



# NEWS

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Holiday 2002

## Looking Forward by Looking Back

by Bernadette McMahon, Chair, Communications Committee

Capitol Hill's increasing popularity as a place to live brings large numbers of new residents to the area every year, and many choose to join CHRS. Every month we publish the *News* to keep members and the public apprised of current activities. A year ago, a website was established to make information more readily available. Monthly Preservation Cafés and quarterly membership meetings, both open to the public, provide opportunities for members and the neighborhood to focus on those topics of primary concern to the Society.

But how well does the Society introduce itself and its history to the new members and to the public at large? How many members and neighbors really understand CHRS's mission and are aware of its history, the stands it's taken through the years, its accomplishments, and the battles it's won and lost?

Negative publicity about specific CHRS actions appeared in recent issues of the *City Paper*. Some members and others have asked to hear the Society's side of the story on the E Street SE shotgun house. A lengthy discussion at the November Board meeting revolved around whether to debate this issue again. Rob Nevitt, on behalf of CHRS, and several individual members have already responded to the *City Paper*, which published their rebuttals as Letters to the Editor. The CHRS position on that house was previously described in Nancy Metzger's article in the September *News* and is now posted on the CHRS Web site, <http://www.chrs.org>.

There was general agreement, however, that more needs to be done to publicize the many positive contri-

butions that CHRS members have made to helping to develop Capitol Hill into the community it is today. Planning for CHRS's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2005 offers a focus for accumulating and organizing the Society's story, and the *News* and website offer mechanisms for publicizing it. CHRS Board Member Gary Peterson is leading the anniversary planning, and will guide the collection of pertinent material. Each committee chair will describe the role of his or her committee, to be published in monthly installments in the *News* and then posted on the website. Other members are encouraged to contribute as well. Volunteers are needed to locate histories written to mark other anniversaries (we know they exist) and reformat them for website posting. People are also needed to research and prepare stories about significant issues from the past and how their resolutions affect the way we live today. Others can prepare details of specific current topics that can be posted on the website and referenced as background in *News* updates.

And, of course, CHRS always welcomes feedback from members and others. Questions, criticism and praise are all valuable to assuring a vibrant, representative, and effective civic institution.

Please contact Gary at [Pgaryl@aol.com](mailto:Pgaryl@aol.com) or 547-7969 to be a part of this interesting long-term project. ✧

### Reminder

**CHRS *News* is not published in January.** Have a wonderful holiday season, and we'll return in February!

## President's Column

by Rob Nevitt

Contrary to popular misperception, CHRS does not patrol the streets looking for inappropriate restorations on which we can blow the whistle. Neither are we committed to an arbitrary agenda that we seek to impose. Most of the time, we act as intermediaries—usually between neighbors who raise issues and the city bureaucracy that is responsible for responding to them. The Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) is a principal point of contact. They oversee zoning, permits and, until recently, the Historic Preservation Review Board.

Close readers of the *News* will have seen a recent article about Boys Town that termed the DCRA “unresponsive,” followed by a letter in the next issue protesting that descriptor from the Dave Clark, DCRA’s Director. At the same time, I wrote to Mr. Clark to seek a conversation about responsiveness and other matters of common concern. He invited representatives of the Board to come to his office. We met him and several staff members for over an hour on November 7. I wrote the following letter to Mr. Clark soon after,

summing up what I saw as the substance of the meeting.

While the Board was dealing with DCRA at the director’s level, a neighbor and CHRS member told me of his attempt to get a permit to replace a short length of an ordinary fence in front of his house with an appropriate cast iron design. From the DCRA website, he got the form that referenced “fence replacement,” filled it out, and took it in. It was the wrong form, he was told. When he took the right form in, he was told that he had to come back with photographs, because the house was in the historic district. This all required a lot of to-ing and fro-ing, lost time from work and growing exasperation. His disposition now is to simply replace the fence and forget the permit process. While the DCRA website is a huge step in the right direction, the information provided didn’t clear the bureaucratic underbrush for the taxpayer, left him frustrated, and undercut the permit process. The website is good approach, but failed to produce product.

We don’t have the resources to intervene for every member who has such a problem. We do spend a lot of time on the telephone, answering



questions about zoning etc. And, we hope we can develop cooperative relationships with heads of agencies and departments who, like Mr. Clark, share with us a vision of city processes that are clear, enforceable, and strike a balance between standards and the particular concerns of applicants. We hope for a system that permits a neighbor to get a simple fence replacement, approved with minimum trouble, but with enough scrutiny built in to stop inappropriate development, intrusive renovation, and demolition by neglect.

