

HISTORICAL SOCIETY AWARDS
OCTOBER 15, 2003

YOU DO ME A GREAT HONOR, AND IT IS VERY MUCH APPRECIATED.

WHEN ONE IS HONORED FOR DOING SOMETHING WORTHWHILE AND
MEANINGFUL, ^{it's just being the cake} ~~IT PROVIDES ALL THE MORE IMPETUS TO CONTINUE~~
~~THAT WORK, AND TO SEE IT THROUGH TO ITS CONCLUSION.~~

~~IN RECOGNITION OF THIS HONOR, I PLEDGE, IN MY WORK ON BEHALF~~
~~OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION, TO DO JUST THAT.~~

I HAVE COME TO UNDERSTAND YOUR PASSION AND DEVOTION TO
PRESERVING HISTORIC TREASURE. UNTIL RECENT YEARS, THESE
TREASURES, LIKE MANY ITEMS IN OUR MODERN SOCIETY, HAVE BEEN
CONSIDERED DISPOSABLE.

BUT STRUCTURES AND PLACES THAT HAVE ARCHITECTURAL,
CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL VALUE HAVE SO MUCH TO TEACH US.
TOO MUCH, IN FACT, TO BE DEMOLISHED IN THE NAME OF
PROGRESS.

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ONE OF THE AUTHORS OF PUBLICATIONS WITH HERITAGE SO RICH –
A CALL TO ARMS FOR HISTORICAL PRESERVATIONISTS THAT LED
TO THE PASSAGE OF THE NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT
OF 1966 -- SAID, “A NATION CAN SUFFER ANMESIA. IT CAN LOSE THE
MEMEMORIES OF WHAT IT WAS, AND THEREBY LOSE THE SENSE OF
WHAT IT WANTS TO BE. IT CAN SAY IT IS BEING ‘PROGRESSIVE’
WHEN IT RIPS UP THE TISSUES WHICH VISIBLY BINDS ONE STRAND
OF ITS HISTROY TO THE NEXT.

“IT CAN SAY IT IS ONLY GETTING RID OF THE ‘JUNK’ IN ORDER TO
MAKE ROOM FOR THE MODERN.

“WHAT IT OFTEN DOES INSTEAD, ONCE IT HAS LOST THE GRAPHIC
SOURCE OF ITS MEMORIES, IS TO BREAK THE PERPETUAL
PARTNERSHIP THAT MAKES FOR ORDERLY GROWTH IN THE LIFE OF
A SOCIETY.”

WE ARE IN GRAVE DANGER, AS A NATION OF DISOLVING, OUR PAST
AND BEING COMMITTED TO A BLIND FUTURE ... A FUTURE PITTED

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WITH DANGEROUS OBSTACLES THAT WE COULD AVOID, OR AT LEAST MAKE LESS DAMAGING, IF WE CONNECT TO OUR COLLECTIVE PAST.

MAKING ROOM IN OUR SOCIETY FOR THE PAST IS AS EASY AS REMEMBERING, AND RESTORING, THE LIVELY DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS AND SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS WITH TREE-LINED STREETS AND SIDEWALKS THAT LEAD TO THOSE COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS.

AS EASY AS REMEMBERING AND RESTORING THE COMMUTER RAIL LINES AND ELECTRIC TROLLEYS THAT TOOK PEOPLE FROM LOCATION TO LOCATION WITHOUT THE CONGESTION AND POLLUTION ASSOCIATED WITH PRESENT DAY TRAVEL BY CAR AND BUS.

BUT CONVINCING OUR YOUNG FOLKS WHO DON'T HAVE THAT MEMORY IS VERY HARD WITHOUT THE PHYSICAL STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS IN PLACE TO POINT TO AND SAY, "SEE, THERE WAS, AND CAN STILL BE, A SMARTER, BETTER WAY."

IRONICALLY, WHEN THE VARIOUS PLANNERS WHO ARE DOING WORK IN OUR CITIES AND TOWNS SIT DOWN WITH RESIDENTS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO FIND OUT WHAT THEY WANT THEIR COMMUNITIES TO LOOK LIKE IN THE FUTURE, THE VISION THEY ARE GIVEN OFTEN MIRRORS THE COMMUNITIES OF THE PAST: DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS WITH NEIGHBORHOODS THAT CAN BE WALKED IN.

THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT PLANNERS ARE FINDING IN PLACES LIKE CRANBERRY AND MOON TOWNSHIPS -- TWIN POSTER CHILDREN FOR SPRAWL IF THERE EVER WERE SUCH A THING.

I BELIEVE THAT INATELY, WE AS A PEOPLE, CRAVE THAT KIND OF NEIGHBORLY, CONNECTED EXISTENCE, THAT KIND OF LIVING EXPERIENCE.

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UNFORTUNATELY, WE HAVE BEEN SOLD SOMETHING ELSE IN THE PAST FOUR DECADES BECAUSE IT WAS SUPPOSEDLY EASIER AND CHEAPER.

NOW WE KNOW THAT WAS NOT NECESSARILY TRUE, AND IF WE CAN CREATE INCENTIVES FOR THE REHABILITATION OF OUR NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS, WE CAN ONCE AGAIN SATISFY THAT LATENT DESIRE TO BE FROM SOME PLACE, TO IDENTIFY WITH SOME TOWN, TO HAVE NEIGHBORHOODS IN THE TRADITIONAL SENSE, AND TO BE ABLE TO WALK TO THE STORE AND TO WORK.

THERE IS NO BETTER WAY TO DO THAT THAN TO PRESERVE THE HISTORIC FABRIC OF OUR COMMUNITIES, AND THERE IS NO EASIER WAY TO RESTORE THEIR COMMUNITIES THAN TO HAVE GOVERNMENT GET INVOLVED IN HELPING US IN THAT RESTORATION.

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WE ARE ON THE RIGHT TRACK. WE WILL KEEP MOVING FORWARD,
AND I PLEDGE AGAIN TO CONTINUE TO BE A PART OF THAT EFFORT,
AND TO DO WHATEVER I CAN, BOTH PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY, TO
HELP FULFULL THE PASSION WE ALL HAVE FOR PRESERVING NOT
JUST THE BUILDINGS AND SITES THAT OUR DEAR TO OUR NATION,
BUT ALSO THE KIND OF LIFE THEY REPRESENT, AND THE KIND OF
LIFE ALL OF US STILL HOLD DEAR AND WISH TO RETURN TO.

AGAIN, THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR THIS HONOR, AND WORKING
TOGETHER, WE WILL REACH OUR GOAL.

West Co. Historical Society - consider other awardees - Big Valley HIST SOCI

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St Vincent

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TONIGHT'S EVENT REPRESENTS FORTUITOUS SCHEDULING, FOR TODAY IN THE STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MY LEGISLATION CALLING FOR STATE TAX INCENTIVES TO HELP BUYERS AND SELLERS OF HISTORIC HOMES AND HOMES IN HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS RESTORE THOSE PROPERTIES SO THAT THEY ONCE AGAIN BECOME PLACES TO LIVE AND BUILD MEMORIES, WAS PASSED.

IT'S AN IMPORTANT STEP IN OUR EFFORTS, AND ONE I AM VERY PROUD ~~OF~~ *to part of it.*

BUT IT IS JUST A FIRST STEP.

WE CAN REBUILD OUR OLDER COMMUNITIES, ONE HOME, AND ONE PROPERTY AT A TIME.

WE CAN BRING BACK RESIDENTS, AND WITH THEM, JOBS AND VITALITY.