



# Trolley Times



Volume # 36

*News of Tacoma's North Slope Historic District*  
*National Register of Historic Places*

July-Aug-Sept 2004

## **NSHD Zoning Update**

The Zoning Committee of the North Slope Historic District has been working with City Planners to create a new zoning category for the northern part of the District. This part, comprised mainly of the area from North I Street through North M Street, and along the edge near Division Street, has zoning called R-4L and R-4, which allows medium and large-sized multi-family apartments. The goal has been to change these zoning categories so that our historic homes would not come under increasing pressure for demolition for the building of large multi-units.

The new zoning category is tentatively named "Mixed Residential-Special Review District" and it grandfathers in the existing apartment units, allowing only single family houses and duplexes (and triplexes, if the lot is large enough) to be built on vacant lots. Any new units must provide two off-street parking spaces, and comply with the terms of the North Slope Historic District ordinance.

"This new category is not a perfect solution to our zoning problems, but it does give the houses the same protection of the single-family zoning category R-2SRD," says Zoning Committee Chair Julie Turner. "The importance of this for preservation of the integrity of the District cannot be overstated; the R-4L category is detrimental on so many levels – parking, lot-size per unit, and pressure for demolition of homes – that the committee recommends enthusiastic endorsement of this new category by all North Slopers."

The Zoning Committee and City Planners are still working on the details, but the timeline calls for the hearing at the Planning Commission meeting on SEPTEMBER 1, and the City Council hearing on OCTOBER 26.

**WE WILL NEED A LARGE PRESENCE OF HOME OWNERS AT THESE HEARINGS SO THAT CITY OFFICIALS WILL KNOW OF OUR COMMITMENT TO THE PRESERVATION OF OUR HOMES.**

All property owners will receive notice of the new zoning change in early August. For additional information from the North Slope Zoning Committee, please call Julie Turner, 253-383-2329.



## **National Night Out**

National Night Out, an event dedicated to making neighborhoods safer by getting to know our neighbors, is scheduled for Tuesday, August 3. The NSHD plans a dessert potluck beginning at 7 p.m. at our North 8th & K Street park.

Soft drinks, plates, utensils, napkins will be furnished. Please bring a favorite dish to share---dessert, fruit, chips, etc. You may want to bring a folding or lawn chair, or a blanket if you prefer to sit on the grass. Activities are planned for children, and usually a fire truck and patrol car visit.

NSHD T-shirts will be available at a clearance price of \$5, size X-large, blue or yellow. Blue polos are \$10.

Last year rain showers that started around 7 p.m. made a change of plans necessary, substituting a nearby house for the park venue. However, over 50 neighbors came anyway. This year, if it rains we will cancel.

More than 250 Pierce County neighborhoods host special events. Over 9,000 groups nationwide participate in this community mobilization, helping to rebuild neighborhood social values, regaining control, and deterring crime. National Night Out is designed to heighten crime prevention awareness, strengthen neighborhood spirit, support positive police-community relations, and let criminals know that neighborhoods are organized.

August 3 will be another chance to see old friends as well as meet new ones. Mark your calendar now--- Tuesday, August 3, after 7 p.m., in our park---and join North Slope neighbors in this 21st annual celebration of American neighborhoods!

P.S. Turn on your porch light!



## Painting Your Historic Home

by Marshall McClintock

Here are some resources that may be useful for choosing historically appropriate exterior color schemes for your home. Many North Slope homes built before about 1920 would have had a minimum 3 paint colors and more likely 4-5 colors. Houses with distinct banding, such as a watermark, a bellyband, changes in building material (such as clapboard on the first floor and shingles on the second), or bands of different shingle shapes usually had different colors or shades to highlight these different body areas. Major architectural elements such as corner boards, cornices, bands, window and door trim and porch elements were defined by the trim colors, which could range from one to upwards of eight colors. Window sashes and muntins (including the storm windows) were another color and usually the darkest, often black or near black. Here are some resources available to help you develop a color scheme for your home:

*Century of Color: Exterior Decoration for American Buildings 1820-1920.* (1981). While it covers a broader period than is relevant to the North Slope, it provides excellent paint history, examples and guiding principles.