The letter to Mr. Clark reflects an attempt at finding the common ground between limitations and responsiveness by the bureaucracy, as well as developing a *modus operandi* for sorting out issues. Please, read the letter and tell us whether this steps off in the right direction. ✧

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David A. Clark  
Director  
Department of Consumer & Regulatory Affairs  
941 North Capitol Street NE, Rm 9500  
Washington, DC 20003

November 11, 2002

Dear Dave,

I’m writing to thank you and your staff for meeting with Brian Furness, Nancy Metzger, and me on November 7. I would also like to use this letter to share with you what we took as the major results of the meeting and would welcome your comments in this respect.

The meeting established that we share the goal of a strong, responsive, and engaged DCRA that will vigorously and effectively enforce the laws and regulations. The Society has for almost 50 years supported a legal and administrative regulatory structure that would protect the architectural fabric of Capitol Hill, particularly against inappropriate uses of buildings in the historic district. We took from the meeting a pledge that we would try to work together on issues of mutual concern.

### Due Process and Existing Law

We agree with your statement that all parties have a right to due process and that this process requires a clear set of standards with the force of law. We further agree that citizens, community organizations, and developers have perceived permit and code enforcement as weak and erratic—and developers, businesses and home owners have taken advantage of this to flout the law. Your point that the legal framework—for instance, as applies to stop work orders— contributes to this perception was well taken: because each order is legally separate. Even a succession of such orders has no cumulative effect on fines and penalties and thus is no effective deterrent. The Society would likely favor legislation and new regulations that would strengthen enforce-

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## Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS)

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To contact any of the above, please contact the Society offices by calling 202/543-0425 or sending email to CapHRS@aol.com.

www.chrs.org

Founded over 40 years ago to preserve and protect Capitol Hill's residential character, the Society is now the largest civic association on Capitol Hill, and one of the largest in the entire District of Columbia. From the beginning, the Society has played a key role in maintaining the diverse, residential character of our neighborhood.

## CHRS COMMITTEE OF THE MONTH

### The Old Naval Hospital Committee

by Barbara Eck, *Chair*

The Old Naval Hospital Committee was formed at the direction of the CHRS President to serve a liaison with the Friends of the Old Naval Hospital and to provide the Society's members and the neighborhood with information concerning proposals, plans, and city government action regarding the historic building and its grounds. The committee is currently made up of Jeanne Campbell and me.

CHRS supports The Friends of the Old Naval Hospital in their role as agent for developing ideas and gathering community input regarding long-term use. CHRS assisted in the funding of a recent Urban Land Institute study which analyzed the financial, political, community, and land-use issues. CHRS members provided information and expertise that was incorporated in the Urban Land Institute final report. Our testimony emphasized that the building is a historic treasure. It is a significant asset to the city as well as Capitol Hill: its restoration and use are of concern to us.

The Old Naval Hospital Committee is planning a community forum in February and will invite all groups interested in restoring and occupying the historic building to present their plans to the community. \*

## Eastern Market: EMCAC Advises City on Lease for New Management

by Brian Furness

Establishing stable, professional, and coordinated management at Eastern Market took another step forward in October when the Eastern Market Community Advisory Committee (EMCAC) recommended unanimously that the city conclude a longer-term lease for Eastern Market with Eastern Market Venture (EMV). The lease should run for at least five years. The EMCAC also provided advice to the city covering financial and operational issues, stressing the need to clarify services covered under EMV's management fees and strengthen EMV's physical presence at the market. The next step is for the city and EMV to conclude a lease, now targeted for signature before the end of the year.

Extending coordinated management to the rest of Eastern Market's operations continues to be blocked by Market Five Gallery, which alleges that the city moved improperly to oust the Gallery when the two parties could not reach a satisfactory operating agreement. The Gallery's complaint will be heard in Superior Court in a trial scheduled for June 23, 2003. In the meantime, the gallery continues to control the north hall and the non-food

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ment with new tools and stiffer penalties. Clear requirements at the outset would benefit both developer and neighborhood, with less need for lengthy revisiting of rulings and expensive legal processes involved in challenging them.

