

# **N** Cabbagetown Preservation Association **NEWSLETTER**

Preserving the architectural integrity and historic character of our neighbourhood

## Meet Mr. Cabbage Head



Photo courtesy of City of Toronto Archives, Series 427, Subseries 1, File 6

**M**r. Cabbage Head, circa 1887, is an old advertising card, typical of a bygone era of marketing. It's one of several hundred items displayed at "Collecting Toronto: Through the Eyes of Larry Becker", a unique exhibition co-curated by Cabbagetown resident Dr. Sally Gibson.

Sally says, "It was really a treat to work with this extraordinary collection. Larry Becker was a remarkable collector. During his lifetime (1939-1998), he created more than 20 interrelated collections of materials focussed on his native Toronto. I think people will find the exhibit entertaining as well as informative."

When Sally is not working as Archivist at the City of Toronto Archives or putting the final touches on her book on Toronto interiors, she can be seen walking her two samoyeds in Riverdale Park.

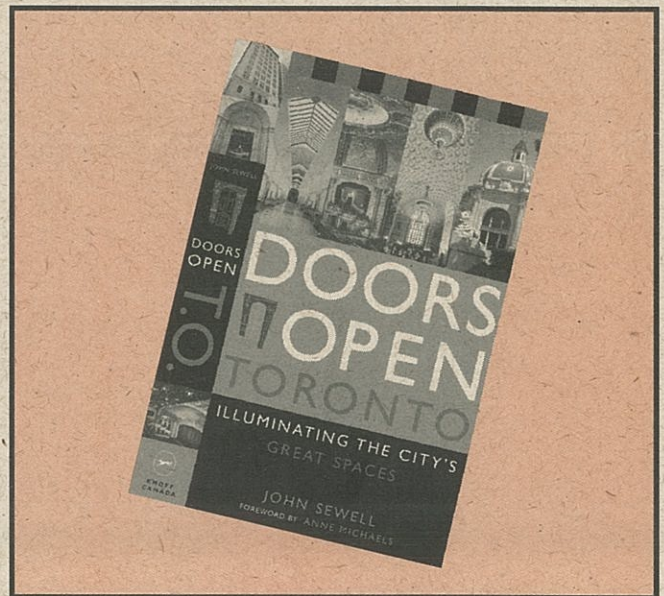
The exhibition runs from April 6 to September 29, at The Market Gallery in the South St. Lawrence Market, 95 Front Street East, Wednesdays through Sundays.

## "Doors Open Toronto" A Book by John Sewell

**J**ohn Sewell's new book "Doors Open Toronto" will be released just before the popular two-day festival to be held on May 25th and 26th. Better yet, John Sewell will share some highlights of the book at the CPA Annual General Meeting on May 23rd.

John Sewell is a well-known public figure and passionate advocate of heritage preservation. He is the author of five books on Toronto, and the city's former mayor. A lawyer by training, he has spent the last three decades as a public policy entrepreneur and activist, with an interest in land-use planning, social policy, history and urban issues.

While the two-day "Doors Open Toronto" festival gives people access to fascinating sites not normally open to the public, Sewell's new book illuminates these one hundred places on a more permanent basis. The book will be an enlightening companion to the festival, and also provide people with "virtual" access to many of Toronto's secret places 365 days a year.





## CPA News

**M**ay brings the usual Annual General Meeting (AGM), with its Election of Directors and proposed Constitutional changes. Here are the highlights.

### Nominations for Directors

The Nominating Committee will be proposing a full slate of twelve candidates to serve on next year's Board, from June 1, 2002 to May 31, 2003.

The slate is: Christopher Dew, Ted Gzebb, Chris Howard, David Jollimore, Peggy Kurtin, Rick Merrill, Margaret Rutledge, David Pretlove, Toby Schertzer, Sheila Schirmer, Alan Waterhouse, Steve Yeates.

If any member would like to propose additional candidates, s/he may do so. Nominations must be made by two members of the association, include the written assent of the nominee, and received not later than one week before the AGM. They can be delivered to 403 Sackville Street or faxed to 416-966-2036.

