

GOOD WORK NEWS

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

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September 2026

Subscription: A Donation Towards our Work

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Extending St. John's Kitchen Hours and Support

As of July 27, St. John's Kitchen is now open seven days a week and as an overnight drop-in space for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

Drop-in hours are from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm. From 9:00 pm onwards, we welcome those without shelter for rest and stability overnight. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner will now be served 7 days/week.

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From A Better Tent City to Cabins on Ardelt

By Joe Mancini

A Better Tent City (ABTC) was a remarkable shelter project that grew out of a plan developed in January 2020 by Ron Doyle and Jeff Willmer to respond to growing homelessness. With the formal shelters all full, Ron and Jeff wanted to create better shelter options compared to random encampments.

Two years later, during a cold and muddy November, the cabins of ABTC were moved to the Ardelt property by agreement with the City of Kitchener and the Waterloo Region District School Board. The site had no electricity, water or sewage when about 60 people moved into the newly placed cabins. There was no place to gather, no place to cook, no pathways. It took weeks to set up temporary electricity using a diesel generator. It was only in January that water, sewage and electricity services were hooked up. By May the community centre and kitchen were completed. Community fundraising made all this possible.

ABTC became a place supporting



some 50 - 70 people on site. Meals were served all day and people used ABTC as a refuge and shelter, reducing the challenges of homelessness.

The leadership group met weekly ensuring the project held together. The main issue was whether access to the site should be restricted or open. No matter how much clean up was accomplished the site always had challenges. By 2026, as the challenges continued to grow more complex, the ABTC leadership group decided to close A Better Tent City.

At the end of March, the Board approached the Region of Waterloo to ask them to consider taking on

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The Bricker Block from 1877 - 2026

The Bricker Block story has its roots in 1877 when David and Aaron Bricker purchased the site after a catastrophic fire burned through the Royal Hotel and properties around it. Aaron Bricker established a successful Blacksmith and Livery service out of a wood frame building that he built after purchasing the property. In 1898 he built 66 Queen, the first two-story brick building covering 5,000 square foot ground area. Around 1912, Bricker built the three-story 44-54 Queen Street South building. The block was completed when Bricker built the three-story 58 Queen building in the middle. 100 years after Bricker established himself on

Queen Street, The Working Centre did as well. First renting 58 Queen in 1985, then in the 1990's, The Working Centre started purchasing and refurbishing each of these buildings, completing the work in 2023. Presently in the Bricker Block there are 30 affordable apartment units focusing especially on single new Canadian woman with children; the busy Employment Resource Centre and Money Matters project supporting 1000's of people each year; Maurita's

Kitchen, the commercial kitchen at the back of 66 Queen, which produces over 700 meals a day for St. John's Kitchen and other shelter projects; and Computer Recycling is in the basement of 66 Queen. The front façade of 54-44 Queen is still under development. Presently Jesse Robertson's Black Arrow Cycles operates at 50 Queen S. For 30 years Mark Kryszak operated ABC Surplus in the end unit. Mark died suddenly this winter

and TWC arranged a memorial service that was held at the Queen Street Commons and attended by friends and his customers. In June, The Working Centre employment services began offering employment workshops out of this space.



Forty-Second Year

Issue 166

September 2026

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. Four issues of Good Work News constitutes our annual report. There is a circulation of 13,000 copies. Subscription: a donation towards our work.

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Bullafest 2026 Raises Funds for The Working Centre

On July 11, the Annual Bullafest brought local musicians and community together in support of The Working Centre. Since 2005, Bullafest has helped raise over \$160,000 for the War Amps and The Working Centre’s St. John’s Kitchen, with 100% of proceeds going directly to these projects.

Thank You for your continued support!

In the photo above: John Liddle (trumpet), Nathan Bulla, Bob Phillips, Paul Bulla, Andy Macpherson, Dave Wiffen, Elise Bulla, Paul Lacalamita, Anna McKimmon, Sean O’Brien.

Cabins on Ardelt

continued from page 1

this project to prevent it from closing. The next step was to hire a security company to help strengthen safety on site, and a generous donor made that possible. This helped the transition process tremendously.

A recent visitor to the cabins noted that “this is a community of people, a determined group of people helping other people, (they offer) so many little gestures that convey something deeper and positively human.”

In June, the Region of Waterloo approached The Working Centre to apply to operate the site as a shelter.



On the ground at ABTC, The Working Centre found a group of people fiercely protective of the independence they had created. This was a group who had lived together, some for more than four years, and had evolved ways of looking after each other.

We began to explore how to hold on to this spirit, while also shifting the model to meet the Emergency Shelter framework. This process has been a challenge for everyone.

The first step has been to shift the site from a public drop-in space to a space that focuses on the 55 people who were officially registered with ABTC. We have worked closely with a number of residents to clean cabins and outside areas. The meals have shifted, and we have been working with the many donors of food and to add this location (along with St. John’s Kitchen) to the places where we are preparing and serving three meals a day.

