

THE PRESERVATIONIST

NEWSLETTER OF
THE SPRINGFIELD PRESERVATION TRUST

Summer 1991

CONSULTANT WRAPS UP HISTORICAL SURVEY

Hired consultant, Kathleen Kelly Broomer of Boston, is completing an historical survey of Bay, Pine Points, and parts of Metro Center which will be ready by mid-summer. She will give a presentation of her findings to the Trust later in the year.

Ms. Broomer was selected last November from a list of candidates to conduct the survey, dubbed the "Springfield Survey Continuation Project". The survey was broken into four phases. In Phase I, Ms. Broomer developed her methodology, proposed bibliography, and working maps. In Phase II, the Trust and Massachusetts Historical Commission reviewed her recommended survey choices. Phase III involved writing narrative histories for Bay and Pine Point and completing forms on specific homes, streetscapes, and area scapes. Phase IV completes the survey with a numbering system for easy reference.

Upon completion, both the Trust and MHC will receive the final survey package for their files.

Historical surveys have importance because they determine the historical significance of an area. This in turn can lead to nominations to the National Register of Historic Places.

Of more immediate significance, historical surveys have ramifications on Springfield's city government. Once a building or area is on record as being of historic value, the city must follow certain standards and considerations in terms of how they handle those properties.

Concerns relating to the new school at Mason Square is a recent demonstration of such ramifications. Because the new school construction took place in a National Register historical district, the city was required to move rather than destroy six houses of historic value. *Continued on page 7.*

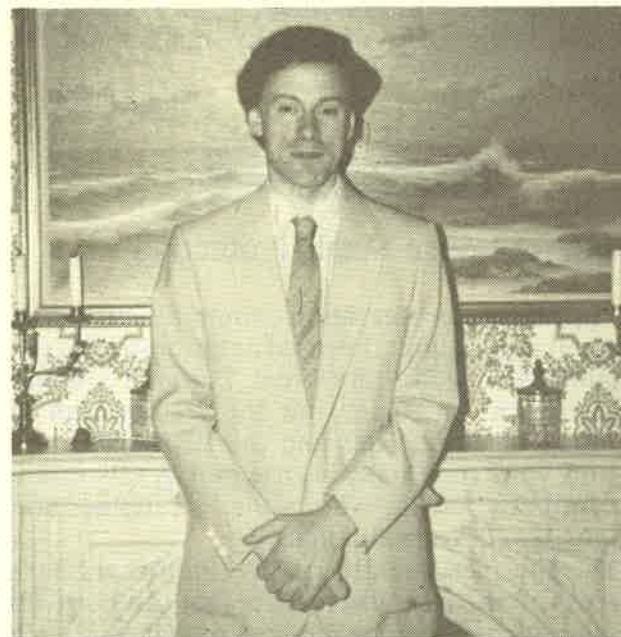
HARRIS NAMED TRUST REP TO HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Roger S. Harris, Director of the Hampden County Energy Office and a four-year member of the Springfield Preservation Trust, was unanimously confirmed by City Council in early June as the Trust's representative to the Springfield Historical Commission.

The Trust has long been interested in a designated seat on the Commission and has sought formal representation since 1982. Springfield's seven-member Commission has consisted of three designated seats for nominees from the local boards of realtors and architects, and the historical society. In order to obtain a fourth designated seat to represent Trust interests, the Trust requested a change in the state mandate asking for home rule legislation.

The Trust received approval for a fourth designated seat in late 1988. A Trust nominee could not assume the seat, however, until one of the undesignated chairs became available upon expiration of that member's term.

In July 1989, the Trust submitted names of two nominees to Mayor Mary E. Hurley when such an
Continued on page 8.



Roger S. Harris is the first Trust rep to sit on the Springfield Historical Commission.

President's Column

Survey Both Fascinating and Worth Sharing

I am delighted to report that the "Springfield Survey Continuation Project", initiated by the Trust Board and researched by Kathleen Broomer, architectural historian, is nearing completion.

This project is funded in part by the Massachusetts Historical Commission and will provide a survey of the cultural resources of the Bay and Pine Point neighborhoods, and parts of Metro Center. Each survey considers the full range of cultural resources in terms of period, theme, property type, architectural style, and geographic distribution.

Upon recently joining several Trust Board members and Audrey Higbee, our Survey Committee Chair, to review the survey inventory, I was simply amazed! There are well over 100 property photos with detailed architectural and historical descriptions. We are very anxious to share this information with all of you and the residents of each of these neighborhoods.

