



CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION

NEWS

www.chrs.org

May 2015

Up a Winding Staircase

By Patrick Crowley

The homes featured on our annual House and Garden Tour are well-known for hiding fascinating secrets and this year's crop is no exception. Take, for example, a 19th century vicarage located at 222 8th Street, NE. Father William opens the old oak doors to give us a peek inside during this year's House and Garden Tour. A native of England, his last parish had a chapel built in the 1200s, so he feels up to the task of the preservation

work needed at St. Monica & St. James Church on 8th Street, NE. Take the grand staircase up to the second floor and when you're finished poking around try to find the hidden servants' rooms. They're up a winding staircase, which itself is hiding behind a closet door. The third floor may not be ready for visitors, but take the hidden steps back downstairs—shades of Downton

Continued on page 10



IMAGE COURTESY JUDITH V. MAY

This year's tour features ten homes, including 11 4th Street, NE.

Mother's Day House and Garden Tour

Saturday, May 9 · 4–7 pm | Sunday, May 10 · 12–5 pm

This year's focus is on the near northeast Stanton Park neighborhood, from homes close to the Capitol on the west to Lincoln Park on the east.

Tickets

Public advance purchase through May 8: \$35; tour weekend: \$40

Local ticket outlets:

- Appalachian Spring at Union Station
- Berkshire Hathaway, 216 7th Street, SE
- Coldwell Banker, 605 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE
- Groovy DC, 321 7th Street, SE
- Hill Center, 921 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE
- Hill's Kitchen, 713 D Street, SE
- homebody, 715 8th Street, SE
- Labyrinth, 645 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE

Eastern Market booth:

- May 2–3
- May 9–10

Purchase online via Paypal:

www.chrs.org/house-and-garden-tour/house-garden-tour-tickets/

Also in this issue

ARTICLES

- CHRS Board Nominees 3
- Inaugural Dick Wolf Lecture 5
- Dick Wolf Lecture Photos 6
- April Preservation Café 9
- Reducing Runoff..... 11

COLUMNS

- President's Column 2
- Zoning Briefs..... 3
- Historic Preservation Briefs..... 4
- CHRS Supporters 4

LOOKING AHEAD

- Mark Your Calendar 12

President's Column: Capitol Hill is Busy!

By Lisa Dale Jones

House and Garden Tour

As you can tell by our lead article, it's House and Garden Tour time! By now you should have your tickets and be ready to go! (If you don't, you can get them over the weekend at Eastern Market, the Hill Center or other local retailers, or at any house on the Tour.)

The Tour will be in near Northeast on Capitol Hill and involves a lot of wonderful staircases. Wear your walking shoes and plan to have fun! This Tour is CHRS's only big fundraiser each year and it helps support our educational and preservation activities.

Dick Wolf Lecture

Those of you who came to the inaugural Dick Wolf Memorial Lecture on March 28 at the Hill Center know what a success it was. Our winner, Bill King, gave a well-thought-out and entertaining presentation about an aspect of the District's historic preservation laws. His talk was based on a paper he wrote that is appearing in this spring's issue of the *Georgetown Law Review*. A story on the presentation is on page 5 of this issue. If you'd like to support the Dick Wolf Memorial Lecture series, please contact our office at (202) 543-0425 or CapHRS@aol.com.

CSX Virginia Avenue Tunnel

A judge has ruled against the Committee of 100's request for a preliminary injunction that would stop the issuance of permits to begin construction on the CSX tunnel. Although there is a slim chance that the actual lawsuit may still be decided in C100's favor, CSX is currently sending out notices that it plans to begin preliminary utility work soon at the intersections of Virginia Avenue

and 4th Streets, SE and Virginia Avenue and 2nd Streets, SE.

CSX has a community relations office in a trailer at 861 New Jersey Avenue, SE. If you have questions, they invite the public to visit them there Mondays and Wednesdays, 7 am to noon and Tuesdays and Thursdays, noon to 8 pm. You can also contact them at VAT@csx.com or call their office at (800) 494-1049.

