



# Diamond Hill News

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*DHHS President Patrick H. Gatti presented the following report during our Annual Meeting January 8, 2008.*

President Gatti

## President's Annual Report

I would like to begin by thanking the membership for your support last year. I would particularly like to thank the Officers, Directors, Committee Chairpersons and many volunteers who helped make it another good year for Diamond Hill. Kaye Chandler, as President, began 2007 by laying out an active operational plan that included three fundraising events and provided a good foundation for activities throughout the year. In April, Kaye and Dan Hague resigned their positions as President and Vice-President. The DHHS Board convened on April 22 to prepare for the election of replacements which took place at the May 1st Business Meeting. I was elected President and Rad Briley, Vice-President.

### Fundraising events

The first fundraising event for the year was Friday Cheers held on June 29. As in the past, this was a "fun" activity for our volunteers and we received \$834 for our efforts. I would like to thank Julie and Vernon Neighbors for not only organizing this event, but also for donating 20 aprons with the DHHS logo on them for the Society's use in future activities.

The next major event was the Ghost Walk held over three nights, October 25 through 27. In spite of the poor weather on the first two evenings, there were 351 visitors and the project generated \$1800 of revenue. I would like to thank LHF for allowing us to work with them on this project. I would also like to thank Sally Schneider, Sarah and Scott Carstens for their great organization and execution of this event.

The final fundraiser for the year was the Christmas Candlelight Tour held December 2. Once again the weather was cold and rainy; however 539 visitors toured the decorated homes. This event brought in \$7156. I would like to thank Julie Neighbors and Fran

Briley and their committee, the many volunteers and especially the homeowners, for this most successful event. I would also like to mention the City's excellent response to our request for leaf removal prior to the tour. I sent a letter of appreciation to several City officials for this support.

### Other activities

I would also like to note some of our other activities of the year. Neighborhood Watch continues to be an important focus for DHHS. Bob Halpin, as our Neighborhood Watch contact, was very active in communicating our concerns to the Lynchburg Police and we appreciate the LPD's ongoing participation in our meetings.

Neighborhood Beautification is a major budget expense for us and is certainly worth the investment. Dennis Newton, our Beautification Chairman, had a particularly challenging year as a result of the record drought last summer and fall. As we exceeded our budgeted expenses for this item, Dennis provided the Board with an analysis of these expenses and made several recommendations on how we could reduce them. The Board appropriated additional funds and made some changes to reduce expenses.

Our Website was improved over the past year thanks to the leadership of Mari Smallshaw. The newsletter is now posted on our Website. Historic plaques were added to five homes on the Hill this year.

Children's activities continued during 2007 and remind us how fortunate we are to have children in our neighborhood—another sign of our continued vitality. An Easter Egg Hunt was held on April 7 and I would like to thank Carol Banker, Tina Secord, Julie Neighbors and the Smallshaw's for making this a grand event for the children.

Chuck Bradner gave a good presentation on Jamestown History at the April 3 Business Meeting which included a test and noted some Diamond Hill residents who were descendants of the Jamestown settlers.

On April 14 DHHS supplied nine volunteers to participate in the City's Operation Clean Sweep. This crew assisted in picking up trash on some of the streets of downtown.

Kaye Chandler worked with Realtors, vendors and other Historic Districts to put together the Grand Open House Tour on May 6. There were approximately 200 visitors to the open houses in the Historic Districts and Downtown. A special thanks to Kaye for organizing and to Fran and Rad Briley for

opening their house as the Hospitality House.

The June Social was hosted by Don and Carol Banker at their home, 400 Washington Street, on June 5. Our thanks to them for a most enjoyable evening.

### Other progress

In October the Society endorsed the City's plan to stamp the pavement on 13th Street and at the end of Clay Street with a brick pattern. This improvement made the surface more uniform.

I would like to recognize the fact that, as of January, the *Diamond Hill News* celebrates the beginning of its 30th year of continuous publication. A special thanks goes to Jim Carrington for producing this very effective representation of Diamond Hill.

