

# Corktownner

FALL EDITION

CORKTOWN'S SEASONAL NEWSPAPER

SEPTEMBER 2013

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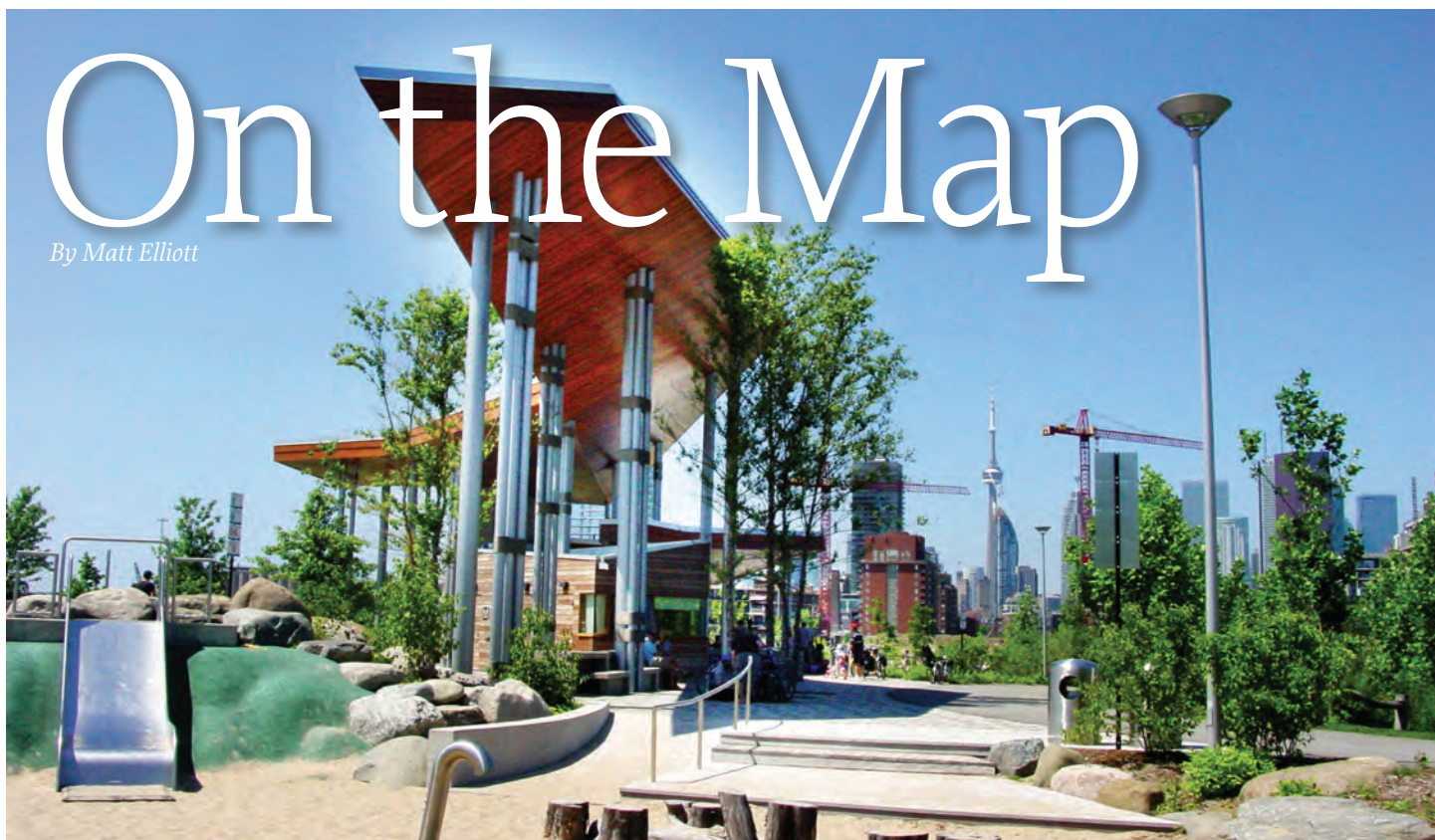
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## On the Map

By Matt Elliott



Corktown Common

Photo by Dan Philips

## “So where is Corktown?”

*It's a common question asked to those of us who call this place home. Despite frequent appearances on up-and-coming neighbourhood lists and a location that plants us firmly in the middle of downtown Toronto, Corktown isn't a name that registers with a lot of people.*

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| October 01, 2013  
CHECK CORKTOWN.CA FOR DETAILS

| November 05, 2013  
FREE AND OPEN TO ALL

But, with a little help from a brand new park, all that is starting to change in a big way.

