all other human institutions, is looking not for the biggest but for the best size.

Many of these decentralists were inspired by the essay “On Being the Right Size” (1920) by the biologist J.B.S. Haldane. Haldane observed that in the natural world size was a critical factor in the systems organism needed for survival. Flies, for example, are larger than loops but because they are too small to absorb the oxygen they need from the atmosphere around them. Human beings, on the other hand, can’t get their oxygen by osmosis. Instead there are special organs complicated equipment to get oxygen to each cell. They are too big not to have lungs. Haldane, after citing additional examples of the importance of size in the natural world, argues the law of right size applies equally to the human world. “Just as their best size for every animal,” he writes, “so the same is true for every human institution.”

They become chaotic and incompetent not by accident or intention but by necessity of size. The extra costs of unnecessary overhead coordination can reach the point of absurdity. In his book Human Scale (1982) Kirkpatrick Sale cites a classic statistic that in large cities in the US for every five officers added to a police force eight less officers are out past the 10pm shift, probably resulting from added layers of overhead inefficiencies. Increased police officers resulted in more management, more missed shifts, and new bureaucratic responsibilities. The result is more police but less police doing street work. One critic research concluded all these extra costs of being super-sized but they remain costs nonetheless, costs are often ignored, and misunderstood.

Size Matters for Democracy

Those who favour our current two-tiered system suggest that democracy is threatened by amalgamation. This is usually presented as a moral argument, and it is that too. But I want to argue that democracy is also cost-effective long-term even when it seems more expensive short-term. Size matters in terms of democracy. If the geographical area and population of a city or town or county is too large democracy becomes less meaningful. Last year researchers from the University of Toronto did a series of studies on the amalgamation of Toronto twenty years after that fact. In their studies they concluded that “the Toronto experience pre- and post-amalgamation consolidate the quality of civic engagement and democratic participation has declined” and Toronto has simply become “too big to be locally responsive in the same way lower tiers had been in the past.” There seems to be a name only critical threshold for representative democracies: beyond a certain size the meaningful representation is no longer possible. Meaningful representation is a necessary part of good government. In their study Size and Democracy (1973) Robert Dahl and Edward Tufte found that smaller units of government, all things considered, generally yield higher levels of political participation: more people get involved, understand the issues, and believe they can make a difference. Earlier this year a book was published that pointed out this sense of political efficacy leads to observable efficiencies in Canadian municipalities relative to their more wasteful provincial and federal counterparts. Municipalities are “accountable and transparent and they have yearly balanced budgets” because “they are closest to the people.” In his estimation democratic representation is more meaningful, and more effective, at a smaller, more localized scale. In his book Making Democracy Work (1993) and Bowling Alone (2000) the political scientist Rob- ert Putnam argues persuasively that good government requires a strong, engaged citizenry. In his study of democracy in both Italy and the United States he showed that what mattered most was not the state of the economy, the ruling party, or other common factors usually blamed or praised for the performance of government institutions. What mattered most, surprisingly, was things like membership in choral societies or soccer leagues. Putnam theoretiocally and as people who are involved in community organizations they develop the relationships, skill, and civic culture that then spill over into their relationship with government, with beneficial long-term results. Why? “The effects can be imagined with the type of civic engagement smaller municipal governments encourage and support by virtue of their size. The higher rates of political participation and higher sense of political efficacy that Dahl and Tufte point to in their study have similar effects to the choral societies and soccer clubs, but with proportionately greater effect.

Not All Upfront Costs are Wasteful

With all this mind what if the extra costs of smaller municipalities, of duplication and efficiencies, were looked at not as an expense but as investment? After all in other political matters, let alone personal life, not all upfront costs are seen as wasteful. Whether the upfront cost is building a bridge or paying tuition we all recognize that short-term costs can yield long-term benefits. If democracy is viewed as wasteful it is only because we have fallen into the habit of seeing it simply as a moral or political participation and essential benefits to good fiscal sense. The amalgamation debate misses an important point - there is such a thing as being too big. Those for consolidating the region do not acknowledge limits to economies of scale and their opponents marshal a variety of examples none of which while valuable in themselves, question the dangers of big per se.

