

Corktownner

SPRING EDITION

CORKTOWN'S SEASONAL NEWSPAPER

MARCH 2014

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A new Vintage

By Alex Bartlett

Once the darling of Church Street, Jamie Kennedy's Wine Bar is back, now operating as part of the charming Gilead Café, just south of King Street.

Jamie Kennedy

Photo courtesy Gilead Café

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| April 01, 2014

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| May 05, 2014

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Stop by for a pre-theatre snack or enjoy a decadent meal.

Kennedy let go of the original location – a leader in the local-food movement and foodie favourite – in 2009 for creative and financial reasons. He turned his attention instead to Gilead, which opened in 2007.

After some Friday-night trial runs, the Wine Bar concept returned in December. (Don't worry: Gilead will continue to offer its popular breakfast and brunch menus).

What can diners expect? In conversation with the Corktowner, Kennedy shares his thoughts on pickling, the neighbourhood's future and why Ontario wines are worth the money.

How have things changed with the new Wine Bar?

We've gone back to a service style which we know our patrons have loved in the past, and which works perfectly with the gastronomic experience we want to provide. The response has been great.

Is the whole experience meant to be more relaxed and less intimidating than a formal restaurant?

Absolutely. It's as casual or elaborate as you'd like to make it. You might come for fries and a glass of sparkling wine before a Soulpepper show, or you could come

for a three-hour multicourse meal with multiple pairings. Most wines by the glass are available in three-ounce pours so you can truly switch up as you move along and try several beautiful pairings.

Expect a casual and friendly atmosphere – but one where we're serious about food quality and service. You can ask us anything or guide your own experience.

.....

DID YOU KNOW?

Jamie Kennedy originally selected the Gilead space to serve as a commissary (prep) kitchen for his catering business. It was formerly a taxi metering shop.

Gilead is a beautiful space but it's not on a major street. Does that make it harder operate?

Yes, it is extremely challenging. Thank you to all our neighbours who have guided lost customers to our door! Once known though, tucked away locations always feel a little more special.

You've long been associated with local and seasonal foods. How

much of the menu is dedicated to this approach?

One hundred percent! This is our mandate and guide. We adapt where we need to; we still have coffee, tea and chocolate, but we seek out artisan, fair-trade suppliers.

How hard is this to maintain in the winter?

It is easier than you'd think, thanks to preserves, pickling, greenhouses, and cold storage vegetables.

How much of the wine is local?

Almost one hundred percent! We do a have a few B.C. wines.

Many people have a hard time paying \$20 plus for local wines (at the LCBO) when you can arguably get better international wines for a lot less. What do you say?

Visit a winery in Prince Edward County or Niagara this summer and enjoy the connection you feel to the product. Try it all, but remember when you purchase Ontario wine, that money stays in the province.

You've been in the restaurant business for decades. Are people today more educated about the food they eat and how to experience it?

There has been a huge growth in knowledge and education about all aspects of food, and this is a very positive thing. An important part of our contribution to the community is to offer education.

Gilead has become a popular Corktown fixture. What do you think the neighbourhood will be like five years from now?

Bustling and charming! 

Gilead Café and Wine Bar: 4 Gilead Place, 647-288-0680. A la carte dinner and wine bar: Tuesday - Saturday, 5:30 to 10 p.m. Breakfast: Monday – Saturday, 8 to 11 a.m. Lunch: Monday – Saturday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Brunch: Sundays, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Find menus and more information at jamiakennedy.ca.

Big changes coming to the Lower Don Trail

by Arthur Sinclair

The City of Toronto is planning some major improvements to the Lower Don Trail with enhancements happening along Corktown's eastern border. Anybody who uses the paths there know they could use some TLC.

In September, the City and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority published the Lower Don Trail Access, Environment + Art Master Plan, with the goal of revitalization. The report describes the Lower Don Valley as "one of Toronto's largest most centrally located – but perhaps also most underappreciated – urban open spaces."

