



Fall 2010

Historic Takoma

NEWSLETTER

A Successful 2010 House and Garden Tour

Historic Takoma held its 37th annual House and Garden Tour on Sunday, May 2. The tour featured the area of Takoma Park known as Hodges Heights, the site of John Roger Hodges' dairy farm until the late 1930s. Despite the unseasonably hot weather, the tour was attended by more than 350 people and brought in approximately \$24,000 in revenue.



◀ *Tourgoers enter 201 Hodges Lane, the oldest structure in Hodges Heights and believed to have been the original farmhouse.*

▼ *The gardens of this Darwin Avenue home were among those featured on the tour.*



Thank You

Historic Takoma wishes to thank the following community-friendly institutions, businesses and individuals for their support of the 2010 Takoma Park House and Garden Tour.

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Our Contributors

Seth Grimes
Takoma Park Animal Clinic
Takoma Theatre Conservancy
Urciolo Properties
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All proceeds from the tour are reinvested in our community.

HISTORIC TAKOMA NEWSLETTER



Historic Takoma, Inc.
PO Box 5781
Takoma Park, MD 20913
301-270-2831
www.historictakoma.org

Officers

Diana Kohn, President
Lorraine J. Pearsall, Vice President
David Paris, Treasurer
John Hume, Secretary

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Caroline Alderson, Member-at-Large
Dorothy Barnes, Historian
Steve Breslin, Member-at-Large
Jack Carson, Membership
James DiLuigi, Member-at-Large
Torrie Mattes, Member-at-Large
Art McMurdie, Member-at-Large
Bonnie Moss, Member-at-Large
Susan Robb, Member-at-Large
Ron Watson, Hospitality
Nancy Abbott-Young, Member-at-Large

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

Visit us at
www.historictakoma.org

HTI NEWS

New HTI Officers and Directors Elected for 2010

The membership of Historic Takoma elected a new slate of officers and board members at HTI's Annual Meeting and Holiday Party on December 6, 2009 at the Sherman Avenue home of Jeff Trunzo and Herman Goodyear.

The election resulted in the installation of Diana Kohn as President, Lorraine Pearsall as Vice President, David Paris as Treasurer, and John Hume as Secretary.

Lorraine Pearsall addressed the general membership with an appreciation of outgoing President Sabrina Baron, making note of her diligence and tireless energy in the cause of historic preservation on behalf of Historic Takoma and the greater community. Sabrina was presented with a gift certificate to a local business as a token of the organization's thanks and esteem.

► 2010 Historic Takoma officers
*John Hume, Diana Kohn,
Lorraine Pearsall, and
David Paris.*



▼ *Members share
holiday cheer.*



▲ *Member Enid Hodes (left)
with HTI board member
Nancy Abbott-Young.*



▲ *HTI President Diana Kohn
with Maryland State Senator
Jamie Raskin.*

Dorothy Barnes — Volunteer Superhero and Grand Marshal

Longtime HTI board member and historian Dorothy Barnes was recognized as the City's top volunteer at the 6th Annual Azalea Awards ceremony held May 15th at City Hall. Sponsored jointly by the Takoma Voice and the Takoma Foundation, the awards honor local citizens and organizations who have made significant contributions to the community. Award winners are determined by public voting.

A second honor was bestowed upon Dorothy by the Takoma Park Independence Day Committee, which selected her as Grand Marshal for this year's July 4th parade. Grand Marshals are recognized by the Commit-



▲ Grand Marshal Dorothy Barnes

tee for their significant contributions to the Takoma community.

Born in Takoma Park in 1922, Dorothy has lived her entire life here and participated in virtually every aspect of the City's development. Dorothy has for many years served

on the board of directors of Historic Takoma, Inc. As the organization's historian, she has devoted countless volunteer hours researching, organizing, documenting, and preserving the City's history. She has also assisted others to understand better the origins of our City's public and private institutions as well as the history of the many City residents who came before us and their contributions to the development of Takoma Park. Her efforts have contributed significantly to the preservation and promulgation of our heritage, and to the evolution of our unique sense of community and historical awareness. Congratulations, Dorothy!

Walking Tour of Old Takoma

Steady rain did not deter the forty diehard history buffs who joined HTI President Diana Kohn on a tour of Old Takoma on Sunday, May 23. Sponsored by Cultural Tourism DC's Walkingtowndc program, the tour was one of about a hundred conducted in and around the District of Columbia on Saturday and Sunday of that weekend. The two-hour tour commenced at the Takoma Metro Station and

covered sites in both DC and MD, and concluded inside the Takoma Park Seventh-Day Adventist Church with a talk on Adventist history in Takoma Park. Since historical education is one of Historic Takoma's most important contributions to the Takoma community and is an essential component of the organization's mission, HTI was pleased to be able to participate in this event.



▲ Walking tour participants were undeterred by rain.