*Victorian Exterior Decoration: How to paint your Nineteenth-century American house historically* (1987). This book provides many photographs and an excellent chart mapping Victorian paint names to contemporary paints from Sherwin-Williams, Benjamin Moore, & Glidden.

*Bungalow Colors: Exteriors.* (2002). This new book focuses on the period from 1900 to 1920 and is a much-needed supplement to Moss' books. The book covers most house styles of this period, not just bungalows.

Elizabeth Pomada and Michael Larsen published a series of books on the detailed color schemes known as "painted ladies". These include *Painted Ladies: San Francisco's Resplendent Victorians* (1978), *Daughters of Painted Ladies: America's Resplendent Victorians* (1987) and *How to Create your own Painted Lady* (1989). While some North Slope homes have the architectural detail for these elaborate color schemes, most will find these books a source for identifying complementary trim colors.

The Heritage Foundation of Vancouver, B.C., has a palette of historical colors based on paint matching research from over 50 historic Vancouver homes. Historic Seattle is currently working on a similar project.

< [www.vancouverheritagefoundation.org](http://www.vancouverheritagefoundation.org)>

Both Benjamin Moore and Sherwin Williams have developed their own historic palette cards to help you select colors. Other manufacturers may have them as well.

*Consumer Reports*, (June 2004), p. 30. This article evaluates brands of paints for their appearance over time, ability to resist dirt build up, color change over time, and mildew resistance.

## FROM THE ARCHIVES . . . .

of the National Historic Register

In 1922 Frank and Helma Alexander built the first condominium in Tacoma, the Gray Gables, at 1617 North Division Avenue. Frank Alexander was a carpenter at Carsten's Packing Co. The architect was A. D. Gendron, builder was Peterson, Riehl & Russell, and contractor Albert Miller. Cost was \$38,000.



The twelve 2 story condos with 5 or 7 rooms are in a U shaped layout. The description includes gabled roof, hipped dormers, double-hung windows, multi-paned doors, and shingle and wood clapboard exterior.

To look up data in the National Register Archive book, please call Jay Turner at 383-2329.

## Variance Signs

by Roger Johnson

The City of Tacoma has land use guidelines and zoning codes that rule how, where, how much, and what kind of use is allowed on private and public property. The rules govern not only the use but the structures as well. All properties in the city must conform to the rules; BUT, exceptions can be asked for and in most cases they are granted.

When a property owner wants to do something outside the rules (a variance) he must post a large yellow sign titled 'PUBLIC NOTICE'. A brief description of the project follows and then some phone numbers and an address. The phone numbers and address are for a City of Tacoma official who will answer your questions and take your comments regarding the variance.

The North Slope Historic District is especially vulnerable to variance requests because they quite often alter a historic property. We need to be especially vigilant and read all big yellow "PUBLIC NOTICE" signs and ask questions. If there is a reason for concern or support, let the city hear from you. It is also a good idea to inform other residents of the North Slope when you spot one of the yellow signs.

## Adopt-a-Spot News

Six North Slope residents picked up litter on North I Street Saturday, June 12 as part of Tacoma CARES Adopt-a-Spot cleanup program. The next pick-up will be on a warm evening in late August, to be followed by dessert and coffee. There will be a sign-up sheet at National Night Out, or you may call 627-4537. You'll be called later with the date and place.

Thanks to our loyal litter patrol. Several people have participated three or four times a year for six years! Thanks also to those who keep their own yards, sidewalks, and parking strips clean and litter-free. We all appreciate it, and our historic district looks better!

## Summer Theater

As its annual summer treat, Tacoma Little Theatre & Metro Parks will present a free performance on Thursday, August 12, at 7 pm, in Wright Park, just north of the community center. Young thespians from our area will perform "The Puppetmaster," based on the stories and tales of Hans Christian Andersen.



Bring your family!  
Bring lawn chairs or blankets! Bring a picnic supper!  
Enjoy this free, family event in our beautiful neighboring park.

## Dates to Remember

July 24-25---Ethnic Fest, Wright Park  
August 3---National Night Out, 7 p.m., NSHD park  
August 12---TLT play, 7 p.m., Wright Park  
September 1---Planning Commission hearing (zoning)  
September 2---Tacoma Schools begin  
September 5---Labor Day  
September 22---Autumn begins  
October 11---Columbus Day  
October 26---City Council meeting (zoning)  
October---Next newsletter



## Police/Community News

Forty North Slopers turned out for the May 11 general meeting with Tacoma Sector 2 Police. Lt. Roberts and CLO Kothstein discussed problems in the North Slope and answered questions.