After five years of extensive use, significant renovations are in or-



Through a partnership between The Working Centre and the Region of Waterloo, Cabins on Ardelt will continue to offer shelter to 55 individuals

der. Some are related to the end of the Covid Emergency Measures that allowed this shelter project to get built. This means that the site must attain a building permit and ensure all structures meet building code. An important change is the requirement to install a universal washroom. Other work will include making the community centre more functional for supporting residents, developing a greater separation for the kitchen and exploring new cabins.

A Housing and Outreach team is now in place, meeting with each person on site, strengthening the work of coordinating with housing and community services, and supporting the wellbeing of each person. Two people have taken up opportunities created by this transition and will move to housing in October.

These are some of the ways that the shelter system can support people dealing with significant barriers while trying to access housing. The Cabins on Ardelt is the new name chosen with residents to recognize the change. Cabins on Ardelt will continue to ensure the community infrastructure, built by volunteers, continues to be an important resource for shelter services in Waterloo Region.



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HOCKEY HELPS THE HOMELESS

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Our charity tournaments leverage Canada’s affinity for hockey to raise awareness and financial support for the homeless through education, fundraising, and by partnering with solutions-based local homeless support agencies.

All net proceeds from the Waterloo Region event will support oneRoof, House of Friendship, Starling Community Services, Cambridge Shelter Corp, YW of K-W, and The Working Centre, which together run the Region’s emergency shelter bed network. Last year, the Hockey Helps the Homeless Tournament of Waterloo Region raised over \$300,000 for these local community organizations.

Donate, volunteer or support the tournament in other ways.

Please visit the website: www.hockeyhelpsthehomeless.com



Developing Supports at the 97 Victoria Campus

By Stephanie Mancini

We have boldly stated that 97 Victoria is a place of hope. This statement seems to stand in stark contrast to the reality we are witnessing each day at St. John's Kitchen. The vision behind the 97 Victoria campus is shaped by a deep acceptance for people in the present moment, that holds a space for the change that is possible.

The community of people at St. John's Kitchen are mostly caught in a cycle of crises and survival. People who are housed have more chances to build stability, but does that mean we leave behind this growing group of unsheltered people?

All the writing on recovery from substance use talks about the theory of change, and change needs hope. Back in 1957 Carl Rogers talked about "unconditional positive regard", the practice of completely accepting and supporting a person without any conditions or judgement. Fr. Greg Boyle calls this kinship, where people are safe, seen, and cherished. He quotes a "homie" who says, "I'm used to being watched, but I'm not used to being seen."



St. John's Kitchen, located at 97 Victoria, serves as a place of welcome, a drop-in now operating 24/7. Here we see people who would be described as being in the "pre-contemplative" stage of change, people who feel dislocated and unwanted in most spaces.

At St. John's Kitchen, we welcome people without judgement, with unconditional acceptance. To help people to know there is another reality possible, the acceptance must also make visible other options – options such as improving access to personalized care and support, recognizing that people are changing and are changed constantly. Acceptance and change walk hand in hand.

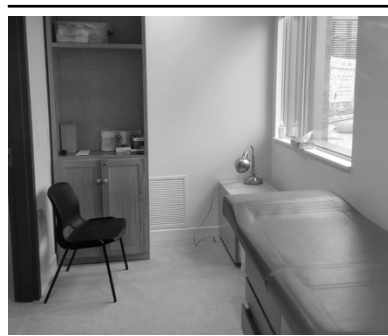
Documented practices to support people in this "pre-contemplation" phase include offering a low threshold setting for initiating care. This means providing a place where you can walk in and receive same day access; a place that provides a direct link with emergency department services and provides access to multidisciplinary health teams. The model includes a place where services co-locate such as primary care, specialty care, mental health, substance use disorder treatment.

This is the goal of the Social Medicine Hub we are building with Waterloo Region Health Network (WRHN).

Social Medical Clinic: The fully outfitted 3000 square foot social medicine clinic at 97 Victoria is linked to both St. John's Kitchen and the on site housing. The Clinic works through relationships formed through outreach, bringing a full spectrum of health care providers to one location, and ensures critical health issues are treated before they become extreme. We will situate two nurses and a host in the clinic who will receive everyone who comes in, helping to navigate their next steps in cooperation with Community Healthcaring and other community teams. Wherever possible we hope to reduce visits to the Emergency Department, and to offer space and connections for hospital-based specialists.

Along with this important health care provided with a mental health and addiction lens, groups, workshops and other activities will bring people together to explore resources, change, recovery and counselling, always including and referring to other services where this work is already being done. This approach recognizes trauma, does not expect major change for people living in survival mode, and recognizes the boredom that settles in due to dislocation.

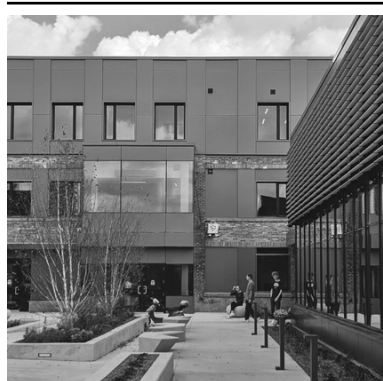
What happens when someone



starts to believe change is possible, moving to the "contemplation" or "preparation" stage of change? This is where we explore the best option with the person, understanding within their circle of support what next steps are most likely to support incremental change. Keeping grounded through change is challenging.

