

LANDMARKS OBSERVER

Historic character enriches our lives



WHO WE ARE:
Hilary Bassett
SEE PAGE 10

PHOTO: RHONDA FARNHAM



OBSERVATORY:
New Visitor Experience
SEE PAGE 4



**THE CASE FOR
MUNJOY HILL**
SEE PAGE 8



FLAG DAY:
Friday, June 14
10 am - 7 pm
SEE PAGE 7

Greater Portland
Landmarks



LETTER FROM HILARY BASSETT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TODAY, AS I DRIVE UP FORE STREET and walk around my neighborhood, Munjoy Hill, the sounds of construction are everywhere – hammers, power tools, and yes, backhoes demolishing buildings. All over our community – whether it is Forest Avenue, Willard

Beach, transportation corridors in Falmouth, or Westbrook’s mill structures – there is pressure that is putting greater Portland’s historic character at risk. Our historic fabric is fragile. Once special places are destroyed or compromised, there is no turning back the clock.

Portland is undergoing one of its greatest transformations since Urban Renewal in the 1960s and 70s. At that time Portland lost some of its most iconic buildings, along with whole neighborhoods. People were stunned as the wrecking ball knocked Union Station’s granite tower to the ground in 1961. Greater Portland Landmarks was formed then as people united to see that this would not happen again. Thanks to you and our supporters over the years, our success is clearly visible and a major factor in keeping so much of the historic character that makes this place so vibrant and desirable.

Having been involved with Greater Portland Landmarks for almost 25 years – including 6 as a trustee – I feel very strongly that we have to continue to take action to research, educate, shape policies, and advocate strongly for good design and construction decisions. We do want to grow and evolve in balanced, informed, smart ways, and we strongly need to advocate that historic preservation is an essential part of doing so wisely.

As many of you know, I am retiring from my position as Executive Director in June. I’m most proud of working with

you to preserve the historic character of the place we call home. Imagine for a moment, how different this place would be if not for Landmarks and the tireless commitment of its hundreds of volunteers, funders, and preservation professionals. Historic preservation has been the very cornerstone of making this place so attractive as a place to live, work, and visit.

Thank you again for making it possible for Landmarks to continue to advocate that preserving and reusing historic places is sustainable, enriches people’s lives, and brings diverse communities together.

Please join me in welcoming Sarah Hansen as the new executive director of Greater Portland Landmarks. Sarah has strong preservation and coalition-building experience at the local, state, and national level. After working in the field in Colorado, Washington, and Arkansas, including a stint at the National Trust for Historic Preservation Denver office,

Sarah returned to her home state in 2017 to work at Maine Preservation. Sarah’s preservation career started with a summer internship at the Portland Observatory in 2000 before she later went on to earn her master’s degree in Preservation Studies from Boston University.

Sarah says, “I am thrilled to be joining the incredible team at Landmarks and to build on the organization’s outstanding accomplishments. I am a big believer in creative collaboration and am looking forward to working with the greater Portland region to advance preservation-minded solutions to economic, environmental and community revitalization challenges.” I’ve known Sarah since she interned at Landmarks, and she is an excellent choice to lead Landmarks into the future. ■



PHOTO: RHONDA FARNHAM

Sarah Hansen and Hilary Bassett

Greater Portland Landmarks



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ADVOCACY UPDATES



Work has begun at 58 Fore Street, as the former pattern storage building at the Portland Company Complex is being dismantled and reconstructed at a new location within to the historic district.

IT'S BEEN A BUSY SPRING at Landmarks as Portland's development boom continues. The redevelopment of the Portland Company complex is underway. Several of the buildings that were not included in the **Portland Company Historic District** have been demolished and the deconstruction of Building 12, the former pattern storage building, is in process. Building 12 will be carefully deconstructed, much of its material will be salvaged for reuse, and the building will be reconstructed closer to the East End Trail to make way for a new office building on the northwest corner of the parcel.

Landmarks supported a new 4-story building at **5 India Street**, next to the recently restored Grand Trunk Railroad Office Building, that was approved in March by Portland's Historic Preservation Board. The building will have retail space on the ground floor and 24 residential rental units on the upper three floors. The proposed building was carefully designed to be visually compatible with the Grand Trunk Building.

The Historic Preservation Board recently approved the design for a new hotel to infill a lot at the corner of **Commercial and Center Streets**. Commercial Street is one of Portland's most architecturally cohesive streets but this lot was historically not part of the strong street wall. Landmarks commented in all workshops and public hearings as the development team worked to make the building more compatible with its context. Landmarks ultimately supported the final design that was approved by the Historic Preservation Board after much thoughtful consideration. The 135-room Canopy by Hilton is being developed by Fathom Companies and is scheduled to open in Spring of 2021.

