



**THE ANNEX  
RESIDENTS'  
ASSOCIATION**

## **This Week in the Annex:**

**May 03, 2023**

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### **AGM Wrap Up**

The competition was beyond fierce – the Leafs were poised to win it from the Lightning. Evgeny Kissin was giving his long-awaited performance at Roy Thomson Hall. And who knows what else was going on in the city? But we were delighted to see that more than 60 residents chose to spend the evening with us at our virtual AGM last Thursday.

### **KESKUS**

There were many highlights, beginning with our keynote speaker, Ellen Valter, project lead for the KESKUS International Centre. We've all been aware of the project – the site on Madison has been busy for many months now as the complex foundation work is completed. But most of us were unaware of the beauty of the building that's about to rise from a base that traces the footprint of Estonia itself.

The concert hall, library, and meeting rooms will all be available to the public who are invited to cross the grounds along a walkway that links Bloor to Huron. It's an astonishing gift to our neighbourhood, and one that is funded purely by donations. If you want know more, [go the KESKUS website](#). And if you are as grateful as we, then you'll also take the time to [make a donation](#), no matter how small, in thanks to the Estonian community for this noble effort.



## Community Builder Awards

One of the highlights of the AGM is our opportunity to announce the [Community Builder Awards](#). These were inaugurated by the Board in 2017 to honour an Annex resident who is not a Board member but who has made a significant contribution to improving our neighbourhood.

This year we were pleased to honour two volunteers who have dedicated hours of support to their community at 250 Davenport. The citations say it all. Long-term tenant John Corso is the Annex liaison, honoured for compassionate service and determined community outreach on behalf of the tenants at 250. Christopher King, equally long rooted in the building, is awarded for persistent advocacy for the rights and security of his fellow tenants.



Chair Rita Bilerman is seen above awarding John Corso (centre right) and Christopher King (centre left) their framed citations. Board Secretary Micky

Fraterman (in an official ARA t-shirt) and Chair of Communications Gillian Bartlett were also on hand for the ceremony.

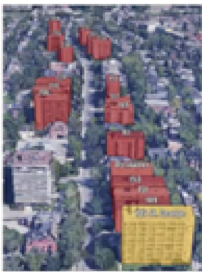


## **An Annex Portrait**

The rest of the proceedings constituted an in-depth portrait of our neighbourhood. In its final presentation on the West Annex Heritage Project, Rebecca Sciarra and Meredith Stewart of the ASI team treated us to an illustrated history of our physical development. Alex Topps presented a summary of his findings on researching the Annex through census numbers. And Kim Statham, Toronto's Director of Urban Forestry, gave an overview of the health and typologies of our trees and how the City is working to protect and augment our canopy.

In keeping with tradition, the Planning and Development (P+D) committee gave the final report of their year's undertakings. As our Chair remarked, Henry Wiercinski and Elizabeth Sisam are working the equivalent of full-time jobs on our behalf – and just reading [their summary of this past year's work](#), you'll see she's not exaggerating.

The most moving part of the evening came when Henry turned the P+D floor over to Board members Charlotte Mickie and Rebecca Gimmi to speak to the perils currently facing Annex tenants. Their heartfelt and compelling narratives lifted the crisis off the screen and into the hearts of listeners. This fight is by no means over – it has just begun.

## Our Values, Tenants' Committee

		
<b>Impact on the overall Neighbourhood</b>	<b>Why destroy a good quality building?</b>	<b>Negative impact on the Environment</b>
<small>If passed, the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment will encourage a domino effect of further evictions and similar demolitions in the Annex, and Toronto.</small>	<small>If passed, the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment would result in the destruction of a fully-tenanted building currently housing over 150 people that is meeting its utilization</small>	<small>If passed, the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment could lead to detrimental impacts on the environment and the surrounding neighbourhood caused by</small>

In just one year, the Tenants' Committee at 145 St George has grown into a powerful voice advocating for the fair treatment of tenants and preservation of rental buildings across the city. The fighting spirit is still very much alive and with us in the Annex. And, yes, that IS Bobbi Speck of *Stop Spadina* fame pictured in the Zoom meeting gallery.

## Notes and Queries

### To Be or Not to Be

Well, as of press time there was still an application out for a film shoot to take place at 181 Lowther. We have to ask whether it really is the right time and place to add even more disruption to that Annex quadrant already under assault from TTC construction? Still, if the application is approved, watch out from early morning May 10 to midnight May 15 for an invasion of film crews. Full details of the proposed disruption are available [by clicking here](#).





