

A Lifetime Spent Battling Secrecy: Some Significant Struggles

by Ken Rubin
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Rubin at the gates of Parliament, battling powerful institutions from city hall and government agencies, to Bell Canada, food industry giants and the National Capital Commission. **Photography:** Debbie Rubin

Fifty Years Later: Remembering Some Formative and Pivotal Investigations

Tenant problems, powerful developers, unresponsive utilities, lemon cars, a profit-hungry food industry, poverty, and unjust and toxic conditions in poorly planned communities were some of the issues that turned me into a hard-hitting local and national activist and public interest researcher.

My career has been spent digging up Ottawa's secret ways and working on issues for betterment, health and safety, human rights and the environment.

Recalled here are some of my formative work as a citizen and consumer advocate, particularly action research and advocacy around neighbourhood planning issues in Ottawa, the campaign to make Bell Canada services more responsive, the work around lemon cars and lax consumer protection. Also included of course are the efforts to bring in access to information and privacy protection legislation in Canada.

Two longer term examples of my investigative and activist work are highlighted. One that is national in scope is bringing to light food industry practices while examining alternative ways to create a sustainable food delivery system. Second is the battle right here in Ottawa to open up and make the powerful National Capital Commission more accountable.

To do this takes persistency, commitment, analysis, tactical foresight and having the fight within to both expose and change the way things operate. Some say that makes me an information warrior, an agitator, a snoop, or a pain in the neck.

Acknowledgement is made that parts of this self-published article first appeared in *Ottawa Magazine* and the *Ottawa Citizen*. Support from my partner Debbie is never ending for which I am most thankful.

Other efforts of my activist and information career efforts not included here are exposing the money behind and the use and export of a lethal product, asbestos; helping people in duress like Maher Arar; working with whistle

blowers like Health Canada's fired scientist Pierre Blais; and shining light on questionable funding in the technology partnership and sponsorship programs. These and many other efforts and stories can be found at my web site, kenrubin.ca.

A recent article, [The Perils and Paradoxes of Freedom of Information in Canada](#) further captures some of my investigative reporting work. It is found on-line at J-Source and the Canadian Journalists for Free Expression websites. I am grateful to the Canadian Journalists for Free Expression who have given recognition to my work by honouring me with their first-ever Investigative Award.

Ken Rubin

**YOU DON'T HAVE TO
WEAR A MASK...**



**TO GET AWAY WITH
ROBBERY**

Call to action in the 1970s, Rubin formed Action Bell Canada, and brought scrutiny to Bell, often through satirical campaigns

The Making of Canada's Long-Time Freedom of Information Warrior

Back in the 1960's and 1970's my citizen action research work examined unwanted and top-down neighbourhood development.

People wanted to play a much larger role in the look and feel of their neighbourhoods, and for me — an independent researcher hired to compile the many voices and frustrations into one coherent self-study document that could be presented at city hall — that meant time spent in crowded living rooms or community halls compiling information, planning surveys and hearing complaints of encroaching development.

From Dalhousie to Sandy Hill, the endless meetings, debates, and data collection taught me a lesson in the value of citizen-based research that would fuel many a fight against such local, national and international interests as the National Capital Commission, Monsanto, the Canadian Meat Council, and Agriculture Canada.

That's not to say the struggle for control and improvement always worked. Helping citizens of Centretown obtain data about its area improvement plan while serving on their community association board did not prevent my own downtown area north of Gloucester Street from falling prey to demolitions, high-rises, and parking lots. Indeed, despite my door-to-door research and activist efforts, the changing tide meant that my wife, Debbie, and I were evicted in December of 1972. I was down but not out — in fact, that battle emboldened me to become more of a determined investigator that I am today.

It was in the 1970's too that the Lansdowne Park stadium seat expansion plans were being revealed, as were the real estate plans of developer and then Ottawa Rough Riders owner David Loeb. By then, I lived in the Glebe and, together with other people who lived in the neighbourhoods of Old Ottawa East and Old Ottawa South, marshaled facts and organized opposition for an Ontario Municipal Board hearing on the long-standing public space. Nevertheless, Loeb's expansion was approved by the board and was constructed in 1975.

Now, many years later, despite similar community and legal opposition — this time by the Friends of Lansdowne group, after the Ottawa Sports and Entertainment Group (OSEG) was granted a sole-source partnership contract by the City of Ottawa — Lansdowne Park has been intensively redeveloped.

