



THE SEHS NEWSLETTER

532 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02118-1402

Vol. 21, No. 2

Newly Renovated Hayes Park is Unveiled

After years of decline, Hayes Park is finally on the mend, and its repairs are near completion. Hayes Park is located on the site of the former Warren Avenue Baptist Church at the corner of Warren Avenue and West Canton Street. Built in 1865-1866, the Gothic style red brick building cost \$105,000 and seated 1,300 people. Its congregation remained at this location until 1920 when it rejoined the First Baptist Church on Commonwealth Avenue. The two congregations had separated in 1742.

The Seventh Day Adventists used the building from 1923 until 1940. In 1943, the Church of Our Lady of the Annunciation, an Eastern Rite Catholic church, purchased the property. That congregation moved in 1967 to a new and larger building in Roslindale. Consequently the vacant church was vandalized and eventually razed due to unsafe conditions.

In 1969, a park was designed on the site and built by the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA). The following year, the community honored James Hayes, Sr., a native of County Cork and longtime resident of West Canton Street, by naming the newly created park after him. The park's neighbors have maintained it since its creation and several generations of the South End community have used it well. However, by the mid-1980s, the park was in need of restoration. There was ongoing uneven settling throughout the site, and the side and rear walls were in a state of collapse.

In 1987, a group of interested neighbors began meeting to discuss the continual need for capital improvements of Hayes Park. Ann Johnson of the Landscape Department and Paul Reavis of the Engineering Department of the BRA worked with the group to develop a comprehensive plan for the park. The Friends of the Hayes Park was created as a membership organization — patterned after the Friends of the Public Garden.



Internationally acclaimed sculptor Kahlil Gibran, a resident of the South End, donated his exquisite bronze statue of a "West Canton Street Child."

Now at long last the final touches of the park are being completed. One-half million dollars were allocated toward the restoration, paid for by the City of Boston. Architect Paul K. Lu worked with Ann Johnson's designs and executed the renovation. The walls are of granite and stone dust, historically appropriate for a landmark district. Improvements include the installation of benches, acorn lights, and a simple cast-iron (from page 1) fence. Thirteen new trees and thousands of tulip *Continued on page 8*

Hurrah for Peace

by Richard O. Card



Dick Card, Historian for The SEHS, attending the Society's Spring Ball.

One hundred and twenty years ago, in June of 1872, excitement was in the air of Boston. A huge wooden coliseum had been built on Huntington Avenue, not far from where the Colonnade Hotel now stands and extending to the railroad tracks. The ten-day World's Peace Jubilee was about to begin, ostensibly to celebrate the end of the Franco-Prussian War. There had been another Peace Jubilee three years earlier, but this time everything was doubled in scale. The organizer and conductor of both events was Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore, the great Irish immigrant bandmaster and composer of "When Johnny Comes Marching Home," and Gilmore thought in superlatives. His home at

the time was number 2 Sharon Street in the South End, a street that then ran between Albany Street and Harrison Avenue (parallel to East Brookline and East Newton) on the present site of the Doctors' Office Building.

The 1872 coliseum was 350 feet wide, 550 feet long, and 115 feet high, in a sort of gargantuan Italianate style and supported by great wooden trusses. The stage for the chorus was 240 feet deep. Twelve doorways, each 25 feet wide, allowed easy access to the 50,000 seats provided for an audience actually substantially larger at times. (That is roughly twelve times the seating capacity of today's Wang center, and this long before any sort of electrical amplification to help the audience to hear the performers.) The outside of the building was decked out in bunting and huge flags. Inside was a festival of lush Victorian colors. The roof was water-colored "an ethereal blue tint," with all the timbers and trusses done in straw-color, columns in light gray, and walls in Pompeian red. There were stained glass windows, gilded pineapples holding festoons of bunting, medallion portraits of composers, heraldic emblems, and a 68-foot-long painting of the nine muses. At one end stood "the most powerful organ ever constructed," driven by eight pumps worked by a newly developed gas engine and featuring a 32-foot "Megalophonia" stop.