Sector 2 personnel are now using the Wright Park Community Center as office space. The liaison officers are available Mon. through Thurs., 10 am to 8 pm.

Phone numbers are:

Lt. Roberts---591-5697

CLO Kothstein---591-5290

CLO Stark---594-1837

CLO Rush---594-7961



*Newest Park  
Weeder Also  
Our Youngest!*

Caterina Terrill, age 7, has volunteered to weed the bed with Valerie Sivinski's memorial stone in it. She is a frequent visitor to the park with her family, which includes two younger sisters. She attends Lowell School during the school year.

We thank Caterina for volunteering to help keep the North Slope Historic District Park looking clean and neat. In fact, perhaps there are other young people who would like to help with litter pick-up or weeding. If so, please call Nick Kristensen or Julie Turner. Adults are welcome, too! We particularly need graffiti-removers, so if you like to do a little sanding, just call.

## Remember to Water Your Trees!

At an October 2003 NSHD meeting, master arborist, Don Stewart, talked about the need to water our street trees in the summer. That seems to be even more important right now, after a time of low spring rainfall. Our street trees create much of the ambience of our historic district, so they need care – and water!

Mr. Stewart recommended soaking the trees by running a TRICKLE of water for a day once a month to encourage deep root growth. Deep roots make it easier for trees to survive dry spells; if you water deeply you need to do it less often, too.

# The Back Page...

## North Slope Historic District Board of Directors:

Victoria Hankwitz	404-1061
Jim Hoard	272-7222
Thomas Hudson	973-3700
Brian & Betsy Johnson	
Bill Johnston	627-6860
Dan & Angie Klein	272-0938
Chuck & Stacy Kahler	779-8757
Nick Kristensen & Patty LeBlanc	272-2884
Kathryn Longwell	627-0423
Velda McDonald	627-4192
Judy Martin	572-3059
Mitch Robinson	272-0165
Barbara & Ralph Tomberg	572-1532
Marilyn Torgerson	627-4537
Julie Turner	383-2329
<i>NSHD Representative on Landmarks Commission:</i>	
Roger Johnson	431-3959
Tim McDonald	572-4512



## North Slope Historic District Plaques

The Historic District Plaques order of April 15 has arrived. Those of you who have already paid for their plaques but have not yet picked them up may obtain them from Ralph Tomberg at 510 N. Sheridan Ave. at your convenience (please call 572-1532 first to make sure someone will be home).

Additional plaques were ordered for some folks that expressed interest but did not follow through with payment. Consequently, we have a limited number of plaques immediately available on a first come first served basis. Cost remains \$75.00 per plaque. Please call number above if interested in a plaque for your historic property.

Thank you to:

## Tacoma Cares

for the printing of the newsletter. We appreciate your support.

## Turners Honored for Contribution to NSHD

Over 30 North Slope residents attended the Washington State awards ceremony May 6 at the Knights of Pythias Hall in downtown Tacoma. Honored for their work during the past ten years in starting the North Slope organization and completing the National Register process were Jay and Julie Turner. Dr. Allyson Brooks, the state director, presented awards in several different categories. Another Tacoma group, *Save Albers Mill*, also was honored. A catered reception followed. Many attendees from outside Tacoma enjoyed looking at the written materials and display of photographs of the North Slope.

Congratulations to all the North Slopers who worked during the last ten years to get our district to the present stage! Three cheers!!!



## Historic Places to Visit

Other Tacoma sites that are on the National Register of Historic Places are:

Old City Hall, South J Street, Stadium Seminary, Wright Park, Union Depot Warehouse, Brown's Point, and Camp Six.

Other districts in Washington on the Register are:

Port Townsend (760 properties), South Capitol Neighborhood, Olympia (512), Central Whidbey Island

## National Night Out

Tuesday, August 3, 7 p.m.

North Slope Historic District Park

North 8th & K

See you there!



The North Slope Historic District is made up of the people living between "I" and Grant Streets from Division to Steele.