Photo: [Beverly Boy Productions](#) Answer? Come to the Annex

## Mayoralty Forum June 1<sup>st</sup>

Here's your opportunity to see the candidates for Mayor in person (or streamed in real-time on-line if you choose to avoid a crowd). More than 60 residents' associations working under the umbrellas of [FoNTRA](#) and [FoSTRA](#) will host the event on **Thursday June 1st from 7 to 9 pm.**

The intention is that all questions to the candidates come beforehand from the general public. In other words, questions won't be accepted either from special interest groups or on the day of the forum itself. So if you have one you want answered, then by all means send it now to [debate@fostrato.ca](mailto:debate@fostrato.ca) with the subject line "Debate Question."

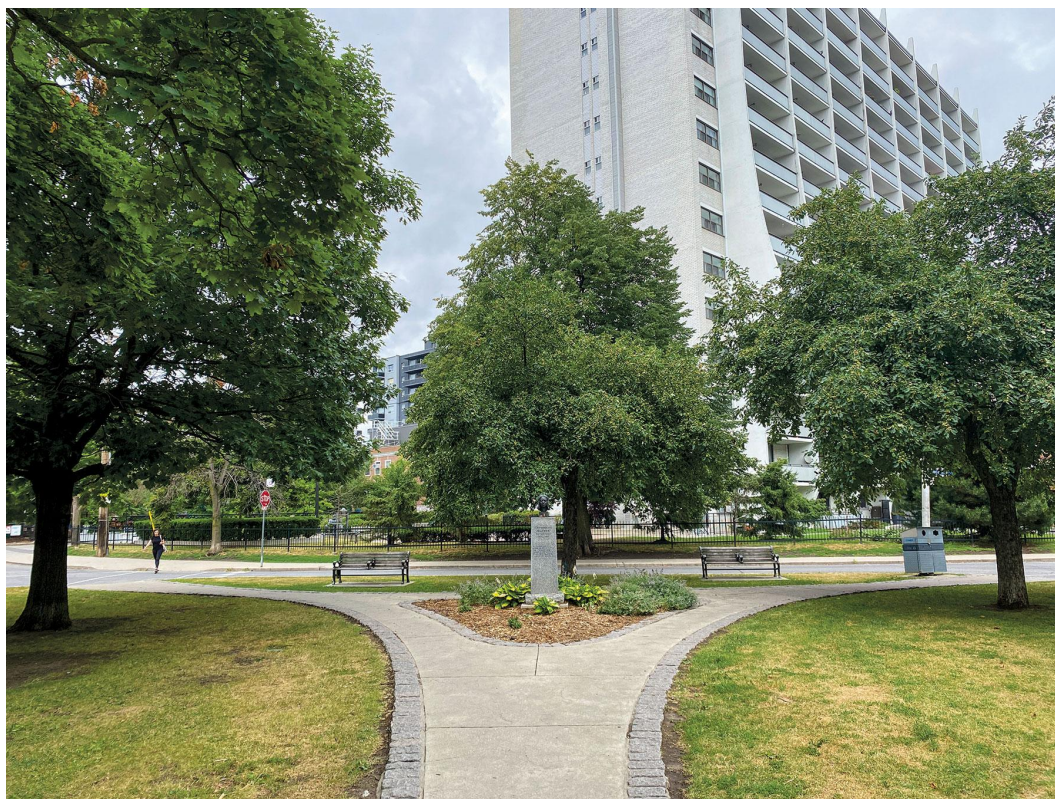
OCAD University is sponsoring the event which will take place in their auditorium at 100 McCaul Street under the baton of moderator [Nicole Swerhun](#). There won't be many opportunities in this truncated campaign to hear out our would-be leaders. Fingers crossed you're able to attend.



## Annex Tours

It was almost lost in the crowded agenda, but Sandra Shaul was able to announce a brilliant initiative that she and Lynne di Stephano have championed these past months at Heritage Toronto. Four times this summer a volunteer guide will lead a walking tour of the Annex filtered through the lens of women writers who called our neighbourhood home. From Carol Shields and Gwendolyn MacEwen to Kim Montsugu, these authors spun stories that inspire self-reflection and community action, tackling issues ranging from domestic violence and sexual abuse to mental health and poverty. You will be able to register for this walking tour on [the Heritage Toronto website](#) later in May.





Gwendolyn MacEwen Park is sure to be featured on the tour which will be repeated on June 11, August 10 and 19, and September 16.

## Ciao for Now

Well, we're putting down our metaphorical pen for the next few weeks but promise to sail back into your in-boxes at the end of May. In the meantime, thanks to all those members who take the time to read this newsletter. (Truth to tell, we're more than a little pleased by the fact that it garners an 80% open rate.) And huge bundles of appreciation to those who take the time to comment and send tips. Your interest and participation are invaluable.



The Annex Residents' Association is a volunteer organization of residents committed to improving and preserving the distinctive character of our neighbourhood. Our strength depends on our base of support in a well-informed community.

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The Annex Residents' Association