



CORNERSTONES

Fall 2007

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

Thursday, October 4

Storytelling: Tilework in Public Art and Architecture
presented by David Dahlquist, RDG Dahlquist Art Studio
7:00 pm at the Pump House Regional Arts Center, 119 King St.
Free and open to the public.

Sunday, October 14

Fifth Annual Heritage Home Tour
Featuring two newly renovated historic homes!
The Holway House, 1419 Cass St. & the MacMillan House,
1222 Cass St. 1:00-4:00 pm.
PAL member tickets are \$13 or two for \$25—bring a friend!

Volunteers Needed:

We could still use a few volunteers for the Home Tour...no experience needed! If you're able to assist, please call or email the PAL office.

Donation Request:

PAL would like to continue offering free refreshments to tour-goers. We would appreciate any home-made or store-bought baked good donations—please contact the PAL office.

PAL is online: www.preservation-alliance.org

Log on to keep up to date on upcoming events, purchase ornaments, view historic pictures of La Crosse and photos of past events, find links to other preservation organizations, and more. Content continues to be added, so check back often!

And if *you* have photos of historic interest to the La Crosse area, contact the PAL office for possible inclusion on the website!

President's Note

Can you believe it? Fall is "technically" here! We've just passed the Autumn Equinox, and we've all begun noticing the shorter days. The bluffs are starting to turn colors, and the leaves are just beginning to drop. Before long the city will cap off the perpetually running green bubblers around town for the winter, a sure sign of the cold weather coming.

With all of that, we are now anticipating our Fifth Annual Heritage Home Tour. We are very excited about this year's tour. We are showing two wonderful Cass Street houses, both of which have new owners and both have seen extensive interior and some exterior renovations and changes. Our generous home owners are obviously proud of the work they've done on their respective houses, as they are willing to allow us to show them as our annual fundraiser.

In other news, PAL has stayed with the Colman/Skaff House, helping to get it listed as a local landmark to help protect it from possible future demolition.

Finally, PAL will be doing some organizational planning in November. We will be looking at what we are doing as an organization, where we have been, what we feel we are doing well, and not so well. We would love your feedback if there is something that you feel PAL should be doing, and is not, or if you think there are other things we are doing well already, and should keep doing. You can leave us feedback by contacting us through our website. You can leave us any comments, questions or concerns by clicking the "contact" button. Your opinions are valuable to us!!

Yours in preservation,

Barbara Kooiman, PAL President

Colman/Skaff House Update

Many of you have been with PAL in following the status of the Colman/Skaff House at 207 West Avenue South. Here's a recap of recent events: PAL friend and former board member Jay Lokken had heard from a member of First Presbyterian Church's congregation that they were making an offer to purchase the white and yellow Queen Anne style house to their immediate north. The session, the church's governing board, had already decided to bring the decision to the full congregation. Once the majority of the congregation agreed, the offer to purchase would be made. The congregation did meet, and by a very narrow margin they voted in favor of purchasing the building.

PAL decided to sponsor a public informational meeting concerning the historic status of the building. We invited representatives of the church to come to that meeting, and members of PAL, the Cass/King Historic District, the 10th and Cass Streets Historic District, the Washburn Neighborhood Association and the Grandview/Emerson Neighborhood Association were sent notice of the meeting. Of course, any church member who lived within those neighborhoods would have been sent notice as well, and it was advertised in the La Crosse Tribune and on the PAL website.

The meeting, held on the evening of August 2nd at the La Crosse Public Library, brought out approximately 80 members of the public. Many were there for the information, others were deeply concerned about the church's future plans for the house, and yet others defended the church's right to purchase the building and do what they wanted to with it.

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A member of the church's session was there to answer questions. She essentially said the church, at that time, had no specific plans for the building, but was simply buying it, in part, to prevent a less desirable neighbor (i.e. commercial or student housing rental) from purchasing it, and to leave their long range campus plans open for future discussion, knowing they owned that property.

The strongest message sent to the church that night was from the neighbors: the church, being part of the neighborhood, should give its neighbors ample time to know what the future plan uses of the historic house may be. There were many concerns that the house's removal may lead to neighborhood deterioration and loss of valuable tax base in the city. The church representative agreed that neighborly communication was good.

Since the public meeting, the church did close on the Colman/Skaff House, and they now own it. On Thursday, September 20 the Colman/Skaff House was presented to the La Crosse Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) for

consideration as a local landmark. It was nominated by PAL board member Eric Wheeler as an excellent example the Queen Anne/Stick style of architecture, and for its association with Lucius Colman, a second generation lumber baron in La Crosse. The HPC voted unanimously to designate the house as a local landmark.

Now, with its historic status, the new owners will be required to come before the HPC with any plans for exterior renovation that would require a building permit, and they will be denied a demolition permit, if they try to obtain one. The church would need to appeal the home's historic status first to the HPC and then to the La Crosse Common Council to rescind the historic designation before they would be eligible to obtain a demolition permit.