We have situated the **Second Floor of Supportive Housing at 97 Victoria** for people thinking about change. Housing stability is critical for making lasting change. We are inviting people into this housing who are seeking stability with an eye to making changes. The housing comes with 24/7 harm reduction, trauma informed support, with access to healthcare, engagement activities and community support in the stability journey.

The **Third Floor of Health Focused Housing at 97 Victoria**, also held in partnership with WRHN, focuses on people with added complex health and mental health challenges. This is especially for people who are frequently accessing the Emer-



gency Department or Acute Care, and who instead need a supported, harm reduction environment to heal or stabilize.

The **87 Victoria Street House** will be a health-care option for people who need a shorter length of health or mental health stabilization. It will reduce hospital stays and



is embedded in a 24/7, harm reduction, short-term housing model.

These wrap-around options act as a toolkit of resources that are critical for the growing number of unsheltered people in our community. The people we see are so far from the concept of recovery, from holding hope that their circumstances can change. This foundation of supports may gradually allow people to access places like Hart Hub or addiction services, helping people to stabilize and strengthen.

We increasingly understand the importance of places like the 97 Victoria campus to provide outlets for stabilization and healing. A place where people know they matter, where they can work through seemingly impossible challenges within a community of belonging.

"I do think that if I had to choose one word to which hope can be tied it is hospitality." (Ivan Illich)

Extending Support at St. John's Kitchen

By Stephanie Mancini

Fr. Murray McDermott, C.R. passed away on August 28. Over the years Fr. Murray listened to our stories of The Working Centre and shared his stories of L'Arche Community, with a sparkle in his eye and a recognition of the sacred in everyday experiences. A humble man, he also saw hardship and often shared stories that recognized the simple acts of grace and humour.

It's a joy to pause and see these moments of grace that occur daily at St. John's Kitchen as we welcome more and more people. This hub of activity could be measured in the number of people who visit (600 visits between 9 am and 9 pm), the number of times the door opens and closes, the number of toilet flushes or laundry loads, the number of showers, the number of meals, the number of food hampers, the number of socks we share, or the number of people we welcome and help to problem-solve challenges that arise.

The expansion of our hours to 24/7 has been a full-on effort, as new people join our team – the staff teams and the volunteer teams that now fill seven days a week, as we offer 3 meals a day, and respond actively to urgencies in the middle of



an ongoing community drug alert. We are stretching, and it feels like a miracle that has come together so we can be present with people who are weary of living outside without the ability to rest securely. We are offering a solution that is only marginally better than living outside. Overnights, we have seen 430 different people since July 27, people who are living unsheltered in our community. Each night there are around 125 people who stay for the night.

Now our challenge is to help people to feel seen and heard, to be welcomed and to be known. Safety on the street can often be found in sameness or in not standing out, to be one of a group. St. John's Kitchen becomes an anchor, a place you can return to, as people move through the day. We are developing the rhythms of the day, starting first with the meals – delineating breakfast, lunch and dinner, offering variety and choice as we work

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Extending Support at SJK

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to stretch the Foodbank donations. We are starting to organize more opportunities that bring people together for social activities, a movie, a learning session. More organizations and services are coming to the space and connecting with people one-to-one. We are growing our health care resources, continuing to welcome Community Health Caring, and our own Street Outreach, Specialized Outreach Services and Justice Outreach Services.

We are exploring ways to embed community resources more visibly in the space, helping to generate accessible pathways towards wellness. Most people cannot see their way out of the cycle of survival created by homelessness and substance use that dominates their days. By focusing on building trust and rest, belonging and connection, we form a foundation from which people can be seen, and be more truly themselves. This will take us time to

develop, to reinforce, to play with different ideas, and to learn. We are standing with people where they are at, while also holding space and conversation for things to be different.

We have reached out to the wider K-W community, inviting groups to come together and host an evening a month at St. John's Kitchen, serving the meals, washing dishes, cleaning the space with us. The number of opportunities for community involvement have grown as our hours have extended to weekends and evenings. As Fr. Murray helps to remind us, this is an act of hope, a way to appreciate that offering hospitality makes us all more human.

"What holds a community together in times of great challenge and change? We believe our collective well-being depends not only on access to support, but also on the empathy we extend to one another. There is a spirit of compassion and care woven deeply within the fabric of every community, and a communal thriving when we feel seen, heard, and cared for." (Fetzer Institute)



St. John's Kitchen is Welcoming New Volunteers

For 40+ years, St. John's Kitchen has served as a gathering place and hub of support in Downtown Kitchener for people experiencing homelessness or living in vulnerable circumstances. This past winter, in the middle of frigid weather, the community's generosity helped St. John's Kitchen to offer overnight shelter. Hundreds of people were able to come inside each night to find warmth, safety, companionship and a place to rest.

We recognize the importance of operating St. John's Kitchen as a drop-in warming and cooling centre throughout the evenings, overnights and weekends. As of July 27, St. John's Kitchen is now open seven days a week and as an overnight drop-in space for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.



Drop-in hours are from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm. From 9:00 pm onwards, we welcome those without shelter for rest and stability overnight. Breakfast, lunch and dinner will now be served 7 days/week.

