

From: Kathy Sutton

To: Councillor Mark Grimes, Chair, Exhibition Place Board of Governors
Councillor Jim Karygiannis, Chair, Business Development Committee

CC: Councillor Mike Layton
Dianne Young, CEO, Exhibition Place

Date: May 4, 2016 (by email)

Re: Article on the Garden of the Greek Gods in *American Road* magazine (attached)

Dear Councillors Grimes and Karygiannis:

You might be interested in seeing the attached article from the Spring issue of *American Road* magazine. Its title is "Free the Greek Gods - Toronto, ON". I have also attached the magazine cover.

The editor of *American Road* interviewed me for this article in November. The story was written because the theme of this issue is Greek-related attractions throughout North America. The editor heard about the story from the "Free the Greek Gods" FaceBook page. It's a well-written and well-researched article. However, it does not give a good impression of how the City of Toronto treats its public art. It also tells readers that the City is not respectful of either its large Greek community, or the art-loving public - including tourists.

The magazine reaches at least 100,000, and its target market is tourists within North America. This issue will be available on newsstands throughout the US and Canada from now through June 2016. Earlier today, I was asked for a second interview, in mid-May, for a follow-up story in the Summer issue. It would be wonderful to be able to tell the editor that the Board has determined that the Greek Gods will be moved this year.

Sincerely,

Kathy Sutton
416-239-4087

Enclosures (2)

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AMERICAN ROAD

VOLUME XIV NUMBER 1



US \$4.95
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Display in Travel Through June 2016

YE GODS!

♥ Centaurs, Cyclopes, and Myth America

Free the Greek Gods!

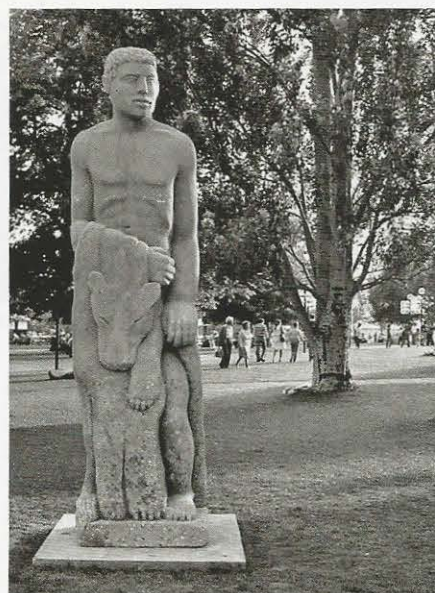
TORONTO, Ont.—In their glory days, the Olympian gods were all-powerful. Zeus beat back a coup staged by Cronus and his cronies, blasting them to blazes with his searing thunderbolts. Hera tipped the balance at the Siege of Troy, and Poseidon shook apart a small island simply for the joy of drowning Ajax the Lesser—after the latter bragged that no god could kill him.

But nowadays, members of this same omnipotent clan can't break their way out of one Toronto nightclub.

The venue in question is the Muzik Club, a swanky hot spot on the edge of Lake Ontario. In 2004, the club was granted a twenty-year lease to set up shop inside Toronto's 1907 Horticulture Building—a glass-domed, Beaux Arts-style space that had been designed to showcase sprouts and flowers at the Canadian National Exhibition. Proprietors were surely pleased with the classical features acquired by that contract, because they recently undertook an expansion that netted them more of the same.

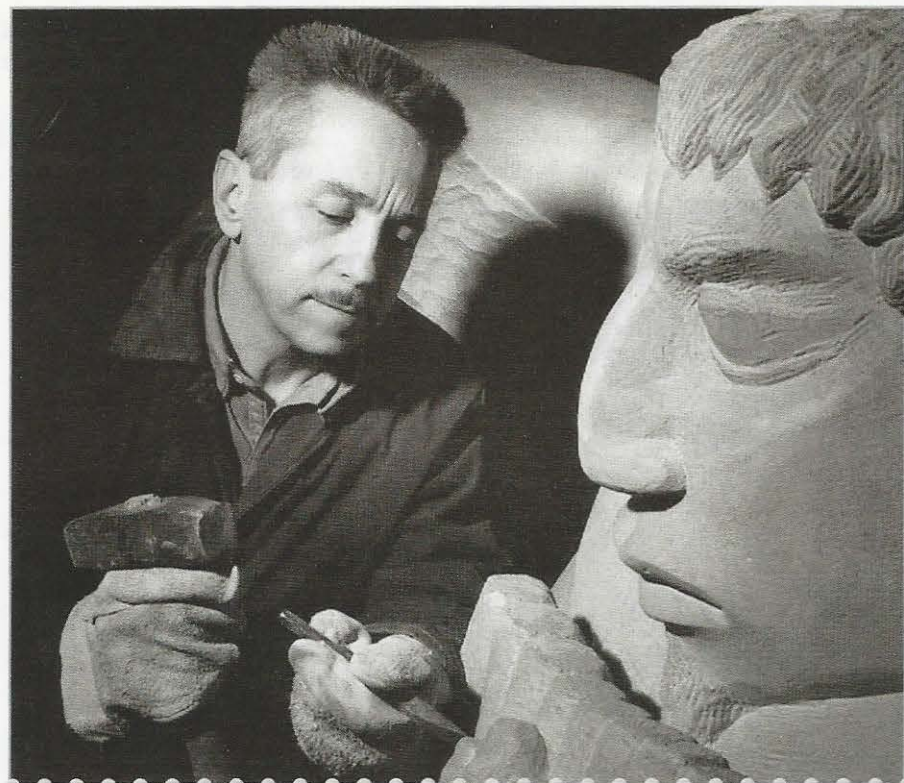
And that's when the Greek gods found themselves between a park and a rock place.

