



## SPRINGFIELD PRESERVATION TRUST, INC

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[www.springfieldpreservationtrust.org](http://www.springfieldpreservationtrust.org)

Dedicated to Preserving Springfield's Architectural History

April 2009

### House Tours Planned

The annual spring house tour—*Maple Street, from Top to Bottom*, is being organized for Sunday, May 17 from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM. It will focus on homes on and off the length of Maple Street (one of the city's oldest streets) having been opened in the early nineteenth century to connect Downtown to the various mills along the Mill River. Five homes are already lined up and range from the Queen Anne style 1897 George Merriam house to a unit in the 1989 Wyndhurst Condominiums. Also open will be a portion of our current rehabilitation project, the 1832 Female Seminary.

On October 18, the Trust plans to have a house tour featuring residences along Longhill Street.

If you know someone who might be interested in opening on either tour or if you might like to volunteer during either tour, contact Bob McCarroll at 736-0629 or [bobmccarroll@juno.com](mailto:bobmccarroll@juno.com).

### Upcoming Preservation Award Ceremony

The Springfield Preservation Trust will hold its annual Preservation Awards Ceremony in June. Every year SPT honors the people and organizations that are helping to restore historic structures in Springfield. If you would like to nominate a project for an award please let us know through [info@springfieldpreservationtrust.org](mailto:info@springfieldpreservationtrust.org). For more information about the exact date and location of the Preservation Awards Ceremony check the SPT website at [www.springfieldpreservationtrust.org](http://www.springfieldpreservationtrust.org) in May.

Historic structures should be at least 50 years old and do not need to be located in a historic district. Nominations can be for houses, multi family/apartment blocks, commercial/retail buildings and public buildings.

### Saving Springfield's Oldest School Building

Rumor had it that the owner of 77 Maple Street was trying to knock the building down so that she could sell the land for a parking lot. Luckily the property is in the Lower Maple Hill Historic District which means certain exterior changes, including demolition, must go through the Springfield Historical Commission. As a matter of

fact, the district was initially created because of the outrage that came from the demolition of another historic house that stood next to 77 Maple Street. At the time there was concern that 77 Maple Street would be next, primarily because it was owned by the same person.



This story illustrates the importance of local historic districts in Springfield. But even with a historic district, 77 Maple Street was on a path to destruction. With no maintenance or protection from the elements, the building was quickly deteriorating. If this deterioration had continued for much longer the building would have become a public safety hazard and would have been demolished.

The Springfield Preservation Trust had already listed the property as endangered and had done some initial research on the property. Because of this, we understood the significance of the building as one of the oldest buildings in the city and the oldest school building in the city. As word of the owners attempt to raze the building got out, SPT became more concerned about the future of one of Springfield's more significant structures. While SPT had not recently taken on any restoration projects, it seemed like an appropriate time to step in, and step up to save 77 Maple Street. In early December the Board of Directors voted to put in an offer on the building. After some negotiation with the out of town owner, a price was agreed upon and we closed on the property on January 31<sup>st</sup>.

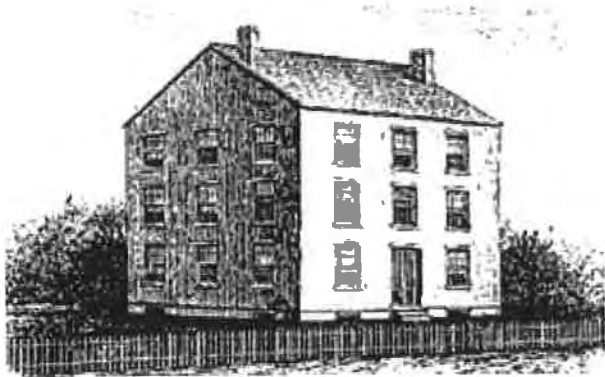
Since closing on the property, a committee has been meeting to plan the future of the building. SPT has already sealed up leaking skylights, painted over graffiti

and cleaned up litter around the building. We will be securing the property to keep out weather and other unwanted guests. One of the most immediate concerns is a collapsing structural wall. We are in the process of creating specification for restoring the wall and plan on using Community Development Block Grant funds from the City of Springfield to make the repairs. We have already applied for a Massachusetts Historical Commission grant, requesting matching funds to restore windows and exterior details of the building, and in the coming months we will be working further to fundraise for the project.

