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## CABBAGETOWN PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION 2024-2025 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING CHAIR'S REPORT & COMMITTEE REPORTS

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### **CHAIR'S REPORT**

Over the last couple of years, the Cabbagetown Preservation Association, known under the acronym CPA, has been energized by new board members, new ideas and new threats to Parliament Street's remaining heritage buildings.

On Sunday, June 5, 2024, the CPA hosted its *Hidden Gardens and Private Spaces* Tour. Over 600 gardening enthusiasts from across the city visited 10 privately-owned gardens. The day was a little soggy but it didn't dampen spirits.

Our Awards honoured several people for their contributions to our community. The Peggy Kurtin Restoration Award was given to 583 Parliament Street for a major refresh of the beautiful Queen Anne style building housing L'Avenue Restaurant.

The annual CPA Recognition Award went to Gale Moore for, among other things, her energetic and creative leadership in improving connections to other heritage and neighbourhood groups and organizations, and adding an academic component to the CPA with Cabbagetown Talks and the Student Experience Program also known as SEP.

The 2024 SEP Award topic seemed unlikely to pack a room - but it did - and resulted in a lively and well-received talk by Bracha Stettin, a Master of Landscape Architecture candidate at the University of Toronto. Her historical ecology project entitled *Trees and Time*, surveyed the past ecology, mostly trees, of Cabbagetown as seen through current evidence.

An ambitious second project supported in 2024-2025 is by Shivangi Chauhan, Masters of Urban Design at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Toronto will be a 20-minute short film, still in production, on the rich tapestry of culinary diversity and urban design along Parliament Street.

The 2025 SEP Award was given to Noor Latif who will study land ownership along the Don River adjacent to Cabbagetown; it is having an auspicious start.

In the background, our core programs have been moving forward.

Cabbagetown People added 4 biographies to its website: Sandra Fraser Gwyn, Harry Rosen, Louis Negin, and Guido Basso and has updated several others. The Cabbagetown People Committee is looking for new names for new plaques, is starting work on an updated brochure, and is making contacts with schools in order to return to the school tours that were done before the pandemic.

And If you have moved to Cabbagetown within the last two years, you should have received a welcome brochure with information about the heritage of this community and an invitation to become involved with the CPA, either as a member, a volunteer, or just to keep informed about our programs. A couple of hundred of these brochures have been distributed since this started.

Our media have been active as well. We really need residents to be aware of local heritage issues, Cabbagetown's heritage status and the perks and responsibilities that go with that.

The paper version of our newsletter is the one media that gets to almost every Cabbagetown household as it has been delivered by a flyer company. The electronic version that we relied on during the pandemic continues to be available on the CPA website. Note that you can not only read the latest issue of our newsletter online but also search our newsletter archive that goes back more than 35 years.

Social media is part of our day to day communication. Instagram has been maintained by Steve Yeates for the beauty shots and by Christina Jackson for the promotion of our events. Facebook, which is maintained by Gilles Huot, has a similar function as Instagram with an emphasis on events, history and items related to Cabbagetown People.

We have also started to put a few videos on YouTube. We'd love to find some video production expertise in the community, possibly something like Cabbagetown Heritage Minutes. Please let us know if you are interested and can help.

As we mentioned a couple of years ago, the CPA was very lucky to get a bequest from one great Cabbagetowner, author and artist Barbara Mercer. If you want to know more about Barbara, you can find a short biography on our Cabbagetown People website. This wonderful gift allowed us to expand some of our programs and is giving us a financial security that few not-for-profit and volunteer-based organizations can enjoy. This is why the CPA Board discussed and supports the elimination of our membership fees. A motion

on this issue was available for reading on our website and will be discussed and voted on by you, CPA members, as an item on the agenda of the AGM.

Finally, our organization doesn't only look at Cabbagetown's past and heritage. We also keep an eye on the future. This is why, over the last couple of years, we have been leading discussions on the future of Parliament Street. Our focus for the last year has been on ways to protect several heritage properties on our main street. As you may know, all of Cabbagetown is now protected as it is encompassed in a Heritage Conservation District (also called HCD), EXCEPT for Parliament Street where only 2 buildings are protected, therefore leaving all the others vulnerable. I invite you to read the article on this topic in the Spring 2025 CPA newsletter and previous articles published in a couple of back issues.

We feel that it is important to express our views about the future development of Parliament Street and not leave it only to developers. There actually is urgency in doing so as, in the context of the 2022 provincial *More Homes Built Faster Act*, the City is currently reviewing its properties *listed* for heritage. In the near future, we will also engage the Cabbagetown community in discussions on how to improve the streetscape of Parliament Street and on how we feel that its future densification should be managed.

