

# LANDMARK

NEWSLETTER OF THE PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION OF THE SOUTHERN TIER

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PAST -- a Gift to the Future

WINTER 2011

## Fire Threatens Historic Perry Building

**PAST Headquarters is Spared, Kilmer Press Building Sustains Some Damage**

Shortly after 9:00 on the night of December 21, 2010, fire broke out in the historic Cyrus Strong Building at 17 Chenango Street, Binghamton. PAST offices are located in the Perry Building, adjacent to the Strong Building on the south side.

Built in 1898 as Binghamton's first Masonic Temple, it withstood a fire of similar magnitude in 1919 and was rebuilt soon after. Over the years the Strong Building served as an extension of McLeans Department Store and was later connected to adjoining structures to create a multi-store Midtown Mall, wrapping around the Perry Building with entrances on Chenango and Court Streets.

Recently the long-vacant building was being renovated for reuse as student housing.

The spectacular fire could be seen for miles. At one point the roof of the Strong Building collapsed, sending flames high above the neighboring 12-story Press Building.

The Press Building sustained extensive smoke, water and some fire damage, while the Perry Building, located on the south side of the burning building seemed to survive the experience without damage. The cause of the fire is not known at this time.

It is only through the outstanding efforts of City firefighters that the fire was contained and did not spread to other structures within the Court Street Historic District.



*The fire-ravaged Cyrus Strong Building as viewed from the neighboring Press Building. The roof of the 1876 cast iron Perry Building can be seen at the center of the photograph.*

See Photos of the fire scene at this website: <http://nysLandmarks.com/fire>

# COMING EVENTS

## UNO's CHICAGO GRILL FUNDRAISER

On Sunday, February 20, PAST is holding a "Dough Raiser" at UNO's Restaurant on Vestal Parkway. Bring the invitation included in this newsletter, enjoy lunch or dinner at UNO's, and 20% of your bill goes to help PAST!

## FIRST FRIDAY ART WALK

Make the historic Perry Building in downtown Binghamton your first destination for every ***First Friday Art Walk!*** PAST's exhibits are always interesting, filled with photographs and information regarding local architecture and historic preservation.

- First Friday, February 4, 6-9pm **Eyes on Five**
- First Friday, March 4, 6-9pm **1876 Lithographs**

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

**Saturday, May 14**

*SAVE THE DATE*

*For This Year's Historic Tour of Homes:*

Featuring Carriage Barns, Victorian, and Colonial Revival homes dating from the 1850's in one of Binghamton's oldest and most beautiful West Side neighborhoods, PAST presents its 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Home Tour. The five homes in this year's tour are all within walking distance in the Abel Bennett Tract Historic District.

Included in the tour this year are two carriage barns. One of them is a companion to a Second Empire style mansion, since demolished, that was home to three generations of the Bennett family. The barn survived, and today serves as testament to the owner's ingenuity and love of architecture. Known as the barn property of the Chester B. Lord estate it is nestled within city limits and accessed through a common driveway with a neighboring property. Although land locked, the owners enjoy the privacy of the setting and the uniqueness of putting architectural feats to "good use".

The second Carriage Barn has lovingly been renovated by the owners. This barn overlooks the Susquehanna River with its breathtaking views. The owners' interest in beautiful art, gardening, and collecting is reflected throughout their home both inside and outside. The families that grew up in these properties were very lucky indeed.

Tickets will be available on the day of the tour as well as in advance through our website, [www.pastny.org](http://www.pastny.org). Stay tuned for more information as we get closer to the date.

For more information call the PAST office: 607-237-0887 or visit [www.pastny.org](http://www.pastny.org)

## SPIRITS OF BINGHAMTON'S PAST

The Spirits of Binghamton's PAST Halloween Tour last October was held on a crisp, clear autumn night with a full moon. Christ Church, celebrating its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary, provided a perfect centerpiece for the walking tour. About 270 walkers attended the event. All raved about the talented actors and wanted to know their names. So here is a list:

### The Spirit

Joshua Whitney  
Organist  
Rod Serling  
Mother Connor  
Willis Sharpe Kilmer  
Isaac Perry & wife  
Truman I. Lacey  
Murderer Ruloff  
Judge  
Sheriff  
Deputy  
Dr. Kilmer  
Charla Hull

### Portrayed by

Doug Duel  
Laura Nancy Kennedy  
Dave Rasey  
Roseanne Norris  
David Merrill  
Scott & Maureen Hause  
Justin Stark  
Brandon Lown  
Evan Stark  
Tom Puterbaugh  
Billy Jack Broder  
John Darrow & Sparky  
Judy McMahon

Tour Committee members were: Joan Sprague, John Darrow, Crystal Lown, Linda Jackson, Phyllis Eronymous, Gail Domin, and Ruth Levy, who also researched and wrote the scripts.

