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\*\*Toronto Real Estate Board Stats IMS, GTA by Value Sold 2008

†† Certain conditions may apply. ‡ Exclusive + MLS 2008

## CHATTER

### Bin brought community closer together

The Seaton Village Residents' Association (SVRA) organized a one-time garbage removal in their neighbourhood in late June to minimize the use of parks as dumping grounds during the garbage strike.

"We wanted to help our community. Some people here don't have cars and some have mobility issues," wrote Rebecca Sugarman, president of the SVRA, in an email.

The idea was pitched to the SVRA by a resident in the community, and soon the executive put the plan together and found a company that was willing to collect the trash. Members of the SVRA started to spread the word through their website (<http://seatonvillage.ca>) and by word of mouth.

The response was significant, and for five dollars per bag residents filled up the bin by the end of the night.

In addition to temporarily solving their garbage-disposal problem, community members were brought closer together, wrote Sugarman.

"People met new people and became more aware of the association. People are feeling proud to live in this community."

The garbage bin was intended to be used for only 24 hours. Until the strike's end, locals had to look for other ways to dispose of their garbage.

Sugarman wrote that the money collected was used to pay for the bin and garbage removal, and any leftover funds would go towards community projects.

—Matt Ho

### Strike leaves St. Basil's School in limbo

A redevelopment proposal regarding the fate of St. Basil's School (34-38 Hazelton Ave.) that was supposed to go to city council on June 23 was cancelled because of the ongoing workers' strike.

The meeting was set to determine whether a seven-storey luxury condominium would replace the school, which was designated as a heritage site in 2002.

"No meetings have taken place," said the Bloor-Yorkville Business Improvement Area's urban design co-ordinator, Marija Jevrie. "We don't yet have an official opinion."

St. Basil's School was an educational facility constructed in 1928 in a Gothic Revival architectural style and lies within the Yorkville-Hazleton Heritage Conservation District.

City council endorsed a set of guidelines regarding any alterations, demolitions, or new construction in the district because of its heritage value. Municipal staff members have now reviewed the site and concluded that it does not meet the intent of the original plan to protect heritage resources.

Residents, local businesses, and heritage advocates were all concerned and said they did not want the school to be torn down and replaced with a condo.

### Exhibit draws visitors, controversy

The Royal Ontario Museum (ROM, 100 Queen's Park Circle) is playing host to one of the most exciting archaeological finds in history, but according to one organization, it was also one of history's greatest heists.

Palestine House is boycotting the museum's exhibit featuring the Dead Sea Scrolls because they say that the ROM makes no mention of the fact that they were stolen from a Palestinian museum in 1967.

"They are exhibiting them in museums all over the world without mentioning that those scrolls are the property of the Palestinian authority," said Issam Al, a media representative for Palestine House.

Al said the organization takes no issue with the content of the scrolls but instead with what he said was the Israeli Antiquity Authority's contravention of the Geneva Convention, which forbids governments of occupying forces from moving archaeological materials across national borders.

"We believe that the ROM should have considered these issues," he said.

The museum has told the organization that they would mention that the scrolls are disputed and have offered to have a Palestinian cultural event at the museum, but Al said they would not consider this offer while the scrolls are on display.

Palestine House will post a few people distributing literature in front of the museum, said Al, adding that they did not want to disturb the many people who are expected to come see the artifacts.

"Our position is only to educate people about the facts of the matter," he said.

The ROM declined to comment on the controversy but did release a written statement. "The ROM has reviewed the recent objection that was raised by the Palestinian National Authority for the first time since such exhibitions have begun and remains satisfied that the exhibition is lawful," it reads.

The exhibit will be on display for the next six months.

### Notes

**P.S. Kensington**, otherwise known as Pedestrian Sundays, is a way for people to reclaim the streets of Kensington from cars while fully enjoying the character of the neighbourhood. An upcoming event, **Blackout**, asks everyone in the market to turn their lights off to celebrate the sixth anniversary of the 2003 blackout. Pedestrian Sundays has also extended to Mirvish Village and Baldwin Village. On Aug. 10, all three will host one large event to celebrate the artistic community, putting on musical performances, a fashion show, and what organizers call "giant street Scrabble." For more information, visit [www.pskensington.ca](http://www.pskensington.ca).

Sections of Spadina Avenue and Dundas Street West will be closed on Aug. 22 and 23 for the **Toronto Chinatown Festival**, which is entering its ninth year. Admission is free and the event starts at 12 p.m. on the first day, ending at 8 p.m. on the next. At this vibrant festival, visitors can celebrate Chinese culture with music, food sampling, performances, and more. For more information visit [www.focus.comms.com/Chinatown\\_Festival.htm](http://www.focus.comms.com/Chinatown_Festival.htm) or call at 416-260-9800.

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