



The FALL 1993  
South End  
Historical Society

# THE SEHS NEWSLETTER

532 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02118-1402

Vol. 22, No. 4

CYCLO RAMA



**BOSTON CENTER  
FOR THE ARTS**

NOVEMBER 20 & 21  
SATURDAY, 11AM TO 6 PM  
& SUNDAY, NOON TO 6 PM

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*The South End, in Great Detail*

## Through an Artist's Eyes



ROSANNE MINERVA has studied the South End in minute detail—from the sidewalk. She has been drawing its buildings for the past four years as well as those of Beacon Hill and Back Bay. Within the consistency of style in South End buildings, she has also discovered that every street is different in its own way. The almost unbroken pattern of bow windows is the trademark of the district as opposed to Beacon Hill where the buildings are flat and vary in scale.

Here too the buildings are mostly of brick and brownstone while those in the Back Bay exhibit a greater variety of materials. The common design elements that prevail in South End residences make their distinguishing details all the more noticeable and interesting. These details sometimes occur in individual buildings, in groups of buildings, or form good portions of entire streets. Faces in brownstone appear as part of the entrance

*Continued on Page 4*



*Lawrence Street with its leaning willow is one of Artist Rosanne Minerva's favorite subjects.*

The South End Historical Society Celebrates its 27th Year



# A Talk with Susan Park—Part II

by Elizabeth Sippel and Emily Domurad

Susan Park, treasurer of The South End Historical Society, president of the Boston Preservation Alliance and president of Boston Harborfest, talked at her home recently about Boston, the South End, urban renewal, and historic preservation:

photo: Elizabeth Sippel



Fall in the South End

“AT THE BOSTON PRESERVATION ALLIANCE (BPA), our greatest accomplishment, has been raising people’s consciousness level about the importance of the architectural quality of buildings in Boston. Cities have very different characters. Boston is very much Yankee. They hide their money; it is not showy. In a sense there are lots of Quakers in Boston. You look at some of the buildings here, and they look like Quakers. They’re honest, they’re straightforward, there’s no finery, no fanciness about them. They’re good, honest, background buildings, for example, 73 Tremont Street before its renovation and addition. The exact opposite of that would be the Burrage mansion on Commonwealth Avenue, which is in the New York mode of high-style elegance. It was restored as elegant housing for the elderly. New York is filled with buildings like the Burrage house because in New York everybody flaunted their money. The houses along Commonwealth Avenue may be varied in style, but they are not nearly as elaborate as the buildings you find in New York. Architect H. H. Richardson’s buildings exhibit different patterns and colors in their materials, but again, the exteriors are practical, not superficial.

Raising the respect for preservation, raising everybody’s level of appreciation to understand the contribution the buildings make to the quality of life in this city is our work as preservationists. The ability to walk down Commonwealth Avenue and see green trees, gardens, houses, and sunlight, all things that we take for granted, rarely exists any more on the scale that we have here. Boston is a much more livable city than Manhattan.

## URBAN RENEWAL

The Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) was started under John Collins in the early 1960s. The city under the BRA lost the entire eighteenth-century fabric that existed where Government Center was built. Everything was leveled in the name of progress. Now in hindsight we would do things differently because urban renewal, leveling the hearts out of cities and bisecting them with highways, didn’t work. Planning officials didn’t know what to do; they knew they had to do something, so they knocked cities down to build them up again rather than understand and rehabilitate the quality of what was already there.

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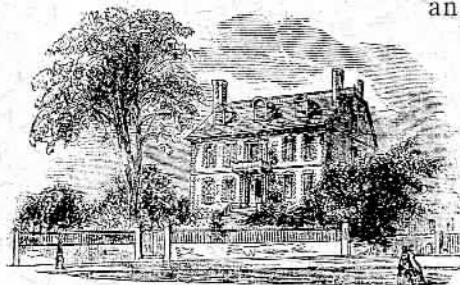
Receipt of *The SEHS Newsletter* is a privilege of membership in The Historical Society, an association of people interested in the recognition and preservation of historic resources in, and recording the history of, the South End of Boston. Individual membership is \$15 per year; family and dual memberships are \$25.

