

# HIGHLIGHT

*The Newsletter of the High Street Hill Association*

*December 2004*

*Join your neighbors*

## CHRISTMAS EVE CAROLING ON THE GREEN

LED BY  
CORNELIA MCMURTRIE

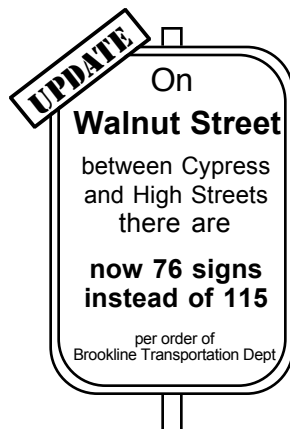


**DECEMBER 24 AT 5:45PM**

BRING FAMILY AND FRIENDS AND A WIND-  
PROTECTED CANDLE TO THE UPLAND ROAD GREEN

### **Walnut Street Lite**

HSHA efforts over the last few months to reduce the clutter of signs on historic Walnut Street are starting to pay off. After enlisting the support of Town Meeting Members and residents, organizing onsite discussions with the Town Director of Transportation David Friend and Chairman of the Transportation Board Fred Levitan, and voicing our concerns at several public meetings, the Transportation Board decided that 39 out of 115 signs were superfluous and voted to remove them. The Board has also requested that Mr. Friend conduct a thorough analysis of the traffic calming measures. We look forward to his report and wish to thank all those mentioned above, along with Town Moderator Sandy Gadsby, for helping to promote a productive dialogue on this important issue.



### **Save the Dates:**

January 30 Celebrate Brookline's 300th Anniversary with **Pill Hill Storyteller Jay O'Callahan**. Sunday 3-5 PM First Parish Church, Walnut Street. \$5.

March 6 (tentative) **HSHA Annual Musicale**

April 25 **HSHA Annual Meeting**

Regular board meetings of the HSHA are held on the second Monday of the month. As always, all neighbors are invited to attend and we welcome any new issues.

### **Passings**

With sadness we note the death of Dr. Josh Drooker of Edgehill Road. Dr. Drooker served on the staff of the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary for 47 years and was also clinical professor of otolaryngology and head of the department at Tufts Medical School. He leaves his wife of 57 years, Emilie, a longtime neighborhood activist.

# Commission Recognizes Restoration of Pill Hill Treasure with 2004 Preservation Award



*22 Irving Street*

We think of the 19th century as that time when the classical tradition that began in the renaissance finally played itself out -- replaced by a grab bag of successively borrowed and blended styles from all places and times. Even as that was happening, and mixed up with it, there was a counter trend, a desire to make a fresh start -- sometimes drawing upon local building techniques and materials to evoke a sense of place and tradition.

For the post Civil War generation which had ended slavery and reformed the union, and which in 1876 had celebrated the centennial, there was a broader sense of national re-creation. With the coming of comfortable travel by rail and coastal steamship, there was also access to a bedrock America previously known only through prints and paintings. Now middle class Bostonian families and their architects could experience the rugged White Mountains and Maine coast. It's no coincidence that those are the years of Winslow Homer's shorescapes and Sarah Orne Jewett's *Country of the Pointed Firs*.

Young Boston architects, wanting to "discover" a true regional language, looked -- selectively, to be sure -- to New England's shingled vernacular, including that of coastal Maine. Admittedly these well traveled, well read, young men were also more than a little inspired by the British Arts and Crafts movement, which recently had rediscovered a British regional vernacular that used roof tiles as siding, not unlike New England's shingle-sided barns and sheds. Along with the work of Henry Hobson Richardson and McKim, Meade & White, the houses of Peabody & Stearns during the 1880s epitomized what the historian Vincent Scully, some 80 years later, would call the Shingle Style.

Those of us who know the value of getting an old window unstuck can only begin to appreciate the commitment necessary to restore a complete, historically important house. That is why Joan Lautenschleger and Jack Cummings are known to some of their neighbors as the "patron saints of 22 Irving Street." The following is from the Preservation Commission's 2004 Award presentation.

In 1882, Arthur Mills, the general freight agent of the Boston and Albany Railroad, hired Peabody & Stearns to design this house on a double lot at 22 Irving Street in Pill Hill. Robert S. Peabody, lived nearby on Edgehill Road. At that moment his firm was building "Kragssyde," a romantically sited "cottage" in Manchester-by-the-Sea, that would become an icon of the shingle style.

Although we joke about such grand "cottages," the idea of the cottage -- a house under a sheltering roof, often acting as if it is one story, even if two or three -- became an important part of the shingle style ideal. Five years later, McKim, Mead & White would create its grandest and simplest example in the William Low House in Bristol, RI. And that ideal of the cottage would

**Jack and Joan have added the names of their contractors to the "Tradesmen" list on the HSHA website at [www.highstreethill.org](http://www.highstreethill.org).**

persist and evolve from thousands of shingle style examples, through Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie style, and down to the present day.

But 22 Irving Street was among the very earliest of its type. Later it would also become the home of a celebrated medical research scientist, William B. Castle, and of Brookline's first Selectwoman, Louise Castle. And so it remained for over 120 years -- both house and setting remarkably intact, and needing only some TLC. Well, perhaps a good bit of TLC. Fortunately, its new owners, Joan Lautenschleger & Jack Cummings, together with their architect and contractors, were the ideal stewards for this wonderful, important house.

Over many months they meticulously restored it piece by piece -- even hand steaming new woven latticework for the porches.

## The 10-year "Overnight Success"

HSHA Board Member **Lucy Aptekar**, along with Helen Charlupski, Nancy Heller and Rosamond Vaule, also received a 2004 award for their efforts to rehabilitate and install the historically significant **Lincoln School Parthenon Friezes** in the High school atrium.

*Hint:* Go through the main entrance and look up.

The *Highlight* is printed several times a year and is distributed on foot or by bicycle by HSHA Board members and their usually-willing family members. If you have a comment or contribution contact the editor, Rob Daves, at 566-7334 or [robdaves@rcn.com](mailto:robdaves@rcn.com).