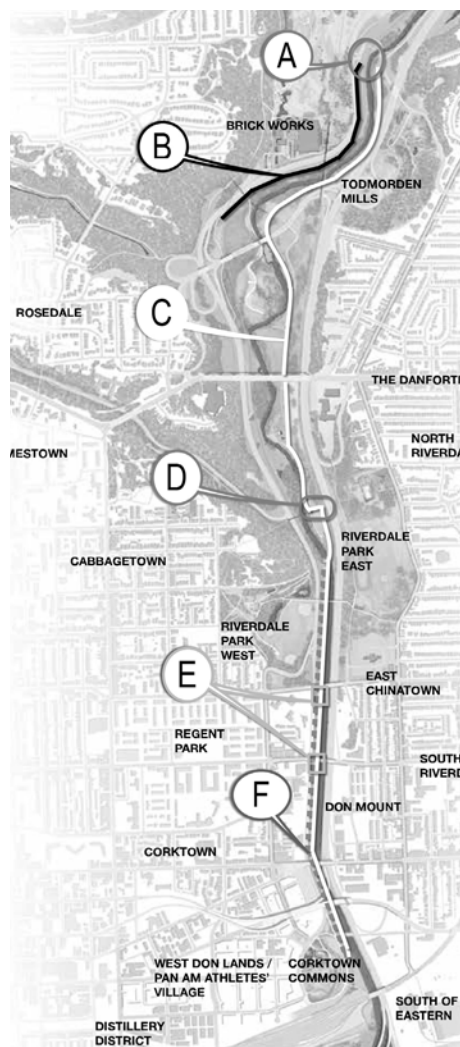
We have learned that the master plan is about to be put into action. In December, the City issued a request for proposal for the "design and construction administration" of:

- A. A new pedestrian/cycling bridge, south of the existing Pottery Road Bridge.
- B. A new bi-directional multi-use trail separated from vehicular traffic within the Bayview Avenue right-of-way on the east side of Bayview Road.
- C. Lower Don Trail – condition audit, widening, surface improvements and drainage.
- D. The realignment and widening of the Belleville underpass.
- E. New stairs to provide access from Dundas and Gerrard Street Bridges.
- F. An "art fence" to replace the existing fence along the rail line and provide a significant public installation from Riverdale Park Bridge to Corktown Commons in the West Don Lands.

This is just the first phase. The master plan outlines a 10-year strategy of progressive improvements.

As of yet there are no firm dates for this stage of the project. According to the City's documents, construction bids are stated to be due this year. Based on this, we predict construction will not begin until late fall at the earliest. The capital budget for this phase is indicated to be between \$2.25-million to \$2.6-million.

A potentially fascinating feature is that public art expressed in the art fence may be extended into custom-designs of other components such as the bridges, staircases and paving treatment.



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10 ways to embrace spring

by Domini Clark

So that winter was awful. And unfortunately it's not over yet. Yes, one of the great myths we tell ourselves as Canadians is that the beginning of March means the beginning of spring. Not quite. But, hey, having something look forward to helps gets us through. On that note, here are 10 things you can look forward to doing in the 'hood once spring (and summer) finally arrives.

1. Street parties

Twice a year the friendly folk of Bright Street and St. Paul get together in a back alley to share homemade goodies and talk until the wee hours. If your street doesn't have such a tradition, why not start one? And just because you live in a condo doesn't mean you can't be social. Organize a fête on the rooftop patio or at a local park.

2. Patios

For such a small neighbourhood we are surprisingly blessed with myriad patio options. The Dominion on Queen is always a classic – and the sprinklers during heat waves are a nice extra touch. And if you didn't get a chance to check out the gorgeous patio of Mill Street Brewery's Beer Hall when it

opened last year, get yourself down to the Distillery District as soon as the mercury rises.

3. Al fresco dining

I'm not talking about patios again. Grab yourself some decadent takeout (my pick is a cheeseburger and fresh-cut fries from Flame Shack), grab a bench at a nearby park and dig in. Because even the best food always tastes better outdoors.



Make new friends at a street party.

Photo by Domini Clark.

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The reveal

4. Iced coffee

I'm not about to get into a debate about where to find the best coffee. Let's just all agree that a frosty caffeine hit is one of the great joys of summer – but of course it's always better when it's brewed lovingly from one of our independent java joints.

5. Nighttime walks

Remember what it was like to walk around in the evening without fear your nose was going to freeze and fall off? This year, try an evening stroll around Corktown Common. Without children running around, it becomes a little escape into nature, with frogs croaking and bugs chirping.

6. Let out your inner child

Speaking of kids, after they've gone to bed, take your turn at the climbing walls and teeter-totters of Underpass Park. Go on – you know you want to.

7. Gardening

It's been proven that gardening offers a host of health benefits. So no matter how big your space – a little backyard or a simple balcony – plant something green and make a go of it.

8. Paddle the Don

Once a year, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority opens up the Don River to canoers and kayakers. You can make it all the way from Ernest Thompson Seton Park to the mouth at Keating Channel. The expected date is May 4. For more information visit paddlethedon.ca.