### The Importance of Communication

You underlined your desire for responsive, efficient, and continuing interaction with District of Columbia residents. We could not agree more that communication is indispensable and vital to comprehension, understanding, and enforcing the laws and regulations. We were particularly interested in the measures you are taking to rewrite rules and procedures to ensure early notice to all interested parties of proposed actions that might affect the neighborhood. We understand that internal systems are to be established for the coordination of the input of interested offices and monitoring of responses; that, this would allow for a complete and coordinated approach to any case, along with a clear understanding of who has the lead and how concerns would be dealt with. Your hope (and ours) would be to establish—early, informally, and unambiguously—a clear understanding of what would and would not be allowed, and the justification therefore.

We agree with your point that the DCRA finds it difficult to identify a satisfactory community interlocutor. Advisory Neighborhood Commissions are important, but do not exhaust the universe of potentially helpful and significant community organizations. When we can, we will use our newsletter and website to help DCRA get the word out. The weekly updates of applications on DCRA's own website <http://dcra.dc.gov/main.shtml> are a constructive step in the right direction. [concerns.dcra@dc.gov](mailto:concerns.dcra@dc.gov) provides a great channel of communication that we expect will advance the interaction with the community. We are delighted to learn that the Mayor's Command Center at 727-6161 allows for quick contact with a DCRA duty officer available to help alleviate the problem of illicit work done after hours and on weekends.

### Nuisance Property Legislation

We shared with you our frustration with the progress to date in complying with the law requiring registration of vacant properties. The Society views this legislation as a major step toward improving neighborhoods and has been dismayed by delays in developing regulations and a list of properties. We understand the need for verification and due process but were heartened to hear that the list will be public soon. We envision an important role for community organizations in the implementation of this legislation; the Society intends to verify and recommend amendments to the list. Capitol Hill is dotted with properties that have aggravated the neighbors by being vacant, poorly maintained, and a nuisance or hazard. Our expectation is that the regulations, the list, and our active interaction will

move us all toward an increase in useful housing stock and the decrease of the blight of demolition by neglect.

### Specific Cases

Our discussion usefully focused on several specific cases that illustrate the community's frustration with past DCRA responsiveness and enforcement.

*Boys Town.* We appreciated your acknowledgment that DCRA took actions that moved Boys Town toward its objectives without full consideration of the objections of others. We agreed that this kind of case could be handled better under a system that received systematic input from interested parties prior to a decision that might require undoing, a painful and complicated process. We hope the chronology we furnished at the meeting illustrated our point about responsiveness to the issues as well as to acknowledging communication.

*424 New Jersey Ave., SE.* Our long-standing legal challenge to DCRA's issuance of a home occupation permit illustrated—to our way of thinking—the consequences of poor procedures, weak verification, and insufficient attention to obviously incomplete compliance. We appreciated your concurrence that DCRA has the responsibility to make clearer that information furnished on applications be truthful, accurate, and complete, and that assertions need to be verified. A related issue is the financial burden placed on community organizations challenging administrative actions.

*20 Ninth Street, NE.* We agreed that the misrepresentations, flouting of rules and rulings, and ineffective enforcement that contribute to this sad saga epitomizes many of the problems that frustrate us both. We came away with the impression that you appreciated our view that allowing the applicant to get away with outrageous and illegal behavior to achieve his ends will set an egregious precedent.

*1229 E Street, SE, known as The Shotgun House.* This saga, featured in the November 1 *City Paper*, illustrated the inability to deal with scofflaw behavior and weaknesses in city legislation regarding vacant and nuisance properties. The Society is prepared to work with DCRA for aggressive enforcement that can bring about the end of a situation that has placed a significant burden on the neighborhood.

In conclusion, I want to make clear our appreciation of your intentions as Director of DCRA. We understand, too, the difficulties of changing a bureaucracy. Although these observations above are, in great part, a litany of faults, we are heartened that giving us an opportunity to share them with you reflects your openness and commitment to outreach. We left the meeting encouraged and look forward to working with you and your staff to bring about the city we both want and deserve.

Sincerely yours,  
Robert L. M. Nevitt  
President

## Looking Back on Capitol Hill

Excerpt from J. George Butler's *Simpler Times, Stories of Early Twentieth Century City Life*.