Fragers' Keeps Moving

While the Frager's deal with Roadside Development has fallen through, at least all the various parts of Frager's are closer together, with the move of the garden center to 1230 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. Their location at the pad at Eastern Market is now closed because construction is due to begin soon on that site as part of the Hine project. All of Frager's is now clustered around 12th Street,

Pennsylvania Avenue and the 1300 block of E Street, SE. Just find a parking spot nearby (good luck!) and walk to all the locations.

Marine Barracks Looking for a New Location

The Bachelors' Enlisted Quarters currently at the corner of 8th and I Streets, SE needs to move. New security regulations don't allow the barracks to be that close to the highway and other streets. The Marine Corps has just released a draft Environmental Impact Statement for five possible locations within ten minutes' walking distance of the parade grounds on Barracks Row. Some of these locations would have an adverse impact on the Historic District. CHRS will be very involved in ensuring the barracks are built in an appropriate location. More information from the Marines is available at www.mbweis.com. ★

Call for Volunteers!

The House and Garden Tour is just around the corner—and there's still a chance for you to participate. The Tour needs a scad of volunteers on May 9 and 10 to staff the homes on the Tour. It's easy work, just help with the flow of ticket holders through the house. We need a total of five or six docents per house. The hours are Saturday, May 9 from 3:45–7:15 pm and Sunday, May 10 from 11:45–5:15 pm. If you can volunteer a few hours, please contact the CHRS office at CapHRS@aol.com or (202) 543-0425.

Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS)

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Donna Breslin, Elizabeth Nelson

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To reach any of the above, please contact the Society offices at (202) 543-0425 or via e-mail: CapHRS@aol.com.

ABOUT CHRS

Capitol Hill is a special place. We promote, preserve, and enhance the character of our historic neighborhoods.

Since its founding in 1955, CHRS has worked continuously to make Capitol Hill the desirable location it has now become. Due to CHRS's efforts, Capitol Hill won designation as a historic district in 1976. Today, that legacy of standing up for the community continues with our work in planning, zoning, historic preservation, and public safety.

CHRS is a volunteer organization, made up of Hill residents who love their historic neighborhoods and want to ensure that the unique character of the Hill is around for future generations. Come join us!

To learn more or join, please visit:
www.CHRS.org

Nominees for the 2015–16 CHRS Board of Directors

The Election Committee's recommendations for nominees for the 2015-16 Board of Directors have been approved by the current Board of Directors. Ballots will be sent to all CHRS members who are on the rolls as of May 1, 2015. Once distributed, ballots must be completed and returned within two weeks.

Lisa Dale Jones has been nominated to serve a second term as the President of the Society. Patrick Crowley and Susan Burgerman have been nominated to serve as First and Second Vice President, respectively. Gloria Junge has been nominated

Continued on page 8

Zoning Briefs

By Gary Peterson

The CHRS Zoning Committee met on April 9, 2015 and considered the following cases:

18938, 325 5th Street, SE. The applicant proposes to replace a two-story rear porch with a one-story addition with a second floor deck on top. The addition will project four additional feet from the rear of the soon-to-be-replaced porch and the lot occupancy will increase from 60.8% to 63.6%, thus requiring a special exception. The neighbor to the north objects to the addition. The applicant provided shadow studies of the property with and without the addition. The committee found that the addition did not unduly impact the neighboring property and voted to support the application.

18981, 333 F Street, NE. This is a typical case of a rear addition that increases the lot occupancy from 53.4% to 70%. Neighbors adjoining the property are in support of the addition and the committee voted to support the application.

18992, 1015 E Street, SE. The applicant wants to add a massive

addition, more than double the size of the current building, and build five units. The property is zoned C-2-A. The neighbors to the east front on 11th Street object to the impact of the addition on their back yards. The committee agreed with the neighbors and voted to oppose the application. The applicant can achieve his objectives with less impact on his neighbors by reducing the number of units and setting back the second floor on the east side of the addition.

18994, 254 15th Street, SE. This case involves a property zoned C-2-A that has no alley access in the rear. The applicant is building a 4-story building with 5 two-bedroom apartments and cannot provide the parking required without a curb cut. He cannot get a curb cut and needs a variance from the parking requirements. The committee reluctantly agreed to support the application.

