

GOOD WORK NEWS

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

Issue 94

September 2008

Subscription: A Donation Towards our Work

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Alternatives to the Overdeveloped Society

By Joe Mancini

Politicians, fearing political backlash, would never question the overdeveloped, bloated infrastructure of North American society. It is not considered polite to identify the waste and questionable work practices that result in what Leopold Kohr described as **The Overdeveloped Nations**. In 1959, he warned that bureaucracies of both the private and public sector have a fierce appetite, that like an addict, are dependant on ever growing injections of resources and money. For example, witness the recent actions of the U.S. Federal Reserve.

As the election begins there is little real concern about the environment. Will anyone mention that the era of cheap fossil fuel is ending? Meanwhile, the realities of global warming are written all over the growing stress levels on Mother Earth. The people of Haiti have been bashed by hurricane force winds and rain at least three times this year, while Americans spend more than the Haitian GNP on protecting one city – New Orleans.

There is unprecedented melting of the Artic Ice Shield. The desperate destruction of forests and natural areas for paper, minerals and urban sprawl continues unabated. In much of North America, overconsumption is obvious. The cause of the growing ecological crisis has become institutionalized in our way of living.

As Wendell Berry says, "We will keep on consuming, spending, wasting and driving, as before, at any cost to anything and everybody but ourselves. This belief was always indefensible – the real names of global warming are Waste and Greed – and by now it is manifestly foolish."

There is a cultural divide in North American society. On one hand are those large institutions who are either overwhelmed by debt or those who benefit fantastically from the uneconomical growth – think of

the banks, car manufacturers and high tech companies who come up with ever ingenious methods of keeping production expanding. On the other hand, there are those who yearn for a more peaceful society, one where people can work at satisfying jobs that productively contribute to a local economy. This latter group is almost silent. They have no political voice. As far as I can see, outside of David Suzuki, the idea of an absolute reduction in consumption does

not have champions in the public arena.

The public imagination has no concept of reduced consumption of manufactured goods and services because, let's face it, cheap fossil fuel has made travel, shipping and materials so inexpensive that the majority have been well served by the endless parade of consumer items. When inflation threatened to undermine cheap production, globalization was conveniently embraced to export production to low wage countries. This trick of economic specialization replaced North American labour with the cost of cheap transportation, closing factory after factory, while relocating production in Mexico, China, South Korea etc. Who really cares about the abstract environment or

decent local jobs when the technological wonder world that we have been served up is accessible to at least 80% of our population?

Politicians will never propose job destroying policies aimed at reducing economic consumption, especially in the name of greenhouse gas reductions. Reducing our ecological footprint within our consumerist-job-driven society needs a public voice. Below are three ways of understanding why a reduction would help our overdeveloped economy. We would do well to realize how much extra equipment we carry around, recognize how growing bureaucracy strangles useful activity, and learn how much wasted consumption is built into our trans-



Tokyo, Japan



Scandinavia



Leuven, Belgium



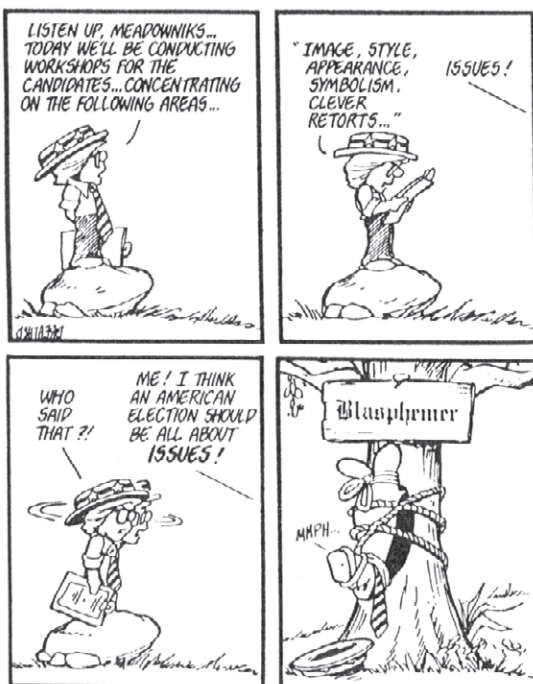
Amsterdam, Netherlands



Niigata, Japan

If They Can Do It, Why Can't We?

The photos above show bicycle lots at train stations around the world. Even the snow does not deter Scandinavian cyclists!



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Twenty-Third Year

Issue 94

September 2008

Good Work News

Good Work News was first produced in September 1984. It is published four times a year by The Working Centre and St. John's Kitchen as a forum of opinions and ideas on work and unemployment. There is a circulation of 9,500 copies. Subscription: a donation towards our work.

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By Dave Thomas

It was a fine sunny day when 170 golfers hit the links at Foxwood Golf Course on August 20, raising more than \$18,000 in support of The Working Centre and St. John's Kitchen.

For the past 19 years, the CAW has been a major supporter of The Working Centre's Golf Tournament. They are always ready to contribute the time of committee members, many prizes and most of all, encouraging golfers. With all the challenges facing the auto and auto parts industry this year, our friends were undeterred and showed a deep commitment to making this fundraising event happen. Once again, we had excellent participation from CAW Locals from across Ontario who showed their dedication to community based support for unemployed workers.

There was a good spirit of camaraderie that filled the day and the golfers enjoyed the chance to be outside in the sun. The top four-some prize went to Brad Livingston, Peter DeRuiter, Dave Leitch and Jamie Smith. The top women's quartet consisted of Janis Turenne, Kim Carter, Cheryl Mederios and Jill Turenne. The top mixed team of Jay Traynor, Pete Antaya, Brad Hanke and Mary Lou MacDonald also received trophies.

Support from generous community donors meant there were prizes for every golfer, and a number of special prize opportunities. H.L. Staebler Company Limited and

KOOL FM provided opportunities to win \$10,000 for a hole-in-one (but alas no one won). Other popular competitions included "closest to the keg" courtesy of Brick Brewing, a 50/50 contest, and chances to win hot air balloon rides from CTV and CHYM. A new competition this year was the chipping contest, with contestants entering a draw for a 42" plasma TV, courtesy of Christie Digital Systems and Edcom Multimedia Products. The raffle prizes included, luggage from TLC Travel and Terri Lynne Woods, a bomber jacket from Union Benefit Plan Services, mitre saw courtesy of UA 527, a rolling tool bag from Canadian Tire.