**Officers:** Arthur F. Howe, President    **Editor:** Elizabeth Sippel  
Susan Park, Treasurer    **Design:** Step Up  
Barbara Anderson, Secretary

The Hotel Alexander on Washington Street, damaged by fire and vandalism, and urban blight are preservation issues. Boston has a tremendous resource in its housing stock, and it doesn't matter whether we're talking about the South End, Dorchester, Mattapan, or Roxbury, we have a variety of architectural styles and ages of housing stock, and we need to sensitize the municipal government regarding their appropriate treatment. The guidelines for new housing are vinyl siding. Whoever is paying for affordable housing these days will not underwrite brick, and you can't build in wood because it's flammable. The housing stock being built in 1993 is vinyl-sided property that has a life span of 20 years.

### EARLY PRESERVATION EFFORTS

The Hancock house was lost in the 1850s on Beacon Hill, and it was a big, beautiful, free-standing mansion. People thought it was important, but it went down to make way for the extension of the State House—the wing on the downside of the



*The loss of the Hancock house on Beacon Hill galvanized Boston's early preservationists.*

Hill. Who's to say whether that's right or wrong. The loss of the Hancock house galvanized the early Bostonians who hated to see it go. When the country was older and Old South church had moved to the Back Bay and was selling their building, people were talking about tearing it down. The congregation sold the building to pay for their new church in Copley Square. However, Old South is one of the five most important colonial buildings in America. You don't just tear those down. People had begun to appreciate some of the relics of the revolutionary period. A development plan in the 1870s wanted to put a building under Old South and raise the church on top of an eight-story building. That was 120 years ago.

Mt. Vernon was also falling down in the 1850s, and Mary Cunningham from South Carolina created a committee of women from the 13 original states to raise funds to save Mt. Vernon and create the Mt. Vernon Ladies Association—the oldest preservation organization. Preservation began around places where something important happened, as in Concord, Lexington, Quincy, in Massachusetts, and in Virginia, where houses are preserved and house associations grew around them. Districts in cities don't have the same sex appeal because probably nothing very much happened. It's the architecture and the rhythm of the whole, rather than the individual house, that make the area important.

### PLANNING THE FUTURE

The National Trust wasn't formed until 1949. That's staggering. Boston, one of the country's most important and oldest cities, didn't have a preservation ordinance until 1975. Charleston, South Carolina had a preservation ordinance in

1931. New Orleans had a preservation ordinance in 1923. The preservation ordinance here was fought by the business community because they felt absolutely threatened by it, and they made it as tough as they could. Each preservation battle was the third world war and almost impossible to win. In the 18 years that we have had a preservation ordinance, fewer than 60 individual landmarks have been created. That's not very many. We have 150 or 200 petitions for buildings sitting in the Landmarks office waiting to be considered. But the political will is not interested in that. Development should be planned growth, and planned growth should be compatible with preservation; they shouldn't be at loggerheads with one another.

As I get older I become interested in more things about preservation. Again, going back to seeing too much, I'm interested in everything. Whether it's cemeteries, landscapes, town centers, open space—all of this I think is environment. Preservation and architecture in the natural environment and how they interact is what interests me most." +

## Prudential Center Hosts Winetasting for Neighborhood Associations

ON AUGUST 17, 1993, the Prudential Center celebrated the new landscaping of the South Garden (Huntington Avenue side) with a tasting of Australian wines as part of their outreach to adjacent neighborhoods. The proceeds of the event were divided between The South End Historical Society and the Ellis Memorial and Eldredge House, Inc. The wines were provided by Kooka Wines, distributed locally by M.R.R. Traders. The hors d'oeuvres were to have been compliments of the Australian Meat & Livestock Corporation but were stalled in the Midwest by the floods. Delicious substitutes were provided by the Sheraton kitchen. Approximately 100 people attended the event and The Historical Society and the Ellis Memorial each were the beneficiary of close to \$500. We thank all of the society's members and friends who attended, Harron & Associates of Berkeley Street for making the arrangements, and the Prudential Center for sponsoring the event. +