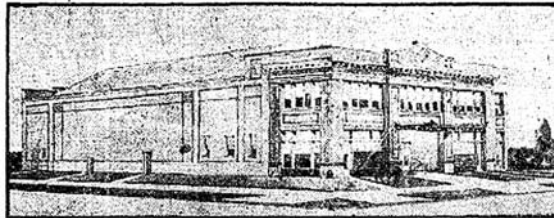
Historic Photos for Council Chambers

Members of HTI met with Takoma Park, MD Mayor Bruce Williams and other city staff on May 25 to discuss recycling the eighteen historic photos that lined the City Council chambers before the recent renovation. The photos were mounted in 1998, with funding assistance provided by the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission and the city. The photos were provided by HTI. Most of the photos were taken around the turn of the 20th century and provide a revealing glimpse into a period of the city's past. The city has agreed to re-hang the photos throughout City Hall with new captions, and also will work with HTI to explore ways to interpret the large historic images that now line the walls of the Council chambers. HTI extends its appreciation to Mayor Williams and City staff for their cooperation in this effort.

Takoma Theatre Update

On January 22, Historic Takoma testified before the DC mayor's agent, Harriet Tregoning, at a hearing of Takoma Theatre owner Milton McGinty's appeal of an October 22, 2009 decision by the DC Historic Preservation Review Board. That decision had rejected Mr. McGinty's application to demolish the Takoma Theatre to make way for construction of a 43-unit apartment building. Historic Takoma joined with the Takoma Theatre Conservancy, D.C. Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B, and assorted preservation advocates in opposition to the demolition, along with architectural historian Dr. Richard Longstreth, who testified as an expert on the area's historic architecture.

The Takoma Theatre, built in 1923, is one of the earliest theaters designed by noted theater architect John Jacob Zink. Its Greek Revival design, visible in the building's elegant interior, predates the Art Deco and Art Moderne styles that dominated Zink's later theaters. The theater is a contributing



building in the Takoma Park Historic District and is therefore protected by law from substantial demolition unless granted a special exception on the basis of hardship or community benefit offered by the proposed redevelopment.

In his appeal of the HPRB's decision, Mr. McGinty requested special consideration on the basis of economic hardship, citing failed attempts to reestablish the theater as a performing arts space over the years. Opponents thanked Mr. McGinty for his efforts to reestablish the theater, at the same time urging the mayor's agent to support the city's preservation ordinance and create new opportunities for putting the building back to use as a focal point of the community.

Historic Takoma's testimony focused on the theater's ongoing contribution

to the cultural and social life of the community and its value as an unusual example of a historic commercial structure retaining its function-specific interior. Pointing to recent successes in applying new adaptive use strategies to

theaters, Historic Takoma urged the mayor's agent to preserve the property, arguing that options for viably preserving and reusing the theater have not been exhausted.

On May 21, the mayor's agent rejected Mr. McGinty's appeal. Although Mr. McGinty subsequently vowed to fight the ruling and sent a letter to Historic Takoma and other concerned parties announcing that he has discontinued all utilities and will put no more money into the maintenance and upkeep of the theater, proponents of the theater are hopeful that the decision by the mayor's agent has greatly enhanced the theater's chances of survival.

To learn more about the effort to save and restore the Takoma Theatre, please visit...
www.takomatheatreconservancy.org

Flower Theater Protected

A July 14 hearing and worksession of the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission resulted in the Commission's unanimously approving the Flower Theater and Shopping Center for designation on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation and for placement on the Locational Atlas while the Master Plan process moves forward.

Placement on the Locational Atlas protects the theater and shopping center from alteration or demolition until they can be protected more permanently by being placed on the Master Plan.

The theater, built between 1948 and 1950 was designed by John Jacob Zink in his characteristic Art Deco style.

Houses Threatened with Demolition

This past July, the City of Takoma Park issued a Request for Bids to demolish the houses located at 7402 Hancock Avenue and 6502 Sligo Mill Road. The Hancock Avenue house, built circa 1928, had been deteriorating for many years and suffered a small fire in the summer of 2009 that prompted the Montgomery County Fire Marshall to condemn the building. When HTI learned about the proposed demolition, board members inspected the house and concluded that it was salvageable. HTI then convened meetings with neighbors adjacent to the property, City staff, and the property's owners to try to accelerate the transfer of the property into the hands of someone who would rehabilitate the house and return it to the residential housing inventory. As this newsletter was going to press, the property had been sold to a house renovator with plans for repairing the structure and re-selling it. HTI expresses its thanks to all parties for working together to keep this house from the wrecking ball.

In August, the City removed the 6502 Sligo Mill Road house from the original Request for Bids after a determination was made that the City did not have the authority to demolish the circa-1900 structure. HTI learned subsequently that the property is owned by a Florida development company that plans to demolish the house and then sell the vacant lot to Montgomery County, which will add the land to the existing parkland adjacent to the property. HTI board members inspected the house and determined



▲ 7402 Hancock Avenue.

that it is not salvageable. The loss of the house will be a sad end to one of the oldest houses in the area and one of the few original remaining houses that line Sligo Mill Road, which was the main north-south road on the eastern edge of the City prior to the construction of New Hampshire Avenue in the 1930s.

