



# The South End Historical Society NEWSLETTER

532 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02118-1402 — Vol. 25 No. 1, Winter 1995

## *Mayor's Announcement Is a Milestone for Allen House*

BY STEPHEN GREENE

**O**N SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4, the South End was alive with activity. There was much hustle and bustle in the Worcester Square area, especially at Washington Street, as neighbors participated in the fall cleanup. At the same time they were sprucing up the outside of the Allen House for an important announcement.

As some of the neighbors worked on the front of the Allen House picking up trash from the now visible front yard and spreading bark mulch, passersby took notice and wondered what event was taking place. With the removal of the green shedding material, the front yard and entranceway were now prominent. Adding some borrowed flower pots and seasonal

*continued on page 2*

### INSIDE

Allen House A Milestone for the Landmark	2
Union United Methodist	3
Grants for Local Projects	3
The South End House Tour Celebrations and Thanks	4
In Memory Of	6
Calendar	6
House Tour Thanks	6
New Members	7



Mayor Thomas Menino, on the steps of the Allen House, presenting Chris Hayes with a plaque showing the mayor's support for the crimewatch program. *photo: Stephen Greene*



## Mayor Visits Allen House to Make Announcement

(continued from page 1)

pumpkins to the Allen House offered an inviting appearance, welcoming the numerous South Enders who came to hear the mayor's important announcement.

Many had witnessed the slow deterioration of the Allen House and then watched the stabilization work and securing of the building. This day offered the opportunity to see the results of the work and to hear the announcement by Mayor Thomas Menino of the Washington Street Task Force with Randi Lathrop as its appointed chair. Randi and City Council President James



Peter and Lydia Shilland  
*photo: Stephen Greene*

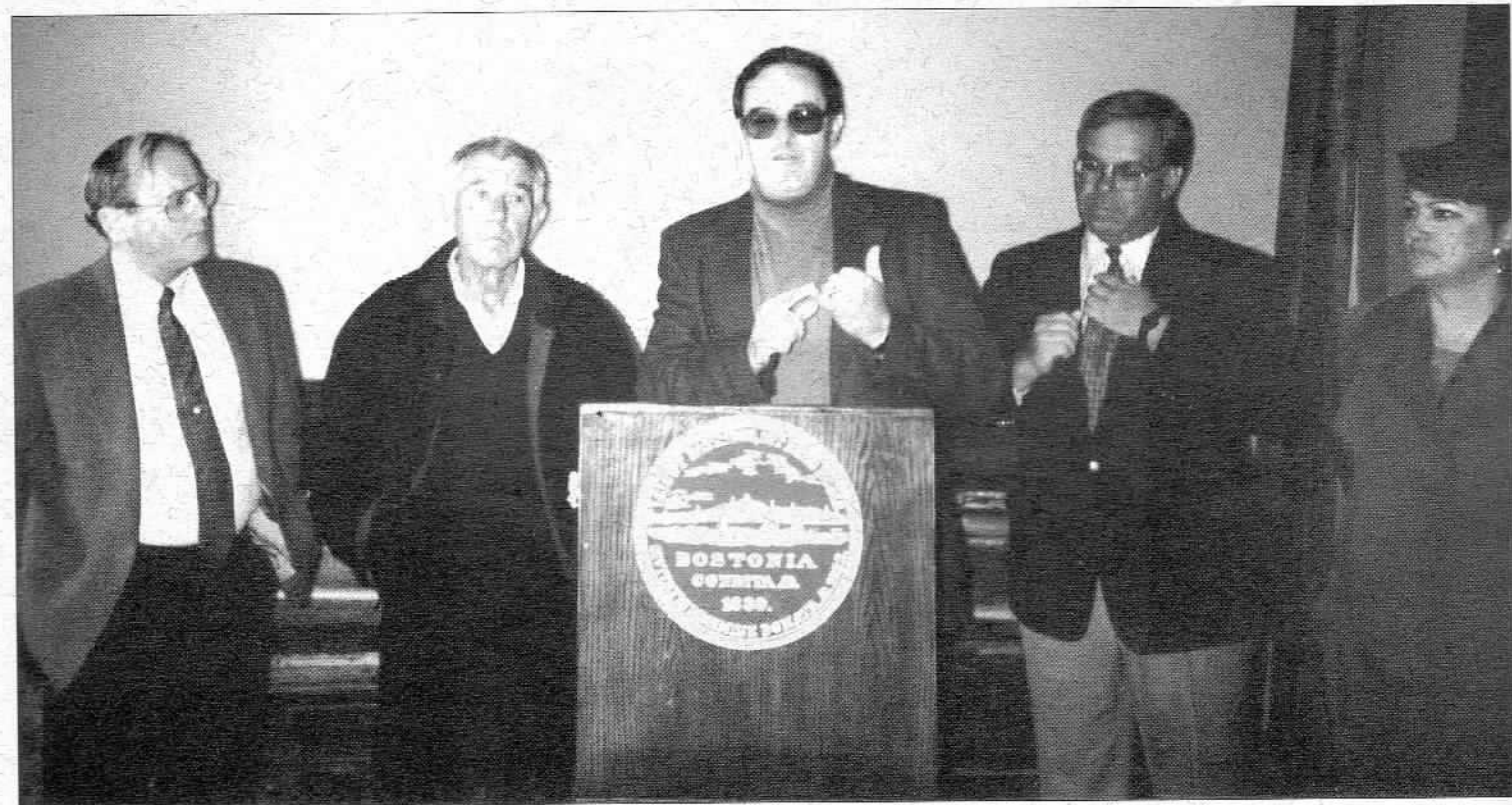
and the importance of the Allen House. Boston's Chief Economic Development Officer Marisa Lago discussed the efforts that the Boston Redevelopment Authority has gone through in the stabilization of this building and the Porter Houses. Arthur Howe, past president, and Stephen Greene, president of The South End Historical Society, talked about the role the Society played in this preservation effort. Kimberly Shilland and Eben Kunz, board members of the Society, were recognized for their leadership