The chorus was overseen by Eben Tourjee, a South End resident living at 31 Dwight Street. He was the founder of the New England Conservatory and for this event had to organize a more formidable roster of 5,115 sopranos, 4,258 altos, 3,592 tenors, and 4,317 basses, plus a Bouquet of Artists consisting of 175 soloists from around the country. The thousand-piece Grand Orchestra included 200 first violins, 150 second violins, 100 violas, 100 violoncellos, 100 contra basses, 24 flutes, 24 clarinets, 20 oboes, 24 French horns, 24 trumpets, 24 trombones, 4 tubas, 6 pairs of tympani, 4 side drums, 2 bass drums, 2 triangles, and one Monster Drum. This Monster Drum was roughly room size, twelve feet in diameter and weighing 600 pounds. There was also a heavy duty grand piano specially built by Hallet & Davis, whose factory was on Harrison Avenue

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF NEW ENGLAND ANTIQUITIES.

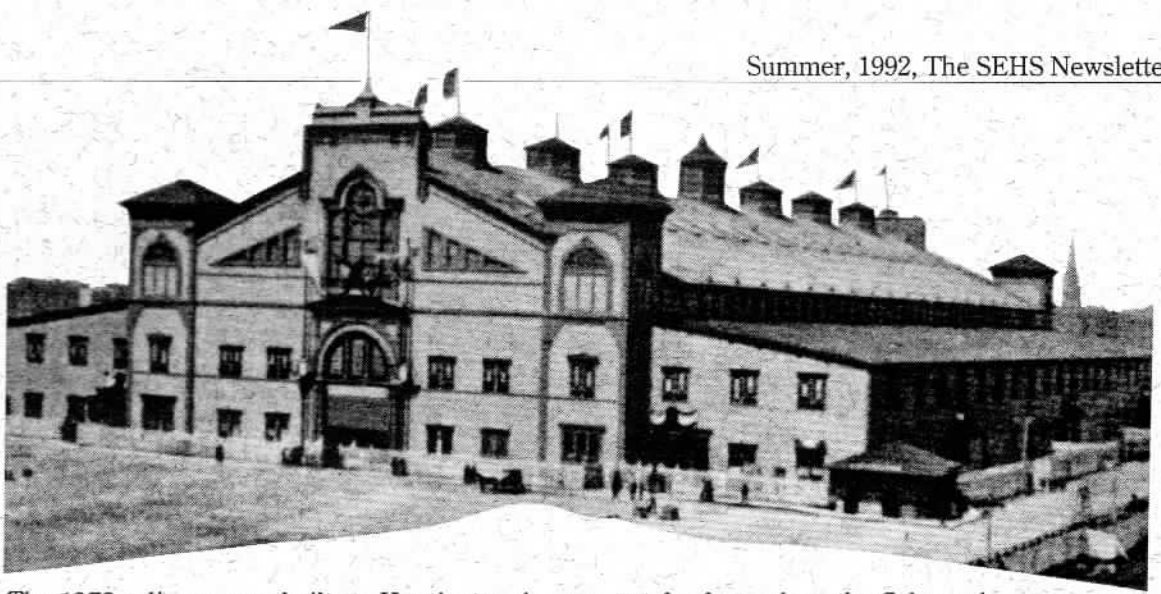


View from the stage of the 1872 Peace Jubilee Coliseum, Huntington Avenue, near West Newton Street.

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



The 1872 coliseum was built on Huntington Avenue, not far from where the Colonnade Hotel now stands, in a gargantuan Italianate style, supported by great wooden trusses.

between East Canton and East Brookline Streets.

Lest this array be inadequate, Gilmore brought in the United States Marine Band from Washington, the Grenadier Guards' band from England, the band of the Garde Republicaine from France, and the Kaiser Franz Grenadiers' Band from Prussia. The Kaiser Franz Grenadiers, when they arrived in brilliant uniforms and helmets topped with scarlet horsehair plumes, marched to the corner of Washington and East Concord Streets, where they were lodged at the venerable Lancaster House. A block away from them, however, was Gilmore's greatest import. Staying at the St. James Hotel (later the Franklin Square House) on East Newton Street was the waltz king himself, Herr Johann Strauss, along with his wife and servants. He had been lured to Boston by the then-astronomical fee of \$100,000.