As soon as the survey is complete, we will be formulating plans to make this possible. The Pine Point neighborhood has a wealth of Craftsman/Bungalow properties and we are planning on presenting a lecture series on this period in the fall. If you have an interest in these neighborhoods or the Craftsman/Bungalow period and would like to join the Survey Presentation Committee, please contact Anne Rice, our lecture chair, at 739-5099 or myself at 785-1636.

The information contained in this survey is fascinating and, of course, many minds make for more enjoyment by all!

— Diane Fisher

**Alexander House Needs Protection**

The historic preservation community has been very concerned about the rapid deterioration of the Alexander House on State Street. Through communication with the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities and the Historical Commission, work has finally been begun by City Councilor Anthony Ravosa who is the leaseholder and responsible for its maintenance.

This fine, very architecturally significant house deserves all the care and respect that can be given and should not ever be allowed to fall into such disrepair. We thank the Springfield Historical Commission for their watchful eye on this most important property.

Can You Guess?

Do you know this building? See page 7.

**Trust Pleased to Serve City**

In 1982, the Trust felt that it could be of service to the city and the Historical Commission if one of the seats on the Commission was designated for a person nominated by the Trust. There are designated seats for realtors, architects, and historic society people.

Home rule legislation was passed by City Council and the state legislature under the guidance of Dave Sanborn, a Trust member. Final enactment by City Council ordinance was a long process which involved an override of a mayoral vote.

But finally, Roger Harris will be on the Historical Commission and be able to serve the city and lend his support and expertise. The Trust wants to thank everyone who lobbied, wrote letters and worked so hard on this project. Thanks are due to Mayor Hurley as well for appointing such a fine person.

—Jim Boone

FREE ESTIMATES

Mahan Slate Roofing

COMMERCIAL & INSTITUTIONAL
SLATE BOUGHT, SOLD & INSTALLED

Our Specialty - Slate Roofs Installed & Repaired

(413) 788-9529
JACK MAHAN, PROP.

P.O. BOX 2860
SPRINGFIELD, MA 01101

TRUST FIGHTS SIDING BEFORE COMMISSION

At the June meeting of the Springfield Historical Commission, the Trust successfully fought the request of a family day-care to side their home.

The owners of the home-based business, located on Buckingham Street in the McKnight Historic District, requested the Commission's permission to de-lead their home by siding. The owners argued financial hardship stating loss of business income through forfeiture of their day-care license if deleading did not take place, and the ongoing expense of continually painting their home.

Jim Boone, vice-president of Trust advocacy, accompanied by experts in the deleading industry and with paint estimates from reputable paint contractors, countered their hardship claim. Mr. Boone presented the regulations for family day-care showing it unnecessary to de-lead in order to have a day-care license. Mr. Boone also showed that over a 10-12 year period, painting was cheaper than siding, and over 20 years, the cost was equal.

After three and a half hours of debate, the Commission determined the day-care business had not demonstrated hardship and ruled against their request to side.

LECTURE SERIES POSTPONED

The lectures on local architecture and period furnishings which were scheduled for this spring have been pushed back to a date to be announced in the fall.

The two talks are intended to coincide with the conclusion of the historical survey of Bay and Pine Point and parts of Metro Center. The focus will be on Craftsman/Bungalow architecture, so prevalent in Pine Point, and on the decorative arts found during the first three decades of this century.

TOUR BOOKLET CONSIDERED

The Trust Board is considering the production of a walking tour booklet for the McKnight neighborhood.

Almost ten years ago, the Springfield Library produced similar booklets for downtown Springfield, the Quadrangle-Mattoon area, Maple Street, Forest Park Heights, and the South End. The series was very popular but is now out of print.

Initially the Board expressed interest in underwriting the reprinting of one of the existing tour booklets. Discussion has now turned to publishing a McKnight booklet which was never included in the original series. Proceeds from the spring tour will finance the project.

Trust Editor Bids Adieu

Trust newsletter editor, Pamela Brecknell, will be resigning from the Trust to move across the Atlantic to France.

Ms. Brecknell, who has been a member of the Trust for several years, will be moving with her husband and daughter to Europe where her husband has a new position.

In assuming the position of editor three years ago, Ms. Brecknell has greatly expanded the newsletter's size and scope. Originally a four-page publication, she has doubled its size, redesigned the format, and given the publication its formal name, *The Preservationist*. Ms. Brecknell has also introduced features, articles by guest contributors, two columns, and occasionally news outside or related to the Trust's mission and interests.