18997, 148 11th Street, SE. New plans were submitted on April 20 and the case will be reconsidered in light of the new plans and neighbor comments. ★

Historic Preservation Briefs

By Beth Purcell

The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB or the Board) considered the following cases on March 26 and April 2, 2015. HPRB is responsible for determining if proposed changes to a building are consistent with the DC Preservation Act. A “concept review” is a preliminary determination of a building owner’s plan to alter the building, and if the concept is approved, the owner will return to the HPRB for a final review. In these reports, “staff” refers to the staff of the Historic Preservation Office (HPO), which serves as the staff of the HPRB.

146 13th Street SE, HPA 15-127, concept/rooftop addition. This property, within the Capitol Hill Historic District, is also subject to a historic preservation easement with the L’Enfant Trust. This proposed project would preserve the existing building footprint and has very commendable aspects, including improvements to the design of the rear addition and a new roof deck. CHRS nevertheless expressed some concerns about the project:

- The plans call for applying stucco on several exterior walls, including an original brick wall in the rear that appears to be in good condition. The HPRB guidelines on walls state that altering walls facing major public streets must be carefully considered so as not to detract from character-defining features but that changes to secondary walls (typically on the side and rear of a building such as this one) should also be carefully considered (HPRB, “Walls and Foundations of Historic Buildings,” 2). While the result should be very attractive and we appreciate the applicants’

desire to apply stucco to create a uniform appearance, applying stucco to historic brick fabric on a rear wall may not be appropriate.

- While the proposed addition is very attractive, it includes a significant amount of glazing and rheinzink (metal) cladding, which are not historical materials.
- CHRS agreed with the staff report that a flag test is necessary to determine visibility from the intersection of Kentucky and Independence Avenues, SE.
- The rear addition will be visible from Independence Avenue and the public alley, especially when there are no leaves on the trees. The applicants have tried to minimize the visibility of the addition by cladding it in the lighter blue-grey rheinzink, reducing the height by one foot and eliminating proposed solar panels. ANC 6B supported the project. Two neighbors signed letters of support, one refused to sign, one sent a letter in opposition and three neighbors testified in opposition at the hearing on April 2. The principal issue in this case is the visibility of the penthouse from Independence Avenue. The 100 block of 13th Street, SE has a unique configuration of two-story houses in the front and rear. CHRS testified that the project *may* be compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District based on the unique configuration of the building and this square. The HPRB approved the staff report but directed that the project be redesigned to address the problem of the penthouse visibility and to prevent it from

being a “looming mass” over the alley. The case will return for another HPRB hearing.

The following cases, which CHRS also reviewed, appeared on the HPRB consent calendar:

515 7th St SE, HPA 15-255, concept/new garage.

1102 Park Street NE, HPA 15-198, concept/new garage with deck, enclose dogleg. ★

Interested in learning more about historic district designation?

Contact CHRS at caphrs@aol.com.

Thank You, CHRS Supporters

We thank the following new members, patrons, and sponsors.

NEW MEMBERS

Dirk Debbink
Lindsay Goldberg
Ryan Riswly
Elizabeth Thomas
Kerry Young

PATRON

Craig Dean & Donna Murasky
Michael Halebian

SPONSOR

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Inaugural Dick Wolf Lecture a Success!

By Lisa Dale Jones

On Friday evening, March 27, CHRS hosted the inaugural Dick Wolf Memorial Lecture. Designed to be an annual event, the series is an ongoing acknowledgement of Dick Wolf's lasting legacy to Capitol Hill and the entire District. The free lecture was a standing-room-only success.

Prior to the lecture Anne Phelps, Legislative Director for Ward Six Council Member Charles Allen, presented a ceremonial proclamation from the Council in honor of the Dick Wolf Lecture Series.

Monte Edwards, CHRS' Chair of the Dick Wolf Memorial Committee, explained how the competition had been publicized among Historic Preservation and Urban Planning students at various colleges and universities in the District, as well as to interns in the Office of Planning. He described how the selection committee evaluated all the submissions and interviewed the semi-finalists in person, eventually selecting the winner based not only on the content of the paper, but on his ability to turn a law review article into an interesting public presentation. Then the speaker was introduced.