*Arthur F. Howe*

## New Members

Patricia and D. Marshall Barry  
Christopher C. Coveney  
Alina and Kent Duckham  
Susan Hamilton  
Lisa Kodmur and Ian Sklaver  
Andrea and George Moryadas  
Marpillero/Pollak, Abacus Architects & Planners  
Frederick M. Ramos II and Robert J. Starmer  
Carolyn S. Woollen



(Continued from Page 1)



*Drawing of Rutland Square residence is by Rosanne Minerva.*

pediments on Union Park and Rutland Square. Projecting arched pediments with columns form small covered porches on Dartmouth Street near Warren Avenue. These buildings also have bays instead of bows and are smaller in scale. Wooden bay windows appear above entrances on Union Park and Dartmouth Place. Flat buildings with recessed entries, shutters, plain windows, and dormered Mansard roofs on Gray and Lawrence Streets are the closest in style to Beacon Hill residences.

Minerva has her favorite streets. As a gift for her brother's office in Manhattan she drew Lawrence Street with its weeping willow that seems on the verge of keeling over into the row houses with their brightly colored window gardens and trailing vines.

This attraction for old buildings has taken the artist from her hometown in Long Island, New York, to Charlottesville and the University of Virginia. There she studied architecture surrounded by the classical influence of

Thomas Jefferson. After college and a year in Salem, Massachusetts, she moved to the South End where she lives on Union Park with her husband, Mark Wacker, a preservation worker with the National Park Service. Much of his time is devoted to the interior and exterior of Frederick Law Olmsted's house on Warren Street in Brookline, Massachusetts.

Minerva had planned on being an architect only to find the profession becoming dominated by the computer with its remarkable capacity to view designs from every possible angle. "In larger offices, even renderings are being produced using three-dimensional design programs. Drawing, the feel of India ink on fine-toothed mylar, will probably not be a part of the picture for very much longer. Computers are fun, but for me nothing can replace having a pen in my hand and being able to sketch on paper." As her opportunities to draw in an architect's office became more and more rare, Minerva set out on her own.

## FINE LINES AND TEXTURES

In retrospect she finds it interesting that she began developing her skills as an artist by drawing loose sketches in felt-tip pen. She discovered that her subjects demanded a much different style, one that could tell the story of nineteenth-century bricks, moldings, and cast iron.

"A lot of artists go in the opposite direction. They start out tight and become looser and looser. I began with very loose sketches and kept adding detail until I developed a new vocabulary for my drawings, with much finer lines. The compositions are tight. There's a focus in the center, and that's where the detail is primarily shown.

"The style I use for my illustrations is not so much the influence of one particular artist as it is of antique etchings in general. Seventeenth and eighteenth-century etchings with their fine lines and textures are the inspiration for my work....My clients tend to be house-proud people who appreciate historically correct restorations. They have devoted a lot of thought to having their properties restored, and they want to enjoy the outcome in complete detail."

Although she has stood outside a building and drawn successive overlays in order to achieve her final perspective, often Minerva uses photographs. Her drawing of a house on Rutland Square, an anniversary gift from a South End resident to her husband, began with a photograph. Minerva may use the given angle or combine several photographs to create her own perspective before she sketches in the windows, doors, and details of the building. Her drawings are India ink on mylar and easily adaptable in case the client has revisions after Minerva thinks the drawing is finished.