Former Trust president, Lisa Sotak-Cooper, will be assuming responsibility for the quarterly newsletter.

Ms. Brecknell was feted at the June Board meeting with a champagne toast, a fruit cake, and a book, *Springfield - 350 Years* by local historian, Donald D'Amato. In her farewell remarks, Ms. Brecknell thanked her fellow board members for their generous assistance in providing articles and time to the newsletter.

This issue will be Ms. Brecknell's final effort before she departs in mid-summer. A writer by trade, Ms. Brecknell will ply her skills in France.



Pamela Brecknell expresses delight with her farewell gift.



Pamela Brecknell

Changing of the Guard...

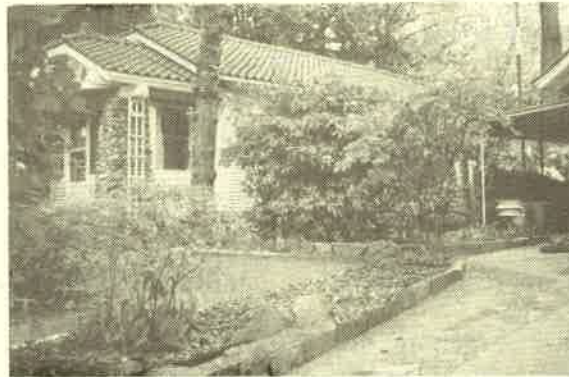
Lisa Sotak-Cooper



Simplicity, honest, natural materials; and fine craftsmanship shaped the arts and crafts architectural movement — themes which were equally cultivated in the gardens and yards of the post-Victorian period. Vine-covered pergolas, banks of windows and French doors, sleeping porches, and broad front porches all linked the open arts and crafts interior with the garden.

Foundation plants, a relatively new concept at the turn-of-the-century, were being highly promoted but little used until later in the century. Most foundations were left open, sparsely planted, or set aside for cottage-like flower borders. Space flowed from inside the home to the yard, with plants clustered close to the house and along the property line, leaving the middle of the yard as an open lawn. Mixed flowering shrub borders of weigela, lilac, hydrangea, mock orange, spirea, shrub roses, and other sweet-smelling species were often used as screening along the property boundary where it was required. When a more formal look was required, then neatly sheared hedges of privet, barberry, yew or boxwood were used, especially along the street edges or lining the front sidewalk. Fences, used primarily for creating an English cottage look, were typically simple white pickets or lattice panels covered with vines.

Arbors, trellises, pergolas, and other architectural accents in the garden were usually hidden under vines of clematis, grapes, Boston ivy,



THE ARTS & CRAFTS GARDEN:

By Lucinda A. Brockway

In reaction to the colorful carpet bedding of the Victorian Period with its heavy emphasis on exotic displays, foliage

Dutchman's pipe, morning glories, four o'clocks, climbing roses, wisteria, or Virginia creeper. These vines often clung to porch columns, door frames, chimneys, or house trellises placed on each side of the door, further uniting the house with nature.

Window boxes or large pots set on terraces, stone walls, patios and porches were filled with geraniums, allysum, vinca, zinnias, dahlias, marigolds, herbs, and other annuals. These garden pots were made of carved stone, cast concrete, Italian terra cotta, and (especially) glazed pottery.

Many of the craftsman magazines feature articles on making rustic planters from twigs and bark, or rusticing cement to imitate rough bark.

Wooden pots and window boxes with a Colonial or hand-crafted look were equally popular. Porch and yard furniture became extremely popular during this period, especially colonial-inspired simple wooden seats, Adirondack chairs, or rustic bark benches and chairs. The newest architectural feature of the arts and crafts movement, the patio,

Lawn And Garden Tips

- ✦ Trim overgrown hedges and shrubbery and reseed bare patches of lawn.
- ✦ Keep crisp edging lines between lawn, driveway, and walk.
- ✦ Keep leaves raked, pavements and gutters swept, and snow shoveled.
- ✦ Check fences for sagging.
- ✦ Put away toys, tools, and out-of-season items such as snow shovels, rakes, lawn furniture and barbecues.

BLIGHT

By Sheila McElwaine

How often have you said something like: "What's the story with the old Smith house? The paint is peeling, the porch sagging, and the property growing with brush and garbage. Somebody ought to do something about it."

They sure should. What about you?

