



# Diamond Hill News

Published by the Diamond Hill Historical Society, Lynchburg, VA

March 2008

[www.diamondhill.org](http://www.diamondhill.org)

Vol. 30, No. 3



**City's new museum opens**—Since the fateful day in 2000 that the ceiling of the Lynchburg Museum in the historic Old Court House crashed to the floor, the building has undergone a complete renovation and several galleries of new exhibits were created. Dana Thayer's operation in Madison Heights built the displays that present a fascinating story of our city's history. Some 500 to 700 artifacts from the museum's collection are now on display. As visitors enter, the stunning panorama above stops them in their tracks. The 1855 landscape of Lynchburg painted by Edward Beyer has been enlarged to fill the entire area once occupied by the judge's bench. We urge our members who have not seen the new museum to visit it ASAP. Admittance is free through the end of February.



## HPC commissioners appointed

City Council recently appointed two citizens to serve on the city's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). Garland Hill resident Amy Brown and Federal Hill resident Neil Bohnert began their three-year terms at the HPC's January 28th meeting. Architect Scott Glass is the new chairman and Dr. James Mundy vice chairman.

Our thanks to our neighbor Lisa Harris Fogleman who recently completed her term on the board. With her replacement, Diamond Hill no longer has a representative on the board. Garland Hill and Federal Hill each have two representatives and the other historic districts have none. The HPC appointed Architect Gary Harvey to serve as the advocate for Diamond Hill. Property owners in our historic district who have questions about the COA process or who need assistance preparing COA applications should contact either Gary Harvey or HPC Secretary Annette Chenault for assistance.

## DH Community Center renovation

The Diamond Hill Community Center on 17th Street will soon have a new look. A new gated entrance will be built and dedicated parking will be provided. Landscaping, sidewalk improvements, fencing, lighting and signage improvements are also being made and new playground equipment will be installed.

## Madison Street blocked by tree branch

Late on the afternoon of Friday, Feb. 15, a large van attempted to back out of the 1300 block of Madison Street. As it approached Washington Street, however, the truck hit a limb of the tree near the corner, knocking it into the street and completely blocking traffic. The police eventually investigated and by early evening a city crew had cleared the street. The old tree bears the scars of several earlier encounters with vehicles.

## Wind storm Feb. 10

A violent wind storm ripped through Lynchburg on Sunday, February 10th, and continued through that night. Diamond Hill residents are still picking up twigs and branches, pulling plastic sacks out of trees, and collecting the widely disbursed pile of trash left on the street by the Liberty University students renting 609 Washington Street.

Due to the storm, several homes on Pearl Street and in the 1400 block of Madison Street lost electrical service about 2:30 p.m. on Sunday. That's not exactly true. During the next 16 or so hours, line voltage in that area occasionally dropped to zero, but for most of that time it flopped erratically between 30 and 100 volts, with an occasional spike up to 150 volts. At least one family had an appliance burn out during one of the low-voltage periods. Electric service was finally restored about 7:00 p.m. on Monday.

## Tips on brush disposal

Dave Owen, the city landfill supervisor, offers the following tips for disposing of brush. Cut up any long branches so that they are not longer than 8 feet and not more than 3 inches in diameter. Place your brush at the curb and call **856-CITY** to have it collected.

If you hire a contractor to cut up your brush and take it to the landfill, there will be no landfill fee if you provide your contractor with a documentation identifying your address. A utility bill, a note from you, or some other document containing your address will do the job.

## June Social scheduled

We are pleased to announce that our June Social this year will be held at the home of Jean and Ted Hannon, 708 Pearl Street. The date is tentatively set for June 3rd.



### Get Ready for an "Egg-Citing" Easter Egg Hunt!

All children ages 10 and under are invited to our annual Diamond Hill Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, March 22nd at 10:30 a.m. on the lawn at the corner of Washington and Harrison Streets. Children should bring their own Easter Baskets, and they're welcome to bring their friends, too!

We will divide the children into different age groups so that they will be hunting for goodies with other children close to their own age. In addition to the egg hunt, we will play games such as the egg roll and the egg toss, so don't dress up too much! Afterward, everyone is invited to the Smallshaw's home, 409 Washington Street, for refreshments.

