



HISTORIC TAKOMA NEWSLETTER

Historic Takoma, Inc. Celebrates 30 Years of Service to the Community 1979-2009

HTI Annual Meeting and Holiday Party Sunday December 6, 1-4 p.m.

Please join us for the HTI Annual Meeting/Holiday Party on Sunday December 6, 2009, from 1-4 p.m. at the home of Herman Goodyear and Jeff Trunzo at 119 Sherman Ave. HTI will hold its annual business meeting and will also offer tours of its new building at Takoma Junction. Refreshments will be served.



Come Celebrate our Progress!

It is a pleasure to announce that we will hold guided construction tours at 7328 Carroll Avenue for our members as part of our annual meeting on December 6th. We have just completed a major phase of building restoration with the skill of Rick Leonard and his firm, Heritage Building and Renovation. With the financial assistance of Main Street Takoma façade improvement grants and revenue from the 2009 House and Garden Tour, Rick completed the remaining work for the front bay window façade and restored two large rear facade windows. These front and rear windows, together with the two newly restored skylights, provide a generous amount of natural light for the building, and restores it to its original appearance for the first time in over sixty years. Currently in progress is the installation of 16 school house-styled pendant lights and three old-fashioned ceiling fans, to be generously donated by the Peterson Companies of Silver Spring.



The interior of 7328 Carroll Avenue.

The funding for a second bathroom and kitchenette remains to be found, and furnishings such as shelving, room dividers, and furniture are urgently needed. We are extremely grateful to our members, to sponsors and donors of the 2009 House and Garden Tour and to all of our funding agencies for making this community project an ever-increasing reality.

HISTORIC TAKOMA NEWSLETTER



Historic Takoma, Inc.
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www.historictakoma.org

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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 nonprofit 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

HTI NEWS

Takoma Theater Defended

On Thursday, October 22, the DC Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) voted to reject an application to demolish 75% of the Takoma Theater, which is located at 4th and Butternut Streets, NW. The board unanimously found that the proposed razing to permit the construction of a 43-unit apartment building would be inconsistent with DC preservation goals. To save time, the board decreed that any future demolition application should be forwarded directly to the DC Mayor's Agent for historic preservation, who ordinarily hears appeals of HPRB decisions.

Before the vote, community representatives opposed the proposal to build apartment units within the theater's shell. Loretta Newman, President of The Takoma Theater Conservancy, which seeks to buy the building, testified that the theater should continue to be used for its original purpose but that a wider base of financial support should be provided by adding of other compatible cultural and arts-related public uses. HTI also contended that it is not in the public interest for an irreplaceable theater to be destroyed to accommodate residences that can be built elsewhere. A resurgent Takoma Theater would retain an important community gathering place and bolster surrounding Takoma businesses by attracting visitors from outside the community who could arrive by Metro.

The Takoma Theater is the last remaining movie house in DC's Ward 4, Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner Faith Wheeler told the HPRB. The building is remarkable because both its interior and exterior, including the original theater sign, are in excellent condition. Of the 14 local movie theaters, including the Uptown, Langley, Atlas, and Flower Theaters, designed by well-known architect John Jacob Zink, only the Takoma, his first DC movie house, remains mostly intact. Designed to serve as a neighborhood facility, the building originally was equipped with 723 seats, storefront businesses, and offices.

Opened in 1924, the Takoma Theater, which was operated for ten years by the independent Takoma Theater Corporation, was one of the first DC theaters outfitted for sound. From 1935-1971, the facility was rented to Warner Brothers. The building was then purchased by William H. Wolowitz and leased to KB Theaters. Wolowitz was a prolific inventor, whose patents included several correction typewriter ribbons and a mechanical charge card/plate printer. It has been reported that, even prior to buying the building, he maintained a typewriter-related business on the theater's second floor.

The theater's financially deteriorating position during the 1970s inspired the first Takoma Park Folk Festival, which was held in the theater to raise funds to save the building. For several years, the building continued to be operated as a movie house. However, in 1984, it was purchased by playwright Milton McGinty, who retrofitted the building for live theater by enlarging the stage. The subsequent plays were poorly attended. While the Takoma Theater Conservancy wishes to purchase the building, McGinty has recently reiterated a longstanding vow that the building is "not for sale to any buyer under any circumstances."

**Think global, shop local.
Support local Takoma businesses.**

Visit us at www.historictakoma.org.