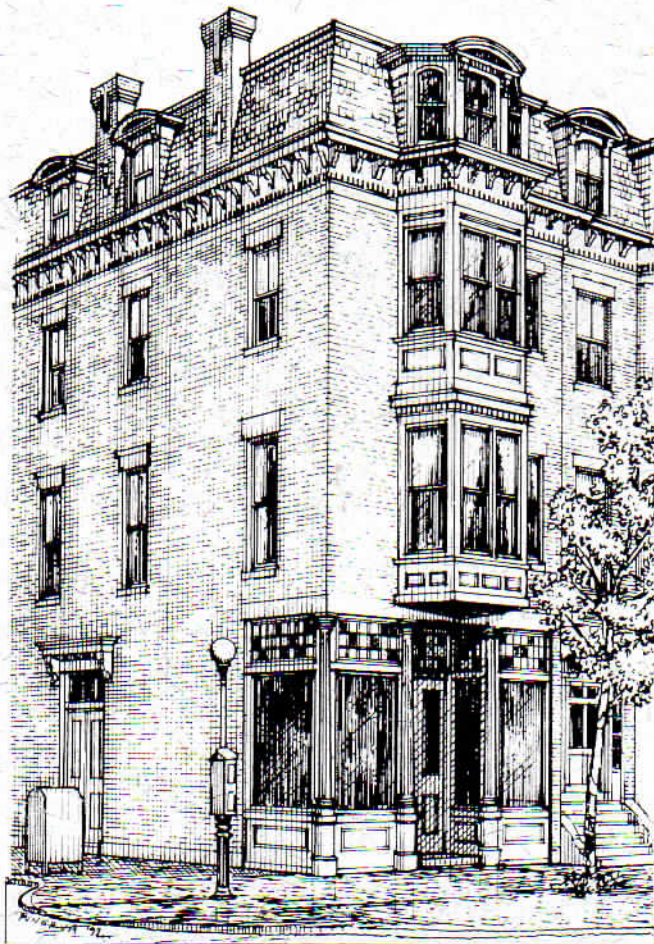
For Paul Duffy's building at 58 Clarendon Street (see stories on page 5) I worked from a set of architectural plans since the renovation was still being built. I had to imagine how the final project would look in perspective."

Since most of her drawings become stationery and greeting cards, Minerva draws in a small scale so that detail is not sacrificed in the printing phase. She has developed a rapport with several printers in Boston who are able to reproduce her drawings accurately.

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## Laura's Restaurant, Remembered...



*O'Ryan Lopez and Chin was established in 1986 by Paul Duffy, a resident of the South End since 1944. Drawing: Rosanne Minerva.*

**P**AUL DUFFY, OWNER of the recently restored 58 Clarendon Street, has lived in the South End nearly all his life. Born in nearby Fort Hill in 1939, he moved to the South End in 1944. His father, a tool and die maker with Holt and Cabot, made guns on Armory Street in Jamaica Plain before he was laid off from his job. Duffy recalls that his dad worked in a gas station on Columbus Avenue to make ends meet. The bustling neighborhood was filled with poor people living in rooming houses. His own parents were broke and housing was hard to find. They lived in a two-room, basement apartment on Clarendon Street with their three young children before moving to Hanson Street. In the late 1950s they joined the exodus of people leaving the South End and moved to the South Shore.

After serving in the U. S. Navy, Duffy returned to the neighborhood and bought the buildings he now owns on Clarendon Street in 1974. "When I was a ten-year-old kid there was a tavern in back at 103 Chandler and out front was a restaurant called Laura's. Before that I'm told this carpentry shop was a First National grocery store. The restaurant had a pass-through to the bar so people could imbibe illegally. Only men were allowed in taverns. It was shortly after Prohibition. Some 'favored' people could get a beer with their dinner. Old-timers who remember Laura's will come down and say 'Oh, Duffy, this looks just like it was. Only the glass wasn't so bright,'" they add, referring to the stained glass ornamenting the store front. "There was colored glass, but it was just odd pieces. They put anything in just after World War II." ➤

## 58 Clarendon Street Restored

**E**BEN KUNZ was the architect for Paul Duffy's restoration of 58 Clarendon Street. One of the pleasant surprises of the restoration was finding the entire, cast-iron store front system under several layers of previous modifications. Studying the original architectural plans for the building, Kunz discovered two windows on the second and third floors of the Clarendon street elevation that had never been built. Kunz and his client Duffy decided to add the windows and reconstruct the bow oriel, which had been removed leaving little evidence of the original construction in the paneling and detail ornamentation of the bay.