Huntington Avenue was in a circus mood. From the popcorn emporium at the corner of Dartmouth Street to the coliseum stood continuous rows of temporary shops and saloons. Behind them were tents and sheds offering such attractions as a "flying machine," negro minstrels, a fandango, and Punch and Judy shows. Special trains brought crowds of people into town, along with such dignitaries as President U. S. Grant and most of his cabinet as well as his political opponent Horace Greeley.

On June 17, the first concert of the festival was held. Rev. Phillips Brooks offered the invocation, followed by a welcome from the mayor. Then Gilmore led the entire assemblage in singing "Old Hundred." The rendition of the "Star Spangled Banner" by the organ, full orchestra, and chorus was enhanced by the firing of sixteen cannons set up on the Boston & Albany tracks beside the coliseum. The audience had difficulty hearing a solo pianist in the vast space, but this difficulty did not affect the "Anvil Chorus," which featured the full chorus, orchestra, organ, cannon, and one hundred red-shirted Boston firemen beating rhythmically with sledge hammers on anvils that weighed up to 300 pounds each. Nevertheless the high point of each concert was the appearance of Johann Strauss.

Strauss was horrified to find that he had to stand on a high platform conducting 100 sub-conductors, who in turn led the mob of nearly 20,000 in such delicacies as "The Blue

Danube." In his own words,

"Suddenly there was a cannon shot — a subtle hint for us twenty thousand to begin 'The Blue Danube.' I gave a sign. My hundred sub-conductors follow me as fast and well as they can. And now there begins a terrific racket which I won't forget as long as I live. Since we all had started at approximately the same time, I did all that I could so we would all finish at approximately the same time. Somehow I managed to do it — it was really the only thing I could do. The audience cheered. The noise was fantastic."

Afterwards at the St. James, Strauss was besieged by so many adoring Boston women wanting locks of his black hair that his resourceful butler saw fit to sell clippings from their black Newfoundland dog as genuine Strauss hair. The same trick had been used earlier in Strauss's Russian trip.

Concerts went on each day through June 26th, with Strauss conducting one of his own compositions for each concert. On the last evening a grand international ball was held at the coliseum, a waltz evening to end all waltz evenings. President and Mrs. Grant were there, though they didn't dance, and Strauss once again was among the conductors. The event was relatively formal, but the crowded floor kept ladies stepping lively to avoid having someone tread on their long gowns. Still they managed to dance until 3 AM. So much for the image of the stodgy Victorians.

A few more concerts were given after the main festival, but the coliseum was soon torn down. The festival, unlike that of 1869, resulted in a financial loss. Boston will probably never again see its like. □



The younger Johann Strauss as seen by Wiener Punsch, an illustrated satirical newspaper.

Members Step Out for the Annual Ball

by Kathleen Peets

THE ANNUAL SOUTH END Historical Society's Ball was held on Saturday, April 25 in the gracious ballroom of the Boston Center For Adult Education (BCAE). Two hundred members came out for a night of mingling music and dancing.

The building at 5 Commonwealth Avenue was built in 1904 for a textile merchant, Mr. Bailie. In 1915, the former carriage house and storage area were transformed into the Curtis Ballroom and the Jackson Room in time for the debutante ball of the youngest Bailie daughter. The Louis XV decor of the rooms and the French country estate design reflect the strong influence of Europe on the family during their travels. The BCAE purchased the building from the family in 1941.

Enhancing the atmosphere of the BCAE ballroom and the general festivity of the evening were the lovely floral decorations on each table provided by Florette. East Meets West catered the event and provided an array of appetizers, a light supper and desserts.

The music was provided by L-n-R Productions, with

*Arthur Howe,
President of
The Society,
attends the
Spring Ball.*

*Photographs by
Kathleen Peets*



Lenny Staff and his partner Rob acting as DJs.