HTI Brings Local History to the Silver Foxes

On September 22, HTI board members Dorothy Barnes, Diana Kohn, and Jack Carson presented a program of Takoma Park history to two dozen of Takoma Park's "Silver Foxes" (members of the City's Recreation Dept. seniors club). Jack led off the program with his entertaining slide show of Takoma Park's early years. Dorothy followed with an insightful talk about the history of the Takoma Park Library and her experiences working at the library in its formative years. Diana concluded the day's events with a fascinating tour of the Washington Theological Union and lecture about the evolution of the structure from its original Seventh Day Adventist owners to the present day configuration by the Theological Union. The day's activities were very well received and HTI is discussing



Dorothy Barnes addresses the Silver Foxes on Takoma Park history.

future events with City staff. Many thanks to the City's seniors program manager, Paula Lisowski, for her help in coordinating this event.

Historic Takoma wishes to thank the following community-friendly institutions, businesses and individuals for their support of the 2009 Takoma Park House and Garden Tour:

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All proceeds from the tour are reinvested in our community.

Historic Takoma
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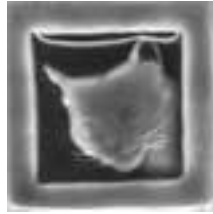
Keep up the good work Historic Takoma!

Thank you for your continued friendship,
 support & referrals over the years!

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Arcadia Book Photos Needed

**Do you have publication quality, copyright
 free, images of people, places or events
 important in Takoma Park history?**

Our DC-MD pictorial history will go into production
 in early 2010. We lack images illustrating a number of
 places and people, especially for the 1960-1990 period.

This is an all volunteer, no fee project. If you have
 photos to share, please contact Caroline Alderson at
caroline.alderson@gsa.gov or 301-270-5958.

We will scan and promptly return your photos, providing
 you a high resolution digital copy if you would like.



Hendrick Motor Company was
 on Laurel Avenue. This photo is
 from between 1918 and 1928.
 Credit: National Photo Company
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MEG FINN

*Specializing in Takoma Park, Close-in
 Silver Spring, and Takoma, D.C.*

Thank you to all my friends, neighbors,
 clients and especially Historic Takoma
 members for your continued support and
 referrals over the years. Let's all support
 Historic Takoma in the 21st century in its
 worthy efforts which benefit us all!

Meg

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Historic Takoma Inc., 2008 Annual Report

Activities and Accomplishments - Highlights

Restoration Work on 7328 Carroll Avenue

In 2008, HTI continued intensive restoration activities with the assistance of several public and private funding sources. Highlights of the work include the removal of old equipment, ductwork, debris, pipes and wiring; the installation of energy efficient HVAC equipment and ductwork; the installation of a new electrical system and temporary lighting; repair and restoration of the tin ceiling, two skylight wells and the external skylight structures; repair of the building roof; repair work on the front bay window and replacement of broken glass; and replication of the original front door from old photographs in HTI's archive collection.

In 2008, HTI applied for a grant from the City of Takoma Park and the Arts and Humanities Commission of Montgomery County to finish the interior shell in 2009. This will allow storage and access to our archive collection by the late summer/fall of 2009 and reinstatement of educational programs and displays.

2008 House and Garden Tour

The 35th annual House and Garden Tour was held on Sunday, May 4, 2008. The DC portion of the Takoma community was the showcase of the Tour, which included large, stately homes, and cozy bungalows. Two important public buildings, the first branch of DC Public Library and Trinity Episcopal Church, were also featured. Public transit, often the subject of current headlines, played a major role in the early development of the Takoma DC neighborhood. 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. As in the past several years, in addition to the revenue garnered from ticket sales, a substantial number of pledges were received by Tour "sponsors."

City of Takoma Park Funding for HTI

In its 2009 budget, the City of Takoma Park has designated up to \$25,000 for HTI to do work associated with taking over the assessment and storage of the City's archives. The last several years HTI has received a donation from the City in support of the House and Garden Tour. The City is now considering a policy to govern the grants it makes to Nonprofit Organizations. The City has budgeted \$5,000 in its FY09 budget to cover grants to all local nonprofit groups, and intends to develop a policy to guide it in allocating these funds.

Input Into Activities in Area Historic Districts and Related Matters

Shaping change to preserve the historic character of our community is one of Historic Takoma's most important functions. HTI reviews and advises the Montgomery County Preservation Commission and DC Historic Preservation Review Board on Historic Area Work Permits having a major impact on the district, testifies in Commission and Review Board hearings, and works with

(continued on page 6)

Historic Takoma Inc., 2008 Annual Report (continued)

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developers to encourage positive change that contributes to the economic vitality of the city while preserving its unique character. HTI also holds a seat on the Takoma Park Façade Advisory Board and Montgomery Preservation. Inc. During 2008, HTI was active in a number of areas, including: 1) input into several potential development projects including Ecco Park (235 Carroll Avenue, NW), Douglas Development project, Willow and Maple Streets, NW, and 6901 Laurel Avenue, Urciolo property; 2) Fire Station re-construction, Carroll and Philadelphia Avenues; 3) continuing to work to with WMATA Board and DC/MD officials regarding community concerns about development of the Takoma metro site; 4) ill-conceived proposals for traffic circles at the Junction; 5) supporting preservation efforts in Silver Spring, including the Falkland apartment complex and the Perpetual Building.