Preservation is something that concerns all of us whether it is maintenance of our own property or a visual eyesore just down the street. Proper upkeep of our homes and land not only makes for a tidy appearance, but lends itself to community pride.

More than being an eyesore, however, deteriorated properties, whether historical or not, are illegal. A couple city agencies are responsible for enforcing zoning, housing, and sanitation codes,

1905-1940 Post-Victorian Gardens

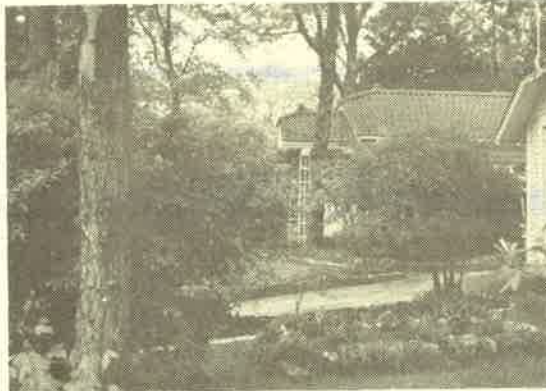
plants, and annuals, the Craftsman Garden focused on the yard rather than on the garden plot.

most completely linked the house and garden, creating an outdoor living room to be furnished with rustic or colonial seats and softened with garden pots, vines and perennial borders.

Specialty gardens became popular thematic accents in the arts and crafts yard. The vegetable and herb gardens were closest to the spirit of the period — blending utility with beauty. "Victory gardens" were heavily promoted throughout the two World Wars and the Depression, encouraging homeowners to raise their own vegetables and fruits and save the commercial produce for the troops and the homeless. Gustav Stickley, in his magazine, *The Craftsman*, argued that "a properly kept vegetable garden is in its way as beautiful as a flower garden".

Rock gardens, lily ponds, Japanese and Italian-inspired gardens, wild gardens and rose gardens all were popular. However, the hallmark of the period was the English perennial border. Inspired by designers such as William Robinson and Gertrude

Jekyll, the English perennial border combined simplicity and low maintenance with romantic associations of English cottages, American colonial dooryards, and grandmother's cutting gardens. Perennial borders were filled with achillea, columbine, daylilies, delphinium, foxglove, hollyhocks, herbs, iris, chrysanthemums, hosta, hardy lilies, asters, poppies, peonies, phlox, sweet William and spring bulbs. These gardens featured soft colors, hardy, aromatic, old-fashioned plants with a succession of bloom from early spring to late fall.



In creating an appropriate arts and crafts garden remember: use the landscape you've inherited as an inspiration for your improvements. Period magazines such as *The Craftsman*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *House Beautiful*, and *Better Homes and Gardens* can provide sample garden plans, how-to articles, advice and inspiration. Respect the period

and work with it in finding solutions for your contemporary needs.

Lucinda W. Brockway is a guest contributor. Ms. Brockway is an historic landscape consultant who has worked at Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania and Strawberry Banke in New Hampshire. She recently formed her own firm, Past Designs in Maine, and is an adjunct professor at Boston University.

A Preservation Issue

and citizens can report abuses to them and request appropriate action.

First, though, if it feels comfortable, you can write or call the property owner and ask that the illegal conditions be corrected. Owners' names are public information and are available at the Assessor's Office at City Hall during business hours.

Often property owners will respond with relief and are encouraged to know neighbors have high standards. Those who are embarrassed or angry will sometimes cooperate when they have cooled off.

If that approach fails, the Housing Code Enforcement Department can and does cite both ten

Continued on page 6.

Exterior House Tips

- ☞ Look for peeling, chipping, or cracking paint, especially on trim, and make necessary touch-ups.
- ☞ Clean interior and exterior windows, screens, and storm windows. Repair cracked panes, torn screens, and broken sashes.
- ☞ Polish hardware and exterior light fixtures.
- ☞ Replace your house numbers if necessary.
- ☞ Check the roof for loose shingles or flashing and the brick work for sound joints.
- ☞ Be sure porches and steps are plumb and joints are sound.

McKNIGHT HOUSE GETS CITY ATTENTION

The city has authorized a small urban renewal project to address pocket blight in the McKnight Historic District. The Colonial Revival style house at 28 Cornell Street has long been vacant and a blight to the area. The urban renewal plan calls for its acquisition by the Springfield Redevelopment Authority (SRA) and sale to someone willing to undertake appropriate renovations. State approval of the plan is anticipated, after which acquisition can take place.