And again, if you would like to see the detailed reports, they are posted on the About Us section of our website.

Stephen Yeates,  
Chair, CPA

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **CPA AWARD PROGRAMS**

#### **The Peggy Kurtin Award Program for Excellence in Restoration**

Since 1998, the Peggy Kurtin (PK) Award for Excellence in Restoration has been given annually to an outstanding restoration project. Honouring the best and most authentic restoration project(s) of the year, this award is at the heart of the CPA's purpose of celebrating architectural and streetscape restoration, and encouraging work of high quality.

The winner of the Excellence in Restoration Award for 2024 was 583 Parliament Street - L'Avenue Restaurant. Built in 1891, this beautiful Queen Anne house with a typical corner tower, has a long commercial past: butcher, confectioner, etc. Note the Barr's Dairy brass lettering still embedded in the stone step.

The building is defined by its asymmetrical design and the whimsical tower. It had most of its original elements but was deteriorating. The building's brick had been damaged from pollution, wear, and graffiti. Stone elements were cleaned and mouldings repaired. Mr. Diles sees Amelia Street as one of the gateways to Cabbagetown. When he bought the building, his intention was to save it from being purchased by a generic chain.

### **CPA Recognition Award**

The CPA Volunteer of the Year Award was established in 2011. In 2017 the Board decided that tying this award to a specific year or to a volunteer status did not allow us to honour what are often lifetime contributions of a Cabbagetown resident or friend of Cabbagetown, nor did it truly reflect the nature of the contributions. The award, which is not necessarily given every year, is now called the CPA Recognition Award, and the winner is announced at the CPA Fall meeting that usually takes place at the end of November. Winners receive a glass wine cooler engraved with their name and the name of the award.

The 2024 award was presented to CPA's Past Chair Gale Moore. Gale's energy and vision helped better define important areas of activities for the CPA: she worked hard on the redevelopment of the CPA website, also adding an e-commerce function to it. She was also instrumental in establishing Cabbagetown Talks, a forum to explore topics of interest to the community. Noting that the world of heritage was changing, Gale encouraged the CPA to participate in conversations at the local, provincial, and national level in order to be part of re-defining what constitutes heritage today. The CPA now also maintains membership in several local, provincial, and national associations. Ever the sociologist, Gale proposed the concept of *collaborative advocacy* to describe the CPA's practice of working in partnership with other local associations and organisations to increase the impact of our advocacy.

Under her leadership, the CPA revised its constitution. During the pandemic, she helped digitize 35 years of CPA newsletters. She also established the CPA Student Experience Program (SEP) that provides funding to graduate students working on projects featuring Cabbagetown.

### **Streetscape in Bloom**

After 26 successful years, the CPA Board decided that the Streetscapes in Bloom Award had reached its destination - encouraging Cabbagetown residents to design and maintain beautiful front gardens - and decided to pause this program. It leaves behind a legacy of urban gardening excellence and community beautification.

## **CPA Student Experience Program (SEP) Award**

In the summer of 2022 the CPA launched a pilot project which offered two awards, each worth \$1,500, to graduate students whose research was in some way relevant to the historic Toronto neighbourhood of Cabbagetown. The idea was to mobilise relevant research and ideas from the university to the community through some form of public engagement: a public talk, an installation, etc. The objectives are to showcase graduate student work, to give students hands-on experience with managing a small award (structured as a contract), to provide an opportunity to add to their portfolios and CVs, and to encourage them to appreciate, perhaps in new ways, the importance of heritage in a community. There is now a [webpage](#) on the CPA website and information on the 2024 winner has been posted. The Award may not be given every year. The number of winners will depend on the quality of the applications.

For the 2024-2025 competition, the information was distributed widely to universities across the City. Two awards have been made this year. Bracha Stettin is a Master of Landscape Architecture candidate, University of Toronto. Her project entitled *Trees & Time* delivered a zine focusing on the historical ecology of Cabbagetown. Bracha also presented her work during the CPA public meeting on November 28, 2024.

Shivangi Chauhan is a Masters of Urban Design candidate in the John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture and Design, University of Toronto. Her project, *Parliament Street Chronicles* will be a 20-minute short film that delves into the rich tapestry of culinary diversity and urban design along Parliament Street in Cabbagetown. This project should be completed shortly. Congratulations to both our 2024 CPA Student Experience Program Award winners.