Corktown Common, the city's newest park, is located next to the rail corridor and accessible from Lower River Street or the Don Trail. It opened to the public for the first time on June 28. Known in the planning stages as Don River Park, Corktown Common is a project of Waterfront Toronto and a key public space for future developments in the West Don Lands.

The 7.3 hectare park was making waves even before its official opening. On June 27, Councillor Pam McConnell led a huge crowd of more than 150 through the park for a special preview as part of her annual neighbourhood walkabout.

*The initial response was overwhelmingly positive. Corktown Common truly is something special.*

Since its official opening, the park has seen a consistent stream of visitors and a ton of media attention. It's been profiled and photographed by CTV News, the Globe & Mail, and thousands of other

visitors who have shared their photos and comments on social media.

*With hot humid temperatures in July, the splash pad was clearly the most popular feature, with energetic kids zipping through the sprinklers as their parents grabbed some shade under the park's pavilion.*

That pavilion, equipped with solar panels, offers a ton of promise, with an outdoor fireplace, a barbecue and a community table. There are even special movable walls that can be pulled around the fireplace area, to help shield the pavilion from cold winds in the winter and allow for year-round use of the space. Waterfront Toronto says people will be able to start booking the pavilion for community events and get-togethers in 2014.

In addition, the state-of-the-art playground includes a variety of kid-tested and kid-approved equipment, including a giant slide that's sometimes so popular that there's a bit of a line-up.

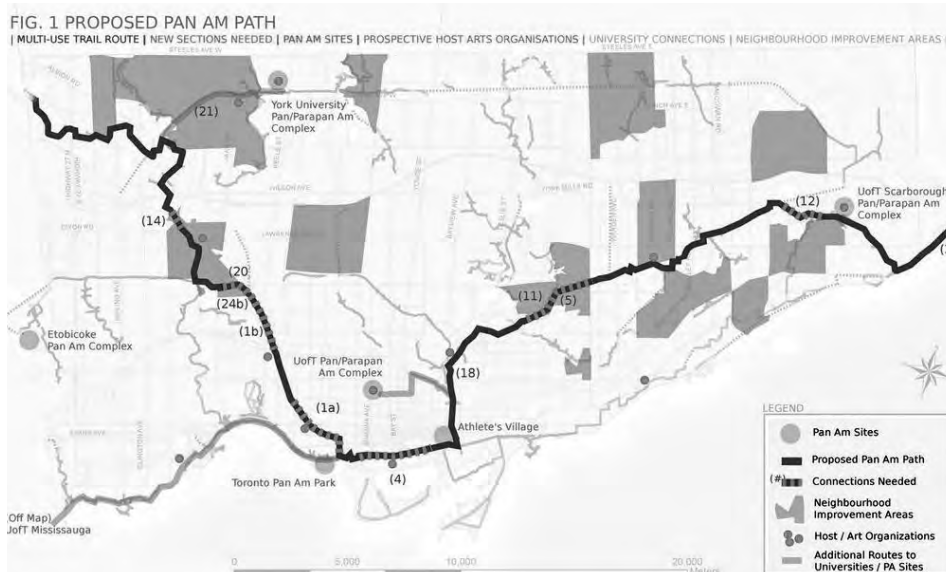
## Pan Am Path connects the Common

The connection from the Don Trail to Corktown Common is a great feature for runners and cyclists, but it's set to get even better with the construction of the Pan Am Path.

The Path is designed to be a legacy project for the Pan Am/ParaPan Am Games, something that Toronto residents can enjoy long after the games have departed the city. Envisioned as an 80 kilometre "active living trail" traversing the entire city, the path will see both new trail connections and the refurbishment of existing trails with improved paving, signage, fencing and the installation of public art at key spots along the route.

*For Corktown, this means that Corktown Common will work as the perfect gateway to an improved Don trail, which runs from Lake Shore all the way up to Taylor Creek Park and beyond.*

The Pan Am Path was strongly endorsed by Toronto City Council on July 19, with funding still to be determined through the city's 2014 budget process. The Pan Am Legacy project also proposes an expansion of the BIXI bike sharing system to include new stations in the area between Queen Street and the rail line, from Parliament Street to the Don River.



