



# HISTORIC TAKOMA NEWSLETTER

Historic Takoma, Inc. Celebrates 29 Years of Service to the Community 1979-2008

## 2008 House and Garden Tour a Show Stopper



*This Victorian jewel on the 2008 House and Garden Tour was built in 1895 at a cost of \$2800 to the original owners. Photograph thanks to Art McMurdie.*

The 35th annual House and Garden Tour was held on Sunday, May 4, 2008, a perfect, balmy afternoon. The DC portion of the Takoma community was the showcase for the Tour this year. The Tour included large, stately homes, and cozy bungalows, as well as important public buildings such as the first branch of the DC Public Library and Trinity Episcopal Church. Public transit, often the subject of current headlines, played a major role in the early development of Takoma. When B. F. Gilbert acquired the first 100-acre tract of what would become Takoma Park in 1883, it straddled the District/Maryland border and the right-of-way of the B & O Railroad's Metropolitan Branch. From the outset, Glibert targeted employees of the federal government in search of affordable homes and lured them to the new sylvan suburb in part by touting the affordable (5 cents each way) commute on the frequently running trains. Takoma Park remains a vital transit suburb to this day.

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## Progress on Building Renovation

Progress on HTI's building at the Junction continues. While it is not all visible from the street, major systems work – new HVAC and electrical systems – has been completed. Funding for these projects was provided by a grant from the Montgomery County Arts and Humanities Commission, matching bond bill grant funding from the State of Maryland and private donations. HTI would like to thank Marlon Pujol of MP Energy and Mike Berardi of Berardi Electrical Designs for their wonderful work and extreme generosity on these improvements to our building. These folks are very community-minded.

As is often the case with restoration of historic buildings, this process is full of surprises and unexpected needs. While



*Chris Lantier of JD Contracting repairs the original tin ceiling at 7328 Carroll Avenue.*

HTI was hoping the current roof would last another few years, recent rains forced us to revise our plans. The roof requires some immediate repairs to make it watertight, and we are now seeking funding to replace the entire roof as soon as possible. Repairs to the original tin ceiling are underway, but must be temporarily suspended until the problems with the roof are resolved. Installation of blown-in fiberglass insulation, and period-appropriate lights and ceiling fans has also been put on hold until the roof is replaced. HTI has been awarded a matching grant of \$30,000 from the City of Takoma Park to help with our roof repair and replacement, but we also need to raise matching funds from government grants and private donors for this project.

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Historic Takoma, Inc.  
PO Box 5781  
Takoma, Park, MD 20913  
301-270-2831  
[www.historictakoma.org](http://www.historictakoma.org)

### Officers

Sabrina Alcorn Baron, *President*  
Lorraine J. Pearsall, *Vice President*  
Caroline Alderson, *Secretary*  
Jim DiLuigi, *Treasurer*

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Cindy Uleman, *Member-at-Large*  
Ron Watson, *Events*  
Nancy Abbott Young, *Member-at-  
Large*  
John Hume, *Member-at-Large*

### Other Volunteers

Ralph Freedman, *Newsletter Design*

*Historic Takoma Newsletter* is a publication of Historic Takoma, Inc. Letters to the editor are encouraged. Volunteers are welcome. Please contact HTI if you want to become more involved in the preservation of your community.

HTI is a membership-based non-profit organization founded in 1979 to promote historic preservation, citizen involvement, and community development in the Takoma community.

Membership is open to the public. Contributions are tax deductible. Federal ID No.: 52-1146960



A member of the  
United Way of the  
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## PRESERVATION NEWS AND NOTES

### What's New In The Historic Districts

Historic Takoma (HTI) plays a critical role in preserving the character and history of our community. It serves as the advocate for both the Maryland and DC National Register Historic Districts and the local Montgomery County, MD Historic District.

- Ecco Park 235, Carroll Avenue, NW While there have been numerous reports that this project is for sale and has been sold, the original developers (SGA Companies) have re-emerged. At this writing, they are seeking design changes in construction materials and the number of retail entrances on the Carroll Avenue façade. The developers have said these design changes are necessary in order to renew permits and that they plan to break ground on the project as early as September. The Old Town Residents Association held a meeting on July 24 to give residents an opportunity to provide input on the proposed changes to the project.
- 6901 Laurel Avenue, Urciolo Properties in-fill development Lot clearance, the removal of storage containers, elements of old burned buildings, and The Deck indicate that this project is currently going forward. Good news!
- Montgomery College Facilities MasterPlan The College is now working on its 2009-2012 facilities master plan. Its proposals have caused a great amount of alarm in the North Takoma neighborhood where the College is located. HTI shares the residents' concerns that unacceptable density and massing is planned for buildings in the historic core of the campus, which closely abuts important Outstanding and Contributing Resources in the Takoma Park Historic District. HTI supports the recommendations of the neighborhood that density should be moved to the part of the College campus on Georgia Avenue, where the College Foundation owns a lot that is a perfect solution to the space needs of the College.
- Traffic circles at Takoma Junction HTI continues to meet with a variety of state, county and city officials to achieve genuine solutions for the intersection of Ethan Allen and Carroll Avenues, and to make sure that the community is protected from an intrusive, heavy-handed action such as the installation of traffic circles in this location and directly in front of the firestation.
- Streetscaping on Carroll Avenue The third phase of the streetscaping projects in Old Town is scheduled to begin in late July. This phase covers the commercial area of Carroll Avenue from Columbia Avenue to the DC line.