On the **West End**, the Ronald McDonald House is expanding to accommodate 13 additional rooms for families needing long-term stays in Portland. The new housing will be provided in a former double house at 59-61 Carleton Street. The alterations to the house were supported by Landmarks and approved by the Historic Preservation Board in March.

South Portland planners and city leaders are currently considering land use amendments that will identify and protect historic resources in the city. The ordinance would empower the city's Arts and Historic Preservation Committee to develop a list of buildings to be protected. The ordinance would protect pre-1941 buildings with a 90-day demolition delay and provide an incentive for the adaptive reuse of protected buildings by permitting alternative uses in the city's zoning ordinance.

The proposed land use amendments establish criteria for evaluating historic resources and the effect of proposed changes to properties that reflect national historic preservation practices. The reuse incentives will not only preserve South Portland's cultural heritage, but also will

provide a sustainable means to manage growth and change. Adaptive reuse projects maximize the use of existing materials and infrastructure, reduce waste, and help to preserve the character of their neighborhoods.

In 2013 Greater Portland Landmarks listed South Portland's historic resources in our endangered property program, Places in Peril, because the city had not yet fulfilled the goals of its comprehensive plan to update its lists of historic and archaeological assets or to develop an ordinance regarding the demolition of historic structures. We support the land use amendments proposed by South Portland planning staff and the Arts and Historic Preservation Committee. The proposal is a positive action for the City of South Portland and begins to accomplish the goals set out in the city's comprehensive plan.



Building 1, formerly the erecting shop, has been demolished, exposing the western facade of Building 2, formerly the machine shop, which will be restored.

This summer Landmarks will undertake the first historic resource survey in Maine to focus on the impacts of climate change. Landmarks staff have been working with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission and the Sustainability Offices in Portland and South Portland to develop a format that gathers information to identify building elements that could be potentially damaged by flooding or high winds or limit a building's occupants to adjust to high temperatures. The work will be undertaken by four historic preservation students that will be joining Landmarks for a ten-week internship. The students are currently in graduate programs at the University of Pennsylvania School of Design, Colorado State University, and the University of Oregon. The project is in part funded by a Historic Preservation Fund Grant from the National Park Service and is administered by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission. ■



Andrea Roller of Van Sickle & Roller examines one of the new Portland Observatory exhibit panels at Welch Sign.

The New Visitor Experience

ONE OF THE CITY'S MOST ICONIC tourist destinations, over 15,000 visitors flock to the Portland Observatory every year with one goal: to get to the top. But how many slow down and take a moment to learn the history of the tower, or who might have been behind its construction back in 1807? This year, with the help of a new series of interpretive displays, that number will start to go up.

Led by Landmarks' Manager of Education Programs Alessa Wylie, local exhibition design firm Van Sickle & Roller sought

to create an array of bright, informative, and visually pleasing panels that present the story of Captain Lemuel Moody (1768-1846) and his maritime signal tower in Portland. Together, their goals for the exhibit were simple: increase accessibility and keep visitors engaged as they ascend and descend the tower, whether participating in a group or self-guided tour. With captivating images and pared down text, the new permanent panels will surely meet those needs. Visitors will find inviting displays on all six floors of the tower, allowing them to bring forth their own experiences and find meaning in the city's maritime history.



A recently donated 19th century Dollond telescope similar to the original that Captain Moody used at the top of the Observatory will be on display in the new visitor experience.

To learn more about the exhibition design process, we sat down with Andrea Rollereri of Van Sickle & Rollereri with a few questions.

Landmarks: Hi, Andrea! What were your main design objectives for the new exhibits at the Observatory?

VSR: We wanted to make the story of the Observatory visually inviting with more images, less text and a fresh appearance. We felt it was important to expand and distribute the storyline throughout the tower. We also hoped to achieve greater accessibility. On the first floor we placed a scale model of the tower and included the panoramic view of Portland for visitors who might not be able to climb the stairs.