Pan Am Path map and Don River Trail

Image courtesy of Friends of the Pan Am Path





**Don River Trail**

Photo by Dan Philips

But this isn't just kids' stuff. Corktown Common also features a winding system of pathways, lined with ponds and wetlands. There are vast stretches of lawn perfect for reading or throwing a ball around. And throughout the park are various places where you can just sit and look at one of the most impressive skyline views anywhere in the city – one that gives a clear picture of the whole new part of Corktown being built for the Pan Am/ParaPan Am Games in 2015.

From atop Corktown's newest park, the future looks good.

### **Having Fun, Staying Dry**

Corktown Common is more than just a park. For long-time Corktowners who have had to nervously watch the waters of the Don River rise with every major storm, fearful of what might happen to their basements, the park is a reason for calm.

Beneath the pathways and playgrounds is a new landform designed to protect neighbourhoods from rising flood waters. The 8.5-metre high berm is so effective at quelling flood waters from the Don that it should withstand even a "500-year storm" – the kind of raging beast that only hits once every 500 years.

Despite record rains hitting Toronto on July 8, Corktown Common was, as expected, unaffected by the waters.

### **More to Come**

Corktown Common is not yet complete. After remaining open through to the end of the summer, the park will close again in the fall to allow for completion of the so-called "wet side" of the park. Once that's done, the size of the park will effectively double, with a whole new network of trails featuring native planting, wetlands and a dog run.

When complete, the park will stretch north, past the overpasses and ultimately connect to Queen and King Street, via the land that used to serve as the vehicle entrance to Bayview Avenue. The already-open Underpass Park and the future Lawren Harris Square also add to the public space. The park is projected to re-open, with the new section, in Summer 2014. After that, there will be one more public closure – to allow athletes from the Pan

Am Games to enjoy the park in summer 2015 – before park-goers finally get to enjoy the park on a permanent basis.

When all development is complete, access to the park will greatly improve with both stair-free access from the Don River trail for cyclists and access along Mill and Front Streets, which will make things a whole lot easier for Distillery District residents.

### **Bringing a Neighbourhood Back to Life**

Corktown Common got its name as the result of a naming contest organized by The Grid and Waterfront Toronto. After a six-week campaign, which saw almost 450 suggestions and 1,500 votes, a selection committee chose the winning name.

.....

*The name "Corktown Common" was submitted by local resident Tedd Konya, who told the selection committee that he supported the name because it honours "the neighborhood that was broken up with the highway ramps and is now coming back to life thanks to redevelopment projects like the park."*

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With a busy playground and splash pad, amazing views and a growing number of impressed visitors, there are definitely signs of life in Corktown Common. **C**



**Enjoying the new park**

Photo by Dan Philips

# Raincheck!

by Mary Wentz

*How often do we give a thought to the agonized anticipation (or is it dread?) of producers, directors, artists, musicians, and all those who create the magic of live theatre, as summer approaches, and productions move from the indoor cocoon of home-based theatres or galleries into the uncertain world of Toronto's outdoor spaces?*

The 52nd open-air art exhibition on Nathan Phillips Square was lucky enough to come ahead of the disastrous downpour that broke all the rainfall records on July 8 this year. Not so, the annual "Fringe", the biggest theatre festival in Toronto, which was running from July 1st to 14th. There were 148 shows in 35 different venues, and for the many participating small companies, who are all on the tightest of budgets, the loss of even one performance can mean the end of a dream.

"The show must go on!" is the actor's motto, but with the stage flooded and no electricity, there's very little one can do. The "Fringe", however, survived, as companies co-operated, and helped to keep things going. There was even an example from one of the "big guys", Mervish Productions, who loaned one of their rehearsal spaces to the run-away hit of the festival: "The Musical of Musicals: the Musical!" who had lost their Monday performance, and without power, were threatened with losing the Tuesday show as well. The word went out, the Mervish space was cleared, chairs were brought in, the audience came, the show went on and ended in a standing ovation!

Now let's look forward to a new season in our own Corktown companies!