### Recommendations

Looking forward, I would like to recommend that our Board and Society consider the following items in 2008:

1. Develop and implement a specific plan for the development and use of our Endowment Fund.
2. Recruit new members and encourage former members to become active once again.
3. Encourage volunteerism for DHHS events and other city historic activities.
4. Seek out and implement additional revenue-generating activities.
5. Continue the focus on communication and involvement of residents of Diamond Hill in the City's Historic Districts Street Restoration Process.
6. Develop a yearly historic research and education project.
7. Familiarize the new Board with Robert's Rules of Order.
8. Seek ways to encourage the sale of the many vacant homes on the Hill.

### Conclusion

We can be proud of our successes during 2007. We had a full calendar of events, with successful fundraising efforts and numerous volunteers willing to serve or open their homes; we had good financial resources in place; we had home owners continuing to make major and minor improvements to their homes; we had a strong organizational structure and committed residents in place to weather any change; we had an effective way to communicate with members and supporters. People continue to make DHHS effective and the neighborhood a great place to live. I look forward to the opportunities we have in 2008.

## Officers & Directors elected

Congratulations and thanks to the following Officers and Directors who were elected to office during our Annual Meeting, Jan. 8, 2008:

- ◆ President: Patrick H. Gatti
- ◆ Vice-President: Leonard R. Briley
- ◆ Recording Sec: Nancy J. Zehmer
- ◆ Membership Sec: Marla E. Potter
- ◆ Treasurer: Jeffery Schneider
- ◆ Historian: Jean L. Hannon
- ◆ Director 2008-09: Julianna K. Neighbors
- ◆ Director 2008-09: L. Robert Halpin

During this year Jon I. Alvarenga and James J. Carrington will be completing their two-year terms of office as directors. On behalf of our membership, we would like to express our sincere thanks to three retiring officers for their outstanding contributions made while in office:

- ◆ Recording Sec: Carolyn T. Banker
- ◆ Treasurer: George W. Dooley
- ◆ Director 2006-07: Mari W. Smallshaw



LHF Merit Award Winners: Jim Tracey and John Seminatore

## Congratulations to Jim and John

During the Annual Meeting of the Lynchburg Historical Foundation the evening of January 10th, John R. Seminatore and James E. Tracey received a Merit Award for their outstanding renovation of the S.H. Franklin Building at 921 Main St. Jim and John are both DHHS members.

Architects Hal Craddock and Lynn Cunningham received the LHF's John D. Owen Jr. Memorial Award for their work on the Craddock-Terry Hotel. The Preservationist-of-the-Year Award went to S. Allen Chambers Jr. and Nancy Marion.



707-709 Fourteenth Street

## Neighborhood Watch News

Reported by Bob Halpin

I received a call from Mr. James Hemphill reporting several break-ins at the duplex he is renovating at 707-09 Fourteenth St. He was afraid that he was investing in a high-crime neighborhood. He has a couple working with him who will occupy one half of the duplex and they expressed the same concern. As we discussed the crimes I assured him that Diamond Hill was not an area of high crime. Several members of our neighborhood voiced this same opinion at our last meeting. Criminals do see an empty house as a target for burglaries, however, especially when they sense that there are valuable tools and construction materials to be had by breaking and entering. After checking with neighbors on both sides of his property Mr. Hemphill felt reassured that having his property occupied would make a difference.

We all need to be vigilant regarding our neighbors' properties, as well as our own. As you walk and travel the streets, please be alert for suspicious activities by those who are not part of our community and report them to the police. Whenever you have the opportunity, take a moment to look out of your windows and report any illegal or suspicious activity you notice. We can help reduce crime and improve the security of our neighborhood by establishing a reputation of being a unified Neighborhood Watch Group.

Cindy Kozerow, LPD's crime-prevention specialist, offers this advice from her most recent experiences with crime: "...remind people about the necessity of not leaving valuables in their cars, locking the car doors even if they are parked in their own driveway, and making it a habit to turn porch lights on at night." Let's follow her advice and keep a porch light burning in the evening to show that we're home—and watching.