*Christmas trees in the gaslight era were lighted up, although not nearly as brightly as in the age of electricity. In my childhood, a highlight of the Christmas season was the lighting of our Christmas tree on Christmas Day. We lighted it with open-flame wax candles in candleholders attached to the tree's branches. Our Christmas tree candles were similar in size to birthday cake candles and burned for less than an hour...*

*Once Mother's emergency precautions were providential. One of the candleholders loosened and tipped over. In a trice, Mother reached behind the sliding door and grabbed the pail of water she kept at the ready. That plus a wool blanket to smother the flames averted a house fire...*

*After the Christmas tree was lit on Christmas Day, it was only re-lit once or twice throughout the holiday season. Candles were expensive and the danger from fire was too great. One Christmas, a house just a block below us, caught fire from its candle-lit tree. The engines from the firehouse next to the Eastern Market came racing. What a sight it was to see those magnificent horses galloping, hoofs and manes flying, a plume of smoke belching from the funnel of the fire engine's steam boiler. As the horses ran at breakneck speed, the wind created a forced draft so that by the time they reached the scene of the fire, steam was already up. The steam boilers were used to power pumps that sprayed water on the fire.*

George Butler grew up on Carroll Street, now the site of the Library of Congress Madison Building. His book is available from Vandamere Press and The Historical Society of Washington DC, tel. 202-785-2068.

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### Acronyms Used in This Issue

BZA	Board of Zoning Adjustment
CHAMPS	Capitol Hill Associate of Merchants and Professionals
DCRA	Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs
DDOT	DC Dept. of Transportation
EMCAC	Eastern Market Community Advisory Committee
EMV	Eastern Market Venture
HPRB	Historic Preservation Review Board
NCPC	National Capitol Planning Commission
SCSD	Southeast Citizens for Smart Development
USCHS	United States Capitol Historical Society

## A Kick Off for Call Box Program



The rusty call box at the corner of 8th and G streets SE was the center of attention on November 1, when Mayor Anthony Williams kicked off the "Art on Call" program, the city-wide effort to reclaim the historic call boxes as icons of neighborhood history and art. After the ribbon cutting, the mayor, sponsoring city agency leaders, and others primed the call box. Seen among those listening to the mayor's remarks are CHRS President Rob Nevitt and Historic District Committee Chair Nancy Metzger, Ward 6 Council Member Sharon Ambrose, and Barracks Row/Main Street Executive Director Bill McLeod.

Two plaques designed by Will Fleishell will be installed in the 8th and G call box to honor early Capitol Hill resident Benjamin Latrobe, an architect of the Capitol and Navy Yard. The bas-relief sculpture of Latrobe includes design motifs he used on the Capitol—such as tobacco leaves and corn. Another call box a block away, at 8th and I streets SE, will commemorate the Anacostia Fire Company. The artwork for both call boxes will be installed next summer, when the Barracks Row streetscape is completed.



Photos by Norman Metzger.

CHRS is the sponsoring organization for the Capitol Hill call box effort. If you'd like to be involved in this project, please contact the CHRS office at 543-0425. With 55 call boxes in the historic district and just about that many more in the greater Capitol Hill area, there's plenty of work for everyone. ✧

# Boys Town Counterattacks

by Brian Furness, Chair, Community Development Committee

Undeterred by recent setbacks and ever pugnacious, Boys Town is moving ahead with its plans to establish an institution for 40 youths near the intersection of Potomac and Pennsylvania Avenues SE. Setbacks for Boys Town include the Board of Zoning Adjustment's (BZA) May decision to reverse the D.C. government's 2001 decision to issue building permits, a federal judge's dismissal of Boys Town's lawsuit against the city and neighborhood institutions and activists, and well-nigh universal condemnation of the proposal of Omaha congressman Lee Terry's (R-Nebraska) to have Congress overturn the BZA decision. Even Terry's hometown *Omaha World Herald* joined Mayor Anthony Williams and D.C. Congressional Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton in opposing the initiative.

Boys Town promptly appealed the BZA action before the D.C. Court of Appeals. More concretely, Boys Town sought to get around the BZA decision by re-labeling the properties as "single family residences" and getting permits to continue construction. The South-

east Citizens for Smart Development (SCSD), which had successfully challenged the original permits, challenged the reissued permits. The BZA will hear the arguments on January 23. In the meantime, construction is virtually complete.