My 2010 investigations yielded sparse data on this deal but did reveal early concerns about increased traffic problems. In 2012, the courts rejected the Friends of Lansdowne legal action, which sought to stop the project because of its untendered nature. And so, with considerable public financial assistance, OSEG built a wall of big-box stores and banks, high-rise condominiums, and a redeveloped stadium.

Much information about this venture will remain confidential, but the Lansdowne case served as a sobering reminder of how tough it is to fight city hall.

The Skyline Hotel Information Caper

Getting information could at times be quite dramatic and strategic in importance. An example of this was when Ontario provincial cabinet ministers descended on Ottawa in October, 1972 at the Skyline Hotel (now the Delta Hotel) with a “Design for Development” plan for Eastern Ontario.

Hundreds of people from mayors to community and business leaders, were expected to listen to long speeches about the plan - without the details. Getting bored and, as always, on the lookout, I spotted stacks of the 20-page plan discreetly boxed outside the large Skyline ballroom. When it came time to ask 'token' questions based on the on-stage rhetoric, I was all prepared with my questions that cited details of the grand plan.

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Those attending were not quite the hicks the Queens Park boys thought they were. In droves, the area mayors, community group leaders and business interests left the main ballroom hall and started rummaging through the boxes for copies of the plan. That effectively disrupted the best-laid top-down plan. Members of the audience were none too pleased with the paternal treatment or the plan's development assumptions and joined in asking pointed questions. That was the last imposed plan for Eastern Ontario.

Speaking of not so even resources struggles both at the community and marketplace level, one of my biggest consumer advocacy fights from 1973 to 1985 was against Bell Canada — the largest Canadian corporation at the time. The goal was to make this commercial giant more consumer-service-oriented and less obsessed with profits. “Ma Bell,” as we used to call the company, was continually increasing telephone rates. A group of people that included consumer, poverty, aboriginal, and civil liberty groups came together in a coalition that I coordinated, called Action Bell Canada (ABC).

Together, we sought lower telephone rates and better service, often taking a satirical approach with our recruiting materials. As intervenors at the Canadian Transport Commission and CRTC Bell hearings, which took place from 1973 to 1985, I filed hundreds of questions on behalf of ABC that brought scrutiny to Bell’s service and cost practices. Deplorable ironies were revealed, such as the fact that Bell employees had been given some 21,000 free phones, with top managers getting several free phones for their winter and summer homes, while some subscribers got poor service and were on four-party lines.

In those days, before social media, it was at times pure guerrilla tactics that got matters going. I remember registering my cat as an intervenor in a few Bell Canada rate hearings and made an issue of how the cat continually got better notification treatment.

Battling for better services and rates also meant seeking better disclosure and

consumer protection from car companies. Helping the Automobile Protection Association (APA) dig for and expose secret car warranties and faulty vehicles, such as General Motor's Firenza, included holding a demonstration in 1973 that saw 32 Firenzas rally on Parliament Hill (two of which caught fire during the protest). My 1974 research study, a *Counter-Report on the Canadian Department of Consumer Affairs* shone a light on the failings of the federal consumer affairs department to help aggrieved Firenza car owners and other people who felt wronged by the marketplace.

The APA continues to offer consumers unbiased advice on new and used cars. Its founder, Phil Edmonston, produces his annual Lemon-Aid Guide, which points out the worst and best vehicles.

Battling for Legal Access to Ottawa's Hidden Records

The time was ripe for legislation that looked out for the little guy. From 1975 to 1982, I worked as a private citizen to press parliament for access to information and privacy protection legislation, writing several reports along the way.

In the late 1970s, I served as information rights chair with the National Capital Civil Liberties Association. Along with its parent organization, the Canadian Federation of Civil Liberties and Human Rights Associations, we highlighted the shortcomings and intrusiveness of federal privacy measures to a parliamentary committee through my 1978 report *How Private Is Private?*. We also sought to inform Ottawans through a 1979 *Privacy and You* pamphlet not to dole out their personal information.

The following year, we brought concerns to then privacy commissioner Inger Hansen about the growing list of institutions, even voluntary hockey leagues, requesting social insurance numbers as an unofficial ID. We presented a brief to a parliamentary committee in 1981 and had some influence with helping get the 1982 Privacy Act passed.