The most exciting event may be Soulpepper's promise to stage Tony Kushner's "Angels in America" – both parts: "Millennium Approaches" and "Perestroika" – for the first time in 20 years. At its first production, it was described as "daring and dazzling! The most ambitious American play of our time: an epic that ranges from earth to heaven!" (Jack Kroll in Newsweek.) Frank Rich in the New York Times called

it "A vast, miraculous play... provocative, witty and deeply upsetting... a searching and radical rethinking of American political drama..."

It will be interesting to see if the new Toronto production will have the same impact today!

The Alumnae Theatre Company, which is now counting down to the celebration of its centenary year in 2019, is promising "An innovative 2013-2014 season..." in its home-base theatre on Berkeley.

The season opens on September 20 with "The Underpants" by Carl Sternheim, a German farce from 1910 in a modern adaptation by Steve Martin, to be followed by a new play event "FireWorks", with 3 new plays plus workshops created by members of the Club. The "classic" MainStage production in January, 2014, will be "The Lady's not for Burning" by Christopher Fry, the 26th annual New Ideas Festival as usual in March, and finally the Pulitzer Prize-winning "Rabbit Hole" by David Lindsay-Abaire.

The French Theatre of Toronto is once again sharing theatre space with Canadian Stage at 22 Berkeley, and once again more than half the performances will have English surtitles.

.....  
*Guy Mignault, the Artistic Director, speaks for the Company as he says "we love to see people in the house that mirror more and more the cultural mosaic of our great city".*

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The season opens on October 23rd and there are seven plays to choose from, so why not give it a shot and see how much you remember of the French you learned in school! One production "Cher Menteur" (Dear Liar) is even a translation from English, based on letters exchanged between George Bernard Shaw and Beatrice Campbell often called "the British Sarah Bernhardt." The text has been arranged by Jerome Kilty and translated by Jean Cocteau, and to play the famous couple we have Louise Marleau and Albert Millaire, two of Quebec's most famous actors.

So there you have it, a wide range of rich and enlightening theatre opportunities in the Corktown area – all within a short walk of residences. Mark your calendars and order your tickets, it's going to be a wonderful theatrical season.

# Development Report

by Arthur Sinclair

## Richmond-Adelaide Cycle Track Study

The City of Toronto has initiated a study to investigate the potential for physically separated bicycle lanes, known as “cycle tracks” running between Bathurst Street and Sherbourne. Part of this study involves looking for potential interconnects with other bike infrastructure, including the Don River pathway. A public open house was held on June 25 and 26 at City Hall. The Corktown Residents & Business Association suggested that the “orphaned” space between Richmond and Adelaide, east of Parliament, be used as a possible connection to Don River trails via future bike lanes in the West Don Lands.

## Phase 2 of Underpass Park

At a meeting of the West Don Lands Construction Liaison Committee, it was announced that Phase 2 of Underpass Park (west of St. Lawrence Street) is awaiting permanent power from Old Eastern Avenue. The construction team has informed Waterfront Toronto that this will be provided later this year to allow this section of the park to be opened.

## Gardiner East Environmental Assessment

The long dormant Environmental Assessment part of the Gardiner Expressway & Lake Shore Boulevard Reconfiguration Environmental Assessment & Urban Design Study completed its public consultation on June 28. This study is to develop ideas for the future of the Expressway and Lake Shore Boulevard between Jarvis and Don Roadway. At a meeting of the West Don Lands Construction Liaison Committee, Waterfront Toronto indicated that the process will now move more quickly. More information is at [www.gardinereast.ca](http://www.gardinereast.ca)

## Front Street Reconstruction

The City will be carrying out road resurfacing, reconstruction and street-scaping on Front Street East from Jarvis Street to Parliament Street. The construction was expected to start July 31 and end November 20 of this year.

## Gardiner Expressway Rehabilitation

Corktown residents are likely already aware that the City of Toronto began work to repair the Gardiner Expressway, from Jarvis Street to the Don Roadway, on July 22. Work will continue until December 2014. During the full 18-month construction period, there will be short-term lane restrictions and closures required on the Gardiner Expressway and Lake Shore Boulevard in both directions, Jarvis Street to the eastbound Gardiner Expressway ramp, and the westbound Gardiner Expressway to Jarvis and Sherbourne Street ramps. Most of the short-term lane closures will take place at night though there will also be long-term lane closures on the expressway.