This year's MC was Tammy Heller, a long-time CAW staffer and member of the tournament organizing committee. Tammy took on this job with great vigour and kept the evening on track and the mood light as people enjoyed their dinner which was catered by Bingemans.

The success of our tournament is largely due to the dedication of our committee members. Special thanks to Tim Mitchell, Rob Pyne, Paul Roeder (CAW Local 1524); Tammy Heller and Jim Woods (CAW National Office); Steve Longeway and Vladimir Malidzanovic (Bell); Frank Curnew and Steve Sachs (Labour Program of Waterloo Region); Chris Riehl and Russ Jessop (UA 527); Mike Thibodeau and Fred Murovec (Lear Kitchener); and Fred Walker (Bingemans).

We are also grateful for the continuing support of sponsors Lear Corporation, CAW National Office and Bell, as well as patron MTD Products Limited.

With another successful year of the Golf Tournament, we extend a deep thank you to all those who continue to support our work.



Exploring Native Canadian Film

Come see and discuss films made by and about Native Canadians... FREE!

October 15th - October 19th

at 7:00pm daily at

Kitchener City Hall, Council Chamber

Wednesday, October 15th

- Life Givers: Honouring Our Elders and Children (5min, 17sec)
- Oh Mother, Where Art Thou? (5min, 13sec)
- The Power of a Horse (4min, 43sec)
- His Guidance (Okiskinotahewewin) (6min, 37sec)
- Hooked Up NDNs Online (6min, 15sec)
- Two Spirited (6min, 47sec)
- Walking Alone (Censored) (6min, 43sec)
- Apples and Indians (5min, 6sec)
- My Indian Name (6min, 29sec)
- Nganawendaanan Nde'ing (I Keep Them in My Heart) (6min, 20sec)
- Patrick Ross (5min, 44sec)
- ati-wicahsin (It's Getting Easier) (6min, 25sec)

Thursday, October 16th

Club Native

Director: Tracey Deer
Length: 78 min.
Released: 2008
Rating: R

Club Native looks into the history and present-day reality of Aboriginal identity. Moving stories from a range of characters from the Kahnawake Reserve reveal the divisive legacy of more than a hundred years of discriminatory and sexist government policy.

Friday, October 17th

Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance

Director: Alanis Obomsawin
Length: 119 min.
Released: 1993
Rating: R

This documentary about a confrontation in Kanehsatake and the village of Oka, Québec takes you into the action of an age-old aboriginal struggle. The result is a portrait of the people behind the barricades, providing insight into the Mohawks' unyielding determination to protect their land.

Saturday, October 18th

Atanarjuat the Fast Runner

Director: Zacharias Kunuk
Length: 161 min.
Released: 2000
Rating: R

This adapted Inuit legend tells the story of a small community of nomadic Inuit whose lives are disrupted when an unknown shaman creates rivalries between families. Two brothers emerge to challenge the evil order: Amaqjuaq, the Strong One, and Atanarjuat, the Fast Runner.

Sunday, October 19th

Tkaronto

Director: Shane Belcourt
Length: 105 min.
Released: 2007
Rating: R

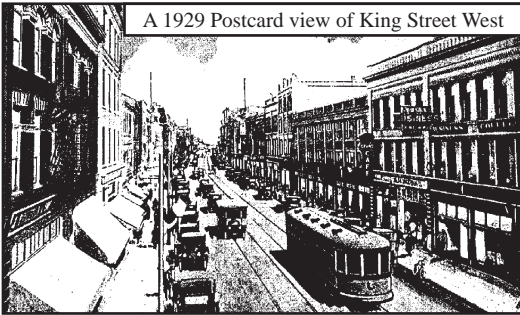
Tkaronto is an exploration of two people caught in the urban crossroads. The two discover a connection when their paths' cross in Tkaronto (the original Mohawk word for "Toronto"). An attraction develops as both are drawn together by a mutual search for meaning in their urban existence.

Walking Through Memories

By Leslie Morgenson

I was joyfully spurred on to begin walking to work for many reasons including my need for exercise, but mostly I was feeling as if there was something I was missing by not walking. Everyone at St. John's Kitchen is a walker and I've recently been reading Rebecca Solnit, Iain Sinclair and Henry David Thoreau who all speak as if walking were the last frontier. The stories of walkers are vibrant as if they were engaged in life while those of us in cars and buses were mere spectators.

I too, am now engaged with my 35 minute brisk walk. And I've met some old friends along the way. Memories of a life lived in these twin cities. As I walk down King St., I pass the construction of the new University of Waterloo Pharmacy



A 1929 Postcard view of King Street West

building. Early in the construction they added a beautiful sea foam green panel of glass with some nodding flowers. As the weeks went by more floral windows have appeared but my favourite is still the first installation with a single poppy bud.

The other day I stopped for a moment to take it all in and suddenly I remembered standing in that same spot maybe 11 years ago. We all were invited, that day in my memory, to watch the old smoke stack come down at the Epton factory, formerly B.F. Goodrich. I had told my family I would meet them there but once I'd arrived I realized I'd never find them in the crowd of maybe 1,000 people, when out of the blue I heard the voice of my three year old son. I'd found them.

Just before I get to those windows I pass the location years ago of H. Salt Fish and Chips. It was such a huge hit when it arrived in town, maybe 40 years ago, bringing us something new- malt vinegar. Today we are fortunate to have food from many foreign lands available to us but in my childhood there were few and malt vinegar was a big deal.




I then come to the old Kauffman footwear factory on the corner of King and Victoria. This was where my grandfather worked as a leather cutter for most of his life. It was one of the few factories in town that never had a union. For reasons I could never understand, my grandfather was proud of this fact. The old factory still remains, presently being

The bustle of people, in and out filling the streets with their camaraderie; a downtown alive with industry; a noon hour and quitting time whistle for everyone in the neighbourhood to set their lives by; and of course, my grandfather.

converted into condominiums. I feel as though I should be happy that they haven't razed the old building, but somehow I'm not. There's too much that's missing. The bustle of people, in and out, filling the streets with their camaraderie; a downtown alive with industry; a noon hour and quitting time whistle for everyone in the neighbourhood to set their lives by; and of course, my grandfather.