Arthur F. Howe, past president of The South End Historical Society, and Jennifer Goodman, executive director of Boston Preservation Alliance  
*photo: Stephen Greene*

efforts for the work on both buildings.

The South End Historical Society recognition awards were given to Mayor Menino, Council President James Kelly and City Councillor Richard Iannella for the role they played in moving this preservation work forward under emergency conditions. At the same time, Mayor Menino presented Chris Hayes with a plaque recognizing the importance of the crimewatch program. This was an important milestone in the histories of the Allen and the Porter Houses. We might sigh in relief, but much work still lies ahead. These buildings need to be quickly developed in a way that preserves their historic and architectural character while also benefiting the neighborhood. ♦



James Kelly, city council president; Arthur F. Howe, board member; Stephen Greene, president, The South End Historical Society; Thomas Menino, mayor; Randi Lathrop, chair, Washington Street Task Force

## First Phase of Steeple Restoration Completed at Union United Methodist Church

BY JEANNE PELLETIER

**T**HE SCAFFOLDING IS coming down at Union United Methodist Church on Columbus Avenue, ending phase one of the church's ambitious multi-year steeple and building restoration project.

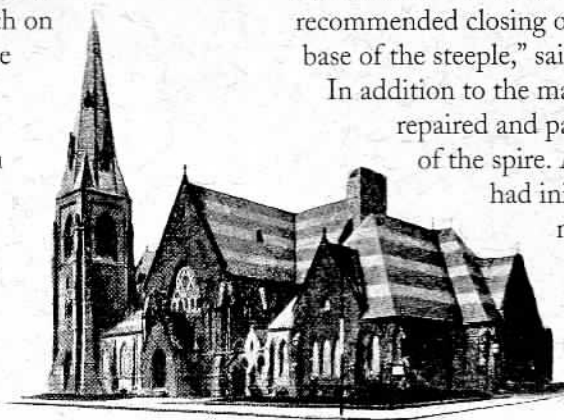
For the past five months, workers from Folan Waterproofing & Construction Company, Inc., under the direction of architects McGinley Hart & Associates, have scaled the 150-foot scaffolding to clean the all-stone steeple, incorporate lightning protection devices, apply a waterproofing solution to spalling sandstone detailing, and install an interior roof drain system. Folan also removed remnants of aged mortar, where it existed, from the steeple — in many cases the mortar had simply disintegrated — and repointed the open joints with a carefully selected mortar to match the original. Over its 123-year history, the church building had accumulated over eleven different mortar types.