For further information on the status of the house and its disposition, call the SRA at 787-6500.



This dilapidated house at 28 Cornell Street will be acquired by the SRA.



Blight Not a Pretty Picture continued

ants and landlords. Tenants are responsible for matters such as trash and dog droppings in the yard, furniture on porches and cars parked illegally. Landlords are responsible for structural problems and maintenance such as sagging porches, rotting roofs, broken steps, leaning chimneys, and broken windows.

Each neighborhood has an inspector from this office charged with enforcing the State Sanitary Code mandating safe and sanitary conditions inside and outside houses and in the yards around them. Mayor Mary E. Hurley has directed inspectors to be responsive and accountable to neighborhoods in the efficiency and effectiveness with which they do their jobs, so as citizens, we need to hold them to a high standard — they work for us.

You can call this department at 878-6730 with complaints, and may request a copy of the inspector's report. You may also remain anonymous. Either way, a follow-up call in two or three weeks regarding action may be advisable.

The Springfield Building Department (787-6031) enforces zoning ordinances. They are responsible for investigating illegal businesses and apartments, cars parked in front yards, commercial vehicles larger than 1 1/2 tons parked on residential property, and illegal lodging houses. All complaints should be reasonable and specific and a record kept of your contact with the different agencies, with whom and the actions taken.

Another avenue is Housing Court. Neighbors have a standing in Housing Court and can take action without a lawyer. After all, the value of property near that Smith house is affected by its deteriorated condition. To initiate action, take a list of your complaints and the name and address of the

property owner to the Clerk's office just inside the door to the old Court House at 37 Elm Street. You will be asked to fill out a one-page complaint form and given a copy to take with you. You will receive a court date in the mail.

Political advocacy is also another tool. Offer to give your favorite City Councilor a walking tour past property which has you worried. Don't let them get away with excuses such as budget cuts. If landlords and inspectors had been working hard before the cuts, we wouldn't see so many cases of advanced deterioration.

Taking each or all of these steps alone is possible, but sometimes tough going. Try to interest two or three like-minded neighbors to join you or work through the neighborhood council or civic association.

Finally, be persistent, and don't give up until the Smith place is a candidate for the Preservation Trust House Tour!

Sheila McElwaine is a guest contributor and a member of the Forest Park Civic Association. She continues to combat the problem of blight in the community.

sears REALTORS

JAMES A. BOONE

97 FLORIDA STREET
SPRINGFIELD, MASS. 01109

OFF.: (413) 785-1636
RES.: (413) 734-9110

SPT CALENDAR

TBA

Lectures on Craftsmen Architecture &
Decorative Arts

TBA

Annual Preservation Pot-Luck Picnic

Monthly meetings are held in the Community Room at Forest Park Library at 7:30 p.m. the first Wednesday of each month. All members are welcome. The next meetings are scheduled for July 3, August 7, and September 4.

CAN YOU GUESS? Forbes & Wallace

The Forbes & Wallace Department Store was the largest store in downtown Springfield. The business was founded shortly after the Civil War and prospered for 100 years.

Located at Main Street and Harrison Avenue, the store grew and expanded several times. In the mid-1970's, the business was sold by the Wallace family. Soon the downtown store closed, shortly to be followed by the other stores in the chain. Several attempts were made to reuse the large building, but none were successful.

The city finally demolished the complex in the early 1980's in the hope of being able to market the vacant land. The site sat empty for several years prior to the construction of Monarch Place.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

We would like to welcome to Trust membership the following new people: Mrs. Jane Serris and Bream Drury.

CONSULTANT, continued.

With the completion of this project, all of Springfield will now have been surveyed. This survey was funded in part by Trust tour proceeds and a matching grant from MHC.

776 Longmeadow Street
Longmeadow, MA 01106
OFFICE: (413) 567-6151
RES: (413) 733-2965

**COLLEEN FLYNN WESTBERG**

Five Million Dollar Club
Serving Massachusetts and Connecticut

**LANDRY, LYONS
& WHYTE** COMPANY

**House Tips****ENERGY LOOPHOLES HURT (Final Part)**

After you have taken care of your air leaks in the building's structure you may want to consider how your home's mechanical systems interact with the remainder of the house. Your oil or gas heating system may also swallow significant amounts of air and send it up the chimney.

Your furnace or boiler mixes air with gas or oil in the combustion process, the more air necessary the more infiltration occurs to feed that air. Coincidentally, the units with excess air are the least efficient. The worst offenders are leaky wood-fired units, atmospheric gas furnaces without a forced draft fan, and older oil burners.