I ask some of the other walkers, also long time residents in these cities what they miss in the downtown. Memories are not usually just about buildings, although everyone I spoke with unanimously laments the passing of the old Kitchener City Hall and lunches at Goudies. But the real losses involve people. One walker remembers coming downtown with his mother. They

Schneider, Nahrgang, Ahrens, and Bricker
Hotels, Fires, Newspapers, and Liquor
A Queen Street South Timeline from 1819 to 1980

Queen Street South facts as recorded in newspapers, journals, and city records.

**The first draft of
Schneider, Nahrgang, Ahrens, & Bricker
Hotels, Fires, Newspapers & Liquor
A Queen Street South Timeline**
can now be read at Queen Street Commons Café
43 Queen Street South, Kitchener

always stopped at Kitchener Dairy for a grilled cheese sandwich. Another gentleman couldn't quite put his finger on what he missed, but he knew he sure did miss it. "It's just the old ways I miss," he says. "There was more of everything, more honesty, more community."

For certain, the streets were once filled with more, making us feel as if we had more. Like the fellow missing the "old ways" what I really miss is the climate of the times. As young children we took the bus downtown, caught a movie, went to the Woolworth's counter afterwards for french fries and a coke, strolled downtown and got home sometime later. We bought the KW

Record on the honour system from the open metal stand at the bottom of our street. We didn't lock our car, we didn't wear seatbelts or helmets and we felt freer. Maybe this is what makes walking so appealing. It is incorruptible. It continues to be as freeing today as it always was. It opens doors to the memories of the past, the street conversations or quiet meditations of the present, and the unknown future, just around the corner.


First Draft of A Queen Street South Timeline

We have prepared this timeline using newspapers, written sources and books, advertisements, and photographs to document a history of our small block of Queen Street South.

This project contributes to our knowledge of local history. It demonstrates how one small stretch on Queen Street South can contribute to the vitality of a growing town. The builders of these heritage buildings were small proprietors who risked their savings to expand their businesses. What can we learn about their efforts and stories? How can such efforts inform heritage and downtown renewal? According to the Vernon Directory of 1911 this small stretch had over 40 business establishments. What does this say about the independent action of small producers compared to the situation today?

This project is dependant on people in Kitchener and Waterloo, especially those whose families operated businesses on Queen Street. We would like to hear passed down stories, see pictures that have been tucked away, and hear suggestions on individuals to interview.

Come down to the Queen Street Commons Café to view our new posters on Queen Street history and to flip through **The Queen Street South Timeline 1819 - 1980**.




Giving Computers a Second Life!

The Working Centre's Computer Recycling Shop offers affordable used computers, components, and accessories.

Recycling Old Equipment

For a small fee we will recycle your old computers and accessories (i.e. computers slower than Pentium III, CRT monitors) that can no longer be used in an environmentally friendly manner.

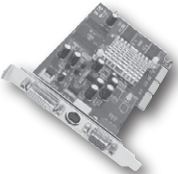


Volunteering and Skill Building

Volunteers are always welcome to help refurbish old computers. Computer Recycling is a perfect environment for learning about computers.

Donations

We accept donations of Pentium III and IV PCs, DDR memory sticks, video, sound, and network cards, LCD monitors, mice, hard drives over 10GB, etc.



66 Queen St. S. (Entrance on Charles Street)

Tuesday - Friday: 10:00am - 6:00pm
Saturdays: 10:00am - 4:00pm
Call 519-743-1151 ext. 225

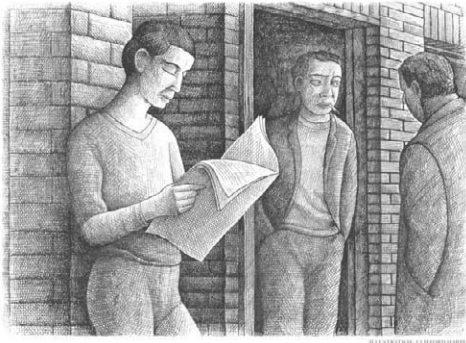
Alternatives to Overdevelopment

continued from page 1

portation model. The final section considers practical options for individuals acting outside of our collective inaction.

The Extra Equipment We Carry Around

John Kenneth Galbraith, in the late 1950s, concluded **The Affluent Society** with a prescient reminder, "To furnish a barren room is one thing. To continue to crowd in furniture until the foundation buckles is quite another. To have failed to solve the problem of producing goods would have been to continue man in his oldest and most grievous misfortune. But to fail to see that we have solved it and to fail to proceed thence to the next task would be fully tragic."



All evidence undeniably points to a crowded room where indeed the foundation is buckling. By the 1950s, Western societies had learned how to solve the problem of production, that is, how to ensure that all had access to food, clothing and shelter. Now, job creation continues apace, with all efforts dedicated to a problem that in reality needed a different solution.

There is a constant fear that our standard of living is declining and thus this unending effort to create jobs. Food, clothing and housing are abundant. The main problem is not that we have a declining standard of living as much as we have an economy that is eating into our wealth. We have lost the flexibility to learn how to creatively share the abundance we have. Increasingly, the way we make economic decisions leads to diminishing returns no matter how hard we work.

In reality, it is our level of subsistence that keeps rising. Our subsistence is better described not as a rising tide that lifts all boats, but rather as more and more water that makes swimming increasingly difficult. The consumer junk, gadgets, and cars all weigh us down. We think that we cannot survive without



them, but with them the economic cost just keeps growing. Leopold Kohr summarizes this argument by stating that, "swimming with all this equipment in deeper waters is inefficient".

Growing Bureaucracy Strangles Useful Activity

The so-called complexity of our society is increasingly held together by bureaucrats in the public and private sector. A mode of production that can only be called wasteful has crept into how we conceive of production and services. Western societies have such significant surplus dollars that no one cares to calculate. According to Kohr in **Development Without Aid**,

"the astronomical cost of modern techno-bureaucracy resulting from the double drag of the high remuneration because of its long preparation, and the stifling red tape effect it exerts because of the notorious inverse relationship between the need for its services and the efficiency of its performance."