What we need are cities and governments and economies that are neither too small nor too big but just right. What we need is to remember Haldane’s counsel: “Just as their best size for every animal so the same is true for every human institution.”

Population & Average Annual Service Costs Per Person:

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<th>Service Costs Per Person</th>
<th>$100,000 - 200,000</th>
<th>$500,000 - 1 million</th>
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<tr>
<td>Average Annual Service Cost</td>
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There are various reasons why costs go up with size and the costs are not all measurable in monetary terms. In her book The Death and Life of Great American Cities (1961), Jane Jacobs proposes inventively decentralizing the bulky bureaucracies of American cities. In her observations these institutions are both too big to be meaningfully coordinated and too big to understand the detail necessary to do their work. They become chaotic and incompetent not by accident or intention but by necessity of size. The extra costs of unnecessary overhead coordination can reach the point of absurdity. In his book Human Scale (1982) Kirkpatrick Sale cites a classic statistic that in large cities in the US for every five officers added to a police force eight less officers are out past the 10pm shift, probably resulting from added layers of overhead inefficiencies. Increased police officers resulted in more management, more missed shifts, and new bureaucratic responsibilities. The result is more police but less police doing street work. One critic research concluded all these extra costs of being super-sized but they remain costs nonetheless, costs are often ignored, and misunderstood.
Why Smaller is Better
Presentation to Regional Government Review

By Joe Mancini

The success of Waterloo Region depends on its unique model of seamlessly integrating cities, towns, and villages. Waterloo Region's model of decentralized but integrated political entities should be celebrated as a highpoint in democratic culture.

The opposite of Waterloo Region's political model is that of centralization, the stringing together of municipalities and towns into one emasculated entity which by its nature dismantles identity, history and culture.

What lies behind the centralization trend in government and in business? Why the misguided passion for short-form, central entities without regard for long-term consequences? Why does this myth persist against all evidence? “Centralization of power often creates a fatter, slower, more expensive and less responsive to their needs, wasteful and ineffective, the solution is to amalgamate it with similar organizations and create a bigger bureaucracy.”

The trend of bundling together ever bigger bureaucracies follows the trajectory of multinational corporations that buy out their competition to stimulate their growth. Even if this strategy often fails, it is the dominant model of business development. But our democracies are not businesses and centralizing public service distances responsibil- ity from the people. While businesses are not concerned for loyalty, the main role for cities is to nurture civic re- sponsibility. It is not logical to model our cities after the structure of trans- national corporations.

The success of Waterloo Region is its micro cultures of separate but integrated municipalities and towns. It is in the small democratic communities where real debate happens, where innovations ignite. Subsidiarity is the development of a structure that is decentralized but integrated. This means that the best decision making happens at the local level. This is the best public policy that reinforces democratic culture.

The Guests of Honour at this year’s Mayors’ Dinner are a case in point. The three grassroots health care organizations, The Working Centre, Sanctuary Refugee Health Centre, and the St. John’s Kitchen Clinic each found traction in Waterloo Region because small initiatives are supported. There is recognition for the small because small projects are more efficient, productive, and humanising. These are key sector for incubating ideas. When the form of the small is modeled in our democratic institutions, then it is more likely for small productive initiatives to take root in the community. This is what creates a virtuous cycle.

A virtuous cycle has little room to get started when large dominant organizations are able to push aside the energy of emerging groups that are trying to start projects from the bottom up. This process is subtle but the fact of the matter is that bigger organizations are not very good at sharing or cooperating. Big organisa- tions get first access to the re- sources because of their power and size, not because of efficiency or cre- ativity. The culture of bigness stifles creativity.

In contrast to the model of one big Region, Waterloo Region has evolved as a model of decentralized government and this model is in turn replicated at the grass- roots where startup businesses are celebrated and provided jobs of in- novation. The Mayors’ Dinner cel- ebrated the same kind of grassroots development in the health care sec- tor. Whether in business, health or local societies, Waterloo Region has high creativity and that is a direct result of our model of government and governance.