Boys Town also decided to appeal the judge's dismissal of its legal action against SCSD leaders and neighborhood activists Will Hill and Ellen Oppenheimer. The move is simply vicious. There is no obvious reason to believe that Boys Town has addressed the reasons for the trial judge's dismissal. Hill and Oppenheimer will continue to be defended *pro bono* by the American Civil Liberties Union and the Center for Individual Rights, but Hill, Oppenheimer and SCSD still have to raise thousands of dollars for direct expenses.

The continued uncertainty regarding the District's budget and Republican ascendancy in the Senate raise concerns about Congressional action, either through Representative Terry's proposed budget rider or new initiatives favoring faith-based institutions. Eleanor Holmes Norton has vowed to fight the Terry proposal,

Send contributions to defend neighbors to:

SCSD Legal Fund  
Kathleen Donner, Director  
18 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NE  
Washington, DC 20002

but SCSD representatives are concerned that some measures could fly under the radar screen. SCSD is seeking help from congressional staff in a position to monitor developments. If you're interested in helping, contact CHRS at 202-543-0425.

The outcome of the Capitol Hill community and neighbors' efforts to counter Boys Town's almost unlimited financial resources and influence (even the *National Geographic* ran a puff piece on Boys Town's Omaha operation) can't easily be predicted. But the SCSD has vowed to fight on. The neighborhood has responded generously to SCSD's request for funds, but more will be necessary to defray the \$20,000-\$25,000 necessary to counter Boys Town's recent moves. Contributions may be sent to Legal Fund Director Kathleen Donner at the address in the box. ✧

## Keep the Date!

Next CHRS member meeting:  
Whither the Old Naval Hospital?  
Tuesday, February 12, 2003  
7:30 p.m. social, 8:00 p.m. meeting  
St. Peter's Church Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> and C  
Streets SE.



## A Helping Hand for Eastern High School

A recent Bob Levey column in the *Washington Post* reminded folks that Eastern High School on Capitol Hill will be the recipient of this year's grocery receipt drive through Safeway and Giant. With "education dollars" from these drives, Eastern will be able to purchase computers, software, and sports and band equipment. According to Levey's column, Eastern had the largest increase in average daily attendance of all D.C. public schools between 2000-01 and 2001-02.

To contribute to the collection, you have to register, either in person or by computer. (Actually you can register for several schools to receive "credit" from your grocery purchases.) To register at Safeway, sign up in person at any Safeway store or go to [www.safeway.com](http://www.safeway.com) and click on "Escrip." Safeway's code for Eastern is 2226030. To register at Giant, go to [www.giantfood.com](http://www.giantfood.com) and click on "A+BonusBucks" or at any Giant store. Giant's code for Eastern is 00061. ✧

## In Case You Were Wondering, Paint is Iron's Best Friend

by Nancy Metzger

Searching for the secret to good-looking iron on your front steps? Look no further than the nearest paint can, according to Patrick Lally, speaker at the November 20 Preservation Café at Trattoria Alberto on 8th Street SE. Of course, before you apply the paint, you need to make sure that the iron is clean, stripped of loose paint, and free of anything that will interfere with paint adhesion. That might require some scraping, wire brushing, or sanding, (either by hand or with an electric drill attachment). Since there are many factors to consider in planning the attack on rust, you would do well to get a copy of the CHRS Guide-line on iron, "Cast Iron: Firmness, Commodity, and De-light" that has very specific recommendations on maintenance and repair of cast iron and was written by Lally. (Copies are available from the CHRS office, 543-0425, and should be at both the Northeast and Southeast branch public libraries.)

Why all the fuss and bother? Well, if the aesthetics of carefully painted cast iron steps or railings doesn't speak to

you, then perhaps the knowledge that those steps and railings might be worth \$30,000 may have an impact. Far better to keep up with the maintenance than to pay for the repair or replacement of cracked, rusty steps.

Those at the café, of course, had a chance to bring up their unique problems. In response to one question about the slick and slippery quality of newly painted iron stairs, Lally suggested a paint product that contains grit that could be applied to the treads and stoop. However, be very careful about what you put on your stairs. In view of the approach of winter, Lally's last words of caution were to *never, ever* use rock salt on cast iron to melt ice and snow. It accelerates the rusting. Also, be very careful in winter about how you get rid of ice on iron. Hard blows, particularly with a sharp edge, could crack the iron since it is already stressed by the cold.