I also became involved in 1975 with another national Ottawa-based group, Access, which pressed for the public's right to know more about the issues of the day.

With the lobby group Access, I carried out a 1976 survey of parliamentarians, which showed that they faced incredible obstacles to gaining information about a range of issues, including changes in the Unemployment Insurance Commission. That report, *The Public's Right to Information Act in the Federal Government As Viewed by Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament and Senators*, gained media attention. If elected members were having trouble, what chance did the average citizen have?

For seven years Access lobbied for, and then helped pass Canada's 1982 Access to Information Act which unfortunately compromised too much in favour of secrecy.

Once it was the law, I began testing the system and filing Freedom of Information requests — that is, formal queries that took advantage of the rights granted under the Access to Information Act. Unlike in the past, I now had a legal weapon to get hidden reports, memos, and agendas. By 1987, a *Saturday Night* article on the act featured me as a leading access “junkie.”

Since the passing of the Access to Information Act over 30 years ago, I have filed literally thousands of requests, dealt with countless government officials, worked with community and client groups, and taken the government to court, winning some cases. Hundreds of newspaper stories have credited my research findings, and I have become a regular commentator on the limitations of access to information laws.

My research reports began pointing out both the access and privacy legislation's deficiencies and included a 1986 report, *Access To Cabinet Confidences* that was cited in both parliamentary committee proceedings and in court cases and a 1983 report, *Prying Eyes: A Review and Indictment of the 1982 Canadian Privacy Act* that pointed out the many third parties with access to Canadians' personal information.

When asked about Canada's current access law, which has never had a major overhaul, I point to the delays, many exemptions, excessive fees, excluded agencies, and cumbersome processes associated with Freedom of Information requests. To say that our access laws protect a culture of secrecy in the government town of Ottawa would be an understatement. Ditto for our weak privacy legislation that allows too much government intrusion with limited access to personal information.

Challenging Food Industry Secrecy and Practices

Indeed, the more I learned about hidden information, the more I was driven to examine subjects close to my heart, such as the food industry. Eventually, too, in the late 1970s, that passion spurred Debbie and me to purchase agricultural acreage in the Pontiac region next to the Gatineau Park.

"Some have told me that my parallel digging in the dirt as a farmer suits me well as I go about digging for hidden information. Perhaps my battle cry should be "Raise hell, raise basil, squash secrecy."

My work at looking at alternatives to junk food and large private supermarket chains began in 1970, when I wrote for the Canadian Consumer Council and published a 1971 report, *Food Store Self Help Projects and Food Aid Alternatives*, that examined the use of food co-operatives as a way to assist people, including case studies on low-income consumers efforts to obtain healthy, affordable produce. It was exciting then to be asked to write a national discussion report on food co-ops and present the paper, *Food Cooperatives; Different People, Different Methods and Cooperative Goals* at a 1971 Cooperative Union of Canada conference. Further research was done on alternative food delivery systems, including reviewing how citizens could change food industry practices, that included describing the efforts of the Boycott Kraft food campaign.

My interest in a better more sustainable food system soon had me playing a central coordinating role in a citizen Canada Food Week initiative in 1977. Through Pollution Probe Ottawa, I produced information kits on alternative local food and nutrition systems and assisted in encouraging over 300 events

in 35 Canadian cities where the information kits were distributed. Here in Ottawa, Frances Moore Lappé, renowned author of *Diet for a Small Planet*, spoke at a downtown church about changes needed to make our eating habits and our planet healthy. Looking back, I see that this was one spark that helped found an active local food movement, which continues to gain momentum to this day.

Of course, consumer food campaigns and the environmental movement are inextricably intertwined, and my investigative work into better local food systems continued in the 1980's and 1990's as the environmental movement grew. That included my joining the Board of Friends of the Earth and helping found a new Ottawa environment umbrella group called Ecovision.

One highlight was publishing a 1992 report, *Towards An Ecological Diet For Canadian Consumers*, which identified obstacles to widespread adoption of eating locally grown food.

My interest in food issues and the environment lead me to become an organic farmer. For over 35 years, this has meant growing and harvesting crops and supplying area restaurants, hotels, individuals, day cares, and food banks with produce - vegetables, herbs and edible flowers. It's been a labour of love and hard work.