Educational Outreach

Marking its tenth year of cooperation with Piney Branch Elementary School, HTI led each of the eight fourth grade classes on a guided walking tour of Takoma Park. The students prepared for their tours by reading "Takoma Park A-Z: A Kids Guide to the Town that Gilbert Built" a text-book written by HTI several years ago to enhance this learning experience. In fall 2008, HTI worked with Takoma Park Elementary School staff to help a second grade enrichment class create a historical timeline of Takoma Park.

Finally, the Takoma Park City Council passed a resolution declaring November 24 as B.F. Gilbert Day, commemorating the date 125 years ago when the city's founding father took title to the first acres of what became the suburb of Takoma Park.

Work on Membership Database

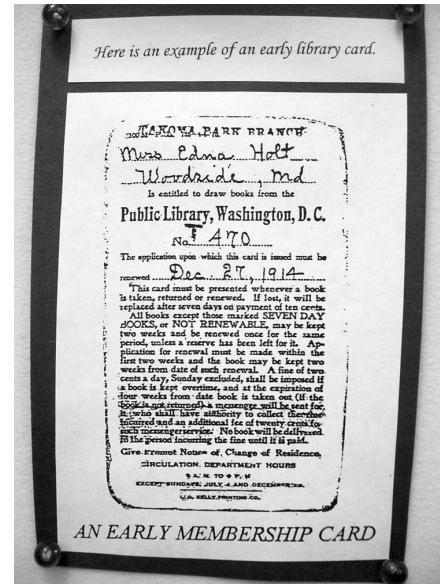
During 2008, HTI was able to more fully implement its membership management software and correct many data errors that had crept into the database in recent years. These actions have produced a more complete and accurate membership database and have improved HTI's ability to communicate with members. Towards the end of the year, HTI began sending out letters of acknowledgment to all new and renewing members, thanking them for their membership contribution and identifying the donated amount and the form of payment.

Annual Meeting and Election of Officers and Board Members

The annual meeting was held on December 14, 2008, at the Cady Lee house. Sabrina Baron was re-elected President, Lorraine Pearsall Vice President, Jim DiLuigi Treasurer and Caroline Alderson Secretary. David Paris was re-elected to the board and Jack Carson was also elected as a new board member.

Takoma History File at Takoma Library

On October 22, the Takoma Park Neighborhood Library unveiled a new resource for local history buffs. Resident archivist Lindsay Halkola presented the "Takoma History File", a collection of articles, clippings, photos, and other documents pertaining to Takoma Park history, both in MD and DC. Ms. Halkola spent the summer of 2009 assembling the materials and organizing them in proper archival storage while assuring their accessibility to students, researchers, genealogists, and others interested in Takoma Park history. Prior to Ms. Halkola's efforts, the Takoma Park collection had not been organized, stored properly, or utilized for a very long time. Some of the 50 subject headings of the new collection include Art, Crime, Parks, Schools, Churches, People, and Theater. Financial and other support for this project was provided by the DC Humanities Council, the DC State Historic Preservation Office, the Friends of the Takoma Park Library, and Helen Hiltz. Historic Takoma lauds Ms. Halkola's efforts to preserve and revitalize this important collection on Takoma Park history, and urges all interested parties to check it out. The library is located at 416 Cedar St. NW, in the District of Columbia.



A Takoma Library Card from 1914.



The Takoma collection is housed in the recently renovated Takoma DC Public Library.



Thanks to librarian Lindsay Halkola, the Takoma story comes to life.



Readers of our newsletter may have noticed it appearing at more outlets around town. HTI has increased its production to 1500 copies and greatly expanded the number of distribution points. The newsletter may now be found at the Takoma Park, MD, Takoma DC, and Long Branch libraries, the Takoma Park, MD and Long Branch Community Centers, as well as about a dozen commercial establishments within the Takoma Park, MD and Takoma DC commercial districts.

Thanks for your readership!

Visit us at www.historictakoma.org.



Calendar of HTI Events
www.historictakoma.org

Sunday, December 6, 1-4 p.m.

HTI Annual Meeting and
Holiday Party

119 Sherman Avenue

Sunday, December 6, 1-4 p.m.

Guided Tours of

7328 Carroll Avenue

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