There will be no Preservation Café in December or January. On Wednesday, February 19, Judith Capen will talk about historic colors for house facades. On March 19 Lee Rogers will be looking back at Capitol Hill's trolley system. ✧

## Park Street Project Moves Forward, But More Funds Are Needed

by Nancy Metzger, Chair, Historic District Committee

As an update to the October *News* article about efforts to repair 1132 Park Street NE, November's cold and rainy weather forced plans for stripping and painting to be postponed from this fall to next spring. Progress has been made, however. Mark Brumagim of Milestone Tarant, LLC, spent the day before Thanksgiving installing new iron railings around the stoop and down the stairs. With railings on both sides of the stairs, the elderly owner will be able to face forward instead of backing down her stairs this winter. Both the railings and the installation were donated by Milestone Tarant to the Park Street project. (To learn more about this company, visit their website at [www.milestonellc.net](http://www.milestonellc.net).)

Also this fall, a professional tree service trimmed several branches of the elm tree that were rubbing against the house. The trimming will also make it difficult for squirrels to take up residence in the attic. The cost of the tree trimming (\$345) was paid for by donations.

Over the winter, the wood door and window hoods must be repaired or replicated. Since they are fairly ornate Italianate hoods, the cost may run to several thousand dollars. As of December 1, \$955 was available in the separate account CHRS established for this project. Members are asked to consider this project for your year-end giving—many more dollars are needed and donations of any size are greatly appreciated. To donate, send your check to CHRS, P.O. Box 15264, Washington, D.C. 20003, and earmark it for "1132 Park Street Fund." All donations are tax deductible.

The Park Street Project is a neighbor-to-neighbor effort to assist a long-time Hill resident of limited means to repair her home to meet historic preservation standards. This pilot project, started because of a Historic Preservation Review Board case, will provide information that may be helpful in establishing a community and citywide program for assistance to low-income homeowners within a historic district. ✧

### WELCOME CHRS SUPPORTERS

WE THANK THE  
FOLLOWING NEW  
MEMBERS, PATRONS,  
AND SPONSORS

NEW MEMBERS:  
Melissa Brown  
Stacia & Edward Cadmus  
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Shawn Kline & Anne  
Rhodes-Kline  
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# Visual Design Principles for the Nation's Capitol: A Lively Discussion at CHRS Membership Meeting

by Tom Grahame

CHRS hosted a public member meeting November 6 that provided a forum for lively discussion of plans for public spaces in the city. The evening's panel, moderated by City Planning Committee Chairman Dick Wolf, included Capitol Hill residents Meg Maguire, President of Scenic America; Dan Tangherlini, Acting Director of DDOT; and Bruce Robey, President of CHAMPS and Publisher of *Voice of the Hill*.

In his opening remarks, Wolf was critical of proposed city legislation known as the "Street Furniture Act of 2002." As he explained, the legislation would have given the DC Department of Transportation (DDOT) carte blanche to enter into contracts with vendors to provide and maintain bus shelters, news boxes, information kiosks, bicycle racks, new street toilets, and other "street furniture." In return, these items would carry advertisements. Citizen groups had unanimously condemned the possibility of a large increase in advertising on the city's street furniture. Newspaper interests were also concerned about the bill's impact on their vending boxes. Though the bill is now in committee and is likely dead, DDOT's bus shelter contract is up for renewal next year. Legitimate questions remain about the use of advertising in the city's public spaces, said Wolf.

Meg Maguire urged that the nation's capital, a "world-class, growing city," must treat its scenic vistas as a form of wealth—especially in its neighborhoods. To this end, the city must identify and map scenic neighborhood vistas and other elements of neighborhood character. It must also have policies in place to retain and enhance them. Trends here and elsewhere toward increased use of advertising signage in the cityscape—more billboards, signs that wrap around buildings, more signage on street furniture, advertising on police cars—suggest that

signage could be the biggest threat to neighborhood and city visual assets, and that policies and legislation should be designed to protect such assets. Much work has been done by groups such as the Fine Arts Commission and others, but it has been uncoordinated.