This year's winner, Bill King, a graduating law student at Georgetown Law Center, presented an argument that would remove one of the areas of discretion attributed to the Mayor's Agent when granting demolition permits for buildings in historic districts or with historic designation. With many photos and a well-reasoned proposition, he made the case that demolition permits should only be granted if the "special merit" of the building proposed to take the place of the historic one to be demolished is based on "exemplary architecture" or "specific features of land planning." The third avenue by

which a Mayor's Agent can currently deem that a new building project has special merit, and therefore demolition of an historic property can proceed, is if it has "social or other benefits having a high priority for community services."

Mr. King stated that this third prong of special merit is not based on the District's Comprehensive Plan and has no public input. It's based solely on the personal preferences and biases of whoever happens to be the Mayor's Agent and therefore should be eliminated. He said that the first two prongs—exemplary architecture and specific features of land planning (based on the Comprehensive Plan)—should be enough.

a problem. Despite his status as a student and theirs as longtime experts in the field, King more than held his own and rebutted their arguments, to the delight of the audience.

After the panel, King was presented with a check for \$1,000 and a cupcake in honor of his birthday, which happened to coincide with the day of the event. The crowd all stood to sing him Happy Birthday as they relocated to the next room for refreshments and mingling.

It was an excellent way to kick off what will be a lively and important annual series to showcase excellence in research and writing on urban planning and historic preservation in the District of Columbia by a student or intern. ★

"Thanks to all the many people who attended the lecture. Dick would have been very pleased to see so many people interested in city planning, an issue that was so important to him."

— Mimi Wolf

The lecture was followed by a panel including King, Peter Byrne (the current Mayor's Agent), Tersh Boasberg (former Chair of the Historic Preservation Review Board and King's current law professor) and Cornish Hitchcock (the attorney who won the Woodward Building case). The three men all agreed that King had made a good argument, but mostly disagreed with him that the third prong was

Inaugural Dick Wolf Memorial Lecture

The Dick Wolf Lecture honors excellence in research and writing on urban planning and historic preservation in the District of Columbia by a student or intern. This year's winner is Bill King, a graduating law student at Georgetown Law Center.

The lecture and reception was held at the Hill Center on March 27, 2015.



1



2



3

1: Lisa Dale Jones, CHRS President, holding up DC Council resolution. 2: Anne Phelps, Legislative Director for Council Member Charles Allen, presenting resolution. 3: Monte Edwards introducing winner Bill King.



4



5



9

4: Bill King. 5: Audience. 6: Bill King presenting. 7: Panelists Tersh Boasberg and Cornish Hit. 8: Susan van den Toorn with Heather and Doug Wheeler. 9: Richard Houghton.



chcock enjoying the talk.

10: Mimi Wolf and family with Bill King. 11: Elizabeth Nelson. 12: Beth Purcell. 13: Reception. 14: Jennifer Cate. 15: Nicky Cymrot and Mimi Wolf.

as Secretary and Adam Apton as Treasurer. Three new At-large Members have also been nominated: Susan Oursler, Scott Davis and Ryan Moody.

Lisa Dale Jones (President) and her husband Gary have lived on Capitol Hill since January 2010 when they moved to DC from Boston—where they also lived in a 100-year-old home. Lisa is interested in history and historic preservation. She was co-editor of the CHRS newsletter from January 2011 until taking on the role of President in June 2014. As President, she planned CHRS's 60th Anniversary celebration in January 2015 and worked on the team that produced the inaugural Dick Wolf Memorial Lecture in March 2015. Lisa has a background in journalism and for 10 years was a radio producer for The Christian Science Monitor, winning the prestigious Gabriel Award. She is a public speaking and communications specialist, helping others confidently share their message in public.

Patrick Crowley (First Vice President), a Hill resident since 1979, brings over 20 years' experience in historic preservation to the Society from his leadership in the rescue of Historic Congressional Cemetery (HCC), which achieved National Historic Landmark status at the end of his term as Board Chairman. Crowley's work with the Smithsonian, Department of Veterans Affairs and the National Park Service helped HCC earn DC's Excellence in Historic Preservation Award in 2009. His instrumental role in re-establishing Congressional Cemetery to a place of honor on the Hill earned him the Capitol Hill Community Foundation (CHCF) Community Achievement Award in 2012 and a write-up in the National Trust's Preservation Magazine. Patrick is an energy economist specializing in federal and state natural gas pipeline litigation and actuarial depreciation

accounting. He is currently serving his second term as CHRS Treasurer. He also serves on the boards of the Capitol Hill Arts Workshop and the Smith-Evans Foundation.