The work was critical to the survival of the steeple. During a comprehensive building assessment commissioned by the church in 1994, Wendall Kalsow of McGinley Hart & Associates examined the unique steeple up close from a bucket truck. "The stone walls of the church exhibited many signs of

deterioration due to deferred or inappropriate maintenance. The spire section of the steeple was in especially poor condition. Since water runs down the face of this surface, the masonry is asked to perform more like a roof than a wall. The large quantity of water which had entered the spire masonry allowed freeze-thaw action to greatly accelerate the rate of deterioration. The deterioration was so extensive that we recommended closing or protecting the main entrance at the base of the steeple," said Wendall Kalsow.

In addition to the masonry work, the contractors also repaired and painted two of the four louvers at the base of the spire. A paint analysis revealed that the louvers had initially been painted grey-green, closely matching the color of the building's original slate roof. This color was re-applied to the newly refinished louvers on the Columbus Avenue and West Rutland Street facades, and an innovative bird-repelling netting now protects the louvers.

A matching grant from Historic Boston Incorporated through its Boston Steeples Project and a matching grant from The South End Historical Society helped finance a portion of the \$200,000 cost of Phase I. In 1996, the congregation will use a \$40,000 matching grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission to begin Phase II of the project, which will include completing work on the steeple and possibly repointing critical areas of the main church building. Next year will also bring exterior lighting of the steeple and church facade through an additional grant from the Steeples Project. ✦



Union United Methodist Church, Columbus Avenue and West Newton Street *photo: postcard view*

## Organizations Receive Grants for Local Projects

**T**HE BOSTON FOUNDATION for Architecture, established in 1984 by the Boston Society of Architects and architects and allied professionals, has awarded its 11th annual round of grants to help underwrite the costs of public education programs that focus on the built environment and environmental awareness. This year, the Foundation specifically solicited proposals for programs that focused on "Investments in the Public Domain" and on ways in which communities throughout Massachusetts could strengthen public awareness and public investment in public community spaces and community infrastructure.

The Foundation's board of trustees has made nine grants totaling \$25,000. Included in this group are two projects with significance to the South End. MYTOWN will receive \$3,500 to support the development of a one-mile walking tour that traces the history of the black community in Boston's South End from 1895 to the present, and WalkBoston will receive

\$2,000 to support the development of a map and working draft for a self-guided walk around the outline of the original Shawmut Peninsula beginning and ending in the South End south of the original Boston neck.

The South End Historical Society congratulates both of these organizations and wishes them luck with these exciting projects. ✦

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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: Stephen Greene, President E. Domurad, Editing & Design  
Susan Park, Treasurer Daniel Sugarman, Communications  
Barbara Anderson, Secretary & Publications Committee Chair



# House Tour Showcases the Eclectic South End

BY LEE DUNN

**E**VEN THOUGH THE 27th South End House Tour arrived on a wet and gloomy day, hundreds of people turned out to tour the eight homes and five public buildings, making it one of the most well-attended tours in recent years. The weather forced us into the newly renovated Boston Center for the Arts Theater lobby to sell our tickets, as opposed to the Kiosk. But even that turned out to be a benefit because friends and neighbors had an opportunity to meet and chat over doughnuts and coffee provided by one of our corporate benefactors, Visibility Inc.

This year's tour focused upon two very distinct neighborhoods. The English-style residential square of Union Park was a wonderful contrast to the narrower and more intimate feeling of the Bradford and Eight Streets neighborhoods. A sense of pride in their community was evident as volunteers stood in Ringgold Park the day of the tour to talk about the future of this former school site turned public park. And in the days and weeks preceding the tour, homeowners in the area worked hard cleaning their neighborhoods, along with the help of the Public Works Department of the city of Boston. It was a wonderful collaborative effort, and we thank them all for their support.