One of the small things that made a huge difference in the appearance of the final project, said Kunz, was restoring the cap details on the chimneys that had been terminated at the roofline. The Mansard roof capped the project using the finest copper roofing and flashing. Kunz is Preservation Committee Chairman for The

South End Historical Society. The offices of his architectural firm, Kunz Associates, are at 38 Greenwich Park, Boston, MA 02118-3004. ➤



*Chandler Street Elevation of 58 Clarendon Street, owned by Paul Duffy. Drawing by Architect Eben Kunz.*



## IN • MEMORY • OF

## Janet H. Bryan, 1934-1993

**W**E ARE SAD to report that Janet Bryan, an active member of The South End Historical Society Board, died rather suddenly on October 16, of complications from liver cancer. Serving as Meetings & Functions Committee Chairman since 1991, Janet has been responsible for a series of outstanding programs and events, the most recent only two weeks before her death.

Graduating from Vassar College, and with a M.Ed. from Framingham State College, Janet had taught high school in New Haven, CT, and in Waltham, and was a METCO tutor for the Lincoln Schools. She and her husband Tom moved to Boston from Concord in 1981 and here she continued her many volunteer activities.

In addition to her work with The South End Historical Society, Janet's other work has included service as overseer of the Community Music Center, overseer and adult literacy tutor for United South End Settlements, architectural tour guide and member of the Ladies'

Committee of the Museum of Fine Arts, docent at the Fogg Art Museum, docent at the Museum of Science, secretary of the Women's Culinary Guild, tour guide for Executours and also for the Metropolitan District Commission, member of the Neighborhood Committee of Boston Center for the Arts, frequent volunteer for Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly and for South End Recycling, and recent president of the Pilot Block Neighborhood Association.

She leaves her husband L. Thomas Bryan, daughters Caroline Mudd of Easton and Amy Bryan of London, and son Andrew Bryan teaching in Viet Nam. She also leaves two grandchildren, Jeremy and Genevieve Mudd, and a sister, Dr. Lisa Newton of Fairfield, CT.

A memorial service is planned at First Parish Church, Concord, on Sunday, November 7, at 2:30 p.m. Janet was very special; we shall enormously miss her enthusiasm, her hard work, and her smile full of love and consideration for others. ♦ *Richard O. Card*

## C a l e n d a r

**First Tuesday of every month:**

South End Landmarks Commission  
Room 801, Boston City Hall  
4 p.m.; public invited  
For more information, call (617) 635-3850

**Second Thursday of every month:**

The South End Historical Society  
Board Meeting  
Francis Dane House  
532 Massachusetts Avenue  
7:45 p.m.

**COMING EVENTS:  
NOVEMBER**

Saturday, November 20  
11 a.m.-6 p.m.  
Sunday,  
November 21  
noon-6 p.m.  
Cyclorama  
Flea Market of  
Antiques and  
Collectibles  
over 100 dealers  
Cyclorama,  
Boston Center for the Arts  
539 Tremont Street, Boston



Admission: \$4.00; \$3.00 with coupon  
for more information, call (617) 536-4445

**JANUARY**

Wednesday, January 5  
New Members Reception  
The Francis Dane House  
532 Massachusetts Avenue  
Time to be announced

**MARCH**

Saturday, March 19  
11 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
Sunday, March 20  
noon - 6 p.m.  
Cyclorama Flea Market  
of Antiques and Collectibles, over 100 dealers  
Cyclorama, Boston Center for the Arts  
539 Tremont Street, Boston  
Admission: \$4.00; \$3.00 with coupon  
for more information, call (617) 536-4445

**APRIL**

The South End Historical Society Ball  
Date, ticket information, and  
location to be announced

**MAY**

The South End Historical Society  
Annual Meeting  
Date, time, and location to be announced

## NEWS • AND • EVENTS

## An Artist Draws the South End

(Continued from Page 4)



Elevation of 58 Clarendon Street by  
Architect Eben Kunz helped Minerva visualize  
her drawing before the restoration project was finished.