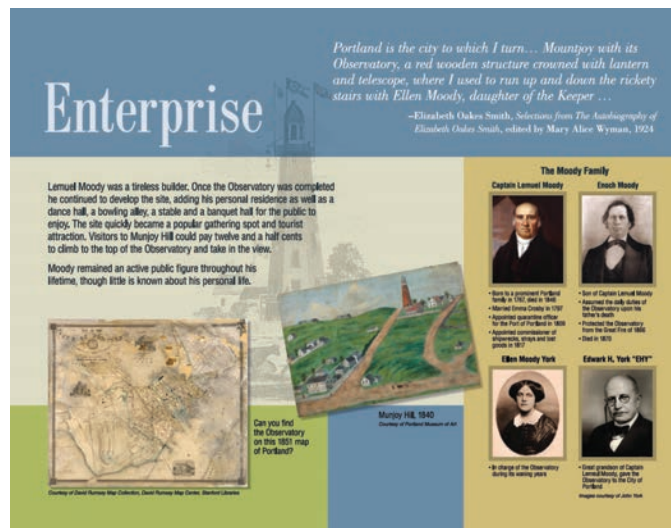
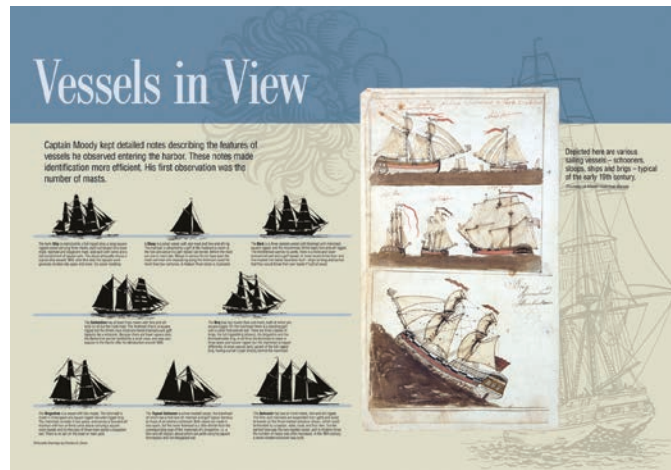
Landmarks: What were some of the challenges you encountered designing in this space?

VSR: With a historic landmark, there are limitations on what can be permanently added to the structure to maintain minimal impact. At the Observatory, visitor circulation is also a challenge because groups of visitors are ascending and descending on the same stairs at the same time. To address this, it was important that we distribute more stories over more floors as well as way-finding. Lastly, the interior space of the Observatory can be dark on some floors, so we wanted the new exhibit panels to be bright, inviting, and easy to read.

Landmarks: How do you anticipate the new exhibits will enhance the visitor experience? Will it be interactive?

VSR: The Portland Observatory *is the interactive* element for visitors. They arrive with a goal of climbing to the top and observing the 360-degree view of Portland just as Captain Moody might have experienced it. The new exhibits will provide visitors with opportunities for an increased understanding of the Observatory and Captain Moody, and to make meaningful connections to Portland, past and present.

Thanks to grants from the National Park Service Maritime Heritage Grants Program, the Davis Family Foundation, the Fisher Foundation, and generous donations from supporters of the Observatory, the new exhibit panels will be installed in time for the 2019 Observatory season. Be sure to stop by and check them out for a new perspective at the tower, past and present. ■



New exhibit panels on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th floors of the Portland Observatory feature 19th century sailing vessels, the Moody family, and the role of the tower in World War II.

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8 Hill Street #3



New to be built, is the Bramhall Hill House. Exciting choices of options and selections to personalize your new 2 bedroom 2 bath West End home. This large unit also includes a dramatic multi purpose loft space with a private deck, awesome light, and views. Rare 2 car garage parking is included. **\$795,000.**

9 Howard Street



At the top of historic Munjoy Hill sits a beautifully maintained Circa 1875, 2-unit building with tons of charm and views of Casco Bay. This property offers to live like a single family with an awesome income producing rental below! You'll find a wonderfully appointed 1st floor 2 bedroom unit with two bay windows, a large private deck, parking, and generous storage in the impeccable basement! **\$975,000.**

84 Eastern Prom



You are at the most coveted location in Portland; Victorian Terrace Condominium on the Prom. This unit has a large master suite with modern bath, guest bedroom, and second full bath. New modern kitchen, with Jenn-Aire Appliances and new flooring throughout. Beautifully landscaped grounds include 2 car reserved parking for each unit. Top floor with private widow's walk deck. **\$925,000.**



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Annual Flag Day Celebration

PLUS - Grand opening of the new exhibits at the Portland Observatory!
Admission is free to all on Friday, June 14.



FOR THE 20TH YEAR IN A ROW, Greater Portland Landmarks and the City of Portland will celebrate Flag Day at the Portland Observatory. Flag Day honors the adoption of the Stars and Stripes as our national flag by the Second Continental Congress on June 14, 1777. Captain Lemuel Moody used flags at the Observatory to alert merchants and ship owners that a ship was soon to arrive. Consequently, the national holiday has become the local day to celebrate the Portland Observatory as well. On Flag Day 1939 the Observatory reopened to the public after its first major renovation was completed by the W.P.A. The tradition continued on Flag Day 2000 when Landmarks and the City of Portland celebrated the reopening of the mighty Tower after the completion of its second major restoration and the first installation of interpretive exhibits. This Flag Day will mark yet another milestone as we officially re-open the Portland Observatory on June 14th with a brand new visitor experience! *Read about the exhibits on page 4.*

Portland Observatory
138 Congress Street, Portland
Friday, June 14, 10 am – 7 pm

FREE
EVENTS

Children's activity & self-guided architecture scavenger hunts.