While the project is still in the early stages, we are planning to convert the building into three or four residential condominium units. As the project unfolds we hope to count on the SPT membership to help support this important undertaking. Along with updates in the newsletter you will also be able to find updates on the SPT website at [www.springfieldpreservationtrust.org](http://www.springfieldpreservationtrust.org)

### History of 77 Maple Street

77 Maple was built in 1832 as 'The Female Seminary'. It is now one of the 20 oldest structures remaining in Springfield. The building, originally three stories in height, was designed by Simon Sanborn, one of Springfield's master builders. He had come to Springfield in 1811 as Asher Benjamin's representative to work on Linden Hall, the grand home of local merchant and first postmaster James Byers. Over 35 years Sanborn designed and built the town hall, county jail, churches, mills, commercial buildings, and houses.



In 1843, the school moved to the principal's home, and the property was sold to Margaret Emery, who removed the third story. It is likely that the brick rear ell was then added and possibly a now-missing front porch. Frederick Harris, who would become president of the Third National Bank, purchased the house in 1870 and lived here until his death in 1911. Dr. David and Mary Brown, the third owner occupants, built a small one-story, brick addition with semicircular portico off the rear ell, perhaps to accommodate his medical practice. The fifth owner

occupant, Margaret Lawler, operated a rooming house. The sixth and last owner occupants, Dr. Thomas and Clara Reilly, lived here and also operated a medical practice from 1940 to 1960. They received a variance so that the entire first floor could be used for medical offices while they lived upstairs. In 1960, they sold the property to a medical group which removed the front porch and made the building entirely offices.



1939 WPA photo

In 2002 the property was purchased by an out-of-town investor who gutted the building but then stopped work. For more than six years the house has sat vacant, deteriorated, and threatened from demolition by neglect. Since purchasing the building in late January, SPT has been planning for the building's restoration.

### Annual SPT Winter Fundraiser

On January 24 SPT held its annual Winter Fundraiser at the beautiful home of Jim and Merry Boone. Guests in attendance were treated to a step back in time as the Boone's home is completely decorated in period furnishings and décor. The entire house was open for all to enjoy including the billiard room on the third floor. The evening festivities were capped off with a birthday cake for SPT president Ben Murphy. We would like thank all those who attended and continue to support the Trust and its mission and especially the Boone's for opening up their home.



## Annual Meeting Overview

The Annual Meeting was held at South Congregational Church, 45 Maple Street on March 1. A social hour began with hors d'oeuvres donated by Cecy Galvin-Perry of Al Dente Catering followed by a tour of the historic 1870s High Victorian Gothic church led by Bob McCarroll.

At the business meeting outgoing president Michael Marcinkewich welcomed folks and thanked members who had served on the Board of Directors during the past year but were not continuing: Joanne Cardell, Bill Devlin, Jack Hess, Jeanne LaLancette, Patty Staples.

Elected for 2009-2010 were President Ben Murphy, Vice President Linda Langevin, Treasurer Michael Marcinkewich, Clerk Bob McCarroll, Fran Gallagher, Bob Holbrook, Jim Llewellyn, and Wendy Somes (see the separate page for biographies on our newly elected officers).

The meeting closed with a presentation by Ben Murphy and Bob McCarroll on the Trust's new rehabilitation project at 77 Maple Street.

## Books on Historic Preservation Available

Are you looking to redecorate your historic house's parlor with period details or choose an exterior color-scheme that is both pleasing and historically accurate? If so, check out the Preservation Trust's excellent collection of books and magazines on historic preservation.

Past President Jim Boone donated his personal collection of books, magazines, newspaper clippings and ephemera about historic preservation to the Preservation Trust early last year. The collection has about 350 books many of which, though not rare, are unique to Hampden County.

The materials can help you identify historically accurate furniture, glassware, wallpaper designs, and much more. Whether you are trying to understand the differences between Art Deco and Art Nouveau, or identify the defining elements of Victorian mill work, this collection can help you.

The books are housed in the Preservation Trust's office and are arranged into 15 or so browsing categories. The categories include house plans, decorating, renovating, fashion, house styles and more. To access our online catalogue, please visit us at:

**[www.springfieldpreservationtrust.org/resources](http://www.springfieldpreservationtrust.org/resources)**

If you are interested in seeing the materials or learning more about them, please contact Matthew Jaquith, *Librarian* at 413-781-1136 or [mvjaquith@go.com](mailto:mvjaquith@go.com).