If there are no additional candidates, the Nominating Committee's proposed slate will be uncontested. Otherwise, members will vote by secret ballot to elect Directors to fill the vacant positions.

### Proposed Constitutional Change

Over the years, the Board has recognized there are pockets of notable architectural heritage located nearby, but outside of, the CPA's geographic boundaries defined in the Constitution. For example, there are delightful historic districts in the area west of Parliament Street, between Carlton and Shuter Street.

Although residents in such areas have asked for the CPA's support in matters of architectural preservation, the Board has felt constrained by the Constitution's existing boundaries. In order to be more flexible and responsive to such requests, the Board recommends that members endorse the following Motion: "That all references to geographic boundaries be deleted from the Constitution."

### Metcalfe area Heritage Conservation District (HCD)

Chair Peggy Kurtin has assembled the HCD's Advisory Committee, with representatives from each of the six streets in the district. Representatives are George Rust-D'Eye (Sackville), Joan O'Roark (Salisbury), Jeff McCanna (Metcalfe), Steve Riddell (Amelia), Bill Hurren (Carlton), and Peggy Kurtin (Winchester).

## CPA Calendar

**Sunday, May 5th**  
Forsythia Festival

**Wednesday, May 15th**  
BIA Chairman's Awards Dinner  
2 Lancaster Avenue (CYC)  
Contact: Joice Guspie, BIA office, 416-921-0857

**Thursday, May 23rd**  
CPA Annual General Meeting & Election of Directors  
Riverdale Farm Meeting House

6:30 to 7:00  
Business Meeting  
Presentation of Restoration Award

7:00 to 7:15  
Stretch break

7:15 to 8:00  
Guest Speaker: John Sewell  
"Doors Open Toronto"

8:00 to 9:00  
Munch & Mingle, with coffee and sweets  
Author's book signing

**June and July**  
Heritage Toronto Walking Tours  
For more information about these and other CPA Walking Tours, see the back page.

## Volunteers Wanted

### Forsythia Festival

Pre-event:  
To stuff loot bags at Simpson House.  
Evening of April 29th.

Day of Event:  
To help run games, paint faces, etc.  
Half-hour stints.  
Sunday, May 5th.  
Contact: Kym Morton, 416-413-0882.

**Newsletter distribution:**  
To deliver to Gifford Street.  
Fifteen minutes, 4 times per year.  
Contact: CPA Office, 416-410-4259





# Restoration — A Labour of Love

Over the past few years, resident Toby Schertzer has worked at restoring several Victorian homes in Cabbagetown. Recently, he gave me and Alan Waterhouse a tour of his current project -- 428 Wellesley Street East -- and shared a wealth of insights and tips based on his own views of restoration.

The house itself is historically significant. It is one of a block of homes built in the late 1890s by Frank Armstrong, one of Cabbagetown's most notable early builders, and is considered one of Cabbagetown's best examples of quality Victorian architecture.

Unfortunately, the house had been not only neglected, but, in Toby's words, "brutally butchered by a typical 1970s gut job". The interior walls had been ripped out to create an 'open plan'. Original plaster moldings had been slashed and severed. The century-old pine floor had been patched with rough plywood.



The open concept that Toby regarded as a "brutal butcher job"

Optimistically, Toby says "the good thing was that the renovations were so rough-hewn that it was easy to see where the original walls had been." As he set about to restore the original spirit, he faced a common reality -- a limited budget, and the need to temper purism with pragmatism.

For example, one major cost in restoring an old house is plastering. In Toby's view, plaster walls have "far more character than dry wall", so he hired a skilled plasterer who worked on walls for 10 full weeks. He emphasizes that plaster walls must be dry-stripped to avoid damage -- at his house, wallpaper removal required five people working for three weeks.

On the other hand, he decided to limit costs on ceiling moldings, saying "Plaster moldings can run about \$65/foot, so I opted for jointed wood trim at about 1/10th the cost. The moldings are far enough away that they are not so obvious to the eye. Of course, I could always replace them later."