## Diamond Hill News

Published Sept. through May by  
**Diamond Hill Historical Society, Inc.**  
 P.O. Box 803, Lynchburg, VA 24505  
 Website: [www.diamondhill.org](http://www.diamondhill.org)

### Officers & Directors

*President:* Patrick H. Gatti  
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*Recording Sec:* Nancy J. Zehmer  
*Membership Sec:* Marla E. Potter  
*Treasurer:* Jeffery Schneider  
*Historian:* Jean L. Hannon  
*Director 07-08:* Jon I. Alvarenga  
*Director 07-08:* James J. Carrington  
*Director 08-09:* Julianna K. Neighbors  
*Director 08-09:* Robert Halpin

### Committee Chairpersons

*Newsletter Editors:* Josie Alvarenga and Jim Carrington  
*Neighborhood Watch:* L. Robert Halpin  
*Neighborhood Beautification:* Dennis Newton  
*Tours:* Julianna K. Neighbors  
*Hospitality:* Tina Secord  
*Children's Activities:* Mari Smallshaw  
*Fund-Raising:* Kaye Chandler  
*Endowment Fund:* George W. Dooley

### Meetings

Business meetings are usually held at 7:30 p.m. on first Tuesdays of each month except June, July and August. Owners of properties in the Diamond Hill Historic District and others interested in supporting historic preservation are welcome to attend.

### Membership

Annual dues for Active Members are \$10.00 per person and the initiation fee is \$5.00 (first year). Active Membership is limited to adult members of households owning Diamond Hill property. Annual dues for Associate Members are \$10 per person (no initiation fee). All members receive this newsletter at no charge. Newsletter subscriptions for non-members are \$5.00 per year.

### Publisher's Statement

The Diamond Hill Historical Society (DHHS) is a nonprofit historic preservation organization approved under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. Its purpose is to preserve and encourage—through the fostering of education, research and restoration—the historical and architectural integrity of the Diamond Hill Historic District. DHHS was incorporated in the Commonwealth of Virginia February 22, 1979. Views expressed in the *Diamond Hill News* do not necessarily reflect the position of DHHS or its officers and directors.

**Contact Us:** [dhscontact@yahoo.com](mailto:dhscontact@yahoo.com)

### City unveils Government Access Channel

A relaxation of the FCC's rules for cable providers is allowing them to drop technical support for public access programming. Comcast, the local cable company, notified the city last year that their personnel would no longer operate the video studios in City Hall or televise City Council meetings, which they had been carrying on cable Channel 7.

Although cable service providers no longer required to provide equipment or personnel to help local organizations produce their own shows, they are required to carry "PEG" channels (Public, Education, Government). When they learned of Comcast's decision last year, City Administration decided to exercise their option to have a government channel, and City Council appropriated the necessary funds for personnel and equipment.

Our neighbor, Steve Smallshaw, along with Phil Spinner who had been operating the studios in City Hall for Comcast, were hired to head a new Broadcast Services division in the city's Communications & Marketing Department. Steve was formerly the Lynchburg Bureau Chief for Roanoke channel WDBJ-TV. They will be operating out of the former Comcast studios currently being renovated in the basement of City Hall.

Comcast is in the process of renewing its franchise agreement with the city and the topic is tentatively scheduled for City Council's Feb. 12th meeting. If Council approves the new franchise, public access Channel 7 will cease and LTV, the city's new government channel, will be activated on cable Channel 15.

The new channel will carry City Council meetings and work sessions, as well as Planning Commission meetings—all live. The monthly meetings of the Historic Preservation Commission will be taped for later viewing.

Steve stated that he and Phil Spinner are also charged with creating new programming for the government channel, such as programs featuring various city departments, employees or services. "The neat thing about this is that all of these shows are—or will be—available by video streaming on the city's website; you can watch any meeting at any time of the day. You'll even be able to fast-forward to the agenda item you're interested in viewing. It's a major improvement and advancement for the city—all in line with Council's goal to make city government more open and available to the public."

Our congratulations to Steve and Phil on their new positions and to City Administration for taking the initiative to keep the citizens of Lynchburg informed.



### 1709 Grace St. auctioned

The three-story Shelmore Apartments at 1709 Grace Street (shown here) and the vacant lot behind it were sold at public auction on the steps of the Circuit Courthouse Nov. 20, 2007 by Substitute Trustee Seth E. Twery. The only bidder was Michael Walsh, representing Granite Partners of Baltimore and Richmond, the mortgage holders.

Charles Neal had purchased the apartment house from Sergei A. Goumilevski and Rabinovich during 2007 for \$370,000, but his whereabouts is unknown, according to Walsh. The city's Inspections Division had notified Neal that he had to correct several deficiencies in the property. After he defaulted on the property and disappeared, Granite Partners took over the management of the property and made the required repairs.