9. Gelato

Generally speaking, I'm an ice-cream person. But I will make an exception for the dark chocolate gelato at Soma. Trust me: A small scoop will do you.

10. Ride the streetcar

Yes, I know you can ride the streetcar anytime of year. But – cross your fingers – this August should see the end of the King car detour. Now that's something to look forward to.

Café Haiku Challenge #4

*The winter 2014
Corktown offered the
following haiku clue and
challenged you to identify
the dish and the local
restaurant:*

*from la belle province
they fry apples of the earth
just a bit better*



Poutine by Jamie Kennedy

Did you guess what it was? The makings of Jamie Kennedy's famous French fries at Gilead Café. His not-so-secret recipe: Take Ontario Yukon gold potatoes, fry them in sunflower oil and finish off with two types of sea salt and fresh thyme. If you haven't tried his poutine, you're missing out.

Who guessed this and won a gift from Gilead? Head over to corktown.ca and find out!

Thanks to Jamie Kennedy and his team at his restaurant located at 4 Gilead Place (416-362-1957), for contributing to the Café Haiku Challenge!



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A will: everyone should have one

by Jon MacKenzie, barrister and solicitor with Aluvion

Tax season is upon us, and while some of us may have been procrastinating, the reality is slowly dawning on us. Yes, there are only two certainties in life: death and taxes. While e-filing and electronic bookkeeping has made the process easier, the frustration many people now face is discovering tax savings they missed out on by not having their financial house in order. But, as hard as it is to realize you missed out by not maxing your RRSP contributions, the tax effects of an improperly organized will can be even worse.

.....

“A will is extremely important for financial reasons. A properly prepared will should outline how the distribution of your estate should be handled to minimize tax implications”

Usually, it only takes one act of missing out on some money to persuade people to talk to a financial planner. When it comes to estate planning, however, people don't get a second chance. First-time condo and homeowners typically are not aware that how they structure their will can have a big impact on how their new property will be taxed. “A will is extremely important for financial reasons,” says Roberto Umana, CPA, CA, a local accountant with Gallagher and Mannisto. “A properly prepared will should outline how the distribution of your estate should be handled to minimize tax implications”

People often worry that creating a will is about making an exhaustive list of which relative gets what piece of furniture. And while there is nothing to stop you from making such a rundown, the document that most legal professionals recommend you have is a relatively short outline that covers three things: who your benefactors will be, who will be the trustee of your estate, and who will look after any dependents you may have.

“There may never be a great time to discuss making your will, but tax time is probably the easiest, because it is the time the majority of your tax planning and compliance is prepared,” Roberto says. While following up tax season with another stressful event might seem like following an annual physical with a root canal, it does not need to be scary. If you already have all of your financial information in order, most of the hard work is done. And don't forget: The process is always a lot less stressful if it's done well before it's needed.

Corktown Detroit

by Domini Clark

*Did you know that there is another Corktown?
Yes, our neighbourhood has an American cousin
– in Detroit.*



photo courtesy Wikipedia

The two communities are eerily similar. For starters, confusions persist over the boundaries. (Sound familiar?) At one time, the Motor City neighbourhood stretched more than a dozen blocks all the way to the Detroit River. The modern-day borders, however, have shrunk considerably.

WHAT ELSE DO WE HAVE IN COMMON?

It's old

The U.S. version gets to wear the official title of "Detroit's Oldest Neighbourhood" (it's even on their street signs). It

dates back to 1834, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Irish ancestry

Paul Szewczyk, a Detroit blogger, found an article from the Sept. 4, 1947, edition of The Detroit News that states: "Detroit's Corktown had its origin in the disastrous [sic] potato famine in Ireland (1845-47), which forced much of the population to emigrate. Many of them found their way to Detroit and settled in the parish of the Holy Trinity Catholic Church, whose boundaries are considered to coincide with those

of Corktown. ... Within this area were some 1,000 Irish families, together with a few Scotch and German families."

It boasts "up-and-comer" status

Just as Corktown Toronto is gaining attention thanks to its recent developments – Corktown Common, new shops and condos – Corktown Detroit is making headlines. In 2012, Bon Appetit deemed it "Detroit's Coolest Nabe," particularly when it came to the food scene. It is "a destination for the city's hungry creative class," the magazine raved, praising a coffee shop, BBQ joint and more. Heck, even marthastewart.com has covered it.