The success of Waterloo Region is because its decentralized politi- cal bodies are easy, accessible for its citizens to get involved and solve community problems. When small groups succeed, they inspire oth- ers; their success builds commu- nity connectedness, a belief in the democratic work of being rooted in place, sharing resources, networking communities and inspiring personal responsibility.

The Working Centre (TWC) is known across the province as a thriving organization that started small and models a decentralized and integrated approach. It is not a coincidence that TWC’s model of operation reflects the structure of Waterloo Region.

When TWC started we were fortunate to inherit and extend the values we found around us in downtown Kitchener. The virtues of sharing were paramount, and this ethic became rooted in the fabric of TWC. It is an ethic which inspired our wide network of informal and formal cooperative supports. We inherited this ethic because it was taught to us by the people of Water- loo Region.

It is paramount to preserve the decentralized political institutions of Waterloo Region. Amalgamation would severely hurt and limit those institutions born and acquired over two centuries. The Working Centre is a thriving organization that deals with every level of government and all levels of institutions. It is easy to complain about inconsistencies, bad decisions, misguided efforts to grab power, red tape, and over-bureaucratization but I would rather do that in a con- text where there are real levers of democratic power, up and down the political spectrum. The opposite is to embed power in large overbear- ing structures at the top. This is a recipe for political and democratic stagnation. It would be a shame for our beautiful Region to fall into the trap of the illusions of bigness.

Why Amalgamations Don’t Work

By Kevin Thomason

Quite simply, most amalgama- tions don’t work and have been shown, time and time again to re- sult in significantly higher costs, less representation, and a less responsive bureaucracies. They seldom achieve the expected ef- ficiencies or cost savings, and many amalgamated municipalities end up investigating ways to de-amalgamate it after learning that bigger isn’t always better.

Unique Communities

The reason why amalgamation has been consistently rejected is that we are unique communi- ties – separate cities with different neighbourhoods, ambitions, priori- ties and approaches. Our Official Plan demonstrates the differences in our goals, challenges, budgeting and decision-making approaches. Sit through a Wellesley Township Council Meeting and contrast it to a City of Waterloo or Cambridge Council Meeting. In one commu- nity rural Mennonite issues are impor- tant, in others it is rapid transit, or high-tech issues. We already have successful custom governance solu- tions tailored to the needs of each community.

Consistently Rejected

The City of Waterloo and Kitch- ener have consistently rejected amalgamation discussions. It was recently rejected resoundingly by a two to one ratio by the citizens of Waterloo in 2010, and has been re- jected by every other municipality in Waterloo Region at various times. Don’t even talk to anyone in Cam- bridge about amalgamation - they are still reeling from 1973 …

Most Corporate Mergers Fail

The Harvard Business Review es- timates that 70 to 90 percent of all corporate mergers and acquisitions fail. Any CEO knows that align- ment is essential and the companies need to share common strategies, goals, and ambitions for a merger to be successful. Our communities have different goals and ambitions – some want to grow others want to stay the way they are. The City of Waterloo has an official “Environment First” motto and has taken extraordinary steps to protect vast tracts of natural areas - even repealing business licenses and other municipalities have prioritized development.

If leading companies run by highly compensated experts, can’t be suc- cessful 70 to 90 percent of the time, how can a rushed review with far fewer resources have any chance of making our communities better?

Loss of Representation and Control

We currently have an incred- ible array of dozens of Councillors from all walks of life representing communities and neighbourhoods. We only have four full-time mu- nicipal politicians in the entire Re- gion, while many Councillors put in almost full-time hours, for low compensation. We are going to be hard-pressed to find a more effec- tive, economical solution. If hard- pressed new Ingredient allows, then resources are replaced with staff, this lessens democracy and makes government more expensive.

Lower Involvement and Engagement

Amalgamated cities have discov- ered that people tend to participate less in larger cities – volunteer rates decline, there are fewer neighbour- hood initiatives such as local arts and cultural events, fewer sporting activities and teams, as well as often the loss of local newspapers when there is no longer a local municipal government to report on. A single Regional large bureaucratic govern- ment could undermine civic partici- pation.