Susan Burgerman (Second Vice President) arrived on Capitol Hill in July 2005, discovered CHRS when in the process of restoring her dilapidated 1890 home and has been a member ever since. She joined the Board in 2013 and is now serving her second term as Secretary. Susan was born and raised in Washington and the DC metro area. She lived for many years in Los Angeles, where she developed an appreciation for the weird and idiosyncratic in residential architecture, and then in New York, where she honed her lifelong interest in local history and 19th-century homes. She has been working on an historical novel based in her Capitol Hill neighborhood, where she lives with her husband and three cats. Susan holds a PhD in Political Science.

Gloria Junge (Secretary) bought her house on Capitol Hill in 1990 where it served as her home base during her overseas deployments working for the State Department. Her Foreign Service career included postings to Iran, Brazil, Swaziland, Central African Republic, Cameroon, Botswana and Uganda. Each assignment had its own challenges with very rewarding and fun experiences. Gloria returned to the District permanently in 2001 and became the CHRS Office Manager from 2008 until retiring from that position in 2014. Gloria has extensive House and Garden Tour experience and an encyclopedic knowledge of CHRS procedures.

Adam Apton (Treasurer) moved to Washington with his wife in 2013. After a number of years living in and around the Brooklyn Heights Historic District in Brooklyn, New York, the Hill felt like home in almost no time at

all. Adam is an attorney by profession. While living in New York, he focused his practice on construction-related matters representing property owners and developers. He now spends the majority of his time representing private investors in corporate investigations and securities fraud actions. Adam and his family look forward to setting down roots in the community and helping preserve the charming tree-lined streets that made their transition from the Heights to the Hill so wonderful.

Susan Oursler (At-large) moved to Capitol Hill from Indiana in 1979. Over the past 30 years she and her husband, Richard Kasting, have owned and lovingly restored the 1912 home that they share with their two daughters. Susan has been an active volunteer for various Capitol Hill organizations including the North Lincoln Park Neighborhood Association and Peabody, St. Peter's, Maury and Capitol Hill Day schools. Susan retired from the Senate in 2014, where she served as the Chief Clerk of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. As chief of the nonpartisan staff, Susan worked closely with the Senate Historian to preserve Senate and Committee records and to publish previously classified documents created in the 1960s and 1970s. She also provided input to the staff of the Architect of the Capitol on renovations of buildings in the Capitol complex and to landscaping of the Capitol grounds.

Scott Davis (At-large) currently serves as a Senior Advisor in the Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). He has been with the Department since 2009, previously serving as a Senior Advisor in the Office of the Secretary and on the President's Hurricane Sandy

April Preservation Café: The Public Monuments of Capitol Hill

By Elizabeth Nelson

The April Preservation Café featured conservator Justine P. Bello as its speaker. Justine conserves and restores architecture, sculpture and monuments both around Washington, DC and around the country. This month's talk focused on the public monuments of Capitol Hill.

Justine briefly introduced the topic of public monuments at large, a vast subject with a long and colorful history extending to ancient Greece, Rome and beyond. Washington, DC boasts an unusually large number of public works of art in a variety of materials (aluminum, steel, stone) and typologies (mural, sculpture, etc). The majority of public monuments in this city are bronze sculptures, which was a focus of this talk.

Justine selected four examples of bronze monuments around Capitol Hill that, although united by their common material, demonstrated a range of subject matter, style and message. These include: the Nathanael Greene monument in Stanton Park; the proposed Francis Marion "Swamp Fox" monument, for possible installation in Marion

Park; the Mary McLeod Bethune monument in Lincoln Park; and the Grant Memorial at the far eastern terminus of the National Mall.