### 2008 Business Meetings

A huge **THANK YOU** to those families who offered to host our business meetings this year:

Dates	Hosts	Locations
February 5	Pat Gatti	608 Washington St.
March 4	Mary Kathryn & Bill McIntosh	700 Pearl Street
April 1		
May 6	Charles Bedat & David Porter	316 Washington St.
September 2	Julie & Vernon Neighbors	602 Washington St.
October 7	Katheryn & Hampton Brown	601 Pearl Street
November 4	Josi & Jon Alvarenga	1421 Harrison St.
December 2	Scott & Sarah Carstens	501 Washington St.
Jan. 6, 2009	Jane & George Dooley	508 Washington St.

### Primary elections Feb. 12th

Registered voters in Lynchburg will have the opportunity to express their preferences for presidential candidates during the statewide Democratic and Republican Presidential Primary Election on February 12th. We encourage our members and supporters to participate in this election.

### Select your perfect tree

Not sure what tree to plant around your home? Help is now available online. Just go to [www.arborday.org/treewizard](http://www.arborday.org/treewizard) to find the right tree for your situation. Answer a few simple questions about soil, sun and size and the Tree Wizard will suggest trees that fit your needs.

### Diamond Hill properties for sale

- ◆ 1216 Clay Street
- ◆ 1223 Clay Street
- ◆ 1225 Clay St: Harris-Sneed House (c.1882)
- ◆ 1304 Clay: Ryland-Addison House (1906)
- ◆ 1308 Clay: Stokes House (1906)
- ◆ 1313 Clay: Akers House (1904)
- ◆ 1420 Madison: Moore House (1910)
- ◆ 605 Pearl: ½ of Owens-Heald Duplex (1899)
- ◆ 606 Pearl: ½ of Blackford Duplex (c. 1880)
- ◆ 709 Pearl St: McLaughlin-Batte House (1921)
- ◆ 611-13 Washington: Threadgill-Clay House (1893)

### Diamond Hill property sold

- ◆ 1319 Harrison Street: from J.P. Morgan Chase Bank, trustee, to Donald E. Carty, \$24,000.

**1600 Grace St. advertised**

A legal notice in the Jan. 12 issue of the *News & Advance* announced that 1600 Grace Street will be offered for sale at public auction at the front entrance of Lynchburg Circuit Courthouse on Wednesday, Jan. 30th at 11:00 a.m. [Note: Trustee sales are often cancelled if the lien-holder has been satisfied beforehand.]

City Assessor's data indicates that this wood-frame residence, located at the corner of Laurel and Grace Streets, was build in 1855—one of the few antebellum buildings left in our neighborhood. Its assessment has been slowly decreasing since 2001 and is currently listed as \$75,200. Although it is located a block outside our historic district, it would be an excellent candidate for real estate tax relief if substantially renovated.



1600 Grace Street (built about 1855)



**Youths implicated in disappearance of beer bottles, broken TV et al**

*Reported by Kevin d'Eustachio*

Early in the afternoon of Jan. 1, 2008, parties unknown made off with an eclectic collection of empty beer bottles, plastic bags and other items—including a shattered computer monitor and an old TV set. The items disappeared from the overgrown area around the gate at the corner of Locust and Laurel Streets. The presence of gloves on the hands of the youths offered evidence of the extremely nasty condition of some of the items in the collection.



**Shooting on Grace Street**

The Dec. 28 issue of the *News & Advance* reported a shooting that occurred in the 1800 block of Grace Street the previous evening. The 18-year-old victim was taken to Lynchburg General Hospital and a 17-year-old was later arrested in connection with the shooting.

During our January business meeting, members asked LPD's Neighborhood Watch representative why the public was not informed of the large number of gunshots nearby residents heard during the Grace Street encounter. The officer stated that the incident was indeed "gang related" and agreed to obtain additional information about the incident to report at our February meeting.

*Feb. Meeting*

**Tues., Feb. 5**  
**7:30 p.m.**

at the

**Evans-Bass Wood House**  
**(1905)**  
**608 Washington St.**

Host: Pat Gatti  
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