## Chimney Fires

The tragic fire at 63 Mulberry St. is a reminder of the danger of chimney fires and fire getting into the side walls of your house and burning it down.

The question is often asked when people are looking for a house is "do the fireplaces work". The answer should always be to have them checked by a reputable inspector to first be sure that they are clear all the way up. The second comment should be is if you are going to use them, and they are not lined, you should have them lined before burning them.

Think about how the bricks in your basement have mortar coming out and maybe places on your foundation. Take that same deterioration and think about the inside of your chimney. With your chimney though, if the mortar is missing, gases and hot sparks or just the heat can get to the wood frame of your house that butts up against the chimney in the walls.

If hot embers or just sustained heat touch that very dry wood that is the inside of your old house, it can smolder and then at some time break into flame. That is what seems to have happened on Mulberry St. Fortunately they were home, reacted quickly, as did the fire department, and the house was not lost.

What to do. Have an inspection and assessment of the condition and whether your chimney is lined. Decide if you want to use your fireplaces. If the answer is no lining, and you want to have fires, call a reputable contractor to come and look at lining the flues you want to use. There are a number of companies that do this work. They pour a lining in your chimney from the top. The system is called Supa Flu.

Remember that wood and Pellet Stoves are equally, if not more dangerous as they have heat in them all the time. These stoves require a building permit and inspection to guarantee they are installed safely and properly.

Spring and summer would be a good time to get this work done so you will be ready for next winter. There are few more tragic sights than watching your beloved old house go up in flames.

## Spring Chore

A good chore for the spring around your old house is to clear bushes and trees that are too close to your house. While there are no leaves, it is easier to cut those overhanging branches that will rub against your roof or house, hold excess moisture in your porches and fill your gutters with all kinds of debris and stop them up.

Plantings should be at least a foot away from the house so as to let things breathe and have air circulation.

Bushes should be trimmed back from the house and don't let those vines climb on the wooden part of the house, they do a real job on the paint and hold lots of moisture in both the summer and winter.

Be careful on the ladder, have someone hold it for you.

Monthly meetings of the Springfield Preservation Trust are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m., at the Mason Wright Retirement Center, 74 Walnut Street. All Trust members are welcome.

Newsletter contributors:

- ❖ Jim Boone
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- ❖ Jim Boone
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Marilyn Sutin, Editor

On March 1, 2009 The Springfield Preservation Trust (SPT) nominated its Board of Directors. Over the past 37 years (founded in 1972) SPT has nominated many boards and numerous members have come and gone. Being the only Non-Government organization dedicated to historic preservation in Springfield, we wanted to take a moment and introduce to you to this year's Board of Directors who will serve from March 2009 to March 2010.

### **Benjamin Murphy, President**

Benjamin works for the United Way of Hampshire County and has been on the SPT board for 2 years. Last year he served as Treasurer. He joined SPT because of his interest in the preservation of Springfield's historic places. From an early age his parents instilled in him an appreciation for historic places. It eventually led to his first job working as a page and then as an archivist at the Connecticut Valley Historical Museum. When he went away to college he chose to pursue a degree in historic preservation at Roger Williams University in Bristol Rhode Island.

While in Rhode Island he saw that in general the public had an understanding of the importance of historic preservation, which showed through public policy and the restoration of so many historic places. When he returned to Springfield a number of years later he saw that Springfield lacked the general appreciation and understanding of its historic resources. He decided to get involved with SPT so that he could help improve the position of historic preservation in Springfield. Through his education and previous nonprofit experience he has been able to bring a lot to SPT and hopes to grow the organization in the future.

### **Linda Langevin, Vice President**

Linda is an Assistant Project Manager at ISO – New England and has served on the SPT Board for the past 6 years. She has lived in old homes her entire life and has a strong appreciation of their character and beauty as well as their idiosyncrasies. "Springfield has a tremendous wealth of wonderful old homes, so it only made sense that I participate in an organization committed to increasing public awareness for one of the City's greatest assets." Linda is also involved in the Maple High Six Corners Neighborhood Council and Keep Springfield Beautiful.