## **EVENTS**

### **Cabbagetown Tour of Homes**

We are planning our next Tour of Homes for September 21, 2025. If you would like to volunteer your home, there is still time. Please reach out to us! The organizing committee is purely volunteer-based and will also be looking for individuals who can join the organizing committee and assist with future planning.

### **Hidden Gardens & Private Spaces**

On Sunday, June 5, 2024, the Cabbagetown Preservation Association hosted its much loved *Hidden Gardens and Private Spaces* Tour, welcoming over 600 gardening enthusiasts from across the city. Though the day was marked by rain, the soggy weather did little to dampen spirits. The event was both a celebration of Cabbagetown's green spaces and a successful fundraiser in support of CPA programs.

The self-guided walking tour featured 10 privately owned gardens, each offering unique design elements, imaginative landscaping, and inspiring horticultural solutions. Guests explored at their own pace, enjoying the beauty and creativity that define our neighbourhood — rain boots and umbrellas in hand.

Adding to the experience were appearances by horticultural expert and CBC host Paul Zammit and Master Gardeners stationed throughout the tour to answer questions and offer insights.

Tickets were \$25 and included background information on each property's special features and access to exclusive promotions from participating local shops and eateries.

Thank you to everyone who joined us and helped make the day such a success.

### **Cabbagetown Walks**

In the summer of 2024 and in partnership with Heritage Toronto, we offered a different walking tour format. Once a month on a Tuesday afternoon, Heritage Toronto installed its booth at the Cabbagetown Farmers' Market. The booth was the departure point of several short tours of the Toronto Necropolis nearby.

### **Cabbagetown Talks**

We held a Cabbagetown Talk on November 28, 2024 at the Meeting House on Riverdale Farm. At the meeting, we presented our 2024 Recognition Award to Gale Moore (see above).

Then our speaker, Bracha Settin, winner of the 2024 CPA Student Experience Program, presented a talk inspired by her published zine entitled *Trees & Time*.

What was the ecology of Cabbagetown like before settler urbanization and development? If we look closely, what are the traces or remains of the vegetative past? What were the trees, shrubs, and mosses that softened the ground, filtered the water, fed the people, and sweetened the air? What does this past mean for the future? Bracha looked at Cabbagetown's past through the traces of ecology. She also acknowledges that this land has been peopled by the Mississaugas of the Credit, Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Wendake Nations since time immemorial. These Nations lived and live in deep and reciprocal relationship with the plants, water, and animal communities around us. In the rush to urbanize, develop, and "civilize", early settlers cleared forests, drained marshes, and gridded the land into rows of rectangular streets. This process changed Cabbagetown's ecology irreversibly.

Using the tools of the “landscape observer” to practice and expand our landscape literacy, Bracha helped us examine present day Cabbagetown for ecological clues that form a trail back to its not-so-distant past.

On February 27, 2025, we piloted a new format for our Cabbagetown Talks. We held a talk entitled *Suds and Stained Glass* where stained glass artist Henry Knight shared the journey of stained glass — from design and creation to how it’s lasted through the years. With a special focus on the Victorian era, he highlighted some of Cabbagetown’s and Toronto’s stunning examples. The event took place at Stout Pub on Carlton Street and was very well attended.

As always, if you have suggestions for topics or speakers, or perhaps you are a local media person, academic or writer who enjoys working with ideas, please get in touch. The [CONTACT US](#) form on the website is the best way to reach us.

## **PROGRAMS**

### **Cabbagetown People**

Last year’s focus of the Cabbagetown People team was on updating sections of our [cabbagetownpeople.ca](http://cabbagetownpeople.ca) website.

We also added 4 biographies to our website:

- Sandra Fraser Gwyn, award-winning journalist and author
- Harry Rosen, Canadian retail icon, founder of the Harry Rosen chain of menswear
- Louis Negin, actor, a veteran of stage and screen
- Guido Basso, renowned Canadian jazz musician

Future plans include a reprint of the Cabbagetown People brochure that would include the plaques that have been installed since the last version was published. The committee has also started compiling names for new plaques that could be installed in the next 2-3 years. Furthermore, contacts have been made with schools that may bring students on tours of the neighbourhood featuring Cabbagetown Peoples studied in class.

### **Welcome Package**

At the CPA, we endeavour to enrich how visitors and residents experience our unique neighbourhood. Learning about our history, our people, and architecture, and engaging with the attractions and activities produced by our volunteer-led board is a great way to do this.

Several years ago we created an information dense, multi-page Welcome To Cabbagetown Package to help us spread the word. But times change and, since then, we



launched our renewed website, providing us an opportunity to reimagine our approach - and we're thrilled with the outcome.