You see, back in the classical years of the 1960s, a sculptor by the name of Elford Bradley "E. B." Cox discovered that the



Greek canon compelled him to create. With air chisels and hand hammers he set to work carving blocks of Indiana limestone, splitting, shaping, and smoothing the stones. Under his imaginative hand, gods and heroes emerged from the rock—Hercules sporting the impenetrable skin of the Nemean Lion; the three Graeae holding their one stone eye; even a boy riding a dolphin who may have been Taras—the little-known son of Poseidon and the nymph Satyrion—who once crossed the Ionian Sea astride a blue bottlenose steed.

SATYR MATTER: Elford Bradley "E. B." Cox puts the finishing touches on Pan, his favorite Greek deity.



In all, Cox completed twenty of these mythological giants—a collection that also included monsters such as the Harpies, the Hydra, Typhon, Cerberus, and the Sphinx.

"My father was a self-taught artist who became the most prolific sculptor in Toronto," says Cox's daughter, Kathy Sutton. "He loved mythology, and he was inspired by the city's Greek culture and history: Toronto has a large Greek community with a Greek Festival every August. The Greek gods meant a lot to my father as an artist. The sculptures he completed became part of Toronto's heritage."

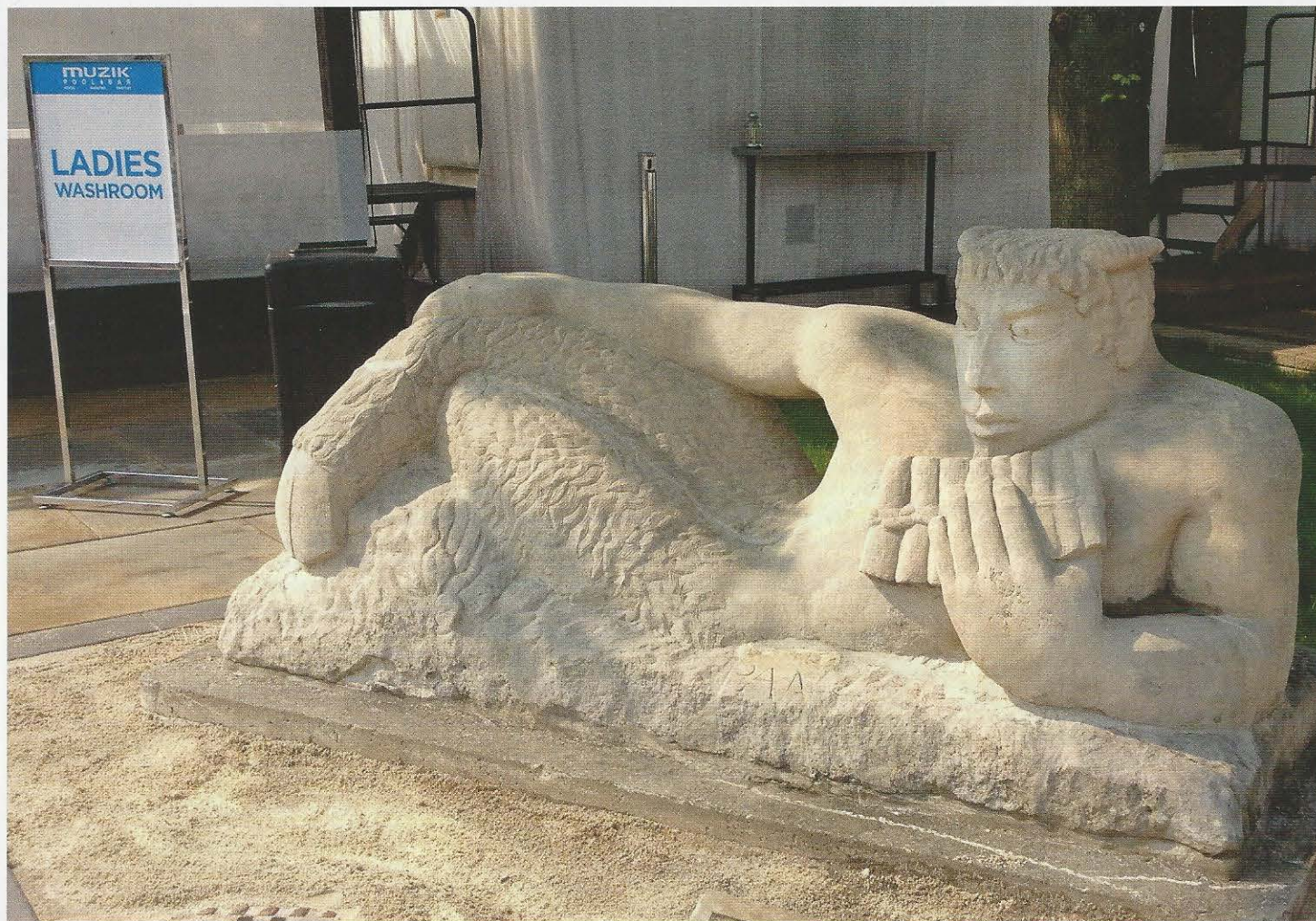
Cox initially installed his classical collection at the Georgian Peaks Club, an alpine ski resort near Thornbury, Ontario—where it was billed as The Enchanted Mountain and operated as a tourist attraction. Hercules—the tallest of the figures—was placed at the base of the mountain, while the other works were scattered around its apex. For ten years, the alfresco gallery entertained hikers trudging up the hillside and skiers racing down it. Then, in 1974, the location of the chairlift changed, and the gods looked for a new home. They were displayed inside the Ricoh Coliseum in 1976 as part of the Royal Agricultural