New volunteers are welcome from 6am to 9pm Monday through Sunday. We are extending a special invitation to groups (churches, clubs, reading groups, neighbours, friends/families) to sponsor a day a month where 8-10 evening volunteers will serve dinner (provided by TWC), do clean up and/or share a dessert for about 200 people eating the evening meal (desserts must be store bought or made in a commercial kitchen).

Email us at: volunteer@theworkingcentre.org

Remembering John Shortreed (1937-2026)

The Working Centre has benefited from a legion of university professors from Waterloo and Laurier who have offered their energy and knowledge to our work. One of the earliest was Dr. John Shortreed who contacted The Working Centre in early 1983, concerned about the effects of high unemployment. He had an idea and followed through by establishing a project called the School for the Unemployed. It was a series of night school classes taught by skilled teachers that engaged those out of work on the future of work, the new digital economy, and skill development. That was the beginning of a long friendship.

John was a thorough and active academic. He joined the University of Waterloo in 1965 and became a full professor of Civil Engineering, teaching for over four decades. His research focus was on transportation, public transit, land use models and urban planning, before he became a pioneer in the interdisciplinary science of risk assessment and management. He founded and served as the Executive Director of the Institute for Risk Research. He served as a consultant to the Greater London Council on projects including the M25 and the Docklands LRT. He also lent his expertise to governments and industries, including acting as an expert advisor to Justice Horace Krever during the Royal Commission of Inquiry on the Blood System in Canada.

While he had national and international stature, he also served as a Waterloo City Councillor. Over 40



years, John always kept in contact with The Working Centre, learning about our programing, offering ideas, suggesting directions, keeping us rooted. We always appreciated John's towering personality and his genuine interest in the work of building a grassroots community organization.

It was not surprising that John's family described how he didn't waste a day of his life. He was forever active, traveling, building and fixing. John fully supported TWC's purchasing and restoring of old buildings, something he did personally by restoring his historic house in uptown Waterloo.

Most importantly, as his family lovingly noted, John was a caring husband and dedicated father, and exceptionally proud of all his wonderful grandchildren. John and Marcia donated generously and regularly to The Working Centre community. Each donation was always marked by a quick call and sometimes even a visit to check in and see what new projects or ideas were percolating. We will miss John's deep connection to community that he offered generously to The Working Centre.

Remembering Denis Eaton (1936-2026)

In early June, two former Working Centre board members held their 90th birthday party at the Rink in the Park in Waterloo. Roman Dubinski and Dennis Eaton were long time friends and neighbours and were also Working Centre board members serving 10 year terms at different times between the years 1996 – 2015. Their sons and daughters all told loving stories of the family life that their fathers had created.

The stories reinforced The Working Centre's good fortune to have had Roman and Dennis as long term board members who had offered their time and talents to support TWC's mission in a similar way – listening, being practically involved and using good judgement.

Sadly, Dennis died on July 15, 2026, a little more than a month after his 90th birthday celebration. Dennis' life was a kaleidoscope of place, work and people. He was a mining engineer, university administrator and independent management con-



sultant. His varied work experience was the lens from which he offered advice and strategy to The Working Centre Board. He freely and humbly offered his vast knowledge and experience for building community.

Dennis always showed interest in each person who entered his sphere including amazing care providers and friends at the West Hill Retirement Facility. At his big 90 event in June, Dennis said it best - purpose is in valuing each other in good times and in hard times. He led a life of justice from start to finish, enmeshed in family, community and discovery. His advice? Sing Monty Python's "Always Look on the Bright Side of Life," it helps when the heart hurts.

Rethinking Economics

By Joe Mancini

The United Nations (UNEP) report, *Limiting Overshoot*, confronts the reality that the world needs to face the inevitability of exceeding 1.5°C global warming beyond the 2015 Paris climate accord threshold.

Do the warnings against increased extraction and burning of coal, oil and gas fall on deaf ears even while we face decades of increased weather-related disasters, rising seas, melting ice and glaciers, and extinctions?

According to the CBC, “this July was the hottest on record for North America and Europe, where successive heat waves have led to thousands of heat-related deaths, dried up rivers and fire-scorched landscapes. That includes Canada, which has already seen more than 4.1 million hectares of woodland go up in flames and produce thick smoke that blanketed much of the eastern half of the country and parts of the northern U.S.”

1.5°C warming will stress food production and increase drought and water shortages especially throughout the southern hemisphere. All we can expect is amplified extreme weather that will provoke more ecological disasters.

Worse is the stunningly low consciousness of the need to reduce fossil fuel use. The momentum is at a snail’s pace. The knowledge and technological change to stop burning fossil fuels is ready but politicians and economists are negatively biased against change.

Here are six books that undermine negative thinking. Each author seeks to solve practical barriers that would change our political, economic and social outlook so that humanity has a chance to survive on this earth over the next 30 years!

Rethinking Economics

John Galbraith and Jing Chen in *Entropy Economics*, zero in on how economics ignores the reality of the physical and biological world. Mainstream economics pays no attention to the alarm bells of global warming, focused only on continual extraction of resources to boost GDP, with no concern for environmental degradation. Galbraith and Chen plead for common sense. What is the true cost of extracting resources? How can society absorb that cost into its accounts?