My investigations into the food industry continued with perhaps the best example being exposing how the industry lobbied for their products in the development of the widely distributed “Canada’s Food Guide”. In 1991, my information requests showed that rather than the nutritional document it claimed to be, the guide was a product of intense pressure applied by large agribusiness interests that wanted (and got) their meat, dairy, and other food products prominently featured.

Those revelations certainly lowered people’s expectations about the credibility of this widely well-thought of publication. Nevertheless, further records obtained indicate that little had changed by 2005 with the resulting *Globe and Mail* story describing the guide’s up-for-grabs development as a “feeding frenzy” for food lobbyists.

At times, too, information obtained threw the unwanted spotlight on the the safety of the food industry products.

Back in the late 1980s, I, along with a reporter from *The Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, went all the way to the Federal Court of Appeal to get the safety inspection reports of large meat-packing companies to monitor their safety practices. Records revealed that some plants had unacceptable ratings, with inspectors finding unsanitary and dangerous conditions.

But the Canadian Meat Council fought back and, in the 1990s, successfully lobbied authorities to bring in a lax rating system that also removed a section of these reports that allowed for critical observations. (By 2006, the meat industry had succeeded in getting rid of such safety inspection reports altogether.)

Unfortunately, it often takes a crisis to begin rethinking how lax regulation of food safety had become when it comes to the food industry. With the 2008 deadly outbreak of listeria traced to the Toronto Maple Leaf Foods plant and the 2012 E. coli crisis at the Brooks, Alberta, XL Foods plant that led to a massive tainted-beef recall, the meat industry is finally beginning to more fully adhere to safer production practices. Still, much work needs to be done.

One earlier effort that was won was when the applications in the 1990's by Monsanto and E Lilly to add the rBST growth hormone to milk for increasing dairy milk production were successfully challenged. After information was gathered and public opposition to the proposed alteration of milk in Canada, their applications were rejected.

Sometimes, it took years to get the public attention after information was released. Hidden drinking water survey reports obtained in 2000 from Indian Affairs and reported in the *Globe and Mail* revealed the crisis with the poor quality of drinking water on many Indian reserves. This helped start a still on-going struggle to improve and finance aboriginal communities water filtration systems.

Around that time too, the federal government's too-cosy relationship with the food industry was reflected in draft food safety legislation (Bill C-80) favourable to the industry. To counter their dominance of discussions on that initiative, I produced a 1999 *Citizen Discussion Paper on Proposed Federal Food Safety Legislation* that highlighted the agrifood business influence in Ottawa. The report findings were presented at a conference on Parliament Hill sponsored by the Canadian Health Coalition.

Nonetheless, in the last decade, the food industry has succeeded in getting food safety legislation more favourable to their interests than those of the public. This despite the public food safety food crisis referred to above.

These days, one topic that still is of interest remains genetically engineered (GE) foods. But it has been a controversial food industry issue for nearly two decades. For instance, using Freedom of Information requests, I found secret trials, applications, and approvals that revealed Monsanto, one of the largest GE producers, had done shoddy field trials for its GE potato varieties and that, in 1999, Monsanto was getting impatient with regulators when it came to approving these new GE crops.

Nothing hits home quite like questions about what we eat — so the GE food industry issue was one where I combined my activist and research skills together like I did earlier during Canada Food Week events.

One cross-Canada event that highlighted GE issues, I organized in December 1999. Celebrity chefs in their respective cities spoke out against using GE foods obtaining incredible publicity. Here in Ottawa, chef John Taylor, Georges Laurier of then Laurier sur Montcalm, and Robert Bourassa of then Café Henri Burger came out for the rally that spurred the now defunct *Ottawa XPress* headline “Ottawans Finally Speak Out Against Genetically Modified Foods.” At Taylor’s Domus restaurant, we brought together producers and chefs to send a message that GE foods should be labelled as such and suggested that the chefs should eliminate such products from their menus.

Another cross-Canada event in April 2003, organized by the Canadian Organic Growers, used information I obtained to fuel educational demonstrations at public agricultural research stations such as the Central Experimental Farm, where records showed that GE experimental crops were being tested for private interests. Activists held a rousing demonstration outside the now razed John Carling Building, which was then headquarters of Agriculture Canada.

Many of the safety and environmental issues concerning GE plants and the possibility of GE animals or even its use to alter people are still being debated, and much of the information around this subject is hidden from public view. More needs to be dug up on food safety, food sustainability and on food industry trade practices. More has to be done too to establish a viable and strong citizen-based national food movement and a sustainable and nutritious food system.

