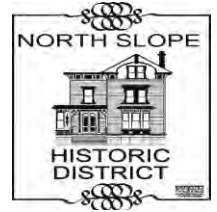




# Trolley Times



Volume 53

Tacoma's North Slope Historic District

April/May 2009

**Problems with your Pears?  
Challenged by Cherries?  
Get help Thursday, April 23rd**



Join us for the next North Slope program, when Bill Horn, a Pierce County master gardener, will provide tips and hints for successful fruit tree care. The educational program will begin at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 23.

During Bill's presentation, you'll learn about insect and disease control, pruning, planting and the best tools to use. Be sure to bring your questions!

**Put it on your calendar:**

**"Bill Horn, Master Gardener"  
6:30 p.m. social/ 7 p.m. program  
Thursday, April 23, 2009  
Immanuel Presbyterian Church  
901 N. J St.**

**Reach more than 1,000  
North Slope homes by  
sponsoring/advertising in  
The Trolley Times for as little as \$200.**

**For details e-mail:  
news@tacomanorthslope.com**

**Meet Other North Slope Families at  
the Park on Saturday, April 25th**



Looking for a chance to meet other North Slope families in a casual, free and fun setting? Bring your kids to the North Slope Historic District Park at 11 a.m. Saturday, April 25, for a **"North Slope Play Date."**

While no formal activities are planned, it's certain the kids will entertain themselves on the playground equipment. Members of the North Slope Historic District Board will be on hand throughout the event to answer questions about the neighborhood.

To learn more about the unique history of the park, located at the corner of North K & North 8th streets, visit our website:

<http://www.tacomanorthslope.com/Park.htm>

**Put it on your calendar:**

**"North Slope Play Date"  
11 a.m.  
Saturday, April 25, 2009  
North Slope  
Historic District Park  
Corner of  
North K & North 8<sup>th</sup>  
Free & Fun!**



## ***Ask the North Slope House Doctor***

**Q:** *We just bought an old house and are anxious to fix it up. Where should we start? - Hot to Trot*

**A:** Dear Hot to Trot:

Whoa horsy! The first thing you should do is nothing. The best advice I got and am passing on to you is to try and live in your new space for a year



without making any major changes. You need time to figure out how the space fits your lifestyle and what needs to be changed. Take that year to learn about the repair of old houses and develop a sequential plan for renovation. Chances

are, you will spend much of your renovation time undoing stupid things previous owners have done. You certainly don't want to do something that you'll have to undo or will regret later on. This is particularly true if you are removing original material. Once it's gone, it's gone.

Yes, you can rip out that smelly, stained carpet; just don't plan on refinishing the floor underneath any time soon. I know it's tempting to work on the pretty stuff first but there is a logical order to renovation and the first part isn't the glamorous bit. If your home needs foundation or roofing work, do that first. Then look at mechanical systems like heating, plumbing, and wiring. You don't want to be cutting into a wall to replace a pipe after you've installed that pricey art glass tile. Insulation of attic, walls, and crawlspace follows. Once the "boring" tasks are finished you can start work on cosmetic jobs: fixing walls, windows, stripping and refinishing woodwork, painting walls and exterior work. Repairing and refinishing floors should be the last job you do.

Some other things to consider:

- Repair rather than replace whenever possible. Your lath and plaster has lasted 100 years. There's a reason for that. Take the time to find out why; don't just assume that drywall is

better. For example, vinyl windows last a fraction of the time of repaired wood windows. You might change your mind about replacing something when you understand more about building materials.

- Many people you call for bids or hire to work on your house will have limited experience working on historic homes. If someone suggests it's impossible to do a job without destroying original material, get another opinion. The first gutter replacement company that gave me a bid said they couldn't replace my gutters without sawing the ends off my decorative eave brackets. The second company had no problems replacing my gutters without damaging the brackets.
- Honor the age of your home with appropriate alterations and materials. If you can't afford to have all your original wood windows repaired, have the worst ones repaired and wait until you can afford to do the rest. Old homes have quirks – that's part of their charm. If you need perfection, maybe old home living isn't for you.
- It will cost more to live in an old home; that's just the way it is. Older homes need more maintenance and are often more expensive to heat. Do what you can to reduce costs but accept that you are paying for the privilege of owning a historic home. Don't try to vinylize those costs away. Use appropriate materials even if they cost a little more up front. In the long run, your home will be worth more than one with shoddy materials and workmanship. Recent studies have demonstrated that property values of homes in historic districts rise faster than homes elsewhere.
- As renovations drag on, look at the "before" pictures you've taken (you are taking pictures through all this, right?) Your progress will help you stay motivated. Above all, enjoy the process. In the end, you'll have the satisfaction and pride of doing a good job. You'll have helped to save an older structure and contributed to the overall quality of the neighborhood. And isn't that why you bought an older home in the first place?