Steven Keen in *The New Economics: A Manifesto* questions the antiquated decision-making models of neo-classical economics which are based on values from the 1700’s. Such a model misjudges how people live and work in the economy. Worse, these misguided calculations caused the 2008 economic crisis, and he fears another one is around the corner.

Kate Raworth’s *Doughnut Economics* popularizes how a lay per-

son can rethink the tenets of economics. Her handbook gives the reader a full understanding of why economics must change and what that change would mean for a society to be regenerative and redistributive in a way that respects the limitations of the environment. It is a highly accessible and readable economic textbook, something to treasure!

Rethinking How the World Works

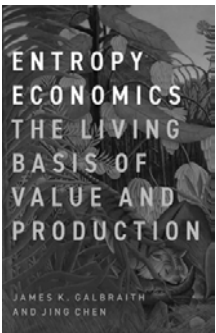
Here Comes the Sun is an anthem for Bill McKibben. Does anyone in Ontario, especially the government, know that since 2024, a gigawatt of solar panels is installed every 18 hours on our planet. That is the size of a coal plant or nuclear reactor. The transformation to a distributive solar economy is upon us and we in Ontario are lagging. The remaking of our economy around electricity generated by the sun, saved in batteries and distributed cheaply is here, all we have to do is direct our energies and efforts to this goal. McKibben and many others are writing books to show how this is now possible.

Peter Barnes has worked out a deeply needed model in *Ours: The case for Universal Property*. Barnes starts by recognizing the ways in which the discipline of economics has ignored the Commons. He goes on to demonstrate how the potential property income of the Commons could fund many aspects of society, and details how this knowledge has been ignored for too long. Common models for joint property ownership of resources abound across the world, and in Waterloo Region, Kitchener Utilities and Enova are excellent examples of that model. Barnes highlights that new mechanisms are necessary for society to fund its growth, and his ideas are a good starting point.

At a Working Centre Common Table meeting in May, Thomas Fraser announced with joy that Jeremy Lent’s book on *Ecocivilization* was now available for order. Lent’s book offers the kind of rethinking we need, to relook at common assumptions in new ways. When the book arrived, its jacket stated clearly that it was “A transformative roadmap for our generation – not just another sustainability book, but a complete reimagining of civilization that synthesizes decades of visionary thinking and policy...” Lent takes the reader through critical thinking while amalgamating ideas around the Economy, Community Enterprise, Agroecology, Common Property Trusts, Convivial Tools, Financial Reform, Social Infrastructure, Democracy, the Commons and Culture and Community – a compendium of major aspects of society that can be redesigned together into a coherent whole, creating the conditions for flourishing at the community level.

BOOKS FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVING

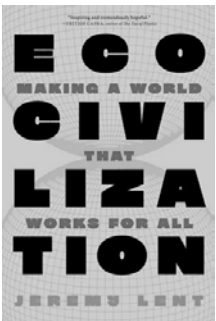
You can place orders by phone: 519-743-1151 x111



Entropy Economics
The Living Basis of Value and Production
James K. Galbraith and Jing Chen

Economists dream of equilibrium. It’s time to wake up. In mainstream economics, markets are ideal if competition is perfect. When supply balances demand, economic maturity is orderly and disturbed only by shocks. These ideas are rooted in doctrines going back thousands of years, yet, as Galbraith and Chen show, they contradict the foundations of our scientific understanding of the physical and biological worlds. *Entropy Economics* discards the conventions of equilibrium and presents a new basis for thinking about economic issues, one rooted in life processes—an unequal world of unceasing change in which boundaries, plans, and regulations are essential.

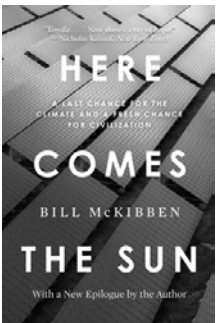
248 pages | \$34.00 softcover



Ecocivilization: Making a World that Works for All
Jeremy Lent

As climate chaos, inequality, and social fragmentation intensify, humanity faces an imminent choice: continue with a system built on extraction and endless growth, or reimagine civilization itself. Incremental policy improvements are no longer enough—we need a deep transformation of our current civilization to continue to survive. In *Ecocivilization*, Lent offers that reimagination, grounded in proven design principles of ecosystems and in humankind’s evolved inclination toward justice, mutuality, and dignity.

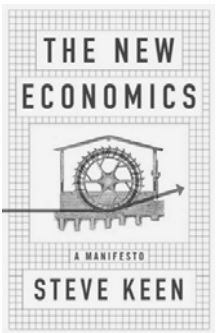
400 pages | \$44.00 hardcover



Here Comes the Sun
A Last Chance for the Climate and a Fresh Chance for Civilization
Bill McKibben

Here Comes the Sun tells the story of the sudden spike in power from the sun and wind—and the desperate fight of the fossil fuel industry and their politicians to hold this new power at bay. McKibben traces the arrival of plentiful, inexpensive solar energy. And he shows how solar power is more than just a path out of the climate crisis: it is a chance to reorder the world on saner and more humane grounds.