Winter Fair, featured in a twenty-thousand-square-foot garden billed as Glorious Greece. Three years later—in February 1979—the collection finally found a permanent home when the late Arthur Carmen, a Greek immigrant and well-known Toronto restaurateur, purchased the works from Cox and donated them to the people of Toronto as The Garden of the Greek Gods. They were placed on display on the south lawn of the Horticulture Building, and for nearly thirty-five years, they were enjoyed there by all.

And then, in 2014, plans went awry when the Muzik Club expanded its patio and assimilated the Greek gods' grounds into its domain. That's how the controversy started, with the old deities at the center of a very modern battle.

Sutton is quick to admit that—under the terms of the current contract—Muzik Nightclubs Inc. does hold the lease to the property on which the sculptures sit. At issue is the treatment afforded these one-of-a-kind works of art by the club and its clientele. Muzik erected a fence around Cox's creations, effectively locking the pieces away from the public.



As Sutton reports, life behind bars is taking a toll: the nightly grind of hip-hop bacchanals, the rigors of the raves, perhaps even the gigos reclining on the centaur as if it's Sagittarius and asking every Aphrodite within earshot, "What's your sign?"

Sutton elaborates: "Narcissus has had a drink spilled on his head, which stained the stone. The Cyclops has suffered several gouges and chips from construction equipment. The sculptures on the patio have been power-washed—as if they were patio furniture—which has damaged the patina. The mermaid has lost a chunk of her tail from being in a high-traffic area." The litany of inju-

ries is long; the potential for further damage, great; and the entire state of affairs demeaning to art and history. "I think my father's favorite sculpture was Pan—the god of the woodlands who played the pipes," Sutton says. "Pan is a magnificent creature. Now he's relegated to sitting in front of the ladies washroom at this night club." That's quite a comedown for the king of satyrs.

And recent events suggest Sutton is too kind in her assessment of the situation. In August 2015 a shooting on-site left two dead and three injured. Police found one woman on the patio among the old gods. She died on the scene.

The city was horrified. Residents condemned the carnage. Yet the Muzik Club is seeking to lengthen its lease. "One condition of the extension is that the sculptures be freed," Sutton says. "And club management is battling the city. They are using the sculptures as bargaining chips." Perhaps they figure the big blocks of limestone can provide hiding places should another shooting take place.

Sutton has established a "Free the Greek Gods" Facebook page to win support for her cause. And she continues to tirelessly tell the story. In the meantime, the Sphinx might be found with a beach ball snugged under her chin, Cerberus looks to have lost one of his noses, and Hercules is sinking into patio muck like a klutzy drunk. The gods aren't crazy. But this state-of-affairs certainly is. Here's hoping great Zeus has a few thunderbolts left in his arsenal and he can light a holy fire directly under the derrieres of the Toronto City Council. ♥



Liberace image from promotional postcard. Michigan Pothole photo by AMERICAN ROAD. Self-driving car photo courtesy Sam Churchill. Garden of the Greek Gods photos courtesy Kathy Sutton.