A secondary air draw at the flue gas stack occurs when the combustion gases are mixed with air at the draft hood or barometric stack damper in gas and oil systems respectively. These openings can also allow back drafting of gases into your basement resulting in indoor air pollution. Again, it is the less efficient systems which are the worst offenders.

What can be done to prevent these problems? The best solution is the installation of a new energy efficient system to replace existing unit. It is important to specify an induced or forced-draft or condensing unit if you are using natural gas in order to eliminate the problems. Not all new gas heating systems are created equal.

If you have an oil-fired system installed, specify a unit with a high speed flame retention head burner tuned to 10 to 12 percent CO₂ in the flue gases. Additionally, the use of an air-inlet damper within the burner and pressure or forced-draft firing will reduce or eliminate air draw problems at the stack end of the system.

If your present heating system has a forced water distribution system (baseboard or radiators) you should consider having an indirect domestic hot water tank installed to further reduce the chance of backdrafting and air infiltration. Indirect water heater information and a comparative list of furnaces and boilers indicating efficiencies, warranties and configuration is available from the Hampden County Energy Office by calling 781-8100, extension 2313.

Not all new heating systems automatically incorporate these energy-savings features. Be sure to carefully consider the purchase of the new heating system since this is a large investment you will be living with for years to come.

A word of caution on basement ventilation: While the sealed combustion and forced-draft techniques are positive steps to alleviate problems

Continued on page 8.

The Springfield Preservation Trust

This newsletter is published quarterly for the members of the Springfield Preservation Trust, Inc., 979 Main Street, Springfield, MA 01103.

Editor: Pamela Brecknell

Contributors: Jim Boone, Lucinda A. Brockway, Diane Fisher, Roger Harris, Audrey Higbee, Bob McCarroll, Sheila McElwaine

Photographs: Robert Jackson, Marilyn Sutin

Advertising: David Premont

Springfield Preservation Trust is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of historic structures in the City of Springfield, Massachusetts.

HOUSE TIPS, continued.

during the heating months, they may be counter-productive during the summer months. Moisture may accumulate in the basement if the heating system has a closed stack since no gravity ventilation system is present. Therefore, the installation of a removable chimney vent cover with screening behind it is recommended. This vent cover is available at hardware stores and should be removed during the summer and capped during the winter.

—Roger Harris

HARRIS APPOINTED, continued.

expiration occurred on the Commission.

Mayor Hurley interviewed the two Trust candidates in April 1991 and appointed Roger S. Harris to the Historical Commission on May 9, subject to approval by the City Council.

Mr. Harris, who received a favorable recommendation by the Council's Economic and Development Sub-Committee, was confirmed on June 3 by City Council.

Harris has been a regular attendee at the Historical Commission meetings since his nomination in 1989.

SPRING TOUR REVIEW

Rave reviews followed our 15th Annual Historic House Tour on Sunday, April 28. As usual, the tour opened homes in each of the city's historic districts. This year featured a wide spectrum of homes including a house undergoing restoration, a condominium unit in a former hotel, and the city's most important 19th century residence. Over 450 people took the tour which is our major annual fundraising effort. The Board of Directors is now considering projects to undertake with the proceeds (see related article on page 3).

Thanks go to all Trust members and friends who worked so hard in putting together the event and to the people who so graciously shared their homes: Howard and Anita Goldberg in Maple Hill, Don and Cathy Heft in Quadrangle-Mattoon Street, Bob Cornell in Ridgewood, Terry and Debbie Barker in McKnight, Charles and Joan Ryan in Forest Park Heights, and Lawrence and Claire Selden in Kimball Towers. Thanks also go to Shawmut Bank for continued sponsorship of the tour and to the Connecticut Valley Historical Museum for its participation.

RONALD ARDIZONI

23 Yrs. Exp.

ARDIZONI
Custom Carpentry
Quality Workmanship Since 1966

KITCHENS • BATHS
ADDITIONS • DECKS
NEW CONSTRUCTION
VICTORIAN RESTORATIONS
GENERAL CARPENTRY

LICENSE #0338527
Fully Insured

*We spend the time to assure
your satisfaction on your
remodeling decision.*

413-567-5151



SPRINGFIELD
PRESERVATION TRUST
979 Main St.
Springfield, MA 01103

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SPRINGFIELD, MA
PERMIT #219