In addition to the highlights of food and music, a raffle featured prizes from local contributors: A Street Frames, the Colonnade Hotel, the Four Seasons Hotel, Mail Boxes, Etc., Mike's Gym, the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, St. Botolph's on



Nancy Parker Wilson and Elizabeth W. Gray-Nix



Eben Kunz and Joseph Park



*Frieda Garcia and Byron Rushing,
State Representative*



Pamela Howland, Stephen Greene, and John Neale

Tremont, St. Cloud Restaurant, Tiffany & Company, Warren Electric & Hardware Supply Co., and the Westin Hotel - Copley Place.

The success of the ball was due in large part to the hard work of the committee that put it all together under the leadership of co-chairs Elizabeth W. Gray-Nix and John Piecewicz. Worthy of special note for her work on corporate sponsorships of the ball is Nancy Parker Wilson, The SEHS's fund-raising chair, who did a tremendous job with much help from David Kantrowicz. Committee members for the ball included Kristen Struebing-Beazley, Tom Beland, Selena A. Gallo, and Marilyn Rogosin.

Congratulations to all on another highly successful South End Historical Society event. We are already looking forward to next year's ball to be held April 24, 1993. □



David Kantrowicz and Guest

The Corporate Sponsors Who Made it a Ball

Atlantic Properties
Azita Ristorante
Bertucci's Brick Oven Pizzeria
J. J. Bodner Insurance Agency, Inc.
Boston Marriott Copley Place
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South End Joint Venture
The University Hospital
The Wine and Spirits Centre

Establish a Bequest to The SEHS

THE SOUTH END HISTORICAL SOCIETY, established in 1966, has grown and maintained its role as an advocate for the preservation of The South End's historic built environment. We have relied on the generosity of individuals, corporations and foundations to financially support our activities. We hope our contributors will continue to support our efforts and consider establishing a Bequest to The SEHS.

The following is a sample of a Bequest Form: I hereby give, devise and bequeath to The South End Historical Society, a corporation duly organized and existing under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the sum of (specify) dollars (\$000.00), the same to be applied to the general uses and purposes of said corporation under the direction of its Board of Trustees; and I do hereby direct that the receipt of the Treasurer for the time being of said corporation shall be sufficient discharge to my executors for the same. (or) Devise of Real Estate Form: I give, devise and bequeath to The South End Historical Society, a corporation duly organized and existing under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, that certain tract of real estate bounded and described as follows: (Here describe the real estate accurately, according to the deed.) Will full power to sell, mortgage and convey the same free of all trust. Notice: The address of the Treasurer of the Corporation is: Susan Park, 166 West Canton Street, Boston, MA 02118. Thank you. □

New Members

Mr. and Mrs. David Banta
 Ms. Madeline Bomberger
 Ms. Kay Herbst and Mr. Al Skane
 Mr. Jim Hood
 Mr. Brian Jones
 Adrienne and Chris Kimball
 Ann and Jay McDermott
 Mr. John McDonough
 Mr. Michael McLean
 Mr. Bradford Minnick
 Mr. Rudy Mitchell
 Mr. Tobias Orfe and Mr. Peter Kelly
 John and Joey Pons-Myers
 Mr. Philip Rosoff
 Ms. Linda Lu Schulz
 Mr. Darryl Settles
 Mr. Gary Stoloff
 Mr. Gordon Strause
 Mr. Michael Tavares
 Mr. John Weingartner
 Mr. Troy L. Whitaker
 Myrna and Les Wierson
 Mr. Joshua Young II

Calendar

First Tuesday of every month:

South End Landmark Commission
 Room 801, Boston City Hall
 4 pm
 For more information call 635-3850

Second Thursday of every month:

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

COMING EVENTS:

October

Saturday, October 24, 1992
 10 am - 5 pm
 TWENTY FOURTH ANNUAL HOUSE TOUR
 sponsored by The South End Historical Society

December

Saturday, December 5
 Sunday, December 6

CYCLORAMA FLEA MARKET OF ANTIQUES
 AND COLLECTIBLES

Over 100 dealers
 Cyclorama, Boston Center for the Arts
 539 Tremont Street, Boston