## Sing Tao Building

Great Gulf has formally applied to amend the zoning at the Sing Tao site (Power and Richmond Streets) to permit a 22-storey mixed-use building with commercial uses below and residential above, and a total of 431 units. This proposal is very preliminary and will likely go through several iterations before any construction begins.

## Don Valley Parkway/Queen Street Bridge Beautification Project

City Council recently approved the use of Section 37 development funds by the Riverside District Business Improvement Area for lighting beautification of the DVP/ Queen Street Bridge. The beautification and lighting of the bridge will enhance the attractiveness of this iconic bridge in time for the Pan-Am Games. And will provide a wonderful welcome to Corktown, on the west side of the bridge.

## Cherry Street/Sumach and Eastern Avenue Reconstructions

Waterfront Toronto reports that full closure of Cherry Street from Lakeshore Blvd to Eastern Avenue will extend likely to early fall. Sumach Street construction is scheduled to continue until October 2014.

## What's up in Corktown?

The Corktown Residents & Business Association is a not-for-profit and non-commercial volunteer neighbourhood organization. We follow the latest developments in Corktown on a wide range of topics and serve as a liaison between Corktown, the City and other key organizations.

The CRBA is an inclusive organization open to all local residents and businesses. Join us and add your voice to the community discussion!

**Learn more:** [www.corktown.ca](http://www.corktown.ca)  
**email:** [info@corktown.ca](mailto:info@corktown.ca) **Facebook:**  
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## Next Corktown meetings!

Oct. 1st, Nov. 5th

Join your neighbours at 7PM on the first Tuesday of every month (except August) in the back room of the Dominion on Queen, at Queen St. and Sumach. Check [www.corktown.ca](http://www.corktown.ca) for agendas and other details.





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# A Historic Worker's Cottage Lives On

by Ryan Kohls

*When Jaan Kittask purchased the tiny worker's cottage at 32 Bright St., he not only bought a home, he also took ownership of a part of Toronto's history. Located in Corktown, in one of Toronto's oldest and most historic neighbourhoods, the tiny home was built in 1861 as a cottage for workers in the surrounding factories.*

"The area around Bright, King and Parliament Streets wasn't heavily populated until the coming of the Irish Catholics escaping the Potato Famine in 1848 to about 1850," says Bruce Bell, a renowned Toronto historian. "Most of these worker cottages were only one storey and were built for just one family, however, after the great Irish immigration sometimes up to 10 families were crammed into these small homes."

Today, the cottage is the only one left on the street, but, as you can see from the photo, it's managed to maintain its quaint exterior character.

Frontage is slightly over 20 feet, and provides its owner with about 900 square feet of living space, including the basement. From front to back, the entire property lot is 115 feet deep.

Stepping inside the house, one can hardly imagine it was once filled with poor Irish immigrants. Clad in modern trimmings and beautiful artwork, the interior is a far cry from its humble, impoverished origins. It also has a newly dug out basement that serves as an office and bedroom.

*"Originally I was looking to buy a condo, or a loft, in the area," says Kittask. "But, my real-estate agent encouraged me to look at this place, and I fell in love immediately."*



Taking the vows



The tiny and influential worker's cottage located at 32 Bright St.

### Shaping Bright Street

For such a small place this little house has actually had an historical impact on the neighbourhood. “The story I heard was that in 1870, a developer wanted to buy up all the cottages on the street, knock them down, build townhouses, and create a newer Bright Street,” says Kittask. “The guy who owned this place back then didn’t want to sell it or get rid of it. Because the developer had to keep this house in mind, the street was built in a curved shape.”

On moving in, Jaan began expanding the house by digging out the basement and creating some of his own unique history on Bright Street. In 2011, he married his love, Erin, on an unexpectedly warm and sunny October afternoon. The ceremony took place on Bright Street, in front of their little cottage, with about 120 guests.

Since then, Jaan’s family has also expanded, making the house extra-cozy. As well as Erin and Jaan, the family now includes 1-year-old daughter Petra, and a 5-year-old dog, Nolla. Jaan and Erin are considering building a modern extension on the back, which would keep the integrity of the cottage and make the home both the oldest and newest on the street. A Corktown architectural firm, Agathom, has created a vision for the

addition and the City has approved the plans. It’s now up to Jaan and Erin to decide whether to invest in this or to, eventually, sell and move on.