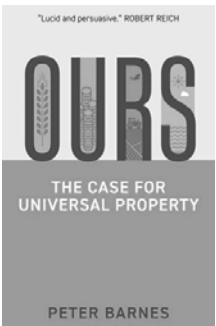
224 pages | \$28.00 softcover



The New Economics: A Manifesto
Steve Keen

In 1517, Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the wall of Wittenberg church. He argued that the Church’s internally consistent but absurd doctrines had pickled into a dogmatic structure of untruth. It was time for a Reformation. Keen argues that economics needs its own Reformation and tackles serious issues that today’s economic priesthood ignores, such as money, energy and ecological sustainability. It gives us hope that we can save our economies from collapse and the planet from ecological catastrophe.

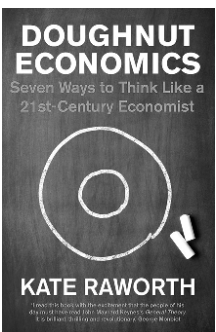
140 pages | \$19.95 softcover



Ours: The Case For Universal Property
Peter Barnes

We think our wealth today comes from productive corporations and workers, but they merely add icing to a cake baked long ago. In this provocative book, Peter Barnes argues that most of today’s wealth is co-inherited from nature and past human efforts, not individually earned. If some of that co-inherited wealth were placed in trust for each of us, living and yet-to-be born – creating what Barnes calls “universal property” – capitalism would be fundamentally transformed.

140 pages | \$17.95 softcover



Doughnut Economics
Seven Ways to Think like a 21st Century Economist
Kate Raworth

Kate Raworth sets out seven key ways to reframe our understanding of what economics is and does. How we can break our addiction to growth; redesign money, finance, and business to be in service to people; and create economies that are regenerative and distributive by design. Raworth handpicks the best emergent ideas—from ecological, behavioral, feminist, and institutional economics to complexity thinking and Earth-systems science—to address this question: How can we turn economies that need to grow, whether or not they make us thrive, into economies that make us thrive, whether or not they grow?

320 pages | \$33.50 softcover



Spokes, Skills and Smiles: Cycling Smarts Lands in Waterloo

By Cassandra Polyzou

Helmets on, kickstands up. This June, elementary students had a blast learning how to ride with confidence in the Cycling Smarts program, delivered by a team of instructors from Recycle Cycles. The pilot project is a partnership between the City of Waterloo, the Waterloo Region District School Board, Waterloo Catholic District School Board, Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region, and The Working Centre, and is designed to empower students with new skills and knowledge on the road.

The pilot program is based on the curriculum developed and delivered by Cycling in the Future (CIFT) between 2014-2022. The Working Centre worked closely with the CIFT team to build on best practices and learn from their extensive experience providing school-based cycling training.

Cycling Smarts is more than a few days of riding. It is a thoughtful introduction to safe, confident urban cycling, designed to meet every student where they are. The curriculum blends classroom lessons with hands-on practice, from road safety rules to

how to do a basic safety check on their bikes before they ride. Best of all, the program is offered at no cost to families and welcomes every student, including those with mobility needs and those who have never ridden a bike before.

The feedback from students and teachers was amazing! The sessions were engaging, and students walked away with a better understanding of a variety of topics including the rules of the road, navigating intersections and the importance of signaling their turns.

Recycle Cycles brought the curriculum to Grade 5 students at two schools, St. Nicholas Catholic Elementary School and Lincoln Heights Public School in Waterloo and is excited to run another session in a new school in the fall.

To learn more about the program, visit: stswr.ca



Uptown Waterloo Launches Weekend Sidewalk Sweeping and Community Clean-Up Pilot Project

Published by the Uptown Waterloo BIA

The Uptown Waterloo Business Improvement Area (BIA) is pleased to announce the launch of a new Weekend Sidewalk Sweeping and Community Clean-Up Project, running from April through the end of October. This pilot initiative is designed to complement the City of Waterloo's regular weekday cleaning efforts by ensuring that Uptown remains clean, welcoming and vibrant throughout the busiest times of the week.

Each Saturday and Sunday morning before noon, a dedicated team carries out sweeping, cleaning and organizing of sidewalks and pavements across the Uptown BIA boundary. The project also includes regular tidying and maintenance of Uptown Square to support a positive experience for residents, visitors and local businesses alike.

The initiative is delivered in partnership with The Working Centre's Job Café program, which employs a team of four individuals to complete the work on a consistent basis. This collaboration not only enhances the cleanliness of Uptown Waterloo but also supports local employment and community development.

"This project reflects our ongoing commitment to maintaining a clean and welcoming Uptown while creating meaningful employment opportunities for community members," said Jeyas Balaskanthan, Executive Director of the Uptown Waterloo BIA. "We are grateful for our partnership with The Working Centre and the Job Café program."

As a pilot project, the initiative has the potential to expand in future seasons, further contributing to the beautification and upkeep of Uptown Waterloo.

