



## RARA WINTER/SPRING 2021 NEWSLETTER

A message from RARA co-president and long time McMaster resident, Pym Buitenhuis:

"We live in challenging times, but your RARA executive has continued to meet throughout the pandemic. While we have tried to keep the spirit of the republic alive and well, this time has not been easy for any of us. Our hearts and minds are with you. Let's hope we are in the home stretch. Here's to a bold new day in this glorious republic and may we all feel grateful for living here!" – *Pym Buitenhuis*

### Plans for the Pump House

Barb Sampson, long-time Pump House resident (40 Rathnelly Avenue, next to the Pump Park), sadly moved from the Republic after a full life of raising her sons and sharing her home to many students from far away. For the past 30 years, Barb turned her kitchen over every Rathnelly Day as a staging ground for our epic community breakfasts. We will forever be grateful for her contribution.

The house is now being used as an office for Toronto Water, which plans to convert it to a space for equipment to monitor and maintain water supply.

The green space around the house has been made available to the Republic for community gardens and we have asked that part of the basement be made accessible to us for a range of local uses.

Meanwhile, the north portion of the High Level Pumping Station is being considered as a space for the station's back-up power generator.

For more details, please refer to the project's website: [www.toronto.ca/HLPower](http://www.toronto.ca/HLPower)

### Green Line Park

The city of Toronto has started a community consultation about converting abandoned land on the north side of the CN railway line that runs parallel to Dupont St. The goal is to create a continuous park from Macpherson Ave. all the way to Caledonia Rd. (west of Dufferin St.).

The first stage of the park begins near us on the west side of Poplar Plains Rd, just as

Davenport Rd. curves to the left. The visual language of the park established in this first phase will continue for the rest of the segments. As a result, it has been a pleasure for RARA to be part of these early decisions.



To learn more about this project, please explore the report and next community consultation on the City of Toronto website.

Go to [www.toronto.ca](http://www.toronto.ca) and do a search for The Green Line Implementation Report July 2019.

### **Volunteers Needed for RARA Executive**

We still have an opening for a new Street Rep for our little section of Avenue Road between Poplar Plains Crescent and Macpherson Ave. And we would welcome any community member skilled in Squarespace or MailChimp to help us to raise our digital game in 2021.

If you are interested in getting involved, please email Pym Buitenhuis at [pym.buitenhuis@gmail.com](mailto:pym.buitenhuis@gmail.com) for more information.

### **Update on Avenue Road Safety Coalition**

RARA was a key participant in a Safety Awareness day held in late September last year to draw attention to the need for wider sidewalks on Avenue Road. The group placed signs along the road and held a well-attended news conference, resulting in great media coverage.

Local councilors Josh Matlow and Mike Layton congratulated ARSC for the successful event and showed support for presenting a motion to the Toronto and East York Community Council that would order city staff to do a pilot project on wider sidewalks and report on its feasibility. The staff report is expected in the new year.

### **Memoirs of a Resident of the Republic of Rathnelly**

*Boondoggles: Travels of a Restless Professor, by G. E. Bentley, Jr.*

RARA Newsletter readers may be interested to learn of a book published by a long-time resident. It will be a welcome read during the pandemic for those who miss traveling to exotic places. A free copy awaits the first person to contact Pym Buitenhuis, [pym.buitenhuis@gmail.com](mailto:pym.buitenhuis@gmail.com).

Jerry Bentley lived in the Republic of Rathnelly for 53 years from 1964 until his death in 2017. He enjoyed participating in the Republic's original secession from Canada in 1967 and living in the leafy neighbourhood, which allowed him to walk to and from the University of Toronto campus.



While Jerry, his wife Beth and their children Sarah and Julia were happy residents of the Republic, he was also an inveterate traveler and raconteur extraordinaire. He wrote a memoir of his travels around the world, published by Friesen Press in 2018, in which he recounts his experiences teaching in places like Algeria, India and China, as well as other adventures from Italy to Australia and Tanzania.

Jerry's daughter Julia, who recently returned from a diplomatic posting abroad, currently lives in the Bentley house on MacPherson Ave. with her daughter. His other daughter Sarah lives in Paris with her husband.

For readers interested in reading *Boondoggles*, you can order it on [Amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca), where the Kindle edition is \$6.54 and the paperback starts at \$46.65.

### **Upcoming Winter & Spring Events**

With the cold weather upon us, we want to take this opportunity to remind our neighbours to “be nice and clear your ice and snow”. Clear sidewalks mean safe sidewalks for our residents, young and old. And for parents of young children, please clear up small toys that may end up on sidewalks and laneways, potentially harming pedestrians and wildlife.

With current and continuing Covid-19 restrictions, RARA won't be able to host some of our traditional events, such as a Community Pub Night at the Pour House or the Easter Egg Hunt in the Pump Park. And Rathnelly Day, scheduled for June 2021, will also need to be postponed until June 2022.

Good news - we are planning to hold our annual Community Cleanup Day of the pump park, green spaces and laneways on Saturday, April 24. We will gather at Hardy's Corner at 10:00 a.m. and hope you can join us. We feel this smaller participation, outdoor activity can be coordinated safely. Remember to come armed with a rake, gardening gloves/disposable gloves, leaf bags and garbage bags!

Coinciding with the Spring clean-up will be the launch of a community lawn sign campaign to show our collective concern about a proposed condo development on Avenue Rd at Macpherson. Signs calling for responsible development in our community will be available for purchase that morning from (10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.) at a cost of \$10. We hope you will all drop by and purchase one. We will print 50 signs, so get there early so you can to purchase your lawn sign.

### **Repurposing Black Take-out Containers for Good**

Have take-out black containers and want them to be put to good use? Drop them off at 29 Poplar Plains Crescent in the milk box at the side of the house and they will be reused to feed homeless people warm meals.



### **Renew your RARA Membership for 2021**

It's time to renew your annual membership. A one-year membership is just \$25 or choose the two-year membership at \$50. The Rathnelly Area Residents Association annual membership has some great perks, plus you can get paperless delivery of the RARA newsletter to keep you abreast of important things happening in the community like traffic safety, rail safety and public works projects. RARA members are invited to join the Republic of Rathnelly Facebook community group – a private moderated site that complements our @rara\_tweets Twitter feed and web presence.

Go to [www.rathnellyrepublic.com](http://www.rathnellyrepublic.com) to be directed to the membership registration page, where you can pay online. While there, you can check out our website to learn of upcoming events, sign up for the RARA newsletter, see who your RARA street reps are and learn more about our colourful history. Think you might already have purchased a multi-year membership? Just check *Member Info* under *Resident Association* tab on the website for a list of members in good standing for 2021.

We hope you found this issue of the Rathnelly Republic newsletter helpful. Have a topic you'd like to see profiled in the Summer/Fall edition or other community engagement idea to share? Send us an email at [info@rathnellyrepublic.com](mailto:info@rathnellyrepublic.com). We'd love to hear from you.

**Long Live the Republic!**