Justine described the Nathanael Greene as a prototypical "equestrian" monument of a military figure in a heroic pose, towering over park-goers. Many are surprised to learn that a park named after a Civil War-era secretary of war (Edwin Stanton) hosts a sculpture of a Revolutionary War-era officer! Francis Marion, the "Swamp Fox," is another Revolutionary War figure but his future on Capitol Hill is hazy at best. Since the idea for this monument was first publicized, the monument has received some public support but its fair share of criticism from concerned citizens. Arguments against the monument include critiques of Marion for fighting against Native Americans in the French and Indian War and for being a slave owner; others simply do not want to cede any portion of their modestly-sized neighborhood park to a monument at all.

Justine contrasted these two monuments with the Mary McLeod

Bethune monument in Lincoln Park. The newest monument of the four, completed in 1974, the monument celebrates a female African American educator, organizer and political activist. Depicted with two children, the composition is highly fluid and textural and thoroughly modern in comparison with the more traditional heroic male monuments.

Finally, Justine addressed the Grant Memorial: a large-scale, highly complex and visually stirring memorial at the foot of the Capitol. Also fairly non-traditional, especially for the time of its construction (1902–1922), the Memorial depicts an equestrian Grant who is war-weary but still dignified. Justine showed how the cavalry and artillery sculpture groups depict the chaos and tumult of war. Justine added the sad post-script that after working on the memorial for 20 years its sculptor, Henry Merwin Shrady, died a mere 15 days before its dedication.

Justine's talk highlighted the grandeur and the modesty, the beauty and the sadness of the public monuments on Capitol Hill. ★

CHRS Board, *continued from page 8*

Rebuilding Task Force. In helping communities across the country recover and rebuild from major disasters since Hurricane Katrina, Scott has worked with The National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to help places retain their unique and historic character. He is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners and holds degrees in Regional Development

and Environmental Planning. Since moving to Capitol Hill in 2011, he has developed a deep appreciation for all of the qualities that make it such a special place and is committed to conserving its heritage.

Ryan Moody (At-large) is a graduate of the University of Virginia School of Architecture with Masters degrees in both Architecture and Landscape Architecture. Since founding Moody Landscape Architecture in 2009, Ryan

has worked on numerous private and public gardens in the Washington, DC region, including more than fifty on Capitol Hill. Ryan is devoted to the principle that good design can make us healthier and happier. Ryan has worked with many of the District's historic groups and appreciates the opportunity to learn more about the fabric of Washington, DC, especially Capitol Hill, where he and his wife have lived since 2007. ★

Abbey right here on the Hill. Join us for the annual CHRS Mother's Day House and Garden Tour (May 9 and 10) and you'll get to see it for yourself.

Think you know what's behind Federal style townhouses on the Hill? Well, if the house in question is the one on 4th Street in this year's Tour, chances are your best guess would be wrong. The original house is the core of this home—the front room is an addition. So is the back room. And the second floor, too, for that matter. Its large rooms are filled with plush furniture. The enormous kitchen has its own narrow back stairs for the servants to serve tea upstairs. Pass through the second floor center library to see the front bedroom. The owners caution you to watch your step: it opens onto another narrow

stairs that winds its way up from the first floor.

Not every home has a winding staircase, but they all have stairs worth climbing. Akemi and David's home on E Street has stairs and steps in all directions leading to one beautiful room after another. Patrick's home, also on E Street, has a globe mobile hanging at the top of a long stairway, a whimsical complement to his serious collection of world globes. Be sure to give his mechanical globe a turn or two. Dick's home on D Street sits above a garage. His stairs lead to gracefully curved walls and fascinating artifacts collected from around the world. Alia and Gary's home is an old addition that once housed a boxing gym. It's up a tall metal exterior staircase and down

a plank walkway. They remodeled using recycled planks for paneling and old doors for storage bins. In all, there are ten homes on the Tour, with a story up every staircase.

The 58th Annual CHRS House and Garden Tour returns on May 9th and 10th focusing on near northeast Capitol Hill. The Tour starts behind the Supreme Court and runs east up to 8th Street and then jogs across the Stanton Park neighborhood to E Street, although you can start the Tour at any of the ten homes. The hours are Saturday, May 9 from 4–7 pm and Sunday, May 10 from 12–5 pm. Tickets can still be ordered online at <http://chrs.org/house-and-garden-tour/house-garden-tour-tickets>, by emailing the CHRS office at CapHRS@aol.com, or by calling

the office at (202) 543-0425. There will also be a booth at Eastern Market each weekend leading up to the Tour; several local retailers are also selling tickets. More information on these ticket venues as well as a list of addresses of House Tour homes is available on the CHRS website: <http://chrs.org/house-and-garden-tour>. ★

IMAGES COURTESY JUDITH V. MAY



This year's tour includes 630 E Street, NE (left) and 811 A Street, NE (right).