The tour consisted of a broad range of homes in various sizes and styles, including a dramatic work in progress on a five-story Victorian bowfront that is one of only two single-family homes left on Union Park. As one of the largest intact residences in the South End, this home captured the imagination of everyone who toured it. The most exciting news of all is that the owners have offered to place their home on the tour again next year so we can view its restoration progress.

Among the public buildings on the tour was the beautiful Cathedral of the Holy Cross, highlighting its recent multi-million-dollar chapel restoration. In addition to a new altar and tabernacle, the chapel now contains a fully restored E. & G. G. Hook and Hastings organ built in 1888 by the former South End organ maker. The Cathedral contains its original organ by the same manufacturer.

The Greek Orthodox Church of St. John the Baptist was also open, despite the collapse of a portion of its ceiling in late July of this year. The Byzantine artistry within the sanctuary and the beautiful stained-glass window left from its days as a Jewish Temple provided a delightful surprise to many who had never been inside this church. The building was designed by N. J. Bradlee and was one of two on the tour by this prolific South End architect. The other was the St. Cloud Hotel, where a spacious contemporary penthouse captured the entire tour from its dramatic rooftop view.

The Graham Gund designed headquarters building of the Boston Ballet was also on tour, with the costume shop in full production for the Nutcracker Suite. The Franklin Institute and portions of the BCA rounded out the tour of public buildings. ♦



*thank you  
for a  
successful  
house tour*

BY STEPHEN  
GREENE

**S**O MANY PEOPLE made this fall's House Tour a wonderful success. Even though the weather was not very cooperative, you and our volunteers worked hard to make this



fundraising effort our best tour yet.

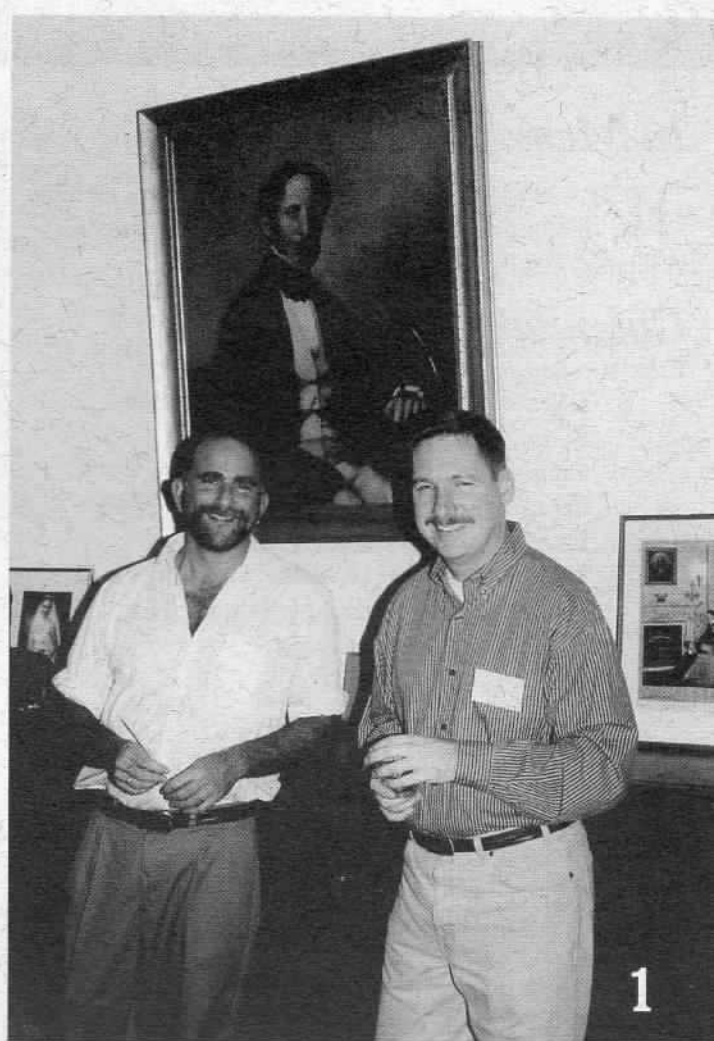
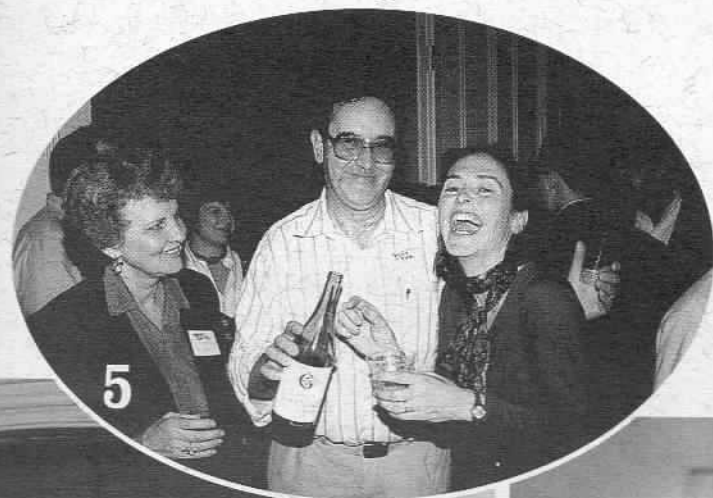
Many thanks to Lee Dunn and Adrienne Kimball for their work. To our volunteers, sponsors, tour house owners and to those behind the scenes: Mike Dunn; Joe and Susan Park; Arthur Howe, and Nancy and Bill Wilson, with much appreciation...