Dan Tangherlini acknowledged he had been surprised by the strong public reaction provoked by the street furniture bill because the proposed legislation had taken some language from the existing bus shelter contract. He belatedly realized that opposition occurred in part because of adverse reaction to recent provisions allowing new wall signs and billboards in DC. Tangherlini said that DDOT wants to work with community groups to find workable legislation and listed ways in which the Department is working well with neighborhoods and business. For example, DDOT now has a fund to provide enhancement grants to maintain and upgrade neighborhood parks and streetscapes, and can even turn over vest pocket parks to neighborhood groups for their care. Some local pocket parks belong to DDOT. Other public spaces belong to many different owners—including the federal government. Among the latter's several small parcels on Capitol Hill is the Metro park at the Eastern Market stop. Coming improvements at Barracks Row/Main Street will cast this park in comparatively shabbier light, but, according to Tangherlini, this presents an opportunity.

Bruce Robey noted that improving the Eastern Market Metro plaza is a priority for CHAMPS, an organization of 326 businesses. Design improvements are needed, along with the removal of bad bricks and weeds. He reported that some CHAMPS members were concerned that advertising allowed on street furniture would take attention away from local businesses, and added that the bill's provisions concerning new street toilets need rethinking. ✧

## News About the Society

### CHRS 2003 Budget Approved

In addition to the forum on street furniture at the November 6 member meeting, the FY2003 budget proposed by Budget Committee Chair John Shages was unanimously approved.

### HPRB Agenda: Reminder

As a service to members and the Capitol Hill community, CHRS posts the agenda for the monthly Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) meetings on our website as soon as it is made available. To see the cases that the HPRB will review each month, go to [www.chrs.org](http://www.chrs.org), and click the calendar link listed on the left. To see the agenda details, click the HPRB Hearing link for the appropriate date (usually the fourth Thursday of the month, but third Thursday in November and December).



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outside vending, cutting off program coordination and expansion, and blocking the implementation of the 1999 community-supported legislation.

EMV has been operating the south hall and the farmers' line on an interim basis since January. It is responsible for the recent improvements, including refinishing the floors in the south hall, repairing doors and windows, and increasing parking enforcement. According to EMV principal Stuart Smith, leases that provide stability to the south hall merchants are high on his list of priorities for 2003. Other priorities on his list are new operating rules and regulations and a survey of consumer patterns and preferences. The last could provide backing for community efforts to adjust closing hours to better reflect neighborhood shopping patterns and other initiatives—such as a weekday farmers market, advocated by CHRS and other community organizations. ✱

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## The United States Capitol Historical Society

by Barbara Eck

**T**he United States Capitol Historical Society (USCHS) is a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan, educational membership organization dedicated to furthering the study of the history of the Capitol and Congress. It was organized in 1962 and chartered by Congress in 1978. Its activities are financed through membership fees, grants, and sale of products and publications. Proceeds support the sponsorship of historical research projects, educational seminars for all age levels, publication of books, and the acquisition and donation of art and artifacts to the Capitol's collections.

Charter membership is \$35, and includes invitations to lectures, symposia, author receptions, and a discount on merchandise and books. Members receive special tours of the Capitol: for the time being, these are restricted to the exterior of the building and its grounds. However, the exterior walking tour takes in the 200-year history of the construction of the building and its exterior artwork, along with all the concomitant political intrigue surrounding the "most famous building in the world."

In the past, our family has been delighted with gifts and books purchased from the USCHS gift shop, but now security concerns and Capitol Visitor Center construction have severely limited visitor access. This has significantly reduced gift shop sales, which finance the many educational and cultural events sponsored by USCHS. Fortunately, the catalog can be viewed at [www.uschs@uschs.org](http://www.uschs@uschs.org) or ordered by calling 1-800-887-9318. ✱

## CHRS 2003 Calendar

For your planning needs, we are printing the calendar for CHRS major events through August, 2003. Check monthly issues of the *News* for additional details and possible changes.

### January

- 21 Board meeting
- 27 Copy deadline, February CHRS *News* (for delivery by Feb. 11)

### February

- 12 Membership meeting; topic: Whither The Old Naval Hospital?
- 18 Board meeting
- 19 Preservation Café
- 24 Copy deadline, March CHRS *News* (for delivery by March 11)

### March

- 18 Board meeting
- 19 Preservation Café
- 24 Copy deadline, April CHRS *News* (for delivery by April 8)

### April

- 9 Membership meeting; topic: The Capitol Hill Business Improvement District
- 15 Board meeting; Nominating Committee presents election slate.
- 21 Copy deadline, May CHRS *News* (for delivery by May 6). Candidate profiles to be included.
- 30 Deadline for submission of grant proposals

### May

- 10-11 House and Garden Tour
- 15 Election ballots mailed
- 20 Board meeting; budget submission due
- 26 Copy deadline, June CHRS *News* (for delivery by June 10)

### June

- 11 Membership meeting; topic: To be decided. Vote on proposed budget and announcement of election results.
- 17 Board meeting
- 23 Copy deadline, Summer CHRS *News* (for delivery by July 8)

### July

Vacation!