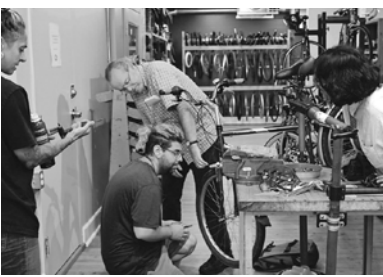
Photo: Dustin, Bryce, Chris, Adam and Jeyas explore the streets of Uptown to make a cleaning plan for Saturdays and Sundays this season. Photo by William Martin Jr.

Recycle Cycles Bike Shop: Open and Flourishing

By Cassandra Polyzou

The wrenches and bike grease have been in ample supply at Recycle Cycles this season. Our community bike shop underwent renovations and reorganization to make the space more welcoming. We focused on bringing back the Do-It-Yourself bike repair stands and structure the main floor to bring more ease to the experience of volunteers and guests. Since we reopened in April 2026, the team of staff and new and returning volunteers have been hard at work supporting folks with bike repairs, maintenance and finding new homes for hundreds of used bikes. In spring and early summer, we sold over 200 bikes, supported 135 hours of bike stand use and hosted close to 400 hours of volunteer time.

Our mission remains to make access to transportation affordable and



serve as a learning and community hub across downtown Kitchener. As an Enterprise Tool project of The Working Centre, people come in to learn and share knowledge on bike repair and maintenance, gain access to tools and hang out in a supportive and fun environment.

Tuesdays are our production days, when volunteers come in to work on bikes. These days are full of conversations, as we learn from each other, working on every kind of bike imaginable. The rest of the week, we fo-

cus on helping people with their bike repairs and selling affordably priced used bikes and parts.

We recently had a visit from a cycling advocate and mechanic from Sydney, Australia. It was a beautiful day, working alongside our new friend from across the globe, learning from his experience and hearing about the year-round cycling programs he and the team at Bike Wise Australia offer. We are keen to connect with other cycling groups and find ways to support the vibrant local cycling community.

Once a month we host a Volunteer Orientation for new volunteers to learn about our practices, the role of volunteers and get a tour of the shop. If you're interested in volunteering with Recycle Cycles, reach out to us at volunteer@theworkingcentre.org for more information.

Whether you have a bike repair need, have a used bike you want to donate or an idea for a collaborative event, we would love to hear from you: recyclecycles@theworkingcentre.org



256 King St. East, Unit B
in Downtown Kitchener

Wed – Fri: 11am – 6pm
Saturdays: 9am – 4pm

Serving as a learning and community hub, we create an inclusive and safe meeting point for the local cycling community. We train diverse folks on bike maintenance, collaborate with local cycling partners and participate in local cycling advocacy and events.

Learn more at:
www.theworkingcentre.org/projects/recycle-cycles



Giving Technology A Second Life at Computer Recycling

This article is featured on the City of Kitchener’s webpage Digital Kitchener 2.0: Stories of Innovation

What if a piece of technology had the power to make change in our community?

What started as a small idea from Councillor Paul Singh has grown into an initiative that’s making a big impact across Kitchener. Through the City’s partnership with The Working Centre, the Computer Recycling program is turning yesterday’s tech into tomorrow’s opportunity while reducing waste.

Over the past year, more than 250 devices once destined for disposal, including laptops, computers, monitors, printers and projectors, have been refurbished and made available at reduced rates at The Working Centre. Some are even used directly in The Working Centre’s facilities, supporting independent workstations for employment, education and access to online resources.

“This is a great example of how innovation and compassion can come together to serve our community,” says Mayor Berry Vrbanovic. “By making technology accessible, Kitchener is helping bridge the digital divide and empower community members with the tools they need to thrive. This partnership with the



Working Centre creates real opportunities for members of our community. I’m proud of our team and partners for making digital inclusion a reality in Kitchener.”

Behind the scenes, a dedicated team of City staff and volunteers ensures that every device is handled with care, maintaining data security and integrity throughout the process. Their efforts have created a sustainable cycle: as City devices are renewed, the outgoing equipment finds new purpose in the hands of those who need it most.

“This initiative proves that small changes can lead to big community impact. It’s a smart, sustainable way to give back and I’m proud to see it continue to grow,” says Councillor

Paul Singh.

Beyond the numbers, the true impact of this initiative is felt in the community. For individuals who may not have access to reliable technology, these devices open doors to opportunity. Technology enables people to apply for jobs, attend virtual classes, connect with loved ones and access essential online



services. By giving these devices a second life, the City and The Working Centre are also giving people a chance to move forward, stay connected and participate more fully in today’s digital world.

“There is a huge need for affordable technology in Kitchener. Our partnership with the City of Kitchener is addressing that,” says Charles McCollm, Project Manager of Computer Recycling at the Working Centre. “This program benefits the City, but the individual stories show the true impact. A local woman who was returning to education to enhance her skills received a computer through this program. She just completed her first year of school. Affordable technology made that possible for her.”

This fall, the team is preparing to send another round of devices to The Working Centre. With each cycle, more laptops, computers and tech accessories are refurbished and reintroduced into the community.

This initiative showed how sustainable technology practices supported digital equity. By giving devices a second life, the City and The Working Centre helped more residents connect, learn and participate fully in an increasingly digital world.