## Upcoming Events

**August 9 & 10 – Old Town Merchants Sidewalk Sale** – A community tradition where we can all have the opportunity to shop locally and support our local businesses

**September 14 – Takoma Park Folk Festival** – Enjoy this long-time community tradition where musicians, crafters, and community groups can mingle and celebrate our eclectic community

**September 16 – HTI Benefit Day at Mark's Kitchen, 7006 Carroll Avenue** – As part of enduring support for the community, Mark will donate a percentage of the day's receipts to Historic Takoma. Please come out and support not just one, but two community institutions.

**October 5 – Takoma Park Street Festival** – Stop by the HTI booth to get an update on the HTI Building renovation and view historic photos of Takoma Park houses and neighborhoods, and meet the HTI Board.

**October 18 – MainStreet Takoma's Fall Community Clean-Up Day** – For the third consecutive year, the MainStreet Design Committee has spearheaded a spring and a fall clean up day in the commercial corridor of our community, covering the area from the historic Takoma Theatre on 4th Street, NW to the Takoma Junction neighborhood. Come out and help plant, mulch, collect litter, and improve our community!

**October 18 – Takoma Park Arts & Humanities Day** – After the community clean up day, relax by browsing artists' studios, crafters' booths, art exhibits, history displays, etc. in another event that is fast becoming a community tradition.

**October 26 – Fabulous Fall Festival** – Join HTI for our second annual autumn celebration at the Thomas-Siegler Carriage House, located on Tulip Avenue near Maple. There will be food, music, vendors and activities for kids, plus an opportunity to peek into the historic Carriage House itself.

**December – Watch for further information about the HTI Holiday Party and Annual Meeting and the Takoma Park Nuclear Free Zone 25th Anniversary**

## Progress on Building Renovation

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Structural problems that developed with the front plate glass windows are also in the process of being repaired with the assistance of a Façade Improvement Project matching grant from MainStreet Takoma. Oak Grove Restoration, which recently restored the national landmark Lincoln Cottage on the grounds of the Armed Forces Retirement Home in DC, is working to resolve the situation with the front bay window. The support of MainStreet has been vital in pursuing the restoration of the building façade.

## 2008 House and Garden Tour a Show Stopper

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Turnout for the Tour was excellent. Special thanks are due to the homeowners who graciously invited Tour patrons into their homes, as well as the Tour's financial sponsors: the City of Takoma Park; Carol Cutini of Long and Foster; Abrams Design Build; Heritage Building and Renovation; Shelterline, Ltd.; Merrick Design and Build, Inc, and Broadhurst Architects, Inc; Washington Adventist Hospital; Columbia Union College; and Lorraine Pearsall and Paul Chrostowski. The Tour is HTI's major fund raising event, and is all the more important to the organization as we work to fund the restoration and renovation of our building at 7328 Carroll Avenue.

## Calling All Volunteers: HTI Needs Your Help

Can you provide painting, plastering, or construction skills, or manpower? Pro bono legal services?

IF SO, CONTACT HTI AT PO BOX 5718

SO WE CAN PUT YOU TO WORK!

## HTI 2007 Annual Report

### Activities and Accomplishments - Highlights

#### Improvements and Progress on HTI Building

HTI now owns a historic commercial building at 7328 Carroll Avenue that is being renovated and restored to serve as archives, community meeting space, exhibition space, and headquarters for HTI. However, substantial work must be completed before the space can be occupied, archival material can be moved in and exhibits and office space set up and opened. HTI made a significant start towards these goals during 2007. Work this year included washing and repointing the façade, doing initial repairs on the crumbling bay windows and installing new and restoring historic metal cornice, skirt flashings, window frame, and downspout. A rear fire door was also installed to meet Montgomery County building code requirements. The work on the façade, bay window, and the rear door was accomplished with a Façade Improvement Program matching grant through MainStreet Takoma. Discussions with contractors continue regarding installation of new HVAC and electrical systems to occur early in the new year. The work for these projects is being made possible by matching grants from the State of Maryland and the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County, as well as donations from community sponsors of the House and Garden Tour and ticket proceeds from the Tour.