And is close to the city centre

The neighbourhood is a little less than two kilometres southwest of downtown Detroit. And, no surprise, that's part of the appeal for the young people moving in. The Wall Street Journal, in yet another 2012 article singing its praises, wrote: "Although hemmed in by freeways on two sides, Corktown has the advantage of being close to downtown Detroit. Many Victorian-era row houses built by the Irish settlers have been preserved or restored. Public-art projects have filled empty spaces, including an urban miniature-golf course built by local university students set to open next month." (Mini golf?! Okay, on that they have us beat.)

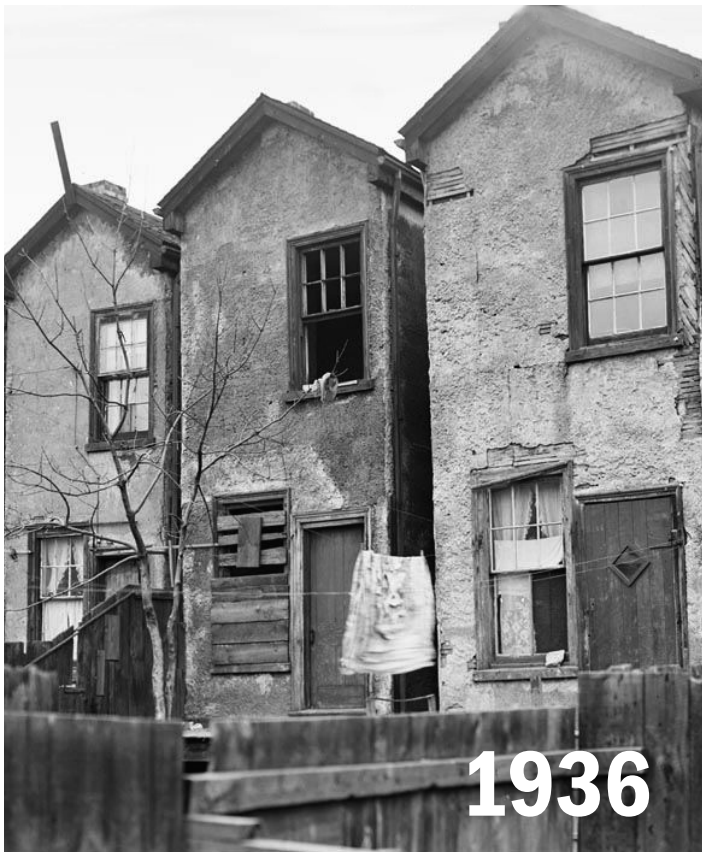
It has a grand old bar filled with music

The "legendary" Corktown Tavern is even older than the neighbourhood itself, opening in 1716. Its website (corktowntavern.com) highlights a mix of live acts on the weekends, plus guest DJs and an "Internet jukebox" throughout the week. One glaring difference? The price of booze. Beer for \$2 and \$3 well drinks? Sounds like it's time for a road trip. Who's with me?

To learn more about Detroit's Corktown, check out Paul Szewczyk's blog at <http://corktownhistory.blogspot.ca>

38-44 Bright Street

by Domini Clark



1936



2014

Neighbours upset with the Good Shepherd Mission

By Concerned Corktowners

I like my neighbourhood. I especially enjoy its closeness to everything this city has to offer and the people who are actively trying to make it a better place. But for years, neighbours of the Good Shepherd Mission have had a difficult time dealing with an unruly crowd that sorely needs supervision, not just inside but outside the building.

For the most part, Corktowners have bitten down hard on their tongues and stayed quiet. In fact this story would have never been written if it were not for the January CRBA meeting, when one of the people who lives and works in Corktown decided to speak out. He was upset at the problems that constantly stem from the mission. Most recently, he was beaten by a patron of that institution – while walking over to the GSM to again complain about the ongoing urination on his property by its patrons. Even in the relative dark of the meeting room, it was clear his face was horribly bruised and swollen. He said his piece and then walked out, leaving behind a video of the incident for everyone to see. Several of us watched it: It is horrific.

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For the last few years, members of this community have been trying to get some traction with city councillor Pam McConnell and other prominent city officials to finally “take back our neighbourhood.” But the efforts have amounted to little action or progress, if any at all. Reasonable requests for change written by Corktown residents have been dismissed.

When situations do arise, the politicians point to the police to get more active, the police respond that it is not their job to police a single institution, and the GSM shrugs its shoulders and usually says “we have no control with what goes on outside our building.” Of course at this rate the status quo has remained and the problems have persisted.

