

ENGLEWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER - APRIL, 2013

Record Attendance at Award Dinner

On April 18, the Englewood Historical Society held its 28th Annual Award Dinner, at the Englewood Field Club. For the first time the attendance exceeded 100 persons. The 2013 EHS Award for Historical Preservation was given to "Gloria Crest," the home of Jan and Edward Turen. In addition, the EHS awarded \$1000 prizes to the winners of its new Essay Prize contest (see below).

"Gloria Crest" is located at 83 North Woodland Street. Driving uphill on Walnut Street, as you reach the end, is the entrance to this impressive mansion. Built in 1926 by Count Stefan Poniatowsky, scion of a Polish royal family, one is reminded indeed of a royal palace when viewing its spectacular appearance. At the dinner, a video presentation given by Dr. Sharon Bernstein, a friend of the owners, showing the interior and the extensive grounds, furthered this impression.

Over the last 87 years, a number of owners have preserved the house. The Turens, who acquired it in 2000, have made a major investment in modernizing the infrastructure while respecting and restoring its original appearance.

Aside from the Turens and a good turnout of their friends, the dinner was attended by Mayor Frank Huttler III, who presented a proclamation, and by his wife, Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttler, who presented the Essay Prizes.

Historical Essay Prizes

This year, for the first time, the EHS offered a new program, to give cash prizes to students in the Englewood Public Schools for the best essays on local history subjects. To be known as the Eleanor Harvey Awards, they will honor the late Eleanor Harvey, our founder and President for 30 years, as well as a long-time teacher in the Public Schools, who died in 2007. At the request of Schools Superintendent Donald Carlisle, we offered two \$1000 prizes this year, one for the Academies@Englewood and one for Dwight Morrow High School.

The essay subject was:

"The following persons have Englewood schools or other facilities named after them: Janis Dismus, John Grieco, Russell Major, Leroy McCloud, Dwight Morrow, Donald Quarles, Winton White. Select one or more of these people and write a essay explaining who each person was and why the Board of Education may have chosen to name a school after him or her." .

Members of the EHS Board reviewed the essays which were submitted and chose the following winners:

Academies@Englewood - Michael J Abolafia, a senior, whose essay was entitled *The Least Pretentious Individual in Washington - The Story of Donald A. Quarles*. Donald Quarles was Mayor of Englewood in 1946-47, and later became Deputy Secretary of Defense in the Eisenhower presidency. He achieved prominence as spokesman for the U S rocketry program at the time of the Sputnik controversy in the 1950's.

Dwight Morrow High School - Joan M. Chica, a junior, whose essay was entitled *Dwight Morrow High School, A Memorial of a True American Role Model*. Dwight Morrow was a prominent national figure, as J P Morgan partner, and troubleshooter for President Calvin Coolidge in the 1920's, who nonetheless found time to play a philanthropic and leadership role in his home city of Englewood.

Progress on Eleanor Harvey Park

At long last there is progress on realizing Eleanor Harvey's dream of creating a public park on the two-acre lot where she lived for most of her long life. Tenafly landscape architect Paul Keyes has produced a plan, based on a statement of intent left by Eleanor, for a passive park with appropriate plantings, walkways, benches, a community garden, and a small parking area. City Manager Timothy Dacey has indicated that funding available from the Eleanor Harvey Trust, created by her will, supplemented by the City of Englewood, should be adequate to implement Keyes' plan.

Third Ward Councilman Eugene Skurnick has played an important part in moving this project along, bringing Dacey and Keyes together, as well as keeping

neighbors and interested organizations, including the EHS and the Englewood Garden Club, in the picture. Skurnick is encouraging the formation of a new not-for-profit supervisory group, including all of the above, to oversee the park on a continuing basis. Incoming Garden Club President Harriet Tanner deserves credit for recruiting Keyes.

Eleanor, who died in 2007, would be happy to know that there is finally a good chance of realizing her vision.

Master Plan Revision

The Englewood Planning Board is nearing completion of its periodic revision of the City's Master Plan, which includes a section on Historic Preservation. Dr Will Lee, Chair of the Englewood Historic Preservation Advisory Committee, has been providing input to the Planning Board, with support from sympathetic Board members.

The Master Plan has since 2003 included a recommendation that the City create a Historic Preservation Commission, which has specified powers under State law. Such a Commission could serve a valuable role in advising the Planning Board, the Board of Adjustment, and the City Council, as well as residences and businesses. It would establish voluntary guidelines. And it would make Englewood eligible for preservation grants not now available.

Lee is optimistic that this recommendation will be continued and strengthened this time. He is also asking that the Planning Board consider historic preservation input at an earlier stage than it does now when reviewing applications from designated historic properties.

Lee is hopeful that improved legal status can be devised to protect Englewood's four remaining Dutch sandstone structures on Grand Avenue: the John G Benson House at 60 Grand, the Garrett Lydecker House at 228 Grand (SESCIL), the Peter Westervelt House at 285 Grand, and the DeMott House at 488 Grand.

Mayor Frank Huttel III has for the first time included the members of the City Council in the plan revision process, which could increase the likelihood of Council support for the legislative changes to be recommended

in the Master Plan. The creation of an Englewood Historic Preservation Commission will require Council action.

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The EHS website, courtesy of the Englewood Public Library, can be accessed at englewoodlibrary.org/archives. For further information, telephone 201-567-8857 or email normandavis437@gmail.com