Bring your children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews and friends! In case of rain, the Easter Egg Hunt will be held on Monday, March 24th at 2:00 p.m. For more information, contact Mari Smallshaw at 846-3242.

### LHF events this spring

The Lynchburg Historical Foundation is sponsoring a talk by S. Allen Chambers Jr. and Nancy Blackwell Marion, who will discuss their new book *Lynchburg 100: An Illustrated Guide to Lynchburg Landmarks*. The talk will be held March 18 at 7:00 p.m. at Westminster-Canterbury.

If you'd like to participate in the bus tour to Lexington scheduled for Saturday, April 26, please call LHF now to reserve a seat (the bus only holds 14). Tickets are \$35 for members or \$55 for non-members (lunch on your own). The bus departs from LHF Headquarters, corner 12th and Court Streets, at 9:30 a.m.

### DH Baptist Church requests support

We received a phone call recently from Ms. Willie Thornhill, a representative of Diamond Hill Baptist Church, requesting a letter of support for their application for a CD Block Grant to make improvements to the historic Diamond Hill Fire Station (Engine House #2) which is owned by the church. The recent wind storm damaged the roof of the fire station, she said, and the grant would be used to repair the roof. The church would also like to improve the interior to accommodate meetings of church groups and community groups. Kelvin Moore is their architect for the job.

As we go to press, President Gatti is contacting our Board of Directors for permission to provide the requested letter. Applications for CD Block Grants are due this year on February 20th.

In his *Lynchburg: An Architectural History*, S. Allen Chambers states that Fire Station #2 is "the oldest surviving firehouse in Lynchburg . . . the fourth such structure erected." [pp. 257-58] It was designed by August Forsberg in his capacity as city engineer and was built in 1883. "Forsberg capped the otherwise unadorned brick structure with a handsome roof line and emphasized the center of the two street facades with pediments. Within each pediment is a small triangular louvered vent. Obviously, . . . the attic vents could have been accommodated more economically, but the charming decorative effect more than compensates for the extra expenditure involved.

"The diminutive structure eventually proved too small for the longer and more efficient trucks that it was called upon to house. A first attempt was made to adapt the building to more modern equipment by the simple expedient of lengthening the first floor. In the 1960s a new Grace Street Station was built, and Forsberg's station was eventually sold to the adjoining Diamond Hill Baptist Church. Although the deed of sale specifically gave as a condition that the building be demolished, that mandate has fortunately not been exercised."

We are indebted to DH Baptist Church for saving this historic building.

## 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)

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### 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 (DHS) 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. DHS was incorporated in the Commonwealth of Virginia February 22, 1979. Views expressed in the *Diamond Hill News* do not necessarily reflect the position of DHS or its officers and directors.

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

## Are parking meters needed?

A meeting chaired by City Manager Kim Payne was held Tuesday, Feb. 6th at the Bluffwalk Center for downtown merchants and interested citizens to hear parking consultant Lee Bourque summarize the study Carl Walker Inc. has completed of Lynchburg's downtown parking. He began his presentation by defining the borders of the study area (5th Street, Madison Street, US-29 and the Riverfront) and stated that the city is not using the available parking efficiently.

Although many had assumed that utilization of available parking must now be at least 80%, Bourque stated that the study showed occupancy of the existing 7006 identified parking spaces is actually 53%, with the heaviest usage occurring in the Genworth area. 85% occupied is assumed to be a "full" condition.

During several days last year the consultants tracked parked vehicles by license numbers and concluded that downtown workers who park on the street are a major cause of the inefficient use of available parking space. There is no incentive for downtown employees to park off the street. Other problems include assigned parking in private lots, the lack of places to park for longer than two hours and vehicles exceeding permitted time limits.

He recommended that private parking lots rent spaces on a first-come basis, rather than assigning spaces. Many other cities use this method, which enables a lot to accommodate 10 to 20% more vehicles. Although strict enforcement of parking limits would provide more spaces, Kim Payne said he would prefer a more positive solution to the parking problem.

Another solution Bourque suggested was to install parking meters to make it more expensive for downtown workers to park on-street than off-street. "I can't find a parking place" is the primary reason citizens give for not shopping downtown, he said. Few citizens object to the cost of metered parking, and meters are now available which can be "fed" with a credit card. He recommended starting metered parking with a period of free 30-minute parking. He also suggested that any new housing in the downtown area be required to provide parking for the residents.