April 27 through July 31, 1992

9am - 5 pm
 REBUILDING BOSTON: PUBLIC WORKS
 AS CIVIC CATALYSTS
 Gallery of The Boston Athenaeum
 10 1/2 Beacon Street, Boston

An exhibition illuminating Boston's historic tradition of rebuilding as a form of urban development from the middle of the nineteenth century. Original models, drawings, and photographs of some of the city's major projects, many not seen outside the offices of the designers and architects who created them, will be included in the exhibition. The gallery is free and wheelchair accessible by prior arrangement. □

NEW • OFFICERS • AND • DIRECTORS

The South End Historical Society, Inc.

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53 East Concord Street, 02118

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4 Lawrence Street, 02116

Fund-raising Director

Nancy Parker Wilson

7 Union Park, 02118

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677 Massachusetts Avenue, 02118

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Janet Bryan

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Newsletter

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193 West Brookline Street, 02118

Preservation Director

Eben Kunz

38 Greenwich Park, 02118

Preservation Director-at-Large

Alex Adkins

164 West Canton Street, 02118

Fund-raising Director-at-large

vacant

Director-at-large

M. Rita Gallo

72 Montgomery Street, 02116



The SEHS to Start Annual House Tours Again in the Fall

Support of Members is Needed

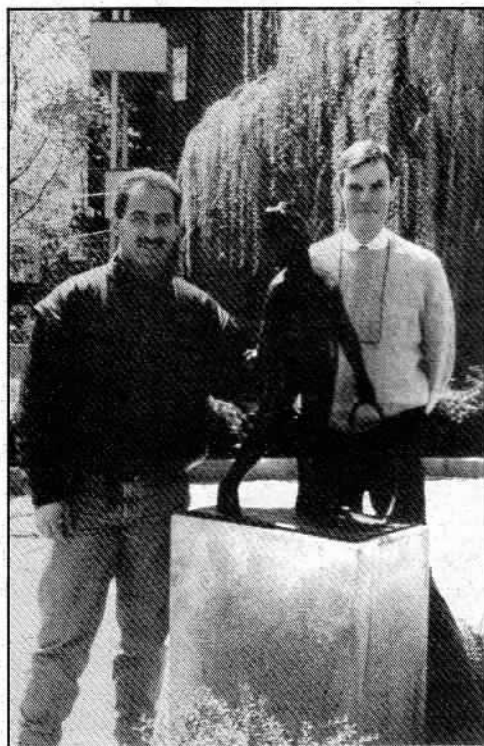
After a hiatus of a few years, The South End Historical Society will once again hold a South End House Tour, planned for Saturday, October 24. The tour had been an annual event, but it became such a struggle for organizers to find people willing to open their houses or to work on the tour that the event was discontinued.

The house tour will allow SEHS members and guests to glimpse beautiful homes and newly refurbished open spaces of the South End. We are very excited about the prospect of once again holding this popular fund raiser and hope to receive a lot of support.

You will be receiving further information during the summer, but please begin to consider being a sponsor of this event. We will also need people to house sit during the tours.

If you are interested or would like further information, please call The South End Historical Society office at 536-4445. □

Hayes Park is Unveiled



Nasim Kahlil and Joseph Park stand with the sculpture by Kahlil Gibran, unveiled at the rededication ceremony held on June 6 for the restored park.

(from page 1) and jonquil bulbs were planted in the park.

Internationally acclaimed sculptor Kahlil Gibran, a resident of the South End, donated an exquisite bronze statue of a "West Canton Street Child." The sculpture, depicting a young girl jumping rope, was unveiled at the rededication ceremony held on June 6th. Present at the ceremony were Mayor Flynn, BRA Acting Director



The former Warren Avenue Baptist Church at the corner of Warren Avenue and West Canton Street stood on the current site of Hayes Park until 1969.

Theodore Chandler, and Councilor James Kelly, who made the project possible. □



THE SOUTH END HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.
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