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*For now, they say: “We love our house very much. It’s hard to let go, but as our family grows, we will need a bit more space. We are more than happy and comfortable with what we have right now though.”*

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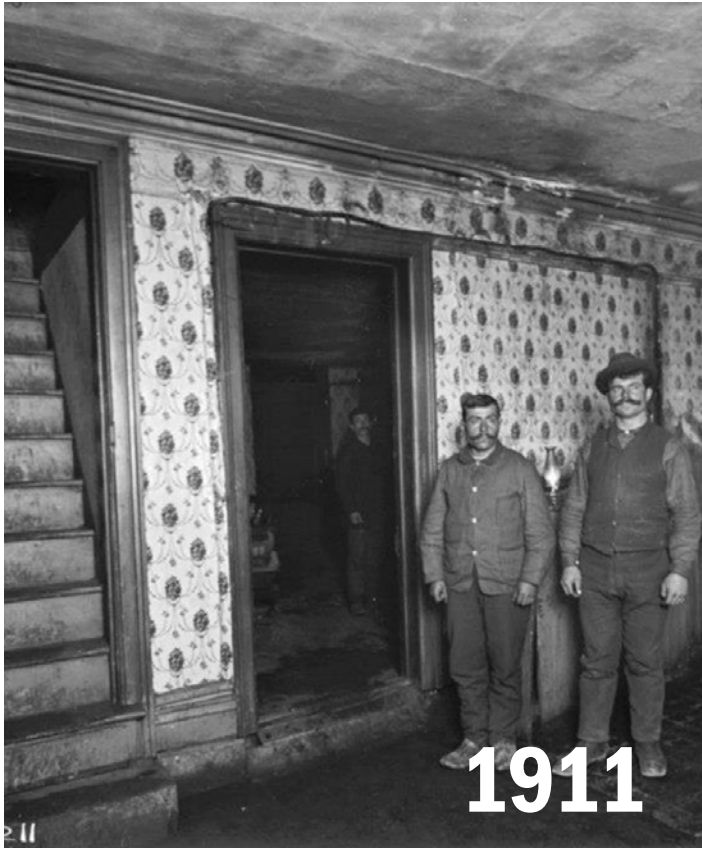
Although many of the workers cottages in Toronto have been demolished, or refurbished, Bruce Bell believes maintaining a few them is essential. “So much of our physical history has been destroyed, so having any part of our Irish Catholic past still standing can only help tell the story of how the Irish suffered on their arrival”, says Bell. “It’s also a story of how, against all odds and unimaginable prejudice, the Irish came here and survived. Having those cottage still standing is a testament to those times.”

Comfortably ensconced in his little piece of Toronto history, Jaan Kittask agrees wholeheartedly!



# 318 King St. East

By Karyn MacEwen



1911



2013

## Café Haiku Challenge

by Alex Bartlett

Recognize this dish? On which Corktown restaurant's menu will you find it? The poem and photo are clues. Identify the restaurant and the dish and win a gift certificate to the restaurant for the value of the dish.

*Hot green Thai chillies,  
Ginger, chicken, Cilantro  
no Margherita*



Enter by emailing the name of the dish and the Corktown restaurant that offers it to [editor@corktown.ca](mailto:editor@corktown.ca) or go to [corktown.ca](http://corktown.ca) and look for Café Haiku. Don't forget to include your name and email address, or phone so we can track you down if you win!

The winner will be chosen at random from all correct entries. Corktown.ca is also where you'll find previous Café Haikus dishes and winners revealed.

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# Café Haiku Winners

## Café Haiku Challenge #1

*The spring 2013 issue of the Corktownner offered this haiku as a clue to an appetizing dish served in a Corktown restaurant:*

*mussels, shrimp, scallops  
see tart tomatoes, fresh herbs  
heartly, rich pasta*



**Spaghetti pescatore from Fusilli Ristorante**

The winner was Corktown resident Martin Gagne who wowed us by submitting his own haiku:

*landed sea creatures  
from water to my warm plate  
nested in pasta*

...to describe Spaghetti Pescatore: spaghetti with shrimp and scallops, mussels, baby clams in a white wine, tomato sauce & basil – a delicious specialty at Fusilli Ristorante, 531 Queen Street E.

Martin has won a gift certificate for the value of this dish (\$18) from Giuseppe, owner of Fusilli Ristorante, 416-214-5148. Thanks Giuseppe and congratulations Martin!