PAST would like to acknowledge donations from Coughlin and Gerhart LLP, Hinman, Howard & Kattell, and Levene, Gouldin & Thompson. Thanks also goes to Christ Church Vestry for their hospitality, and to the hearty tour guides and their sweeping assistants.

Visit this website to take an on-line virtual tour:

<http://nysLandmarks.com/spirits>

## 2010 HOLIDAY PARTY

The annual PAST Christmas party was held at the home of Board Member, John Burns on Friday, December 10<sup>th</sup>. John's magnificent Riverside Drive home is beautifully restored and was tastefully decorated for the holiday season. The evening was filled with holiday cheer, festive food, drink, and good friends. A wonderful time was had by all who attended. Thank you John for a memorable evening!

## GREEN MAN ORNAMENTS

**At the Roberson Center**

A Green Man Christmas Tree at *Roberson's Home for the Holidays* was decorated by PAST members Elaine Benjamin, Linda Brown and friends with 30 custom designed and crafted Green Man ornaments.



## ANNUAL AWARDS CEREMONY

PAST's annual awards ceremony took place on November 2, 2010, in the Helen Foley Theater at Binghamton High School. Awards were presented as follows:

### BINGHAMTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

- Helen Foley Theater, Binghamton

### BROOME COUNTY

- George Harvey Justice Building
- Greyhound Bus Terminal

### BINGHAMTON FIRST WARD ACTION COUNCIL

- Marlborough Building, Clinton Street
- Dwightsville Workers' Cottages, Front Street

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR BROOME

- Liberty Street Apartments

### SEPP, INC.

- Harry L. Apartments

### VILLAGE OF JOHNSON CITY

- CFJ Carousel

### KELLY WAGSTAFF

- 51 Main Street, Binghamton

### RICK PESCATORE

- 97 Court Street, Binghamton

### THE RYCHELEWSKI FAMILY

- Barn Restoration, Kirkwood

### KENNETH & LINDA JACKSON

- Washingtonian Hall, Endwell

### *PAST RECOGNIZES* **JACK WATKINS** AS HONORARY TRUSTEE

During the recent Holiday party, long-time Board member and former President of PAST Jack Watkins was recognized for his years of dedicated service to the organization.



Ruth Levy presented Jack with a citation bestowing on him the honorary position of Board Trustee.

## Funding Committee News

By Ken Jackson

**Enjoy a Sunday meal February 20<sup>th</sup>  
at UNO's Chicago Grill... and Support PAST!**

PAST members and friends, please mark your calendars for Sunday, February 20<sup>th</sup>, to enjoy a great meal at Uno's Chicago Grill in Vestal and support PAST at the same time! Just give one of the coupons included with this newsletter to your server on that day, and twenty percent of your check will be donated to PAST! ***How easy is that?*** A surprise celebrity chef will be there to greet you, and PAST information will be on display in the lobby. Please share these coupons with family and friends and ask them to join you in supporting PAST. If you are able, invite family and friends to ride with you and dine together....the more the merrier! If you need additional coupons just copy the ones in the newsletter, pick up more at the PAST office, or call 237-0887 to request them.

### BUSINESS MEMBER DRIVE

The funding committee has a goal of increasing business memberships and donations. A membership drive letter to potential business members was mailed in December to over 600 area businesses, with a goal of increasing area business participation in, and awareness of PAST. The committee will follow up with many of the businesses in 2011, and your help could make a big difference! If you know the owners or leaders of a local business, please encourage them to join PAST as a business member. Your personal connection can make a big difference! Please let us know if you've spoken with someone or if you are interested in doing so.

### GRANTS PROJECT

Your funding committee is increasing efforts to obtain more grant funding for PAST, which will supplement your generous memberships and donations. Funding is a large challenge in today's economy and we anticipate this challenge will continue in 2011 and beyond. If you have grant writing skills you would like to share, if you would like to participate on the grants subcommittee, or if you have ideas or suggestions, please contact Ken Jackson, 607-341-1584 or email: [kenjny@stny.rr.com](mailto:kenjny@stny.rr.com)

### CULTURAL DATA PROJECT

The New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) recently established a program to accumulate financial and operational data from participating organizations. Registration in the "Cultural Data Project" is required of all future NYSCA grant recipients, and PAST intern Rebecca Buzen is working to ensure that PAST completes the lengthy process by the April 1 deadline.

## THE GREEN MAN PROJECT



Binghamton's Ross Building held some of the finest examples of Green Man architectural features in the Southern Tier. In June 2008, the building was demolished, along with many of its magnificent terra-cotta Green Men.

At the last minute, due in large part to PAST's efforts, two of the Green Men were salvaged. Unfortunately, while in storage the largest and finest specimen was damaged... completely broken into five pieces!