Computer Recycling repurposes or recycles used computers or other computer related equipment. We wipe data from donated equipment and repair items to make them available at an affordable cost. Items that cannot be repaired or are no longer useful are recycled in an environmentally friendly manner to keep waste out of landfill sites.

We welcome your donated computers, printers, monitors, phones, and other electronics. Our aim is to provide technology to people that would not otherwise be able to afford it.



**Desktop Computers | Laptops | Cables | Printers
Monitors | Mice | Keyboards | Drives | Video Cards
Sound Cards | Modems | Network Cards | Parts
Peripherals | Retro Items | and more!**

The systems that we sell meet basic computer needs and are suitable for internet browsing, e-mail, word processing, Zoom, watching video and using online tools.

**66 Queen St. S. in Kitchener (Entrance on Charles St.)
Tues: 10am to 12pm | Wed: 1pm to 4pm**

We may also be available at other times by appointment.
Contact us by email to set up an appointment time.

cr@theworkingcentre.org | 519-743-1151 ext. 225



Income Tax Clinic and Money Matters Help Secure \$14.85 Million in Financial Benefits

In March and April 2026, The Working Centre’s Free Income Tax Clinic helped individuals and families file **3,938 tax returns to secure \$14.85 million in benefits**. This is a critical service enhancing the financial security for many in our community.

These numbers represent more than statistics; they signify the positive change and stability brought into the lives of those we serve. Tax credits - refund, GST, OTB, CCB, CAIP and more are often a lifeline for covering essential expenses and ensuring secure housing.

This year 60 volunteers were trained in tax receiving and filing. Additionally, the tax clinic was able to engage eight partner organizations in tax filing and benefit navigation.

We want to extend our gratitude for the dedication and hard work of our Tax Clinic. They play a vital role as we navigate through another successful year operating the clinic. We want to express special recognition to our volunteers who tirelessly worked behind the scenes and on the front lines—receiving documents, screening, completing intake forms, tackling complex tax situations, filing returns and ensuring the smooth operation of the clinic. Your contributions have been nothing short of essential to our success.

Community Events at Queen Street Commons Café and Fresh Ground



Since reopening earlier this year, Queen Street Commons Café has quickly re-established itself as an excellent space in the downtown core for events that bring community together. The Commons has welcomed several live music events with Good Corp Productions, along with arts and community programming open to the public.

CAFKA, in partnership with Musagetes, brought its Big Ideas in Art and Culture lecture series to the Commons, offering an opportunity for artists to share reflections on their practice and for the wider community to take part in the conversation. The space has also been opened to 4RepairKW for its Repair Cafés, with upcoming events on September 19 and November 21.

More community programming is on the way, including a fingerstyle folk open mic on September 17 and a Good Corp Productions show featuring Mia Kelly and her band on November 4. Alongside these public events, Queen Street Commons continues to welcome private gatherings and celebrations, including birthdays and baby showers.



At 256 King Street East, Fresh Ground Café has also been busy welcoming a wide variety of community gatherings and events. This spring, Sustainable Waterloo Region held a panel on running sustainable events, and The Registry Theatre has used the space for its AGM. This month, the KW Symphony will bring its volunteers together at Fresh Ground, while a monthly slam poetry night is creating another regular opportunity for people to gather and participate.

From live music and poetry to workshops, presentations, meetings and celebrations, both cafés are becoming places where people can come together, share ideas and build community.

Learn more about the Cafés and other Community Tools projects on our website: www.theworkingcentre.org/hubs/tools-and-enterprise



Queen Street Commons Café Receives Seed and Grow Grants from Provincial Ontario Trillium Fund

On June 5, Kitchener Centre MPP Aislinn Clancy joined Amaryah DeGroot, Joe Mancini and Working Centre Board member Eunice Valenzuela to announce and celebrate both a Seed Grant and a Grow Grant from the provincial government’s Ontario Trillium Fund, as we relaunch the Queen Street Commons Café as a vital placemaking model for community connections, diversity, inclusion and democratic dialogue.

The Queen Street Commons Café has a long history of being an affordable and inclusive meeting place, where people from all walks-of-life gather in common. At a time when public spaces are diminishing, and our feelings of isolation and loneliness are growing, the Commons is needed more than ever.

Joe Mancini, Director, shared, “The Queen Street Commons is a place to help strengthen community and a way of living that sustains our social fabric. We are grateful for OTF’s support in helping to strengthen this dynamic community space.” On Friday, June 12, we celebrated 20 years of the Queen Street Commons.



The Working Centre Walking Tour

Interested in learning about the impacts, challenges and relationships of The Working Centre projects? We look forward to welcoming you at our free monthly walking tours, on the last Tuesday of each month from 11am-1:30pm.

The 3km guided tour will introduce you to some of the spaces that host the 30+ projects that make up The Working Centre. The tour includes the Job Search Resource Centre on Queen Street, St. John’s Kitchen and 97 Victoria campus and our many Community Tools spaces with stops at the community cafés, bike repair shop, and furniture thrift store.

We also offer several corporate tours and volunteer experiences where you will engage with our community building work.

Learn more or register for a tour on our website: www.theworkingcentre.org/get-involved/tours

You can also email us at: tours@theworkingcentre.org