Amalgamation Isn’t Necessary

Amalgamation isn’t necessary. Many of the most successful cities in the world are actually clusters of communities. Silicon Valley is com- prised of 40 different municipalities, London England is made up of 33 different boroughs, and Boston is a staggering 282 municipalities.

Do we need amalgamation to make a bigger impact globally? In fact, many highly successful cities are like Waterloo Region, diverse clusters of communities working to- gether.

continued on page 7
Remembering Shirley Gutenberg

By Margaret Nally

Editor’s Note: The memorial for Shirley Gutenberg was held at St. John’s Kitchen on May 10th after her sudden and unexpected death on April 22, 2019. Memorials are a way to reflect on those in the St. John’s Kitchen community who have died. Since November, over 30 people have been remembered at three different memorials.

At the start of Shirley’s memorial, a gathering of about 40 people, Sara came into the dining hall where the memorial was taking place and whispered to Rhonda, one of the nurses, and then Amanda an outreach worker left, and soon after Gayle the Nurse Practitioner was motioned to, and Nikki seeing the communion left along with Tom and Andrews. They were all doing what the outreach and medical team have been doing at St. John’s Kitchen all winter, responding to two overdoses. These ones involved some heavy drugs and the two individuals were in and out of consciousness with EMS coming and leaving.

As the memorial continued, Tom came back and offered his remembrance adding that Shirley was a master at handling such commotion and would have seen the beauty and necessity of supporting those with drug addictions. Patrons and fellow workers paid tribute to Shirley as a foundation of the St. John’s Clinic work.

Shirley will be greatly missed in all the community spaces, like hospital, prison, outreach places, in fact, everywhere her unending kindness and generosity of spirit was shared as she moved, and worked with people in places of pain, suffering, healing and wholeness to situations.

We have known Shirley and we honour that she was a woman unique and mysterious. As the late Jean Vanier reminds us we cannot work in an inclusive way with people without acknowledging a power beyond ourselves. And Shirley lived and modeled a life with a deep resonance and understanding that for her there was a deeper reality where hope and beauty resides and where human life lived in dignity and respect when honoured.

Shirley’s Catholic heritage speaks to that reality and these words from the Book of Wisdom (4:7-14) were spoken at her funeral Mass:

The virtuous woman, though she dies before her time, will find rest. Length of days is not what makes age honorable.

Or the number of years the true measure of life?

She has sought to please God, so God has loved her.

Red-haired Shirley was wife to Fritz, mother to Gillian and Gareth and their spouses, grandmother, stepmother, sister, friend and was a bright spirit to all. Shirley was born 75 years ago in Saskatchewan, received her nursing training at Albera and lived life on a broad scale well into her eighties. We were blessed by his long journey with us.

In conclusion, why would anyone want to pay more for fewer services, less representation, diminished democracy and reduced control, while facing a significant loss of community and identity, along with staggering odds that things aren’t going to get better? We need her time and attention.

We are already the envy of the world. Our current community structure isn’t a problem to be solved, our diverse community of communities working together are a large part of the reason for our success.

Kevin is a Waterloo/Wilmot Township Resident, E-mail: kevinthoma-san@mac.com

Remembering Gord Crosby

By Joe Mancini

During the first week of January 2019, we learned of the death of Gord Crosby, our long time Board member who retired from the Board after a stroke in 2015.

Gord Crosby joined The Working Centre Board in 1989 at a time when The Working Centre was learning what it could become. Gord joined with other new key Board members including Ken Westhues, Maurita McCrystal, Mike D’Silva and Arleen Macpherson who joined as coordinator of St. John’s Kitchen.

This group became core to The Working Centre over 30 years. During this time, The Working Centre went from owning few assets and struggling year to year, to purchasing buildings and developing over 30 projects, while rooting itself in downtown Kitchener.

