



SOCIAL HOUSING

People living in privately owned rental units or social housing are invited to take part in the second annual Tenants' Conference at City Hall on Saturday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tenants will be able to share their stories and questions during workshop sessions, which are aimed at finding solutions to common problems. Recommendations will be submitted to the community and protective services committee in October. To register, call 613-563-4532 ext. 456 or e-mail register@housinghelp.on.ca. For more information, contact Rob MacDonald at 613-563-3229 ext. 226.



GREEN LIVING

People interested in green living can attend the 2008 Ottawa Eco-Stewardship Fair on Saturday. Exhibits and demonstrations will show how to save money, improve health and help the planet. Admission is free, and the fair runs from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the RA Centre, 2452 Riverside Dr.

■ **MANAGING LITTER**

Merchants urged to help clean streets

Diane Holmes thinks she's come up with a solution to the city's ongoing battle with litter — make it against the law for the business community to ignore it.

"I'm not sure how much support a bylaw like that would get around the council table," said Holmes, who represents businesses and residents in the Somerset ward.

"But it would be one way to keep the city clean."

Holmes said it's difficult not to notice when litter and dirt piles up along city streets and sidewalks.

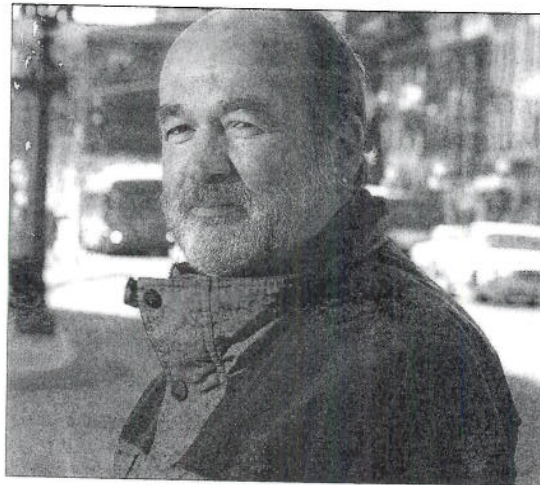
"Let those business owners be required to get out and clean up in front of their stores," said Holmes. "The city's sweeping machines do a pretty good job, but it's not enough."

Rideau-Vanier Coun. Georges Bedard agrees some of the onus for keeping Ottawa clean should be placed squarely on the shoulders of the business community.

Bedard said he and his staff are hoping to inspire business owners along Montreal Rd. by handing out 100 brooms on April 25.

"We want them to take ownership of the property in front of their stores and keep it clean," said Bedard. "It's not going to solve the problem, but it could put a dent in it."

Bedard said downtown business improvement associations are being encouraged to enter into talks with the city with an eye towards assuming responsibility for



Submitted photo

BREAK OUT THE BROOMS: Rideau-Vanier Coun. Georges Bedard says some of the onus for keeping Ottawa clean should be placed squarely on the shoulders of the business community. Bedard said he and his staff are hoping to inspire business owners along Montreal Road by handing out 100 brooms on April 25.

cleaning up commercial areas in the downtown core.

"We have 200,000 people going to the Rideau Centre every week, they leave quite a mess behind," said Bedard. "And we have 50,000 people walking through the By-

ward Market every week, many of them tourists. It's a mess there, too, and we're not making a very good impression on tourists."

— Sun Media

■ **MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS**

Summit to discuss solutions to drug crisis

A downtown community group has organized a meeting with Mayor Larry O'Brien, police Chief Vern White and local politicians to demand answers about what they're going to do to solve the city's drug and needle crisis.

The meeting will be held in the auditorium of the Elisabeth Bruyere Health Centre on April 22.

"It's to demand some answers from them," said Chris Grinham of Safer Ottawa, a Lowertown com-

munity group founded last year to combat the number of discarded needles in the downtown core.

In 2006, the city's needle hunters and staff at the Shepherds of Good Hope picked up more than 4,000 dirty needles.

Last year, the city collected over 2,000. Shepherds 1,628 and Grinham around 1,000 in a six-week period.

Grinham is inviting concerned business owners and residents to

attend.

"The meeting will focus on five areas: the needle exchange program, safe injection sites, crack cocaine, drug-related crimes and SCAN (Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods) legislation," said Grinham.

SCAN allows police to shut down suspected crack houses without the landlord's permission.

— Sun Media

■ **EDUCATION**

Part-timers eye union

Mary Anne Jackson-Hughes has taught college part-time for 15 years but looking at her pay stub, she's still a rookie who works for a fraction of what the full-time professor earns in the class next door.

The Algonquin College horticulture professor has no benefits, no seniority and figures she spends as much time preparing for lessons or correcting papers as teaching her students, despite only getting paid for classroom time.

But yesterday, Jackson-Hughes became part of the largest union application in Ontario history, as part-time and sessional college employees made a bid to join the Ontario Public Servants Employees Union (OPSEU). The application will ask the Ontario Labour Relations Board to hold a certification vote to determine if OPSEU can represent 12,500 part-time employees at 24 Ontario colleges.

At Algonquin College, 1,300 employees — including teachers, librarians and counsellors and support staff — would be eligible to join OPSEU, along with a few hundred part-time staff at the French-language La Cite collegiale.

For decades, part-time teachers like Jackson-Hughes — who work less than six hours a week and sessional professors who work more than 12 hours a week but who are not full-time — fell into a pay and benefits category that gave them only a fraction of the earnings of their full-time counterparts.

Under a confusing patchwork of pay scales, Jackson-Hughes has taught the same class several times but her pay has varied from \$30 to \$97 per hour, depending how many hours she worked during the week.

"We're not trying to eliminate part-time work — we just want to be able to do that work with some of the benefits and working conditions that some of our full-time counterparts enjoy," said Roger Couvrette, president of the union section representing part-time and sessional college employees.

— Sun Media



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