We now distribute a *Welcome to Cabbagetown* letter to each new resident, personally signed by the CPA Chair. The letter is accompanied by a beautifully designed, trifold *Explore Cabbagetown* brochure, highlighting the CPA's programs and awards, as well as opportunities to support us through membership, volunteering, and joining our board.

Recipients are encouraged to visit our website to learn more. Not only is this a more cost-effective and sustainable approach, but it is also multipurpose. The compact size of our new brochure enables us to share it more readily via events and partner locations thereby increasing awareness of all that we do beyond new residents.

In 2024-2025, we distributed over 100 *Welcome to Cabbagetown* letters.

## **MEDIA**

### **CPA Newsletter**

Steve Yeates continues as editor and designer-in chief of our biannual newsletter. With other social media now in place, the newsletter provides an opportunity to dive deeper on heritage and other issues. We hope it encourages the community to be actively aware of Cabbagetown's heritage status, issues and history, and to support and respect interest in Cabbagetown's ongoing evolution.

During the pandemic, some of our issues were made available digitally only. However, we received a great number of comments reminding us of the value of printing the newsletter and distributing it throughout the neighbourhood.

Our newsletter is now a "hybrid" publication as it is published online and on paper (distributed throughout the neighbourhood). We also leave copies at several retailers in the hood. In this way, we hope to reach friends and neighbours who do not (yet!) subscribe to our mailing list.

Each issue, current and past, is also posted on the News page of the CPA website. This almost complete archive of more than 35 years of news, views, and activities of the CPA is a great resource. We are still missing one or two issues. So, if you are cleaning up and find some old CPA newsletters, please check to make sure you don't have one that we're missing.



## **Social Media**

We continue to use a variety of social media to reach our members and beyond. Our Facebook page, curated by Gilles Huot, now has 1,000 followers. This page is used to announce events, share news, celebrate death anniversaries of remarkable Cabbagetowners, etc.

We have a few YouTube videos on our channel and will add more as we go along. We'd also love to find some video production expertise in the community to assist in these efforts. Cabbagetown Heritage Minutes perhaps? Please let us know if you're interested and can help.

The CPA's Instagram site, curated by Steve Yeates, has grown since its launch a few years ago to 720 followers. Our goal is to meet everyone where they read the news, and to continue to move into new areas. Please follow us on Instagram and Facebook for news and updates about our plans and activities.

## **CPA Website**

The website ([cabbagetownpa.ca](http://cabbagetownpa.ca)) continues to serve us well. The e-commerce portion of the site is especially useful, in particular for association memberships and tour tickets. Our payment processing platform, Stripe, is not only secure, but provides bookkeeping and statistics that support the work of our Treasurer. We are considering a refresh of the site. More details on this in the coming year.

Also, please visit our other website, [cabbagetownpeople.ca](http://cabbagetownpeople.ca), to read about remarkable people who once called Cabbagetown home.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES**

### **CPA Membership and Marketing**

We continue to encourage members of our community to join our association to support our work and efforts to promote an active interest in the heritage of our community and to encourage participation in our activities. To allow our base to grow more and to simplify management of memberships we propose to eliminate membership fees.

A motion to do so is contained in a separate document that was available on the CPA website ahead of the meeting with other AGM material. This type of change means that we also need to change the membership section of the CPA Constitution. This is why a vote is required at our AGM.

If you have ideas or an opinion on how to increase our reach in the community (or any other topic of interest), please write to us, or join us on a committee or the board to move forward with us.

### **Merchandise**

We usually sell our merchandise at our public events (Cabbagetown Talks, AGM, etc.) We also provide information about our programs, answer questions, etc. at various public events like the Cabbagetown Festival/Cabbagetown Arts & Crafts Show (our booth at Winchester and Sumach). This is also an opportunity to sell our CPA merchandise. It currently includes tea towels and tote bags.

## **COLLABORATIVE ADVOCACY**

### **The Future of Parliament Street**

Starting in the summer of 2024, some CPA Board members and members the Cabbagetown HCD Advisory Committee (CHCDAC) worked together on a proposal that would help the City deal with Parliament Street's heritage-*listed* properties and, at the same time, protect many other remarkable heritage properties on our main street. Note that Parliament Street has a number of listed properties but none of them are in immediate danger. However, many properties with high heritage value currently have no protection at all. Our proposal wants to deal with this issue.

Representatives of both the CPA and the CHCDAC met with the Cabbagetown Business Improvement Area (BIA) in February of 2025 to discuss the proposal. More meetings around the proposal are planned for the coming months. For an update on this issue, see the Spring 2025 issue of the CPA newsletter.