Gord Crosby made an extraordinarily long-term commitment. He originally came to us to support the work of St. John’s Kitchen, because he recognized the importance of feeding the hungry as a Christian call. The longer Gord walked with The Working Centre, the deeper he connected with our work. As a small business owner, Gord was our teacher, explaining how to justify a real estate investment while having the vision to see how the building could be used to strengthen community.

Gord cared deeply about The Working Centre and was an integral part of our story. His contributions from 1989 - 2015 were immense because he participated fully in all discussions, and his insights were part of every decision. Gord serving proudly as President from 2006 - 2015. Ken Westhues noted that, “The thing about Gord, in my view, was that he wasn’t hungry for power. He had had enough successes in his life that it was no skin off his back to let other people succeed.”

Gord Crosby started life as an orphan, only remembering the blue dress of his mother who left him at the orphanage door at a young age. After Gord met Mrs. C., his wife Gerry, who attended the same school, Gord channeled his steady but strong energy into being a police officer,into selling cars, and soon enough, he was the owner of a Volkswagen dealership in Kitchener.

While training for the Toronto Police Service he started in track and field and became Canada’s 200m Hurdle Champion, competing in the 1950 Commonwealth Games in New Zealand and then at the 1952 Olympics in Helsinki, Finland. Gord used that knowledge coaching youth to hockey championships, and helping both his sons Gary and Cameron compete at the highest levels. Before Gary died in a tragic car accident, he had been drafted in the fifth round in the NHL draft. In later years Gord was a nationally ranked Senior Tennis Player who represented Canada at various International Senior Tennis Tournaments.

Well into his eighties, Gord maintained a rigorous workout schedule. As a board member for 26 years, Gord’s style as President was to have wide open discussions which served our goal of having each voice heard while coming to consensus.

Gord was always proud of the good decision-making we had and worked to preserve the mutual language that we had created together.

We loved Gord’s constant curiosity about church, religion, God and leadership. Gord would ensure these issues would feed into every discussion in a way that reflected who he was and how these ideas could shape our culture, Gord had a unique way of bringing his whole person into a discussion and the result was that he helped us build the common unity that became The Working Centre. We were blessed by his long journey with us.

Amalgamations Don’t Work

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Conclusion

In conclusion, why would anyone want to pay more for fewer services, less representation, diminished democracy and reduced control, while facing a significant loss of community and identity, along with staggering odds that things aren’t going to get better? We need her time and attention.

We are already the envy of the world. Our current community structure isn’t a problem to be solved, our diverse community of communities working together are a large part of the reason for our success.
Hilton King will tell stories from his journey through the Child Welfare system, to his work today as a social worker/mental health worker and lecturer at Renison University College, reflecting on the importance of restoring indigenous cultural ways.

The Summer Institute is a set of workshops designed by The Working Centre that are geared to describing the philosophy and skills that enable The Working Centre to walk the fine line of rooting in community while remaining responsive, reflective, and guided by virtues.

Cost for the Summer Institute is $250 per person, and includes Fermented Thoughts. You can register separately for Fermented Thoughts or/and The Daily Circus. For more information, connect with us at: waterlooschool@theworkingcentre.org

www.theworkingcentre.org/summer-institute/725

Fresh Ground for Plant Based Whole Foods

Join us at Fresh Ground as we explore the growing momentum around the ideas of plant based whole foods. In the last year, there has been a significant increase in public awareness and research around the possibilities of plant based eating:

- The EAT-Lancet commission released their report recommending a mainly plant based diet for planetary and human health
- The Canadian Food Guide was revised to increase focus on plants and decrease focus on animal proteins
- Project Drawdown has named eating a plant rich diet the #4 solution for impacting (changing) climate change
- Oxford University has released some intensive research
- Alongside of this climate change research, there is a deeper understanding growing about the human microbiome and how it changes our understanding of our place in the world

This fall we will be exploring these ideas through various learning and practical workshop series.

For more information or to share ideas, please connect with us at: freshground@theworkingcentre.org

Explore the Working Centre community with our new interactive virtual tour!

Learn about our projects, locations, and community building initiatives.

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