#### House and Garden Tour

HTI held the 34th annual Takoma Park House and Garden Tour on May 6, 2007. The Tour had 19 stops featured, most of them along Carroll and Sherman Avenues. The theme this year was "Carroll Connections." It was on Manor Circle, just off Carroll Avenue, where several houses on the Tour were located, that civil-war hero General Samuel Sprigg Carroll built his home, prior to the establishment of Takoma Park as a community. The location of the Tour also allowed HTI to show off its new building at the Junction to tour-goers. As in previous years, the Tour this year was HTI's major fundraising event, bringing in revenue from ticket sales and sponsorships.

#### Fall Festival

HTI introduced a new event this year, to enhance visibility of the organization, increase interaction with the community, promote more widespread exposure of the Thomas-Seigler Carriage House (an historical property now owned by the City of Takoma Park, but managed by HTI), and to provide a good time to all on a beautiful autumn day. The Fall Festival was held on October 21, 2007. An antique carriage was on display as were vintage cars. There was live music, refreshments, vendors and activities for children. HTI literature and historic displays abounded.

#### Stewardship and Advocacy for Takoma Park DC and MD Historic Districts

Shaping change to preserve the historic character of our community is one of Historic Takoma's most important functions. HTI reviews applications for historic area work permits and advises the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission and DC Historic Preservation Review Board on proposals having a major impact on the historic districts. HTI also testifies in Commission and Review Board hearings, submits written testimony and policy advice, and works with developers to encourage positive change that contributes to the economic vitality of the community while preserving its unique historic character. HTI also holds a seat on the Takoma Park Façade Advisory Board and Montgomery Preservation, Inc., and the president of HTI sits on the Board of Directors of the Old Takoma Business Association and volunteers on the MainStreet Design and Economic Restructuring Committees and also sits on the Board of the Takoma Theatre Conservancy and chairs the Design Committee of that Board. HTI Board members also work with the Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Committee and the DC Coalition of Historic Districts. During 2007, HTI was active in a number of areas, including: 1) preservation of historic windows in four houses on Piney Branch Road, NW; 2) preservation of the Takoma Theatre, located in historic Takoma, DC (HTI served as the 501(c) 3 umbrella for the Takoma Theatre Conservancy until their own non-profit status was granted); 3) continuing to work with WMATA Board and DC/MD officials regarding community concerns about inappropriate development at the Takoma Metro Station; and 4) following up on a number of proposed development projects in the community, including the Douglas Development Corp. project behind CVS, the Urciolo project on Laurel Avenue, and the renovation of the Takoma Park fire station.

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# HTI 2007 Annual Report

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## Community Outreach

HTI is an active presence at public meetings, community association meetings, and government sessions that have implications for the historic districts. Board members spend numerous hours every week on these kinds of activities.

HTI is also present as a community group at many events, such as the Takoma Park Folk Festival, the Takoma Park Street Festival, Magical Montgomery, and Happy Birthday Montgomery!.

We continue to offer guided walking tours to the public, often in conjunction with DC Cultural Tourism, as well as guided tours for the fourth grade classes in the Takoma Park public schools.

HTI works with the City of Takoma Park and other entities, such as the Takoma Park Adventist Church and the Takoma Park Folk Festival, and local artists, in search of historical information about the community and events in the community, to provide information, support, and exhibits for their use.

## Photos of Recent Events



*Takoma Park citizens staged a protest at the Fourth of July Parade against the bulldozing tactics of WMATA in trying to force development on the community. Photograph thanks to Franca Brilliant.*



*Peter Kurtz (left) of the Maryland Historic Trust met with HTI President Sabrina Baron, Vice President Lorraine Pearsall, and Board member John Hume, at 7328 Carroll Avenue to see the building and tour the Takoma Park Historic District.*



*Tickets for the House and Garden Tour were sold in front of the community's Carnegie library at Fifth and Cedar Streets, NW.*



*Local potter Maija Hay in her garden with a Tour goer.*



**Calendar of  
HTI Events**  
[www.historictakoma.org](http://www.historictakoma.org)

Saturday & Sunday, August 9 & 10  
Old Town Merchants Sidewalk Sale

Sunday, September 14  
Takoma Park Folk Festival

Tuesday, September 16  
HTI Benefit Day at Mark's Kitchen

Sunday, October 5  
Takoma Park Street Festival

Saturday, October 18  
MainStreet Takoma's Fall  
Community Clean-Up Day

Saturday, October 18  
Takoma Park Arts & Humanities Day

Sunday, October 26  
Fabulous Fall Festival

## Join Historic Takoma Today!

### Help Preserve Our Community's Heritage

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Individual  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Household                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40 Business    | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Sponsor                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Benefactor | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 B. F. Gilbert Club (lifetime) |
- (Contributions are tax deductible.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to: Historic Takoma, Inc.**  
**PO Box 5781 Takoma Park, MD 20913**

Visit us at [www.historictakoma.org](http://www.historictakoma.org)

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