The Canadian economy has gone from primarily a goods producing economy to a service economy. In the latest employment figures there were only 3.4 million workers who produced goods while 12.8 million workers produced services. The economy is dependant on service jobs, the vast majority of which add very little value to the economy. The proliferation of media, finance, advertising, retail, health care, education, and administration, are all costs to the economy carried by a continuously shrinking manufacturing sector.

Who can calculate the growing environmental cost that comes with the time and money committed to consultations, committees, office space, human resource training, and collaborative management processes? These costs can all be justified. Every budget leaves plenty of room for such goings on. Khrushchev, exasperated at the over-managed Soviet system, described the situation as "supervisors supervising supervisors". At some point, overdeveloped systems implode in on themselves as workers refuse to take serious the

pleadings of management for determination, straightforward action and responsibility. It becomes easier to socialize the risk by proposing one more meeting, fudging numbers, demonstrating results without substance. The bureaucratic way is deceptive and

it infiltrates the way workers think.

How Much Wasted Consumption is Built Into Transportation

A significant reduction in greenhouse gases is possible if North Americans wasted less time commuting and reduced the movement of goods by truck and airplane. How efficient is it to use a three thousand pound car that can reach speeds of 250 kilometres an hour, to move the vast majority of commuters who travel at most 25-50 kilometres a day? This same vehicle will be lucky to last seven years on the road and is very likely to be involved in an accident. Accidents boost economic growth, but are bad for the car owner, especially if the accident causes any kind of serious damage. The cost of gasoline, parking, maintenance, taxes and lease payments on a car can add up to a fifth of an average wage earner's income. This does not account for all the time wasted in traffic. The commuter car culture wins the award for the most unproductive activity that the majority of workers have no choice but to participate in everyday.

Clive Doucet, an Ottawa city councillor and author of **Urban Meltdown, Cities, Climate Change and Politics as Usual**, documents how the just-in-time truck delivery has played havoc with Ottawa city streets. Overall in Canada, he reports that during 1995 - 2000 there was a 44% increase in truck traffic. In Ottawa, just the downtown core takes 3,000 trucks everyday. He shows how this strategy of warehouses on wheels has successfully downloaded on to municipalities the cost of bridges, road maintenance and the fastest possible route. An economy that produces very little and imports almost everything is truck dependant. Goods are shipped into the city and government offers investment credits and subsidized research to the petroleum industry to ensure access to oil. Our cities are made poorer with such arrangements. Meanwhile big box stores continue to expand as do their warehouses on wheels, continually speeding up and down the provincial and municipal road system.

Leopold Kohr in **Development Without Aid** looks at the question of how many miles in a loaf of bread. He is not impressed by the economy of scale that comes with long range tractors and trailers criss-crossing over long distances first to procure ingredients and then to distribute product. It is not just high quality carbon that fuels this process, what of all the marketing, management, and human resources. All this effort generated by the transportation economy can be easily contrasted with a different method of development. Kohr thinks of the European city states of the 1700s which produced better quality bread in abundance without a transportation network. Small shop bakers contributed to "spacious houses, urban

adornments, stately inns, engaging streetscapes, and other indispensable accessories of a civilized standard of living." Rather than centralizing income in large conglomerates with huge transportation networks, a local bakery which reduces scale, controls expenses, and produces close to its market, turns upside down how we think about the nature of work. Local production reduces waste and creates a different model of employment.

Rethinking the Nature of Work

This essay is proposing a different way of thinking about an important political issue - how to reduce overdevelopment and consequently, consumerism. Greenhouse gas re-



duction would be a side benefit. Reducing the vicious consumption spiral would be the main advantage. Excessive economic development is adding burdensome equipment, bureaucracy, and inefficient transportation. It is drawing negatively from our cultural reserves.

In some respects, it all comes down to jobs. Our Gross National Product is a barometer for how many jobs are created. But this is not where our attention should be. We need to search under the surface to understand how local economies work best.

There are many ways to live outside of the dictates of economic growth. We can learn from those who live simply. Why is it that in most North American communities, those with the fewest resources, those with mental health or physical burdens are able to live with incomes far below the average? They walk, bus, bike, to get around and they shop at used furniture and clothing shops. There are no grandiose plans here. There are others who choose to work part-time, who refuse the expense of a car and use a bicycle instead, who believe that work must reflect their commitment to conserve the natural world. Yes, these are examples of true environmentalists, but really, they are just citizens who make common sense decisions to live more sanely, to live within their means.

It is not necessary to think of economic development from the top down. Economic units are most viable, when they are numerous and small, physically struggling to create independent economic development mixing culture and poetry - a shared understanding of the work and creativity necessary for independent action.

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The Republic of Eldonia

By Jim Lotz

Liverpool, home town of the Beatles, became the cultural capital of Europe in 2008. The city's history has been marked more by poverty, unemployment, industrial decay, religious tensions and racial discrimination in the past than by concern for the arts.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the British economy went sour. Factories in Liverpool closed, thousands of workers lost their jobs, riots erupted and the city's population dropped. The Vauxhall area, near the docks, housed large factories owned by Tate and Lyle and the British Tobacco Company. They have vanished, and in the place of a sugar factory stands the Republic of Eldonia, as it is known locally.

Last year I returned to Liverpool,



“We recognized that Phase Two was more than about housing. It was about education, crime, health, jobs and making the community a safe place. We developed a number of enterprises including the Village Hall, a Business Centre, the Nursery, the Old People's Home and a land bank. Profit used to be a dirty word. Profit means sustainability - it goes back into the project. Break even is too fine for us.”

my home town, to meet Tony McCann, the founder of this republic, an urban village run by the residents. Liverpoolians — scousers — have a reputation in Britain as tough, tenacious, articulate individuals with a subversive sense of humour. Tony demonstrates all these qualities. At 70, he retains the visionary zeal of a social entrepreneur and the hard common sense of a community organizer. He worked for 22 years as a forklift operator, lost his job and found himself overwhelmed by the massive changes sweeping over his community and the city:

“I'd always lived in the Vauxhall area. People lived in slums, in houses without running water and worked in poorly-paid jobs. But we were happy and had a great sense of community. In the early 1960s, city council pulled down homes, re-housed some of the residents in tenements and council houses, and sent others to new developments in the suburbs. They did not consult with the local people as they tore the heart out of the community. In 1968, some of

Last year I returned to Liverpool, my home town, to meet Tony McCann, the founder of this republic, an urban village run by the residents. Liverpoolians — scousers — have a reputation in Britain as tough, tenacious, articulate individuals with a subversive sense of humour.

the new housing was demolished for the entrance to a new tunnel under the Mersey River. Old people died of a broken heart as urban renewal proceeded through the 1970s and industry left the Vauxhall planners and that to keep area. When we objected, the politicians told us that we had to broaden our horizons - they knew what the people wanted. We had to fight our community together. In 1978, a group of us decided to develop our own community and build our own

houses. We became known as the Eldonians from the street on which many of us lived.