He believes that details such as authentic hardware for doors are important but very costly at restoration specialty stores. He says, "Don't be afraid to jump in a dumpster. I always jump in dumpsters with my screwdriver in hand. I collect old hinges and doorknobs that people throw away when they 'renovate'."

For most people, the joy of restoration is the process of peeling away layers of coverings in hopes of discovering hidden beauty. Toby was well-rewarded. He found the original stained glass transom window under a sheet of tin, century-old pine floors under linoleum and carpets, and the mark of an original artisan dated 1891 on the back of a baseboard.

The most extraordinary discovery was the original pine doors that had been sealed away in a plywood coffin. While some people would think the burial was a crime, Toby says, "It was a blessing. That's why the doors were so well-preserved, with not a warp in them!"



The original pine doors, encased in plywood covering, are revealed.

Although this restoration revealed a wealth of hidden heritage, not all houses have such treasures. Toby's view is "The more owners a house has, the less likely it is that the integrity of the original house will remain intact. It's wise to try to find a house that has had very few owners. For example, this house had only three owners in more than a century of its life!"

We thank Toby for sharing his views on restoration and would like to do similar features on other restorations. In our next newsletter, we will bring you Part 2 of Toby's story — restoring the exterior of the house.



# Walking Tours Update

CPA Tour Guides conduct Walking Tours upon request, during the Cabbagetown Cultural Festival, and as part of Heritage Toronto's citywide Walking Tour program.

## Heritage Toronto tours are:

- Tour 1: July 7th and August 10th, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.  
Meeting at Wellesley and Parliament Streets.  
Tour 2: July 21st and August 24th, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.  
Meeting at Winchester and Parliament Streets.

If you have a group of ten or so people and would like arrange a guided tour of historic Cabbagetown, please call the CPA office.

## CPA Board Members

Kathy Farrell, President  
Sheila Schirmer, Vice President  
Ted Gzebb, Treasurer  
Kym Morton, Secretary  
Ray Barton, Meetings and Events  
Marijan Bayer, Walking Tours  
Christopher Dew, Fund Raising  
Victoria Hadden, Writing  
Peggy Kurtin, Past-President  
Claudia Salzmann, Heritage Interpretation  
Alan Waterhouse, Architectural Preservation

The CPA newsletter is produced by Kathy Farrell, and distributed by Ray Barton and his team of volunteers

Telephone: 416-410-4259; Fax: 416-966-2036  
P.O. Box 82512, Toronto, Ontario M5A 4N8.

## CPA: Who are We?

Founded in 1988 to preserve the architectural integrity and historic character of Cabbagetown, the CPA does that and more. Here's what we do.

### Heritage Preservation

Review applications to Committee of Adjustment  
Make submissions to regulatory bodies  
Represent community at Toronto Historical Board

### Heritage Promotion

Produce quarterly newsletter  
Produce special heritage displays  
Organize "Speaker Series"  
Manage "Walking Tour" program

### Awards Programs

"Restoration Awards"  
"Streetscapes in Bloom"

### Community Events

Forsythia Festival  
Cabbagetown Cabaret  
"Tour of Homes" Tea

### Special Long-term Projects

Heritage Conservation District  
Books on Cabbagetown Heritage  
~~Heritage Plaque program (new)~~

*Cabbagetown People -  
A historical  
plaque program!*

The CPA's activities benefit the entire community, so please support us by becoming a member. If you have the time and the interest, we would also welcome you as a volunteer — mini-jobs available!

## CPA Membership/Volunteer Application

Mail to Cabbagetown Preservation Association, P.O. Box 82512, Toronto, Ontario M5A 4N8

Or, send by e-mail to [CabbagetownPreservationAssn@rogers.com](mailto:CabbagetownPreservationAssn@rogers.com)

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

1 Year (\$10) \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_  
3 Years (\$30) \_\_\_\_\_  
5 Years (\$50) \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Single \_\_\_\_\_  
Family \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Interested in volunteering? \_\_\_\_\_

Pay by cheque or credit card: Visa \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_  
Mastercard \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_