Some have told me that my parallel digging in the dirt as a farmer suits me well as I go about digging for hidden information such as in the food industry. Perhaps my battle cry should be “Raise hell, raise basil, squash secrecy.”

Yet Other Access Searches That Impact on Ottawa and Reveal More Local Secrets

It is particularly satisfying when the stories dug up reveal secrets close to home that agitate residents. The few federal, provincial and local access searches described below all had delayed responses and took much negotiations and persistency to get.

One request to Transport Canada in 1988 uncovered incidents of close encounters between airplanes in the skies over Ottawa; and another 1990 Transport Canada one produced records that identified a toxic site near the Ottawa airport. The resulting stories touched on public safety concerns and helped locals realize the dangers that lurk in the skies overhead and in their own backyards.

Research in 2011 showed that Library and Archives Canada was planning to block local groups from booking the much used auditorium space and meeting rooms at their Wellington Street headquarters. The resulting *Ottawa Citizen* story postponed the change for a year but sadly, in the end, most groups had to look elsewhere for a place to gather.

A 2013 municipal access request revealed that from 2010 to 2013, the City of Ottawa hired, on a sole source basis, the company of a former councillor turned consultant Graham Bird for work on Lansdowne Park OLEG redevelopment. Some said his contribution – that in the end cost taxpayers over \$2.8 million dollars - was excessive and not all that necessary. That revelation made some taxpayers and opponents of the sole sourced Lansdowne Park redevelopment furious.

In 2014, Algonquin College records surprised by telling that departing President Robert Gillett received a whopping \$1,931,000 in supplementary pension benefits. This gold-plated financial package came out of the College's operating funds. The Ontario government's sunshine list for 2014 indicates Gillett was paid \$443,727. This extra pension benefit on top of a large salary and severance package upset some college staff and members of the public.

Lastly, the controversy over Ottawa's light rail train plans, costs and directions has never ended. At times getting information on the behind-the-scenes' goings-on was hard to get.

Back in 2012, as reported in the *Ottawa Sun*, I was able to obtain a 2009 memo written by federal bureaucrats to then-infrastructure minister John Baird, that indicated that "the province of Ontario has expressed reservations about elements of the [LRT] plan, such as the downtown tunnel. Premier McGuinty publicly criticized the plan as too expensive on Oct. 28, 2009, echoing earlier comments by municipal affairs minister Jim Watson."

The memo went on to say "Cost estimates for the light rail transit segments of the plan may be low " and "City staff estimate that a 3.2 km tunnel downtown would cost approximately \$550 million, a price tag that is not in keeping with transit tunnel projects in other Canadian cities." One resulting change in the LRT construction underway was to build a shorter shallower less expensive 2.5 km downtown tunnel.

Wrestling with the NCC's Culture of Secrecy

By far my most intensive and longest local struggle has been to try and open up and make more accountable the powerful National Capital Commission.

Digging for information about and answers from the influential National Capital Commission began for me in the late 1960s. It included assisting community groups in the 1970s, getting data to try and combat NCC suggested plans for a massive Rideau Street redevelopment near the Canal. That development did go ahead in the 1980's and included the Rideau Center, the Weston Hotel and the Ottawa Convention Centre.

My pursuit of the NCC continued once Canada's Access to Information Act was in place in 1983 and allowed me to gain some access to NCC's decision-making minutes - from meetings that in those days were all held behind closed doors.

The NCC was none too happy with my monitoring their meetings and in 1986, cut me off from getting any NCC meeting minutes or attached reports, exempting everything in the minutes except publicly announced decisions. So I had to go to federal court in 1987 with the assistance of the *Citizen* and argue in front of a judge that I should get the NCC to release records again. I was successful and have persistently continued year after year to apply for NCC meeting minutes and other records.

Even though in November, 2007, the NCC was finally forced to open up parts of their meetings to the public, key matters are still reviewed at in-camera sessions, with sanitized summaries being released months late — and

only because I file requests.