### **Michael Marcinkewich, Treasurer**

Michael is a Financial Accountant for the City of Springfield and has been with SPT for the last three years, being treasurer for two and president this past year. He moved to Springfield six years ago and was amazed at the plethora of architectural beauty throughout the entire city. He was honored when asked to become a board member and has taken his hobby of photography to archive the SPT functions over the past few years. Having lived in Cambridge, Somerville, and Dorchester MA he has seen how other cities save and reused their historical assets and is elated to belong an organization that is doing the same in his new found home Springfield MA.

### **Bob McCarroll, Clerk**

Bob is a retired City Planner from Springfield who resides in an 1870 brick row house in the City's Mattoon Historic District. He has been on the SPT board for more than 30 years holding the position of Vice President, President, and has graciously accepted the position of clerk for the 2009 session. When not advocating for the preservation of Springfield historic assets he helps run the Mattoon Arts Festival and is a member of the Springfield Historical Commission. He co-founded the web site [www.ChooseSpringfieldMass.com](http://www.ChooseSpringfieldMass.com) and is a very active member in South Congregational Church. He joined SPT because preservation is one of his passions

### **Dr. Robert Holbrook, Director**

Robert is a retired Dentist who resides in Springfield and has been on the SPT board for the past 9 years. The Preservation Trust is just one of the many boards he belongs to: The Kimball Tower Condominium Board, The Armory-Quadrangle Civic Association and The Pioneer Valley Dental Society all bide for his attention and dedication. He joined SPT because he "had been involved in restoration of several buildings and the historical details that are needed for this form

of restoration are limited unless you have an organization such as the Springfield Preservation Trust to help and direct you in the process."

### **Fran Gallagher, Director**

Fran is a Tape Library Manager for Spherion/Technisource, partnered with CIGNA for the past 12 years. He resides on Allen Street in Springfield, has been with SPT for the past two years and wants to help prevent any more of our Historic properties in the city from being torn down. "We have lost so much of our valuable history in this city due to the wrecking ball and it can't or will never be replaced. We must have a more collaborative effort in saving what we have for future generations to come. You can certainly see when looking around this Beautiful city of ours, why it was once called the "City of Homes" we have some of the most beautiful historic area's around. Just look at areas like, McKnight, Maple High Six Corners, and Forest Park Heights Historic District to name a few." He is a board member of Keep Springfield Beautiful.

### **Jim Llewellyn, Director**

Jim is a Realtor specializing in Historic Homes who joined SPT last year. His love of historic homes and buildings is the reason he joined the trust as well as a reason he moved to Springfield. He is also the Vice President of the McKnight Neighborhood Council where he makes his home.

### **Wendy Somes, Director**

Wendy is a museum educator at the Springfield Museums. She and her husband bought a c. 1901 home in Forest Park two years ago and both have worked as educators in Springfield for over five years. The city's wealth of historic architecture is one of the reasons she chose to adopt Springfield as her new hometown. This is her first year with the Preservation Trust and she looks forward to applying her passion for historic homes and Springfield. Wendy also serves on the historic committee of the Forest Park Civic Association.

### **Jim Boone, President Emeritus**

Jim, a former counselor from the West Springfield Public Schools, retired in 2004 after 32 years. He has been a Realtor for 25 year with Sears Real Estate specializing in Historic Houses. Jim served on the board of SPT from 1977 to 2007 and has been Treasurer, VP of Advocacy and President at various times. He has held the position of VP and President more than once. In the 80's he coordinated the restoration of 5 houses for SPT. He joined SPT because it supported the efforts being made in developing Historic Districts and saving the City from demolishing everything in bad shape became a major goal of the Trust. Jim was made President Emeritus after retiring in September of 2007.

### **William J. Devlin**

In January, Board member Bill Devlin resigned so he could become the lead architect on 77 Maple St restoration project taken on by SPT.

Bill, an Architect registered In MA, specializes in small projects (mostly residential), historic work, and solving unusual situations/ roofline challenges, etc. He has a genuine interest in historic work, and adaptive re-use and has been with SPT for 15 years. His 1971 thesis was a proposal, for a "mini-neighborhood" conversion of a huge old Nabisco factory in Detroit; it was denied; "Don't you know it's better to just tear it down and build new?!" So, he did a newbie and moved on. He belongs to the American Institute of Architects, Boston Society of Architects/ Western Mass, Home Builders' Association of Western Mass, Holy Name Roman Catholic Church, Springfield, Springfield Museums, Armory-Quadrangle Civic Association, and the Weavers' Guild of Springfield.