### August

- 19 Board meeting

## Mark Your Calendar!

### DECEMBER

**15 Sunday, 2:00–6:00 p.m.**

Capitol Hill Arts Workshop Winter Revelry. Tour six private homes and historic Friendship House, decorated with various themes. Tickets (adults, \$25 or 6/\$100, kids under 14, \$5) available on tour day at Friendship House, 619 D Street SE starting at 1 p.m. See [www.chaw.org/revelry.htm/themes](http://www.chaw.org/revelry.htm/themes) for advance ticket sales information.

### JANUARY

**21 Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.**

CHRS Board meeting. Old Naval Hospital, 921 Pennsylvania Ave. SE.

### FEBRUARY

**11 Tuesday, 8 p.m.**

Overbeck Lecture, Don Hawkins on "Our Neighborhood's River". Naval Lodge Hall, 330 Pennsylvania Avenue SE. Reservations required; see [www.CapitolHillHistory.org/comingevents.htm](http://www.CapitolHillHistory.org/comingevents.htm)

**12 Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.**

CHRS Membership Meeting. Topic: Whither the Old Naval Hospital? St. Peters Church Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> and C Streets SE

**18 Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.**

CHRS Board meeting. Old Naval Hospital, 921 Pennsylvania Ave. SE.

**19 Wednesday, 6:30 p.m.**

Preservation Café. Judith Capen on historic colors for house facades. Trattoria Alberto's upper room, 506 8<sup>th</sup> Street SE

### MARCH

**19 Wednesday 6.30 p.m.**

Preservation Café. Lee Rogers on Capitol Hill's trolley system. Trattoria Alberto's upper room, 506 8<sup>th</sup> Street SE

## 2003 House Tour Search Begins

by Shelly Jordan Rydell, House Tour Chair

**M**other's Day may seem to be a long time away, but already the search has begun for the houses that will be showcased on the 2003 Capitol Hill House Tour May 10–11. Although the supply of houses that might be featured seems endless, the task of selecting is still quite difficult.

Why? We strive each year to represent the true beauty of our neighborhood. To us, this means representing the many different types of houses that make up our diverse community. When searching for the eight or so final homes, our search committee looks for a good mix of large and small homes, houses with families with children and those without, and houses that have been renovated and those that have been restored. We look for a mix of traditional tastes and contemporary styles, Victorians and Wardmans, wood frame and brick, and, especially, those homes that have a unique story to tell. Because the Restoration Society sponsors the tour, we also require that the homes selected represent sensitive care and maintenance of the neighborhood's historic fabric.

But that's not all we have to consider. How close are the houses to each other? Is it a walkable tour distance? How will 2,000 people flow seamlessly through each house?

And then, of course, there is the question: will the homeowners *let* their house be on the tour? Sometimes a little begging is part of the process, too. Last year, the committee visited 30 fantastic houses in the process of choosing a group that represented all these aspects of life on the Hill. This year will likely be the same. The right mix of houses is the foundation of a successful House Tour. As the only fundraising event for the CHRS, its success is critical to the continuation of the many programs, services, and activities provided by the Society.

This is also the best way to show how strong our community is to people across the region. Attending the tour inspires people to make Capitol Hill their home, and inspires those of us who have houses that are not quite "house-tour-ready" with new ideas for our own home projects. If you know of a great home on the Hill that you would like to see on the tour, please drop me a note or call with the address and homeowner's contact info (if you know it).

And if you think organizing the house tour sounds like fun, we'd love to have you join the committee. There are lots of ways to help—with everything from advertising and promotion to planning a reception and an afternoon tea. I look forward to hearing from you, soon! Send a e-mail to [shell29@earthlink.net](mailto:shell29@earthlink.net) or call 548-8174. ✽

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### Capitol Hill Restoration Society

420 Tenth Street, SE  
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