Capping the day was the traditional Sponsor's Party, held this year in the home of Nancy and Bill Wilson of Union Park. ♦

Photos, left to right: 1. David Stein, House Tour

home owner, and John Piltzecker, House Tour sponsor; 2. William Shaw, House Tour home owner, and Susan Hamilton, House Tour sponsor; 3. John Amodeo and Brian De Lorenzo, House Tour sponsors; Adrienne Kimball, fundraising director at large; and Lee Dunn; 4. Lee Dunn, chairman of the fundraising committee, and Mayor Menino. 5. Stephen Greene, The SEHS president, and Nancy Wilson, House Tour sponsor.

*photos: Mike Dunn*



## In Memory Of

WE ARE SADDENED to report the death of a member of The South End Historical Society, Florence Williams.

## Calendar

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  
7:00 p.m.

### COMING EVENTS:

#### MARCH

Saturday, March 16

11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Sunday, March 17

11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

CYCLORAMA FLEA MARKET OF  
ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES

Over 100 dealers

Cyclorama

Boston Center for the Arts

539 Tremont Street

Boston

Admission: \$5; \$4 with coupon

For more information, call 536-4445.

#### MAY

Saturday, May 4

THE SOUTH END  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPRING BALL

Boston Ballet

Building

19 Clarendon Street

Music by Four Guys

in Tuxes

Watch for more  
information.



## House Tour

AS FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE chairman I would like to thank the following people for helping to make this year's tour a success:

### HOMEOWNERS

Hunter O'Hanian and Jeffry Cismoski  
Donald Morton and Michael Swartzell  
David Stein and Ace St. George  
William Ralph  
Joe Todaro and Mike Cogley  
Chester Woolley and Frank Girvan  
Kelly Brown and Oliver Desmain  
William Shaw

### CORPORATE AND INDIVIDUAL SPONSORSHIP

Adrienne Kimball, Fundraising Director

### ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Fran Duffly

### TICKET SALES

Susan Park and Conrad Agneta  
Sarah Kunz and Mike Dunn  
Ned Flaherty and Fran Duffly  
Joe Park  
Hunneman & Co/ Coldwell Banker  
Kennedy Studios  
M. J. Berries/Maggie Ballard Antiques  
Mail Boxes, Etc.  
Old South Realty  
The Picture Store  
Prudential/ Gibson  
A. E. Rondeau  
South End Realty Group