One of HTI's primary missions is to preserve the historic built environment within the City. We appreciated the opportunity to have input into the outcomes for these two properties and plan to have discussions with City staff about how HTI can play a more prominent role in preserving threatened historic properties throughout the city.

HPC Budget Money Restored Thanks to HTI Members

In May, following news that the Montgomery County Council was planning to drastically cut funding for the Historic Preservation Commission for the 2011 fiscal year, Historic Takoma urged its membership to email their County Council members and the County Executive requesting restoration of the funds.

Historic Takoma wishes to thank its many members for their strong email response.

We are pleased to report that \$109,420 was restored to the HPC budget—the full amount needed to keep the Historic Preservation Commission functioning.



▲ *The Allen Theater in its heyday.*



▲ *After the fire.*

Allen Theater Burns Down

HTI joins the Takoma community in bidding a sad farewell to the old Allen Theater, which succumbed to a devastating fire on Saturday, December 5, 2009. Designed by architects James Hogan and Francis Groff, the theater was constructed by theater magnate Sidney Lust.

It opened on March 24, 1951 amidst much fanfare, with a live orchestra and the film “At War With the Army,” starring Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis. Longtime City residents recall the 25-cent movies and 10-cent popcorn that made for an entertaining Saturday afternoon in the 1950s. HTI board member Jack Carson cites the live, onstage performance by comedian Soupy Sales as one of the highlights of his childhood.

The advent of multiplex screen movie houses in the 1980s, and changing family entertainment interests, led to the theater’s demise. It closed in 1990 and the building was converted into a discount retail store, although the structure’s distinctive marquee and vertical “Allen” neon sign survived intact.

Fourth Grade Tours

As she has done for the past several years, HTI President Diana Kohn led all six fourth-grade classes of Piney Branch Elementary School on walking tours of the City in early June. In the accompanying photo, she explains to one class of students the historical significance of the two houses directly behind her on Maple Avenue. Both houses were built in the early 20th century to house railroad workers.



Welcome New and Renewed Members!!!

*These members renewed their memberships or joined as new members
between November 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010.*

Alderson, Caroline & Thomas A.
Augustine, Reginald & Juno
Bass, Jane L.
Belden, Tamara & Joseph
Bowman Hunter, Margaret
Bowser, Muriel
Breslin, Steven
Brown, Ellen
Callard, Pamela
Childs, Hally
Covarrubias, Margarita
Damico, Donna
Daniels-Cohen, Kay; Jack Cohen
& Buddy Daniels
Dixon-Peugh, Katherine
Douglas, Janet and James
Duncan, Pamela
Fisher, Michael & Christy Lopez
Flory, Ashley Files
French, George & Marcie Stickle
Ginsberg, Robert & Ellen
Grizzell, Virginia Roe
Guldin, Robert & Susan Strasser
Hay, Maija
Hoffman, Steven
Hoffnar, Ann
Hurlburt, Heather & Darius Sivin
Ikle-Khalsa, Mimi & Sat Jiwan
Juneau, Ann & Paul Long
Katz, Russell
Kay, Jeffrey & Ann
Khalsa, Sat Jiwan
Kittner, Sam & Bobbi
Lawson, Kurt & Jill Feasley
Leffler, Merrill & Ann Slayton
Luther, Judy
Maplesden, David
Marsh, Ellen
Marth, Paul & Rita

Mattes, Victoria
McGuckian, Eileen
McGuire, Brian
McMahon, Edward
Melov, Steven & James Goddard
Mergner, Wolfgang & Gertrud
Montgomery, Susan West & David
Murray, Stephen
O'Connor, Richard
Partan, Andrew & Kathryn
Perrolle, Pierre & Lois
Petersen, Karen Kay
Pierpoint, Jeffrey A.
Polis, Crystal & Daniel
Porter, Kathy
Prentice, Kathleen & George
Raff, Melvin & Dolores
Rende, Carol & Edward Hollander
Richards, Paul, Mary & Steven

Robb, Susan
Scannell, Raymond F. & Miriam
Szapiro
Schallhorn, Nancy
Sheldon, Robert
Sherman, Mark
Silverstone, Jeffrey & Margreta
Sparkman, Dolly
Trachtman, Dan
Turman, Maureen & Richard
Turman, Wendy & Jonathan
M. Smith
Vogel, Margaret
Vorhies, James & Mary
Walker, Margaret & Dimitry
Vesensky
Whitney, Stephen & Barbara
Wial, Howard
Young, Nancy Abbott

Join Historic Takoma Today!

Help Preserve Takoma's Heritage

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

Membership contributions are tax-deductible.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

E-Mail _____

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

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▲ *Historic Takoma members Jack Carson and Howard Kohn join Dorothy Barnes, Superhero, at the Azalea Awards in May 2010.*

HTI Building Update

Historic Takoma is currently working with the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services on obtaining an occupancy permit for use of our headquarters building at 7328 Carroll Avenue. We hope to obtain a permit before the end of this year.

Join Historic Takoma Today!

Historic Takoma, Inc.
PO Box 5781
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