How I Reduced Storm-Water Runoff and Gained a Garden

By Margaret Missiaen

The DC government is encouraging residents to reduce paved areas to help reduce storm-water runoff (you may have noticed the clean rivers impervious area charge on your water bill). To help meet this goal, my husband and I installed a permeable driveway in 2012. A contractor recommended by River Smart DC ripped out our ugly old concrete driveway, excavated several inches of soil, put down a layer of crushed stone and finished it off with brick-sized pavers. The narrow channels separating the pavers allow rainwater—even storm deluges—to seep into the ground, thus keeping it out of the street where it could flow into the Anacostia River.

We did not repave the entire space occupied by our old driveway. We filled an unpaved strip down the middle with soil. I filled this space with plants and now we have a new garden! After spending thousands of dollars on the driveway, I kept down costs by dividing hostas, Lenten roses, sweet woodruff, creeping Jenny and other plants from my backyard. Passersby ask, “What about your car?” All the plants are low-growing and can be cut back if they get too tall. The lamb’s ear has already learned that lesson.

The driveway plants have evolved in the three years since I began the project. The below-normal temperatures of the last two winters have been hard on some of the plants. The rosemary did not survive but the dark, purple crocuses were beautiful this spring. The yellow-green sedum and creeping Jenny started filling in the brown spaces in early April. The leaves of the barrenwort (epimedium) looked completely dead



IMAGE COURTESY BETH PURCELL

Margaret Missiaen’s flourishing driveway garden.

until Easter Sunday when dozens of green sprouts appeared. The pale yellow flowers will soon be visible to anyone walking up the driveway. The white blossoms of the candytuft and deutzia appear in mid-April.

The native columbine is tap-rooted and difficult to transplant but it self-sows where it likes. This year columbines are popping up in the driveway. They will eventually

be too tall, but maybe there will be a few flowers before that happens. Low-growing herbs have proven to be good driveway plants—not recommended for eating. Chives, oregano and thyme are all thriving.

I will be happy to identify the plants for anyone who stops by for a look; contact me via e-mail at margaretmissiaen@gmail.com. ★

Groff Court Neighborhood Walking Tour

Tour this historic neighborhood featuring Victorian houses, tales of famous Washington builders, economic boom and bust, scandal and life in the alley.

The tour will take place Saturday, June 20, 2015 at 10 am. Meet at 324 E Street, NE. This event is free and open to the public; no reservations needed and the tour will be held rain or shine. Contact CapHRS@aol.com or (202) 543-0425 for more details.



Capitol Hill Restoration Society
420 Tenth Street, SE
Washington, DC 20003

Mark Your Calendar!

MAY

4 Monday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Historic Preservation Committee,
Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first
floor. Details: Beth Purcell, (202) 544-0178.

14 Thursday, 7: 30 pm
CHRS Zoning Committee, Kirby House,
420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details:
Gary Peterson, (202) 547-7969.

19 Tuesday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill
Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE,
second floor. Details: Lisa Dale Jones,
(202) 543-0425.

JUNE

1 Monday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Historic Preservation Committee,
Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first
floor. Details: Beth Purcell, (202) 544-0178.

11 Thursday, 7: 30 pm
CHRS Zoning Committee, Kirby House,
420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details:
Gary Peterson, (202) 547-7969.

16 Tuesday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill
Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE,
second floor. Details: Lisa Dale Jones,
(202) 543-0425.

20 Saturday, 10 am
Groff Court Neighborhood Walking Tour.
Meet at 324 E Street, NE; the tour will be
held rain or shine. This event is free and
open to the public; no reservations
needed. Details: CapHRS@aol.com or
(202) 543-0425.

58th Annual Capitol Hill House and Garden Tour

Saturday, May 9 • 4–7 pm | Sunday, May 10 • 12–5 pm

More information and tickets available at (202) 543-0425 or www.chrs.org.