The problems facing residents include: verbal and physical harassment and threats; littering of both food and garbage on roads, sidewalks, gardens and back yards; drug dealing and drug use;

cigarette smoking; indecent exposure and urination; sexual acts in public; trespassing; vandalism to gardens, fences, walls, windows, doors, garage doors – all of which costs the neighbours of the GSM a lot of money to repair; general violence and fighting.

.....
We want and need the mission to realize that they are part of our community and that they directly impact us by inviting so many people into the neighbourhood on a daily basis. We very much want them to start taking responsibility for their patrons and any damage that may result from them.

Sure there are other corners and streets in our city that are far worse off – just look at Queen and Jarvis – but that simply doesn’t mean that what is happening at Queen and Tracy now is acceptable in any way.

It is unfortunate that these issues have not been taken more seriously by our civic leaders or by the GSM. Not one single Corktown resident should ever once have to deal with these issues, let alone on an almost daily basis.

We all want to feel safe in our neighbourhood. We wish to live our lives in peace, and we want to feel safe. It should not be difficult for our elected officials to understand this.

I wrote this one Sunday after being verbally abused by a GSM patron who threatened me with violence. What is it going to take to change our neighbourhood for the better, and to solve these issues once and for all?

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Real estate review

by Socrates Apallas, advocate of Corktown living.

Follow him on Twitter: @SocratesApallas or visit www.LivingToronto.ca

Corktown is undergoing an immense building boom, which is great for people moving into the area as they have more options than they have ever had. Socrates gives his thoughts on some of the alternatives.



Vinegar Lofts
19 River Street
Built in 2008 by Streetcar
Developments
No. of units: 38

This is a conversion/restoration of the 1907 warehouse originally owned and operated by Queen City Vinegar Co. The redesign marries vintage industrial architecture with modern steel and glass: The look is tasteful and timeless.

Residents enjoy upmarket finishes that today's buyers love— and that have helped build Streetcar Developments' reputation for larger, taller and better spaces (at least in most of its early buildings). There is no shortage of expansive glass and polished concrete in this building, along with some authentic post and beam. Layouts are one-of-a-kind and many suites offer spacious outdoor spaces that are perfect for entertaining.

This boutique project is an outstanding example of how developers can keep the spirit of Corktown's history while introducing architectural depth and character to the neighbourhood.



Canary Park Condominiums
Front Street + Bayview Avenue
Occupancy 2016, to be built by
Dundee Kilmer & Waterfront Toronto
No. of units: 437

South of Underpass Park, Canary Park appears to be nearly complete, and the developer has just launched a pre-sell of 437 suites. It is one of the buildings that will house athletes for the 2015 Pan Am Games, so for now you can buy off plans but you won't be able to move in until 2016.

It might be worth the wait. This coveted location overlooks the spectacular Corktown Common and sits adjacent to the planned Front Street promenade. There, you'll be able to lounge for hours at one of the many proposed cafés and restaurant patios.

This project features two mid-rise towers of 12 and 16 storeys, plus a dramatic retail podium. Unfortunately, the units will feature generic builder-grade finishes – but you might be too distracted by the panoramic views to notice. Want more details about this project and its desirable location? Ask me!

POPPED



There are some happy changes on the business side. Fusilli Ristorante is now open on Sundays. The Healthy Road continues to bring in new products as they grow and adapt to customer requests (the dried golden berries are a must try). Atelier Bistro has taken over the spot vacated by the short-lived Que Supper Club. And Platis Cleaners has a new name: Corktown Cleaners. Nice to see a commitment to the neighbourhood!



Most folks don't long for the bad old days when people could smoke indoors – but is there any other way to get people to stop loitering on our sidewalks? Whether it's outside the Good Shepherd Centre on Queen, the methadone clinic on King or one of Corktown's few restaurants, a crowd of cigarette smokers and a cloud of smoke can be intimidating to walk through. And that's to say nothing of all the butts left on the ground. It's not about begrudging these people their right to smoke – just wishing they didn't have to take over the whole sidewalk while they do so.



The Corktown Residents & Business Association has been collaborating with other community groups. The CRBA is involved in RANACA, a “forum on best practices for launching, growing and managing a resident/community/neighbourhood association” that is building connections across Old Toronto. It also instigated an alliance with other nearby neighbourhood associations to organize the federal by-election debate in November. There are already plans for the same groups to work together again on a mayoral debate in 2014.