### SPONSOR'S PARTY

Nancy and Bill Wilson

### HOUSE CAPTAINS

Stephen Greene  
Susan Hamilton  
Cathy Marotta  
Jim McQueen  
Karen Parker  
John Piltzecker  
Marilyn Pond  
Dan Sugarman

### HOUSE TOUR FLAGS

Arthur Howe  
Susan Park



## NEWS • AND • EVENTS

## HOSPITALITY

Mike Dunn

## HISTORIAN

John Neale

Special thanks to Tom Tinlin, Neighborhood Services, and Bill Stanton, Public Works Department, city of Boston, for public services support.

Sincerely,

Lee Dunn, chairman  
The SEHS Fundraising Committee

*A special thanks to our  
house sitters:*

Barbara Anderson  
Karen Anderson  
Deborah Asbrand  
Gordon Bebe  
Mary Canby  
Dick Card  
Nancy Carleton  
Ron Cheney  
Ken Cronin  
Paul Curtis  
Geoff Davis  
Phil Davis  
Eric Dray  
Mike Dunn  
Pete Erbland  
Bob Faulkner  
Mark Ferbert  
Monica Flaherty  
John Goode  
Alan Goostray  
William Greene  
Tom Grigsby  
Cindy Grillo  
Sheila Grove  
Jeannette Hajjar  
Pat Hall  
Dan Heenan  
Kay Herbst  
Pam Howland  
Gail Ide  
Helen Jordan  
Frank Jordan  
Jane Joyce  
Nan Kern

Carolyn Kraut  
Eben Kunz  
Marty Kyne  
Patrick Lamerson  
Mark LaSaffre  
Bob Lathrop  
Rose-Marie Latlippe  
Mary Leen  
Ed Lewis  
Richard Lombardi  
Jay Lynch  
Jerry Magnifico  
Bill Makos  
Ranee Martin  
Lee Martz  
Ann Mavor  
Christine McCarrick  
Dennis McCrum  
John McDonough  
Palma McGuire  
Laszlo Meszoly  
Amy Meyers  
Scott Monahan  
Nancy Monbouquette  
Jeff Mondon  
Margaret Morad  
Tom Myers  
Marilyn Pajk  
John Passanese  
Wanda Pearle  
Sandy Pepe  
Shelia Perkins  
Lorraine Pitts  
Margaret Preston  
Fernando Requena  
Patrick Requena  
David Richardson

Jack Rizzo  
Blake Roberts  
Rick Roessle  
Melissa Scher  
Jane Schwerdtfeger  
Geraldine Scott  
Tracy Smith  
Laura Spence  
Bob Tanzie

Ken Tutunjian  
Alice Verhoeven  
Ken Watts  
Larry Wenglin  
Paul Whaley  
John Whiteside  
Carolyn Woollen  
Nathan Yang  
Winnie Zimmer

## New Members

Gay Bailey  
Paul Bingaman  
Bertha & Robert Blicher  
Linda Breckenridge & Wayne Rollins  
Carl Brooks, Jr.  
Rolf I. Carlson  
Edward Chick  
David Davidson & Stephen McGurl  
Laird Elting  
Julia Graz  
Terrence Heinen  
Helen Jones  
Michael Kevin Lynch  
Cynthia Chace MacNiel  
Terry MacDonald  
Charles McCormick  
Donald McGrath  
Andrea Papanek  
Kevin D. Parker  
Suzi and Thomas Parks  
Payne/Bouchier  
Marcia & Al Pertuz  
Harold F. Pfister  
Alison & Joseph Quinan  
Blake Roberts  
Martha L. Rothman & Elliot Paul Rothman  
Mark Schwindenhammer  
Dr. Beverly M. Shafer  
Michael Shannon  
Judith Sugarman  
Lee Thornhill & Jacob Murray, D.M.D.  
David Wayne & Paul Fortier  
Peter Wild  
Stephen W. Wolfe