



Springfield Preservation Trust

S P T

OCTOBER 2013

Mad About Jazz Garden Party a Fantastic Success

The event featured live poolside jazz by Premiere Swing, a 50/50 raffle, and a very successful silent auction.



More than 180 guests attended the *Mad About Jazz Garden Party* making it the most successful fundraiser SPT has held to date. The

event was held on August 27th at the beautiful home of Melissa and Peter Picknelly. Located in the historic Colony Hills section of Forest Park, this 1929 Tudor Revival home is situated on a spectacular piece of property surrounded by Forest Park. The home was designed by Max Westhoff who designed some of Springfield's grandest homes and public buildings including the William Pynchon Memorial Building at the Quadrangle and the Liberty Branch Library.

Many guests dressed in "Great Gatsby" era attire and faux pearl necklaces were handed out to all ladies in attendance.



Al Dente Catering, which has become the regular caterer for SPT events, did a wonderful job serving hors d'oeuvres to the large crowd. Guests were also invited to tour the Picknelly's home where they could see the sensitive additions to the historic home as well as the impressive media room and spa on the lower level of the house.



Special thanks go to Melissa and Peter Picknelly for opening their spectacular home and gardens, all the businesses and individuals that donated items for the silent auction (see below), Denise Moccia and Donna West for the hard work of soliciting items for the silent auction, and especially to Dr. Robert Holbrook and Robert Louder who spent a number of years securing the venue and coordinating the event.

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Donors for Silent Auction

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David and Lorrie Murphy, and Lisa Sullivan, Dave and Lisa's Artful Furnishings, Chicopee
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 Marilyn Sutin, FunkyFusion, Springfield
 Kevin Wallace, Mattoon Street Blooms, Springfield
 Gary & Donna West



“Voices from the Grave” Tour

SPT is organizing a twilight tour of Oak Grove Cemetery on Sunday, October 27. Groups led by SPT docents will visit six graves of nineteenth century Springfield residents including philanthropist Primus Mason, chain store pioneer Lyman Besse, and Civil War Congressional Medal of Honor winner, Luke Griswold. Costumed interpreters will speak at each stop about that person.



The 90-acre Oak Grove Cemetery was opened for burials in 1882. The Springfield architectural firm of Richmond & Seabury designed the brownstone entrance arch and Romanesque hillside chapel, behind which bodies were stored in winter to await the thaw for burial.

Hour-long walking tours will depart every fifteen minutes from the former chapel starting at 5:00 pm until about 6:45 pm, depending on attendance. Seasonal refreshments will be served.

Tickets for this event will be sold for specific times. Sunset occurs at 5:50 pm and twilight ends at 6:20 pm, so plan your departure depending whether you want daylight, dusk, or dark tour. Wear sensible walking shoes and bring a flashlight if you plan to tour after dusk.

Tickets are limited and can be purchased in advance at Flowers, Flowers, 758 Sumner Avenue or www.SpringfieldPreservationTrust.org after October 15. For information, call 736-0629.

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Lessons from mansion's razing

It is terribly sad to see the magnificent Allis Mansion on the campus of Mercy Medical Center torn down. It is of such historic significance to the city and the hospital and all the people who have supported Mercy over the years.

But the demolition, which took place last week really started 20 years ago, when the Allis Mansion began to be neglected and maintenance was stopped by Mercy Medical Center.



This is called "demolition by neglect." Was the Allis Mansion in bad shape? Yes. But was it structurally sound? Yes. And could it have been mothballed until a viable alternative was found? Yes. Would it have still been a viable building today if it had been maintained? Yes. Are there many other equally old buildings in Springfield that have been maintained and are still standing? Yes.

The city and the public needs to take a more active role in designating historic districts so that this type of thing can't happen again. When people understand they cannot willfully tear down historic buildings, they tend to take better care of them. To tear down something just because it's "in bad shape" when you let it get in bad shape in the first place, is wrong.

I think the destruction of this historically significant building should wake up the good citizens of Springfield so that we do not have to face another tragedy like this one. The rapidly dwindling stock of historic properties is one of the few things that make Springfield unique. Drive by Mercy Medical Center and the Allis Mansion and mourn. Then resolve to not let it happen again by standing up and letting your City Councilors know that the few remaining landmark historic buildings need to be identified and protected. Only then will the demolition of the Allis Mansion have stood for something.

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SPT Forms Most Endangered Committee

For the first time in its history, SPT has formed a special committee to monitor the status of historical properties on its Most Endangered List in order to give the SPT an additional means to complement its work on advocacy for preservation of historical properties in Springfield. The Most Endangered Committee, comprised of seven Board Members representing a range of backgrounds, has been tasked to keep updated contact information and status records on the 24 properties on SPT's current Most Endangered Property list.

While the Committee is still in the early days of getting itself established, it has already formed a database of properties under its watch and has started to make recommendations for the inclusion of additional "At Risk" properties which it identifies. Eventually, it is envisioned that it the Committee will play an active part in discussions on ways to help save properties on the list.

According to Committee Co-Chair, Tim Cummings, " We are trying to be the early warning system for SPT as far as changes in the status of an endangered property. This should give SPT additional time to develop a response to properties under threat."

If you are interested in assisting with the work of the Most Endangered Committee or have information on a specific historical property under threat, please contact Tim Cummings at timotije65@hotmail.com.

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Update, 77 Maple St. (The Female Seminary)

As of mid- September, Construction Documents (C.D.s, = Drawings, Specifications, Etc.) are nearing final approval by the State. Our generous \$50,000.00 grant from the 1772 Foundation was matched 100% by the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF), run by the Mass Historic Commission. The same Fund helped us with 77 about 3 years ago.

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The work to be done will consist of rehab / rebuilding of exterior trim, and windows. As usual, the plan is to start at the front and work towards the back, as the money allows. Most of the windows, but only small amounts of trim, are done in front. The windows to be done now are at the South (right-hand) end of the building. The trim, which would be quite dramatic, is the big cornices and "sub-fascias" at and near the roof, on both gable ends of the building. If we can continue back, we'll go generally around the North, to the East (rear).

The Contractor-selection process (bids, etc.) would start with advertising upon approval of the C.D.s. Due to the MPPF schedule, work would start late Autumn, proceed as weather allows, and wrap-up in the Spring.

Advertising

If you are interested in advertising in our newsletter, the cost is \$35 per issue for a business card size ad. Contact jimboone@hotmail.com if you would like to join the group of advertisers that support the Trust and want to have our members as customers.

Enewsletter

The cost of printing and mailing our quarterly newsletter is approximately \$1000 a year. In order to use those funds for other projects, the Preservation Trust is going paperless. We are currently working on the set up and will keep you informed as to the transition date. The newsletter will continue to be mailed to those who wish receive a paper copy.

Please sign up for the enewsletter at www.springfieldpreservationtrust.org; just fill out your name and email address under the 'eNews Sign-Up' banner on the left side of the page.

You can also find us on FaceBook, www.facebook.com/PreserveSpringfield

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.

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