"Every month I add one or two drawings to the collection."

When Minerva isn't drawing buildings, she gives her imagination free rein in cartoons and sketches of people, faces, and characters. Recently she was sketching cows to illustrate an image from a chapter in *Moby Dick* for an attorney who is decorating his living room with scenes from Herman Melville's epic. One of her goals is to bring her people and buildings together in a series of drawings that would give her the freedom of looser interpretations.

"Most of the time when I am commissioned to draw the rules are stringent. The buildings stand alone. As I look at my older drawings I find that some of the character of the early sketches is missing in my current work. The presence of people and implied architectural detail keep them from looking static. So when I draw for myself I like to show the character of the neighborhood, its parks, and the flow of its streets. It gives me the opportunity to work again in a looser style. I love people's faces and draw bizarre sketches in order to get in touch with my own imagination. People give the neighborhood it's vitality." +

# Welcome

## Greet A New Neighbor with a Membership To The SEHS

**B**ECOME A PART of the effort to preserve the South End, one of Boston's most unique and important neighborhoods, by joining The South End Historical Society. Your dollars and membership will help us achieve our objective of preserving the physical fabric and interpreting the history of the South End for present and future generations.

Newsletters, publications, programs, tours, and numerous other activities are all part of The South End Historical Society. We hope you will support our neighborhood by joining our society and becoming part of these activities.

name or  
names \_\_\_\_\_

address \_\_\_\_\_

zip \_\_\_\_\_  
telephone \_\_\_\_\_

full-time student...	\$10.00	_____
individual.....	\$15.00	_____
family/dual.....	\$25.00	_____
patron.....	\$75.00	_____
life (indiv.) .....	\$300.00	_____
additional		
contribution.....	\$25.00	_____
.....	\$50.00	_____
.....	\$100.00	_____
total .....	\$	_____

Please make checks payable to The South End Historical Society. All contributions are tax deductible.



# CYCLORAMA FLEA MARKET

**D**ON'T MISS the next biannual Cyclorama Flea Market of Antiques and Collectibles that will be held on Saturday, November 20 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday, November 21 from noon to 6 p.m. at the Boston Center for the Arts, 539 Tremont Street. As it has for the past 22 years, the market features dealers who sell everything from jewelry to furniture; vintage clothing to fine linens; antique maps and prints to contemporary paintings; Limoges china to '50s style kitchenware; dolls and toys to Christmas tree ornaments. The market is worth the trip if only to marvel at the crowd—connoisseurs of fine antiques, students trying to find bargains to furnish new apartments, children eager to spend their allowance—and to eat a piping hot Greek meal. And you're sure to find some wonderful and unusual gifts in time for the holiday season. Another fascinating feature of the fair is the building itself. The vast brick and iron Cyclorama building with its soaring ceiling and circular shape was designed by

Cummings & Sears and opened December 1884. The building had twin towers and looked very much like a Norman castle; the towers were eventually replaced by the present flat façade. Originally, an interior panorama, painted on nearly 400 feet of canvas by Paul Philippoteaux and a crew of artists, surrounded visitors with a scene of the Battle of Gettysburg. In 1962 the painting was restored and moved to a building at the battlefield site, where it remains.

The Cyclorama Flea Market of Antiques and Collectibles is one of The South End Historical Society's most important fundraisers. Please support The SEHS and the Boston Center for the Arts. Admission is \$4 or \$3 with a coupon. ♦



**Members: a reminder—don't forget to send in your membership renewal.**



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