PAL was not trying to stop the church from purchasing the building, and is confident that First Presbyterian Church will be a good steward of the historic building; however, PAL was reacting to public concerns about the building's potential future.

For future updates on the Colman/Skaff House, check the PAL website at www.preservation-alliance.org

—submitted by Barbara Kooiman

Home Tour Offers Chance to Tour Newly Renovated Homes

PAL's fifth annual Heritage Home Tour is Sunday, October 14 from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. This year's featured homes are two notable Cass Street historic properties representing distinct architectural styles popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The tour offers a unique opportunity for the public to see these newly renovated private properties. Both homes contribute to the Cass/King Street National Register of Historic Places District.

The Holway House at 1419 Cass Street is often referred to as the "Castle of Cass Street." Under new ownership by PAL members Grant and Jane Wood, the home offers a contrast from its former Victorian interior design. Even if you have toured this grand house before, you need to see it now! Decorated differently, with a completely renovated kitchen and back yard patio (where our volunteers will be offering coffee and treats), this year the second floor bedrooms will be on view for guests as well. This spectacular Queen Anne-style house was built in 1892 and was designed by Gustav Stoltze and Hugo Schick, both of La Crosse. Its 20 rooms feature woodwork of ash, birch, oak and sycamore.

The second featured home is also under new ownership by PAL members: Kathryn Pertzsch and Steve Cottrell have recently completed an extensive renovation of the property. Known as the MacMillan House, the 1222 Cass Street house was built in 1914 and was designed by well-known La Crosse architect Otto Merman (who also designed the Gelatt house next door at 1212 Cass Street). The MacMillan house is a fine example of the Prairie School style of architecture, popular in the early part of the 20th century.

Architectural historians and PAL volunteers will present an architectural and historical overview of each property and will guide guests through the architecturally significant areas of the interior. We're still welcoming volunteers, and we're also in need of baked good donations for the event. Please contact the PAL office for more details.

Tickets for the tour are for sale in advance at the People's Food Co-op, La Crosse Festival Foods, and Quillin's in the Village Shopping Center. Tickets will also be available at the featured homes on October 14. PAL member tickets are \$13 or two for \$25; consider bringing a non-member friend! General admission tickets are \$15 the day of the tour and \$13 in advance.

We hope you'll join us for an exclusive opportunity to tour these newly renovated private homes!

PAL Presents...

Storytelling: Tilework in Public Art and Architecture

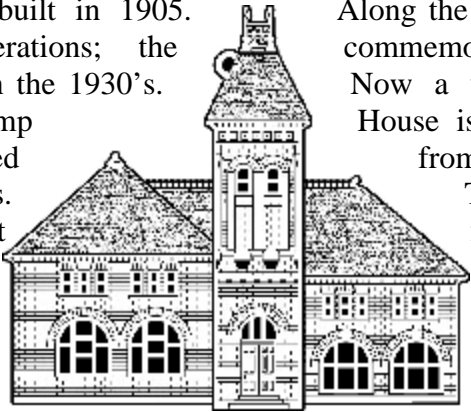
PAL's educational speaker series continues on Thursday, October 4. Presenter David Dahlquist is a nationally recognized public artist and teacher. He is now a partner with RDG Planning and Design, Des Moines, Iowa, and leads the RDG Dahlquist Art Studio.

In this session, David will share his experiences working in the realm of "Public Art" and his over 30 major public-art installations across the country. David will discuss how he works collaboratively with many different artists and design professionals and how he is regularly called upon to be the artist/design consultant to multi-disciplinary teams of architects, landscape architects, and engineers. He will share the work of the RDG Dahlquist Art Studio and speak about the evolution of his work from individual "object maker" to the integration of tilework into architecture and the landscape. The history of tilework will be highlighted in the role it has played in architectural ornamentation, decoration, and the development of narrative.

David will also discuss his work with the Louis Sullivan Building Foundation, including restoration of the Adams Land and Loan in Algona, Iowa and work on the Grinnell, Iowa Merchant's National Bank. These buildings feature ornamental terra cotta manufactured in Chicago by the Northwest and American Terra Cotta Companies. David is currently working on the largest Italian (SICIS) glass mosaic tile mural in the United States. He will share the development of this large-scale project from original concept now into construction.

2007 Treasures of the Past Ornament Revealed!

PAL's 2007 ornament celebrates the 30th anniversary of the Pump House Regional Arts Center. Once the city's water pumping station, the brick Romanesque Revival building at 119 King Street was originally built in 1905. Along the way, the building has seen several renovations and alterations; the commemorative ornament celebrates the building as it looked in the 1930's. Now a vibrant home for the visual and performing arts, the Pump House is one of La Crosse's preservation success stories, saved from abandonment (and probably destruction) in the 70's. The Pump House Regional Arts Center, with support from the City, continues to care for its historic home: last year saw the installation of new copper around the roof, and currently, significant interior renovation and beautification is under way, including a new hardwood floor in the Kader Room.



The Pump House will be in stock shortly. The exquisitely detailed 3-D ornament is plated in 24-karat gold and presented in a handsome gift box.