PAST has now obtained the pieces from the City and launched a three-phase project to first repair the piece, then create a latex mold and eventually cast concrete duplicates for use in new construction and as lawn and garden ornaments.

Phase one is nearly complete. The Green Man is now whole again.

Soon the piece will be ready for the mold-making process, and hopefully, duplicates will be available for purchase in the spring... a truly appropriate season for this ancient symbol of renewal and rebirth.



## EYES ON FIVE

*Five Endangered Historic Landmarks  
Featured in January and February Exhibits*

A photo exhibit opened at the PAST gallery for January's First Friday Art Walk and continues on display through February. Located in the Perry Building, 89 Court Street, Binghamton, the display can be viewed weekdays from 10:00 to 4:00, and weekends by appointment.

## Update on The Strand

On November 23, 2010, the long vacant Strand Theater in Binghamton was auctioned. The winning bid came from an undisclosed source, however, the deal subsequently fell through and the Strand was offered to the next bidder. As this newsletter goes to print, sale of the Strand has not yet been finalized.

## Help Find a New Home for the PAST SALVAGE SHOWROOM

Since its inception, PAST has provided a valuable public service by salvaging architectural and construction material for reuse. For the last two years the PAST Salvage Showroom has been located at the Lofts on North Depot Street, Binghamton, in space generously donated by the building's owner. Unfortunately, the space is no longer available and a new home for the Showroom needs to be found. If you know of appropriate space that may be available and would like to help PAST continue this valuable service, please contact Karen Anderson by email: [Karenabgm@aol.com](mailto:Karenabgm@aol.com), or call the PAST office.

Stay tuned... hopefully a new location and grand opening will be announced soon and the Salvage Showroom will be back in business!



## GREEN MAN UPDATE!

PAST is very pleased to announce receipt of a generous donation from member Nathaniel Levy for the Green Man Project. The donation was made in honor of Levy's mother, longtime preservation advocate and PAST Board Trustee, Ruth Levy. *To learn more about the exciting GREEN MAN PROJECT, to get information on sponsoring this effort, or to reserve a duplicate of the Ross Building GREEN MAN, contact the PAST office: 607-237-0887.*



# PROFILE

## GETTING TO KNOW OUR BOARD MEMBERS

### Deacon Stephen Boyd

by Kay Buckley

Born in Illinois and raised in Missouri, Stephen Boyd tells us that his philosophy of life combines the legacy of Abraham Lincoln with the motto of Missouri: Actions speak louder than words. This combination explains Boyd's industrious, methodical approach to all endeavors in which he participates, especially volunteerism.



At Alameda University in Idaho, Mr. Boyd earned an undergraduate degree in Management and a graduate degree in Computer Information Technology. He is also an ordained Deacon serving at Our Free Will Baptist Church in Binghamton. Additionally, he is the Multi-Media Manager of Broome Community College as well as a member of the Campus Committee on Diversity and Inclusion. Deacon Boyd is a former President of the Lawton, Oklahoma Chapter of the NAACP. Last but not least, he is an adjunct faculty member at Ridley-Lowell Technical Institute.

Besides his interest in preservation, Deacon Boyd is a former Broadcast TV, Radio, and Internet Radio host who writes and produces Christian music. Currently, he holds the position of Chairman of Trustees at his church. Along with his wife Vera, Deacon Boyd is especially proud of having been instrumental in establishing Our Free Will Baptist Church as a landmark listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Deacon Boyd points out that preserved buildings "are testaments of time."

According to Deacon Boyd, his motivation for giving back to his community via volunteerism "is fueled by fundamental historic concepts and principles." He questions how we can learn from our past if our past is taken away from us. So, when he is challenged to preserve historic landmarks, Boyd does not at all mind "rolling up his sleeves to preserve what needs to be preserved for future generations."

The Preservation Association of the Southern Tier and its members are indeed grateful that Deacon Boyd is willing to roll up his sleeves on their behalf.

## Days of Future PAST

### A Message from the President

In the previous issue of Landmark this column mentioned the beauty and unique character of PAST's new home, the historic cast-iron Perry Building.

On December 22, as I stood in front of the Perry building watching the structure right next to it burn, it became very obvious how quickly things can change, and how close we came to losing this magnificent landmark.

It was noon, roughly 15 hours after the fire was first detected, that I was allowed to enter the Perry Building and take a quick look at its condition.

Accompanied by a firefighter, we quickly checked each floor for damage, including the basement and roof. Fully expecting to see destruction caused by smoke and fire, there was none. I had expected to be greeted by a waterfall cascading down Isaac Perry's staircase... nothing. Even the basement was dry!

Miraculously, after a fire raged throughout the night, just a few feet away, there was no sign of damage to our building!