“I had been active in the Catholic Men's Society at the local church and was shoved into leading the housing group. No one else wanted the job. We brought in a housing association, experienced people, to help us to design housing and the sort of community we wanted.

“We took our plans to city council. It was dominated by members of the Liberal Party who supported community development. It agreed that half the housing scheme would be owned by the municipality and half by a co-operative. We redrew our plans, formed the Portland Gardens Housing Co-op and built 130 houses. Things were going great - until the Liberals lost control of the council in 1983. The Militant Tendency, a hard-left Marxist group, put organizers in the wards and took over the council. We were told that our housing co-op would be taken over by the city. We tried to work with the new council, stressing that our approach to housing formed the backbone of socialism. When we took our proposal for building more co-op housing to council, the members tore it up and threw it into the wastepaper basket. If you want anything for the Vauxhall area, we were told, you have to go through the ward.

“I had no interest in politics. I copied the tactics of the Militant Tendency, joined the Labour Party, signed up 150 Eldonians and we took over the ward. We were the only ones

standing up to the Militant Tendency. It had wiped out our co-op, but the Eldonians kept together and stayed the course. We were determined to have a stake in our own lives and we weren't going to be stopped by anyone.

“In the 1980s, no one would invest a penny in Liverpool. When Tate and Lyle closed its factory, throwing hundreds out of work, I said: ‘We'll build houses on that land.’ I'd been threatened lots of times. Now people laughed at me. We contacted English Estates, a semi-governmental body. With their help we secured an option on the Tate and Lyle land in 1989. Local residents, ordinary people, did a survey to determine housing needs. They were surprised that they were not being told what to do. We came up with an innovative scheme for a mixed population of owners, renters and seniors.

“I commuted to London and met Patrick Johnson, Secretary of the Environment. He backed our scheme and we became friends. We originally had 150 families in the project, but that number had dwindled to 27, making our original scheme unviable. In 1991 we created the Eldonian Community Based Housing Association to carry out our project, and looked for money. A government task force set up to revitalize Merseyside provided a grant of £7.5 million (\$15 million). About a third of this went for decontaminating the Tate and Lyle land.

“When we went to city council for planning permission, its members tried every dirty trick in the book to stop us. We got a top barrister for our presentation, support from the Catholic and Anglican archbishops



and won planning permission for Phase One of our venture.

“The central government created the Merseyside Development Corporation to revitalize the docks. We asked it to include the Vauxhall area in its boundaries and the corporation did so, taking us out of the claws of the Militant Tendency. We set about looking for funds for Phases Two and Three of our project. We were told that a government minister would visit Vauxhall. This turned out to be Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. I was invited to dinner at No. 10 Downing Street, and told: ‘Don't ask the PM for money.’ As I left, someone assured

me: ‘We'll be in touch.’ Shortly after this, we learned that our housing association would have £15 million (\$30 million) available to it.”

George Evans, the association's housing manager, takes up the story:

“We recognized that Phase Two was more than about housing. It was about education, crime, health, jobs and making the community a safe place. We developed a number of enterprises including the Village Hall, a Business Centre, the Nurs-



ery, the Old People's Home and a land bank. Profit used to be a dirty word. Profit means sustainability - it goes back into the project. Break even is too fine for us.

“Tony is the ideas man and we follow in his wake.

“You have to give people hope, give them an alternative, and then you need 100% effort to be the best and have to sustain high levels of competence. We're a family-oriented community and crime free.”

Shareholders in the housing association pay £1 (\$2) a year. A third of the board resigns each year. Tony still chairs the board: “I put myself up for election and tell members they can vote me out if I'm not doing my job.” The Eldonians have won many awards: a sign greets you as you approach their community: “Welcome to Eldonia Village...It's a World Habitat Award Winner.”

Tony McGann sums up the essence of this unique venture in self-help and community development:

“It grows on you. You find you can make things happen. You've got to be passionate about it. You have to have a vision of a better life for all. Our people did not have a clue about how to create a community they could run themselves. Neither did I. You have to do it yourself, set up ways through which people can educate themselves in their own way and enjoy doing so. You can't wait for the professionals - the experts learn from us. You have to stop feeling sorry for yourself, get off your backside and make things happen.”

Liverpool University Press will publish **The Rebirth of Liverpool: The Eldonian Way** this year. More information on the Republic of Eldonia can be found at www.eldonians.org.uk.

Jim Lotz is a freelance writer, teacher at the Coady Institute, consultant, and independent researcher who has garnered wisdom watching and describing how community development, governments, and individuals can work together to create better societies. Jim Lotz will give a talk at The Working Centre in April 2009.

Rethinking the Nature of Work

continued from page 4

The hard working producerist can provide useful goods and services that are uneconomical for the formal system. It is requisite that such action be done for love of concept, more than the riches that it will bring. This is where economic development thinking must be turned on its head. Work is not for becoming rich, but for providing satisfactory goods and services in a way that enhances the community.

Useful work generates revenue. One's standard of living must be commensurate with revenue. The beauty one's work creates and the lessons of commitment and artisanship, are the true rewards, and they will most likely be matched over time by revenue. The revenue is not guaranteed to afford a high standard of living by the means of money, but will do so by means of the accomplishment of genuine work.