Several citizens spoke against the metered-parking proposal and Gary Case insisted—over and over—that more parking decks are needed immediately. If the consultant's other suggestions are used, Bourque said, investment in new parking decks could wait for a few years.

Councilman Mike Gillette spoke in favor of meters, "We're short-circuiting the free-market system by providing free on-street parking." Action to address parking problems is already underway; the city is hiring a parking manager to oversee whatever decisions are made.



1319-25 Church Street in 1961



1319-25 Church Street today

## History of a parking lot

The downtown YMCA was built in 1956 at 1315 Church Street. Within five years the need for parking for their members had developed; so the Y's board of directors authorized the purchase of the four row houses shown above for \$5250. The buildings were located adjacent to the "Y" on a lot 89 feet wide and 128 feet deep. In 1961 the board had the buildings demolished and the lot was graded to provide the needed parking.

Shown below is a portion of sheet 7 of Sanborn's Insurance Map of Lynchburg (1938 update). Church Street runs vertically on the map, just right of center. Thirteenth Street runs across the top of the map and Washington Street across the bottom. The arrow indicates the location of the row houses. How many other structures can you identify? Which no longer exist?



## Beautiful job, Jean!

Congratulations to Jean Hannon, our retiring historian, for the beautiful job writing and publishing DHHS's Annual Report for 2007. Copies of these reports are filed at Jones Memorial Library and provide an excellent overview of our neighborhood for people—particularly new residents—looking for historic properties in Lynchburg.

Members can obtain a copy of the report from our president, Pat Gatti, for a donation of \$3.00.

## Thanks, Charlie!

Before moving to Lynchburg, Charles E. Bedat worked as an accountant in Connecticut. We deeply appreciate his professional expertise and the time he spent auditing our books for 2006. He has also agreed to audit last year's books for us. His work is a significant saving for our organization. Thanks again, Charlie!



East end of Washington St. in January 2006      Same view in February 2008

**Permit parking**

Because of the poor management of the apartment house at 310 Washington Street, nearby property owners plan to apply for permit parking in that area. It is indeed unfortunate that a developer who has purchased many properties in our city is incurring the wrath a DH property owners by ignoring their numerous complaints about his apartment house. The property is owned by HROK, LLC of Charlottesville, VA.

**Liberty U. students on DH**

The Liberty University students renting the house at 609 Washington St. from Anya Scott have shown blatant disregard for our neighborhood. Our president, Pat Gatti talked with them about the trash problem they were causing and explained the city’s trash ordinance to them. They continued to ignore his advice even after Pat contacted them a second time.

The students put their trash cans out in the middle of the week, rather than on Friday, which is trash-collection day for our area. City ordinances allow residents in our area to place trash cans at the curb on Thursday after 6 p.m. or by 7:00 a.m. on Friday. They must be removed by 6:00 p.m. on Friday.

The most serious problem caused by these students occurred Sunday, Feb. 10th. The huge collection of trash they had left on the sidewalk beside their trash cans was distributed by the windstorm the length of Washington Street and into some of the cross streets. The students had neglected to place their trash in appropriate containers and had neglected to provide trash tags; so the city workers left the trash on the sidewalk when they emptied the trash cans on Friday. Are we wrong to expect anything better from Liberty U Students?

**Weed trees gone**

Until early 2007, two decrepit old mulberry trees, completely shrouded in ivy, blocked the view of the James River Valley from the east end of Washington Street. Both pictures on the left show the east end of Washinton St. in January 2006 and in February 2008 after removal of weed trees. The first of those two weed trees was blown over in February of 2007 and removed by city contractors. When it blew over, it apparently broke the nearby gas line and the street was torn up to repair the line. The section of concrete curb removed by gas company contractors is still missing.

Klaus Schreiber Jr., the city’s urban forester, stated that both of the trees were diseased and his contractors removed the other tree this winter. It comes as no surprise that numerous mulberry shoots have already sprouted in that area. This year might be an appropriate time to talk about what we’d like to see done with the area along the Washington Street steps. What do *you* think?

***Mar. Meeting***

**Tues., March 4**  
**7:30 p.m.**

at the

**Yancey-Suhling House**  
**(c.1857)**  
**700 Pearl St.**

Hosts: Mary Kathryn &  
Bill McIntosh