Suspecting that the cast-iron construction may have contributed to its survival, my firefighter escort told me that in fact, cast-iron does not protect a building from a major fire. Originally marketed as a form of fire-proof construction, cast-iron loses strength under intense heat, and shatters when sprayed with water.

Back outside it was clear what saved not just the Perry Building, but the Press Building, and in fact many other landmarks within this historic district. They were saved as a result of the expertise, dedication and valiant efforts of our city firefighters.

Roger Luther

[rluther@nysLandmarks.com](mailto:rluther@nysLandmarks.com)

cell phone and text message: 607-759-0844

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## My Space

### Message from the Executive Director

2010 was a successful and ambitious year! It started with a relocation to our new home at 89 Court St. The unexpected move in March was stressful and required much work, but we had the help of many supporters.

As always, PAST is deeply involved in the community and is pro-active on many fronts. With the launch of the *Eyes on Five* program, PAST monitors five endangered properties: The Carnegie Library, Masonic Temple, Broadmoor Hall, original IBM complex, and the Stone Opera House. The opera house was also nominated by PAST to the Preservation League of New York State's *Seven To Save* list of endangered landmarks.

We also lost some battles. Demolition of the Broome County Alms House brought an end to the 30-year effort to preserve it. The original First Baptist Church of Johnson City was also demolished, replaced by a parking lot.

With so many churches merging, being sold or left empty, PAST is grateful for the completion of Phase I of the Sacred Sites Survey that was funded through a Preserve New York grant from the Preservation League of New York State. The PAST Library, Preservation League, and Broome County Public Library each have a copy of this completed survey that documents nearly one hundred Binghamton religious properties of all denominations.

The launching of our redesigned website, [www.pastny.org](http://www.pastny.org), brought us new members, volunteers, and visitors from around the country. The website is not only a valuable resource to visitors, it is also a source of revenue for PAST. It is very convenient now to renew membership or buy tour tickets with a credit card online.

Another emerging trend is 'Heritage Tourism' – out-of-town motorcoach tours bringing visitors to discover our architectural history, gold-dome churches and have a ride on one of our historic carousels. Last summer six tour bus groups were guided around by PAST tour guides bringing in revenue to help preservation projects.

PAST's revenue comes from three main sources: Membership, Programs/Tours, and Grants. Despite the recession, membership has been holding steady and even gained a little ground. The salvage sale income has also gone up. The new self-guided cellphone tour has garnered sponsorship income.

However, PAST has started losing revenue from grants and programs like the House and Garden Tours. Due to some bad weather and a poor economy, tour attendance has been down – thus income is down for these two popular events. New York State's budget problems have trickled down to all non-profit organizations with the reduction of our New York State Council on the Arts grant. This results in a substantial decrease in income.

While income has been falling, our expenses are rising. Fortunately, The Community Foundation for South Central New York awarded PAST a grant to help cover the rent increase for our first year at 89 Court Street, but we cannot re-apply for the coming years.

We now have a very active Funding Committee which is looking for new grant sources and is kicking off a corporate appeal for patron donors. We are also looking at boosting our income for each of our major events and of course we look to each of you, our members, to consider increasing your support by volunteering your time and/or becoming a Patron Donor.

The year ended with a Holiday Miracle when the cast iron Perry Building was surrounded by fire and emerged unscathed! It could have been a disaster, but the PAST office and its historical files and library were not damaged! PAST is able to continue its mission. The fire served to emphasize a need to get as much of our historical information and pictures digitized and protected for future generations.

Best Wishes for 2011!  
Jane De Hawkhurst  
Executive Director

### *Recognition of Board Member* **Bruce Nelson**

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation announced on December 29th that PAST Board Member Bruce Nelson, of Nelson Development of Vestal, is to receive an Historic Preservation Award for "outstanding adaptive use and commitment to community revitalization" for his Montour House project that turned a deteriorating building in Montour Falls, New York, into luxury apartments and offices.

*Congratulations, Bruce!*

### *Thank You...* **Jane DeHawkhurst**

We read almost daily of measures taken by organizations to better cope in these troubled financial times. PAST is not immune to the effects of this economy and, going into the new year had to make a difficult decision – to eliminate the staff position of Executive Director.

Jane DeHawkhurst has filled the position since September 2007, and her enthusiasm, commitment and passion for preservation has played a role in the success of this organization. The Board of Directors extends its gratitude for her efforts, and wishes all the best to Jane in her future endeavors.

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Become a member of the Preservation Association of the Southern Tier, or if you are already a member, please pass this on to a non-member friend. Fill out the form, enclose payment and mail to PAST, 89 Court Street, Binghamton, New York, 13901. *Thank You!*

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City

State, Zip

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Email

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Added donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Have you considered adding PAST to your will? Please contact the office for more information, 607-237-0887*