Sanitized as their records are, the value of uncovering matters of local interest can be found in the following items that resulted in primarily *Citizen* stories:

- 1988 consultant plans proposed for the parliamentary and judicial precinct were released after months of delays and an Information Commissioner complaint
- secret 1989 discussions about introducing user fees at Gatineau Park
- 1990 documents on delays and cost overruns associated with building a museum of photography next to the Chateau Laurier
- 1992 records on the NCC's opposition to a popular idea of a park at the site of the former Daly building (the space now houses a luxury condominium, from which the NCC receives revenues)
- 1988 to 1994 data that revealed the NCC was selling off chunks of its public greenbelt space to private developers
- 1991 data on spending \$10,000 for the installation of condom dispensing machines at NCC public washrooms
- 2002 records that revealed that the NCC had spent \$250,000 renovating an outdoor bathroom in Rockcliffe Park
- a 1995 report by one Ottawa experienced appraisal firm that said the used sales value of furniture, furnishing, built-in closets and wallpaper left behind after the Mulroneys departing 24 Sussex Drive and Harrington Lake was only worth \$39,050 despite the NCC having paid the Mulroneys \$150,000 for these items in 1993
- a 2003 investigation that mapped the incredibly vast capital area financial land holdings of NCC Chairman Marcel Beaudry and family and friends
- 2004 NCC data that showed the NCC's "competition" for developing phase one of the publicly owned LeBreton Flats space ended with Claridge Homes getting the project, even though they "qualified" in last place in the ratings.
- 2015 data showed just how much the NCC's power was based on funds from long-term lease revenues

- . 2015 data, published in the *Hill Times* that revealed secret plans for four new office towers, removing an open space plaza, demolishing some buildings on the north side of Sparks street opposite Parliament - this included discussions and decisions made at secret in-camera NCC meetings
- . 2015 data, published in *Embassy News* that indicated the government was in discussions to allow the iconic old American Embassy site opposite Parliament to be used as a Mexican embassy despite years of some lobbying for it to be the home for a Canadian portrait gallery

These are examples of finding out what the NCC was none-too-keen to have made public. Yet the NCC still likes to decide key community matters behind closed doors, exempt matters it would prefer to keep hidden and delay others from early public input.

The continuation of its secrecy practices is once again demonstrated in its provision of minimal information about the four consortiums' January 2015 proposals for a large scale redevelopment anchor project at LeBreton Flats. My access request on this and other queries made by the *Citizen* remain unanswered. We were told wait until this December and some data could be released.

The NCC may be its own worst enemy by being at times too secretive, arrogant and not wanting its track record as a developer known.

Nor has it helped matters that the NCC has itself been subject to hidden political interference that, once discovered as is the case on the location of the proposed memorial to the victims of communism, results in a public outcry.

Getting the NCC to be more open has at times too meant organizing with environmental groups through Ecovision a 1993 public forum at Library and Archives Canada on the NCC's none-too responsive role in local environmental issues. More recently, it has meant joining in 2015 with individuals and the Move the Memorial group who are seeking to relocate the victims of communism memorial.

The struggle to build a better capital and further open up and reform or replace the less-than-accountable and transparent NCC continues.



Set sights Ken Rubin, shown at his Pontiac farm, has spent his life battling for freedom of information **PHOTOGRAPHY:** TONY FOUHSE

The Bumpy Rewarding Journey for Transparency

Many of the information searches I've done over the years have originated right here in Ottawa. Over the years, I have developed a hunch for knowing what information to look for — call it a nose for news. But sometimes, it's just good old-fashioned curiosity.

For instance, in 1990, I filed a Freedom of Information request about an unpleasant smell that I encountered while walking down Sparks Street. That toxic smoke sent some office workers home for the day. It turned out that the noxious emissions came from the Bank of Canada burning computer cards in their incinerator — a practice since discontinued.

These investigations sometimes even become part of local folklore. One Ottawa River tour-boat operator used to point out to tourists the separate house on the grounds of 24 Sussex Drive; during Jean Chrétien's time, his chef lived rent-free, as revealed in a 1994 investigation. The focus now is on how to fix up 24 Sussex Drive.

Speaking of local tours, maybe it's time for some enterprising tour operator to start showing off the hatching grounds of scandals. Everyone walking the streets of Ottawa should expect that each block has its secrets, some revealed and others waiting to be uncovered.

My quest for access to information — from the days of seeking answers to neighbourhood queries to pursuing answers from governments and corporations on misspending, safety issues and unaccountable local, national and international practices — has been a bumpy but rewarding journey for transparency.

Ken Rubin is reachable at kenrubin.ca. More data on his investigative work can be found there.