The common sense lesson, for those who have a double income, but who are frustrated by the wastefulness of their work, is to figure out how those who already live with less are able to somehow make ends meet with far fewer resources. It is possible over time to conserve income, reduce expenses and slowly develop a line of craft that revitalizes one's spirit. Jane Jacobs in her final book, **Dark Age Ahead**, suggests that the only hope for suburbia is to transform the sprawl with renovations and densification, through an import replacement strategy that would see more and more services provided in suburban neighbourhoods. One person converts his garage into a car repair operation, another creates a daycare, another creates a three bedroom rooming house, another attempts shoe production and repair, and another creates a greenhouse. There is no lack of ideas or creativity that is possible for those committed to getting off the path of spiralling economic insanity.

Decent, compact living in Southern Ontario, once the norm, is now barely understood, the result of a forty-year-never-ending sprawl event. Nonetheless, such living is still available in the core area of most municipalities. The Working Centre has always been influenced by a British journal, **Resurgence** that we make available at the Queen Street Commons Cafe. Some of our favourite thinkers like E.F Schumacher, Leopold Kohr and Ivan Illich developed their ideas in articles in the 1960s in this publication. John Papworth, one of the founders, envisioned,

"economics under genuine human control because the size of such units are small, sensible, and human scale, where there is a maximum of decentralized decision mak-

ing, and where the pace of change is regulated...by the day-to-day needs of small-scale human communities."

This idealism of compact living flourishes everyday at The Working Centre. Productive amenities on a pedestrian scale thrive in downtown Kitchener. In the pages of **Good Work News**, we often document the many successes of these projects. Consider the community services generated by Recycle Cycles – the community bike shop, the Computer Recycling shop, public access computers, the Job Search Resource Centre, Worth A Second Look – Kitchener's largest furniture and housewares recycling centre, Queen Street Commons Cafe with its wide selection of locally produced natural foods and baking, and St. John's Kitchen, are just a selection of practical projects most of which operate primarily with the enthusiasm and commitment of over 200 volunteers. Visit any one of these operations at anytime of the day and you will find each a hub of purpose filled activity.

Forty individuals live in our various affordable and transitional housing units that are all within a kilometre of each other. Many of our volunteers walk to their project of choice. How rich can you be to be able to walk to your place of work? BarterWorks and our new-



est project – Waterloo Region ASSETS (A Service for Self Employment and Training Supports – in cooperation with the local MEDA chapter) provides practical home business training. All together, these closely packed services build off each other while operating as distinct cultures based on the tools and services they provide.

On Queen Street, the Cafe is like the restful enclosure of the local square, a place to meet and hang out. The building renovations have accentuated the attention to detail and the commitment to revitalized use. The dense array of projects combined with an adherence to multiple levels of elegant design gives all involved recognition that their commitment enhances the community.

There is so much work to do. The Russian prince, humanist and anarchist, Peter Kropotkin wrote with vigour and commitment about how all can cooperate to build a better society. His best known works, **Mutual Aid, The Conquest of Bread and Fields, Factories and Workshops** describe how mutual cooperation can make a difference in many areas of human endeavor.

our. Just consider the one example of building a different food system, not by decree but by personal action. This includes digging up parkland and backyards, the nurturing of soil, the complexity of organic gardening, the science of composting, the preservation of heritage seeds, learning how to grow food year round and relearning food preservation techniques. This work builds community. Amartya Sen shows how people can free themselves from poverty when they can control the means and ability to produce the things they need such as food, energy, and housing. The work of securing these tools generates dignity and self esteem. That in itself generates community.

The challenge of reducing consumption cannot be solved by invoking a law. It is complex and can only be approached through choice, good will and a personal commitment to find satisfying work. A starting point is freeing oneself from overdeveloped work and finding peace through work that conserves resources. Investigate and understand examples of human communities that offer work opportunities that are not a disrupting force on this earth. Thankfully enjoying the beauty of nature, taking the time to tend to the soils and flowers around us, seeing the diversity of those that dwell on the earth, these are reasons enough to truly celebrate the wonders around us, reason enough to create work that moves counter to present day political opinion.

Diploma in Local Democracy: Guest Speaker Series

continued from page 8

devastation of the environment," Baum writes, "Karl Polanyi was the prophetic theoretician of the ecological movement."

We have invited Gregory Baum to present his important work on Karl Polanyi as a complement to The Working Centre's dedication to the building of grass roots social solidarity that assists people and communities to find way to produce things for themselves.

April (TBA)

97 Victoria Street North, Kitchener

Jim Lotz presents his people-centred community development ideas and experience

Jim Lotz is a freelance writer, teacher at the Coady Institute, consultant and independent researcher who has garnered wisdom watching and describing how community development, governments and individuals can work together to create better societies. His wis-



dom comes from 25 different jobs and volunteer assignments in community development in Slovakia, Nain, Egypt and Lesotho. Jim, who lives in Halifax has been a friend of The Working Centre for almost 25 years and has provided ideas, guidance and support. His book, **The Lichen Factor, The Quest for Community Development in Canada** is highly recommended as an excellent guide to non bureaucratic practice and is especially recommended as an antidote for projects and government initiatives that are often no more than an excuse for further bureaucratization. Jim will present his concept of community development and tell stories of effective community work.

April (TBA)

97 Victoria Street North, Kitchener

Ken Westhues presents on the philosophical roots of The Working Centre

Ken Westhues is the author of the 1995 book, **The Working Centre: Experiment in Social Change**. As a Working Centre board member since 1988, Ken has been an integral part of the development

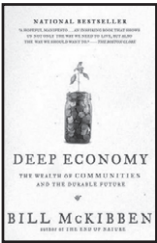


of the Centre's projects and approach. In his book, Ken was particularly interested in The Working Centre's link to social action as an organization

that "is relatively free of sectarian, partisan or specialized interests". This founding ethos allowed the Centre to "serve the goal of community development in an admirably dialogic, democratic and holistic way." 14 years later, where does The Working Centre stand in its development as an organization dedicated to serving the common good in Kitchener-Waterloo. Writers and social activists such as E.F Schumacher, Wendell Berry, Ivan Illich and Dorothy Day have all influenced the projects and spirit behind The Working Centre. What is the method behind The Working Centre's ability to integrate conceptual ideals of cooperation into the practical day-to-day work of the Centre?

Dates in March and April to be announced.