## Café Haiku Challenge #2

*Our summer 2013 issue provided the following haiku clue – your job – identify the wonderful restaurant:*

*an informal James  
eats a toasted perfection,  
yells for more napkins*



**The Jimmy Screech sandwich from Morning Glory Cafe**

Randomly chosen from several correct submissions, Joe Harmatiuk identified the Jimmy Screech, a delectable ham and cheese sandwich with an egg fried right into the bread from Morning Glory Café, 457 King St E. 416-703-4728.

An honourable mention goes to Martin Gagné, who again sent a haiku with his entry:

*the hen gives an egg  
but the pig is committed  
to my morning meal*

Too true, Martin!

Enjoy your Jimmy Screech, Joe, courtesy of Morning Glory. And good luck to all on the next Café Haiku Challenge!

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to hire a local realtor,  
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about resale homes in  
and around Corktown  
or just say hi.

- Socrates

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# Real Estate Review

By Socrates Apallas, advocate of Corktown living. Follow him on Twitter: @SocratesApallas or visit [www.SocratesApallas.com](http://www.SocratesApallas.com).

*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.*



**Clear Spirit Condominiums**  
**70 Distillery Lane**  
**Built by Cityscape & Dundee Realty Corporation, 2012**  
**No. of units: 347**

Look up - towering over the neighbourhood, the newly completed Clear Spirit Condominium can be seen from pretty much any angle in Corktown. Here are 40 floors of endless glass walls, stellar views and impressive engineering. But will future buyers be prepared to make some sacrifices to live in the heart of the Distillery? Agreed, much about this building exceeded my expectations but sadly, it fell short on interior finishes. Units are priced at over \$600 per sq. ft, and yet this builder chose to outfit these suites with the type of dull standard features that can be found in many lesser-priced units currently under construction throughout our city. Over the last couple of years, Corktown condo buyers have become accustomed to upgraded polished finishes and higher ceilings found as a standard in pretty much every other recent neighbourhood project built by local Streetcar or Lamb Developments. I wonder how Clear Spirit will compare in ten years? Will

suites feel dated or will buyers turn a blind eye in order to live in the heart of a cultural hub? Or maybe the average condo buyer may never notice the interior details I'm referring to. My take is simple - it's 2013 and ugly popcorn ceilings just shouldn't fly!



**Knitting Mill Lofts**  
**426 Queen Street East**  
**Built By Paul De Haas, 1997**  
**Number of units: 28**

Located between Tracy and Trefann Sts, the Knitting Mill Lofts offer ample space, stunning hardwood, soaring ceilings, a freight elevator and best part of all -- suites are within your budget! Affordability however, demands its own price. While the Knitting Mill Lofts are located a few doors east of the Good Shepherd Ministries, these unique suites provide the framework for a special building with a real sense of community. I believe any suite here is an excellent purchase if you're a forward-thinking buyer who has trust that this part of Queen Street East is, indeed, in the process of gentrifying.

THE GOOD AND THE BAD

## POPPED



Corktown Common is such a wonderful park, that we're going to give this a pop of champagne, even though the park will already be closed by the time you read this. We enjoyed our two months of splashing in the splash pad, listening to frogs croak, zipping down the slide, lazing on the grass, and using the nice, clean, new public washroom. We're a bit sad that we can't continue to wander through the park through the fall and winter, but we're already looking forward to saying hello to the ducks and frogs next spring when it re-opens!



Just when we thought road closures and construction around Corktown couldn't get any worse we heard that the Gardiner is being fixed - for 18 months! It is pretty bad planning to announce half a billion dollars for fixing the Gardiner and Lakeshore at the same time that the government figures out whether to keep the section between Jarvis and the DVP. And it's disgruntling for us that parts of the Gardiner and Lakeshore will be under construction from Jarvis to the eastern edge of Corktown for the next year and a half.



The first phases of River City are pretty much done and residents are moving into the cool, modern condo buildings at Lower River and King. And the seniors Toronto Community Housing buildings across the street from River City are also almost ready to move into. It is good to see a mix of architectural styles and demographics in the newest part of Corktown, keeping a similar mix and diversity to the older, established parts of our neighbourhood. Now let's hope for a great mix of retail - including groceries? - on the ground floors of the new buildings!