***Send your questions to the North Slope House Doctor at [news@tacomanorthslope.com](mailto:news@tacomanorthslope.com)***

## ***NSHD Board of Directors***

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Mitch Robinson	253-272-0165
Dave Root	253-223-6636
Marilynn Sabo	253-627-4735
Barbara Tomberg, treasurer	253-572-1532

## ***The New & Improved Traffic Circle***

Last August, the North Slope Historic District received a Neighborhood Council Innovative Grant to landscape the traffic circle at the intersection of N. L and N. 5th streets. Members of the Park and Beautification Committee, including Kyle Price, Marshall McClintock and Geoff Corso, planted the circle. Neighbors Don and Chris Brosnan have graciously donated the use of their hose and water to irrigate the traffic circle for two years.

The landscape design was inspired by a Victorian garden often called a moon garden. After viewing Japanese moonlit gardens, Victorians began incorporating water, pale rocks and white sand into their moon gardens to reflect moonlight. Dwarf boxwoods were planted in the center of the traffic circle to provide a dark background for the pale granite rocks and evergreen variegated Gladwyn iris. Speedwell ('Georgia Blue'), with its dark evergreen foliage, was planted around the perimeter of the traffic circle to contrast with the white curb. These plants were chosen from the Elisabeth Carey Miller Botanical Garden educational awards program.

## **2009 NSHD Programs/Dates**

- 4/23 "Master Gardener" \*
- 4/25 "North Slope Play Date" (K St.Park)
- 6/28 "Antique Appraisers Live" (Time: TBA)
- 7/4 Annual North Slope 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade (J St.)
- 7/11 Annual North Slope Garage Sale (various homes)
- 8/4 National Night Out (K St. Park)

*\* Indicates these programs begin with social time at 6:30 p.m., followed by the meeting at 7 p.m. Programs generally include a short business meeting to update residents on relevant issues/concerns.*

Unless otherwise noted, programs will be held at Immanuel Presbyterian Church, 901 N. J Street. Check our website ([www.tacomnorthslope.com](http://www.tacomnorthslope.com)) and watch future editions of this newsletter for updates.

## ***March Progressive Tour is a Hit!***

Approximately 80 people from in and outside our neighborhood enjoyed a tour of four of the North Slope's most stunning older homes plus a variety of special treats.

Our thanks to everyone who attended, our hard-working volunteers, and most importantly, the four families who graciously shared their homes with us: Jack and Kathryn Terrill, Eric and Liz Jacobsen, Dave and Josie Root, and Jason and Railene Gordon.

To make sure you find out when our next event is, or to get the early word about next year's progressive tour, make sure and join our e-mail list by visiting [www.tacomnorthslope.com](http://www.tacomnorthslope.com).





Tacoma North Slope Historic District  
1102 N. Fifth Street  
Tacoma, WA 98403

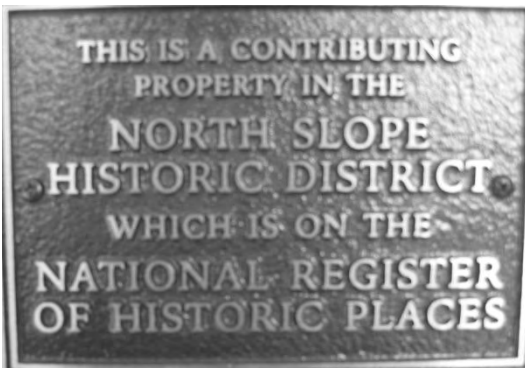
***Next Program is Thursday, April 23rd- Details Inside!***

### ***A few Plaques Still Available***

We still have a handful of North Slope plaques available for purchase by district property owners.

These bronze, 5-by-7-inch plaques identify your home as part of the North Slope Historic District and National Register. The locally produced plaques cost \$75 each and are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

To purchase your plaque, send an email to [news@tacomanorthslope.com](mailto:news@tacomanorthslope.com) or phone Mary at 272-0165.



### ***Stuff for Sale?***



The annual all-North Slope garage sale will take place Saturday, **July 11**.

It's never too early to start sorting through your attic or cleaning out the basement in search of treasures to sell. By participating in this District-wide sale, you'll be able to take advantage of group advertising and enjoy increased traffic because folks typically flock to our dozens of sales.

Look for more information in the next issue of *The Trolley Times*.

### ***Wood Window Repair?***

Are you interested in a presentation on wood window repair and maintenance? If so, please call Kathryn Longwell @627-0423 or e-mail us at [news@tacomanorthslope.com](mailto:news@tacomanorthslope.com)