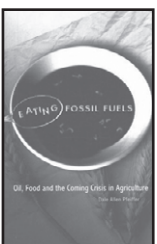
Alternative Work Catalog



Deep Economy
The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future
Bill McKibben
 McKibben offers the greatest challenge in a generation to the prevailing view of our economy. He makes a compelling case for moving beyond "growth" as the primary economic ideal and instead pursuing prosperity in a more local direction, with more locally produced food and energy, and even culture and entertainment. Our purchases need not be at odds with those things we truly value, and the more we nurture the basic humanity of the economy, the more we may preserve our own.
272 pages \$15.50 softcover



Divorce Your Car!
Ending the Love Affair with the Automobile
Katie Alvord
 Society's love of cars began enthusiastically more than 100 years ago, and has since become a very troubled relationship. Today, the automobile inflicts upon us pollution, noise, congestion, sprawl, big expenses, injury, and even death. Yet we ignore the growing costs to ourselves and the environment. Alvord explores the many practical ways in which people can reduce their dependency on cars and address the many problems they create.
320 pages \$22.95 softcover



Eating Fossil Fuels
Oil, Food, and the Coming Crisis in Agriculture
Dale Allen Pfeiffer
 The miracle of modern agriculture is made possible by cheap fossil fuels to supply crops with artificial fertilizer, pesticides, and irrigation. It is estimated that in the US it takes ten calories of hydrocarbon energy to produce one calorie of food. Eating Fossil Fuels examines the interlinked crises of energy and agriculture and highlights some startling findings, and argues that the effect of energy depletion will be disastrous without a transition to a sustainable, relocalized agriculture.
144 pages \$13.95 softcover



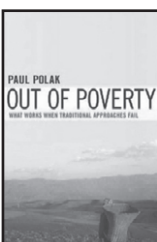
Gardening When It Counts
Growing Food in Hard Times
Steve Solomon
 Designed for readers with no experience and applicable to most areas in the English-speaking world except the tropics and hot deserts, this book shows that any family with access to 3-5,000 sq. ft. of garden land can halve their food costs using a growing system requiring just the odd bucketful of household waste water, perhaps two hundred dollars worth of hand tools, and about the same amount spent on supplies - working an average of two hours a day during the growing season.
360 pages \$19.95 softcover



Human Scale
Big Government, Big Business, Big Everything - How the Crises that Imperil Modern America are the Inevitable Result of Gigantism Grown Out of Control, and What Can Be Done About it
Kirkpatrick Sale
 Human Scale details the crises facing modern society and offers real solutions, describing how we can take control of our lives by building institutions, workplaces, and communities that are sustainable and ecologically balanced. This remarkable book provides a fascinating perspective on the last quarter-century of "growth" while exploring the movement towards relocalization in response to the end of cheap oil.
560 pages \$33.95 softcover



The Lichen Factor
The Quest for Community Development in Canada
Jim Lotz
 The collected wisdom of "a very wise man" describing how community development, governments and individuals can work together to create better societies. Reviews the history of community development as he has seen it and explores its potential and limitations using practical experience combined with vision.
288 pages \$22.95 softcover



Out of Poverty
What Works When Traditional Approaches Fail
Paul Polak
 Polak busts the common myths that we can donate people out of poverty, that national economic growth will end poverty, and that Big Business, operating as it does now, will end poverty. These failed top-down efforts contrast sharply with the grassroots approach outlined by Polak that helps the dollar-a-day poor earn more money through their own efforts. Unexploited market opportunities do exist for the desperately poor, and with innovative, low-cost tools, they can use the market to improve their lives.
232 pages \$30.95 hardcover



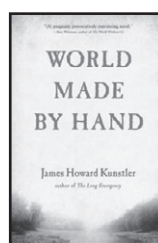
The Party's Over
Oil, War, and the Fate of Industrial Societies
Richard Heinberg
 The world is about to run out of cheap oil and change dramatically. In The Party's Over, Heinberg places this transition in historical context, and describes how contention for energy resources in the 21st century will lead to war. He describes the likely impacts of oil depletion, and all of the energy alternatives. He also recommends a "managed collapse" that might make way for a slower-paced, low-energy, sustainable society in the future.
306 pages \$17.95 softcover



Reinventing Collapse
The Soviet Example and American Prospects
Dmitry Orlov
 In the waning days of the American Empire the US administration finds itself mired in political crisis; foreign policy has come under sharp criticism; and the economy is in steep decline. These trends mirror the experience of the Soviet Union in the early 1980's. Reinventing Collapse examines the circumstances of the demise of the Soviet superpower and offers clear insights into how we might prepare for coming events. It suggests that there is room for optimism if we focus our efforts on personal and cultural transformation.
164 pages \$17.95 softcover



Urban Meltdown
Cities, Climate Change, and Politics as Usual
Clive Doucet
 Eighty percent of the planet's greenhouse gases are created by energy-intensive urban centers. Thus, the key to creating climate change solutions resides with cities. Author and Ottawa city councillor Doucet provides an insider's perspective, stating his central theme: "It's not about planning. It's about politics." Climate change is proceeding so quickly not for lack of knowledge, but because politicians who deviate from the car-based sprawl model cannot get elected. Urban Meltdown describes how we got here, why we got here, and what can be done about it.
251 pages \$20.95 softcover



The World Made By Hand
James Howard Kunstler
 In this work of speculative fiction, social critic Kunstler paints a picture of American life in the aftermath of the long emergency, when the terminal decline of oil production and disruptive climate changes have put industrial civilization out of business. Cities have been wiped out, epidemics spread uncontrolled, the government has effectively collapsed, and transportation is slow and dangerous. This powerful tale of love, loss, violence, and desperation depicts a surprisingly hopeful new America, struggling to be born.
317 pages \$26.50 hardcover

The Alternative Work Book Store at Queen Street Commons Café offers a wide selection of books on such topics as the environment, education, poverty, social alternatives, the philosophy of work, job searching, simple living, and more!



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WATERLOO SCHOOL FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In a Democracy Citizenship Means More than Voting

The Diploma in Local Democracy project has completed two sessions involving 35 participants over the last two years. The course focused on the practice of local democracy as perceived and experienced by the participants.

