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Quick & Quirky: September 24, 2009

MULTIFAMILY EXECUTIVE Senior Editor Chris Wood rounds up interesting and intriguing news tidbits. This week: frightful apartments, container construction, and fashion with a passion.

By: [Chris Wood](#)

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Hosting a Ghost

So school has started and October is already right around the corner. That means Halloween, of course, and what better time to take a look at some of the spooky statistics out there in multifamily? That's just what Santa Monica, Calif.-based Rent.com did a few days ago, releasing survey results commissioned by Wakefield Research on behalf of the ILS that asks renters to identify their worst apartment horror stories. Topping the terror list revealed by the survey, renters pointed to nightmare roommates and cited their most monstrous qualities including leaving the living room or kitchen messy (tops at 35 percent); using personal items without asking (34 percent); and blasting loud music (13 percent). When it comes to other worldly freak-outs, 11 percent of respondents say that they have lived in a home that has been inhabited by ghosts. What's more, a whopping 69 percent of renters said they would be willing to rent a haunted apartment for a full- to half-rent discount or free utilities. Twenty-three percent said they'd rent a haunted unit for a flat-screen TV with cable. Rent a haunted apartment for a free TV? Umm hello, did you see the movie *Poltergeist*?

Stack em' High

San Francisco-based architecture and design firm Group 41 is anticipating planning approval in short order for a 200-unit multifamily housing project built out of recycled shipping containers. Nearly 1,000 used shipping containers will be recycled as modular building components sitting on a traditional commercial concrete podium including parking. The transit-oriented development is near a commuter rail station and highlights Group 41's pioneering work in using shipping containers as non-traditional homes; as a potential solution to the world's overwhelming need for emergency and homeless shelter; and as a viable option to developers who are looking for creative, green housing alternatives. "I have always believed that shipping containers are the building resource of the future," says firm founder and principal Joel Karr. "I have been working on shipping container architecture for more than ten years, continuously seeking out opportunities to introduce the building world to the multi-faceted potential of this innovative building resource."

A Fashionable Address

Nothing seems to be stopping The Gotham Organization from cranking out one-of-a-kind events to generate publicity, attract new renters, and, most importantly, provide residents with some exclusive fun care of the New York-based boutique apartment development and management firm. Two weeks ago, Gotham hosted a red-carpet kick-off party to New York Fashion Week at the firm's iconic Atlas New York luxury high-rise. Helping to co-host the fete was actress Michelle Monaghan, CBS News anchor Kristine Johnson, HGTV's Krista Watterworth, Pier 1 Imports' in-house stylist Amy Beatty, interior designer Oskar Torres, and owner of Concierge Service International and exclusive concierge to the Gotham Organization Michael Morris. It wasn't all cocktails and daydreams, though. A design competition was held to benefit Safe Horizon, a New York City organization providing support, violence prevention, and justice promotion for victims of crime and abuse in the city. Safe Horizon offers an avenue for victims to share their story, a guide through the criminal justice system, and a safe place to sleep 24 hours a day.

Editor's note: Send your offbeat multifamily news leads to cwood@hanleywood.com.