



Dorchester Historical Society NEWSLETTER

Dorchester Historical Society, 195 Boston Street, Dorchester, Massachusetts 02125-1613
www.historic.org/dorchester

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(617) 265-7802

Summer 2007

ANONYMOUS DONOR OFFERS \$30,000 MATCHING DONATION FOR BLAKE HOUSE



The Blake House exterior restoration is nearly complete.

An anonymous donor has challenged the friends of the Dorchester Historical Society to match a donation of \$30,000. If we can find enough donors who can together match this wonderfully generous offer we will have met our goal.

We have received \$50,000 from the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund of the Massachusetts Historical Commission plus

\$70,000 in individual contributions for a total of \$120,000. This new donation of \$30,000 and the matching money to be raised will come to \$60,000 for a grand total of \$180,000. When combined with the sales of Blake House mugs and trivets and other efforts, we will have enough to finish paying

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Annual Meeting

An election of the new board of directors took place at the annual meeting of the Dorchester Historical Society on May 20 at the William Clapp House.

Officers - One-year terms

President - Earl Taylor
Vice President - Marcia Sewall
Secretary - Robert Severy
Treasurer - Rosanne Foley

Directors-at-Large - Three-year class

Ruth Brown	Jeffrey Gonyeau
Jim Cooke	Karen MacNutt
Larry Davidson	Charles Tevnan

Directors-at-Large - One-year terms

Robin Allsop	Philip Lindsay
Paul DeLorey	Anne Schmalz
Sean Denniston	Michael Stella
Elaine Happnie	Emy Thomas
Janice Knight	Van-Lan Truong
Barbara Langis	



After restoration by Glenn Shalan, the Blake House leaded glass windows were ready for painting.

Help the Blake House

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for the project.

Every contribution will help us make the match. For donors who could not sponsor a window in the past but would like to, they can now use the matching donation to do so. A contribution of \$1,500, when matched, will provide the necessary funds to pay for the restoration of one of the leaded glass windows. You and Anonymous can now become window donors.

Now that the wraps have been taken off the house, it is a stunning presence in Richardson Park.

Grant awarded for landscape plan at the Clapp houses

The New England Grassroots Environmental Fund of Montpelier, Vermont awarded the Dorchester Historical Society a \$5,000 Boston Grants Initiative toward a \$10,000 first phase of a landscape redesign project.

The landscape project will improve the condition of the three-quarter acre grounds on Boston Street to facilitate their use, to better reflect the historic

importance of the site and to improve the public perception of the DHS and its value to the community.

For this first phase, DHS is working with Community Outreach Group for Landscape Design to design a landscape master plan. The BGI funds will help offset costs associated with developing the master plan, which includes an analysis of the existing site conditions, brainstorming potential uses and identifying historic landscape features, then designing a master plan. The landscape design team is Jean Cavanaugh and Virginia Stewart of Cavanaugh Stewart Design Associates.

To get involved in this project, please contact Anne Schmalz at dorhist@aol.com or 617-265-7802.



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DHS names two directors emeritus, four Dorchester Adventurers

*DHS Board
directors emeritus
Don McGill and
Fred McDonald are
pictured on the
DHS float at the 2004
Dorchester Day Parade.*



For their long service to the Dorchester Historical Society, Fred MacDonald and Donald McGill were both named to the Society's Board of Directors as Board Member Emeritus, and they were awarded the title of Dorchester Adventurer. Also named Dorchester Adventurers were the late Joe Langis and the late Don Brown, both past presidents of the DHS board. They join the Rev. John White and others, who offered their dedicated service to the creation of a new Dorchester in New England.

The movement that eventually brought the Puritans to New England began as a fishing venture, not unlike other fishing ventures of the day, promoted as early as 1622 by sundry merchants and adventurers of Dorchester in south western England. The **Dorchester Adventurers** hoped to profit by setting up a plantation in New England in the immediate



*The late Don Brown (above) and
the late Joe Langis (left) were
named Dorchester Adventurers.*

neighborhood of the fish to be caught, thus saving both time and money by taking advantage of the proper season for fishing and cutting out the cost of extra seamen and the return of the fishing vessels to England. The originator of the idea and the leader among the adventurers was the Rev. John White, whom the historian Hubbard calls one of the chief founders of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Although in 1626 the Dorchester company, wearied of adventuring

in that kind by reason of their losses, withdrew its support and the Gloucester settlers dispersed, not all of the Dorchester company were willing to give up the undertaking without further effort, and its most important member, the Rev. John White, did not despair. As a result, meetings were held in London, at which plans were made for the erection of a new company - the New England Company - to take over the Dorchester project and to plant a colony in the New World.

2007 Top ten endangered properties in Dorchester

The Architectural Preservation Committee presented its list of the top ten endangered properties at the annual meeting on May 20. The committee, formed in 2004, works to raise awareness of architectural treasures in the Dorchester and Mattapan community. This year's list, the fourth annual, includes these houses:

- 1.) **2 WOODWORTH ST. (1874) THOMAS F. TEMPLE HOUSE** - A fire in March 2007 during condo conversion work has led to the building inspector condemning property and the developer says it must be torn down.
- 2.) **20 PEARL ST. (CA 1860)** - Developers bought this rare gingerbread Gothic house in order to demolish it and construct two 3-unit condo buildings.
- 3.) **1203 ADAMS ST. (CA 1795) JOHN BUSSEY HOUSE** - Rumors of demolition to create parking have surfaced recently.
- 4.) **386 CENTRE ST. (CA 1830)** - Owner plans to demolish this potentially historic house on one of Dorchester's oldest streets.
- 5.) **107 MINOT ST .** - Plans to subdivide and develop this property has neighbors worried about preserving the historic aspects of the building.
- 6.) **ST. PETER'S CHURCH, CORNER OF BOWDOIN AND PERCIVAL (1884) AMERICAN GOTHIC**

REVIVAL - Community discussion with the Archdiocese is ongoing about the future of this important building.

- 7.) **131 CENTRE ST.** - Listed in 2006, this long-vacant property is now for sale by owner.
- 8.) **111 OCEAN ST.** - Over the past 15 years this solidly-built, attractive two-family has been almost destroyed by questionable mortgage activities and foreclosure.
- 9.) **39 ADAMS ST.** - This is typical of early 19th century pre-annexation houses being demolished for development.
- 10.) **GLOVER'S CORNER** - Dorchester's earliest commercial district has become the focus of development interest due to planned traffic improvements at the chaotic intersection of Freeport and Hancock streets and Dorchester Ave.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission has funded the Boston Landmarks Commission to conduct an intensive survey of Dorchester and Mattapan with priority given to buildings that pre-date Dorchester's annexation to Boston in 1870, specifically buildings associated with early settlement patterns including residences, barns, outbuildings and carriage houses.

To get involved in the DHS Architectural Preservation Committee, email dorhist@aol.com or call 617-265-7802.



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