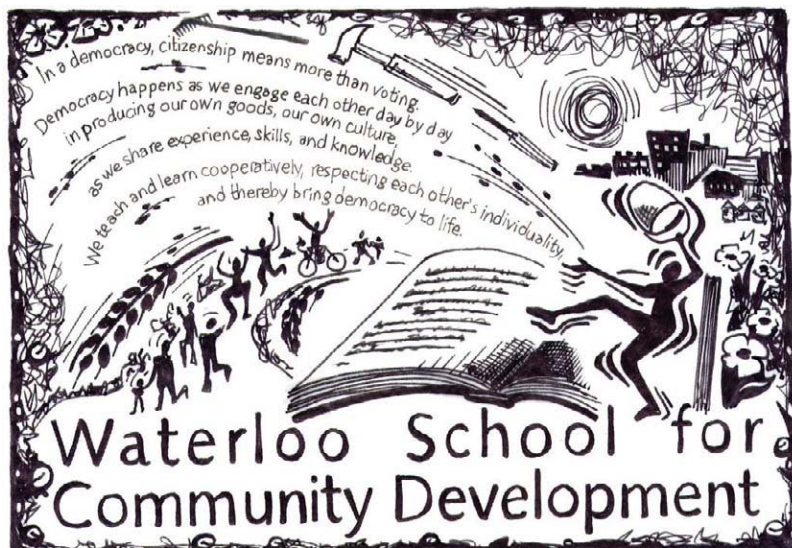
The theory and practice of Local Democracy is essential for the development of democratic communities where practical expressions of social solidarity through cooperation, neighbourhood mobilization, and personal responsibility are normal.

Local democracy is about applying the virtues at home, work, and

in the organizations that sustain our communities.

The course format consisted of eight evening classes in the fall and winter which emphasized participants' experience.

Participants have ranged from people connected to Working Centre projects, Kitchener-Waterloo citizens, new Canadians, interns from Ugunja, Kenya, and students from the University of Waterloo. University students have taken the course as a BA level reading course and as a supplement to their M.A. course work. Internally, the Diploma in Local Democracy has been a way for new and old staff at The Working Centre to engage the thinking of Local Democracy. At our first graduation ceremony, Carmetta Abbott, Professor Emerita of French Studies at St. Jerome's University and the University of Waterloo and active citizen gave the commencement address. Each student received



their diploma and gave a five-minute speech on what they learned through the course.

Ken Westhues and Joe Mancini have guided the development of this course and project. Ken Westhues is a Professor of Sociology and a distinguished practitioner of that discipline for 40 years. He has been a board member of The Working Centre for 20 years. Joe Mancini, Director of The Working Centre has offered his 25 years of community development experience. Both are satisfied with the Diploma course structure that emphasizes dialogue, equality and reciprocity.

This dialogical approach has laid a foundation for further growth of this community based approach to teaching the skills of local democ-

racy. Up to now, minimal resources have been allocated towards the conceptualization, recruitment and teaching. This past fall we opted to take a break to think about its structure and to consider its long-



term integration as a viable Working Centre teaching project. We will be offering the next Diploma in Local Democracy course in the Fall of 2009.

Diploma in Local Democracy: Guest Speaker Series

Fall 2008/Winter 2009

October 29th at 7:30pm

Second Gathering for the Presentation of the Diploma in Local Democracy

St. John's Kitchen

97 Victoria Street North, Kitchener

Marty Schreiter, Honoured Guest of the Waterloo School for Community Development



Marty Schreiter will talk about the role of the Kitchener Downtown Community Collaborative in the development of Outreach Services in Downtown Kitchener.

In May 2002, as Executive Director of the KDBA, Marty Schreiter put in motion a major community effort to understand the problems that were creating a negative public perception of the downtown. The first step was sponsoring a series of breakfast meetings with over 50 social services, groups, businesses, neighbourhood and City of Kitchener representatives. The Kitchener Downtown Community Collaborative developed into a multi-faceted

collaboration that encouraged a new approach to downtown issues. There was a commitment to developing a model where people's ideas could shape outcomes through flexible design and the implementation of practical projects like Downtown Street Outreach and Job Café. Marty, as chair of the collaborative, was steadfast in the development of a working model for downtown collaboration towards a shared vision of a vibrant and healthy downtown community.

November 19th at 7:30pm

St. John's Kitchen

97 Victoria Street North, Kitchener

Jutta Mason presents the story of Friends of Dufferin Grove Park

For over 15 years, Jutta Mason has made friendship for the park her almost-full-time hobby. Her story is local democracy in action with little fanfare and lots of friendships. During that time, under her clear vision for love of place, Jutta and friends, who in this case are all those people - more every year - who are friendly to that 14.2 -acre city-owned common space. Most park friends express



their friendship only through their joy at what goes on in the park.

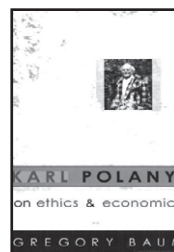
The friends of Dufferin Grove Park are not an organization. There is no executive, no annual meetings, no formal status. Jutta will describe how the park has become useful, as a commons, to those who live nearby and how that commons has enlivened those who give things like time, plants, music, theatre, toys in the sandpit, conversation, sports skills, etc., as they feel moved to do.

March (TBA)

97 Victoria Street North, Kitchener

Gregory Baum presents Karl Polanyi's insights into embedding social relationships in the work of local culture

When Gregory Baum retired from the University of Toronto, he found a home at McGill University where he came upon the Karl Polanyi Institute in Political Economy. The thinking of Karl Polanyi has enriched Baum's theoretical work on the Catholic social



justice movement. He has used Polanyi to demonstrate how material poverty is not a tragedy when a culture embeds social solidarity through daily economic relations of producing and selling. When given community freedom, people can be creators capable of inventing a culture that will sustain them.

Ken Westhues reviewed Baum's 1996 book **Karl Polanyi on Ethics and Economics** in 1996 in Catholic New Times.

"Polanyi understood half a century ago that as capitalism frees itself from limits, turning goods more completely into commodities and people into maximizers of utility, it leads inexorably to authoritarian government and the destruction of the earth. Accurately and compellingly, Baum summarizes this argument, as well as the corrective Polanyi proposed. The need is to embed markets in vibrant, democratic communities, where the principle of social protection and cooperation balances the principle of economic liberalism. Only thereby can our species and planet flourish. "Long before the public outcry against the

continued on page 6