10 am	Welcome by Hilary Bassett, Executive Director, Greater Portland Landmarks. Raising of flags.
11 am & 1 pm	Guided walking tour of Munjoy Hill
1 pm – 6 pm	David Peloquin, a folk musician specializing in songs and chanteys of the American sailor will be performing in the Observatory.

Nominations Open for 2019 Places in Peril

Landmarks is seeking nominations for the 2019 Places in Peril. The program draws attention to places that are in danger of extreme deterioration or loss because of limited public awareness of how important they are to our history, lack of maintenance, and the absence of preservation protections. "Our goal is to broaden awareness of these vulnerable places and to advocate for their preservation, protection and adaptive reuse. We look forward to serving as a catalyst for preservation so that these at-risk places can be saved," said Hilary Bassett, Executive Director of Landmarks. For more information and to nominate a property visit our website www.portlandlandmarks.org



Examples of door hoods, bracket ornaments, and denticular details that are indicative of development on Munjoy Hill following the Great Fire of 1866 and give the neighborhood buildings their distinctive character.

The Case for Munjoy Hill

It is critical to create a historic district now to conserve the neighborhood's historic character.

BY JULIE ANN LARRY

What is happening on Munjoy Hill?

For over a year Greater Portland Landmarks has been working with local residents to advocate for a historic district on Munjoy Hill to help manage change and loss of historic character in a neighborhood that is rapidly transforming. Time and again, through the designation process, Portland has successfully balanced the preservation of historic resources with economic growth. With only five properties currently protected by the preservation ordinance, a Munjoy Hill historic district would conserve a neighborhood that has been home to generations of families that helped to shape the city.

In partnership with the City of Portland and the Munjoy Hill Neighborhood Organization, Landmarks helped fund a survey of over 400 buildings that could potentially contribute to a Munjoy Hill Local Historic District. Utilizing this survey, the city's Historic Preservation Program is moving forward with plans to designate a large area of the Hill as a historic district.

Landmarks supports the city's proposal to create a historic district on Munjoy Hill. The resources within the proposed boundary tell the story of the Munjoy Hill neighborhood's development over a broad period of time and retain significant levels of architectural integrity. Over the coming months we'll be part of the ongoing conversation about the formation of an historic district and we hope that you'll join the conversation as well. Landmarks will post updates and meeting dates to our website: www.portlandlandmarks.org/urgent

Why is Munjoy Hill significant?

Munjoy Hill's extant buildings tell the story of three successive waves of development that reflect three major periods in Portland's history. The first wave of residential subdivision on the Hill was due a growing need for worker housing upon the arrival of the railroad in the 1840s and the subsequent expansion of activity on Portland's waterfront; the second wave was caused by the flurry of building activity that occurred following the Great Fire of 1866; and the third wave was spurred by the arrival of European immigrants at the turn of the 20th century.

For the last century Munjoy Hill has been one of the city's most densely populated and ethnically diverse neighborhoods, but it was one of the last neighborhoods on the peninsula to be developed. From the city's founding in the 1630s until the 1840s the Hill was an occasional gathering place and a pasture for cows.

An upsurge in industrial activity along Fore and India Street in the 1840s and 1850s led to a residential boom on the Hill, attracting workers from the nearby Portland Company and Atlantic & St. Lawrence Railroad. Many of the homes built in this era are located on the southwest side of the Hill and were built in the Greek Revival style that predominated during this period.

In 1866 the Great Fire of July 4th and 5th spread from Commercial Street to North Street. It destroyed 1,500 buildings in the city and left over 10,000 residents homeless. Among the buildings to survive the fire are several early homes to the east

of North Street including the Benjamin Noble House (1856) at 65 North Street and the double house of Eliphalet Clark and Moses Gould at 79 North Street (c1847).

Following the Great Fire, the city's need for housing drove development on Munjoy Hill. This development was largely middle-class homes, with a few high style residences, in the Italianate and Second Empire styles. Many gable front dwellings on narrow lots were built in this period of expansion. These dwellings characterize many of the Hill's streetscapes and usually have bracketed cornices, bay windows, and hooded entries.

In the early 19th century the city of Portland started purchasing land along the waterfront, but it wasn't until the late 19th century and the extension of the street car line to Morning Street that lots were developed along the Eastern Promenade.



Munjoy Hill's extant buildings tell the story of three successive waves of development that reflect the social and cultural history of Portland.

Then wealthy local families began to appreciate the Promenade's sweeping views and erected grand homes in the Queen Anne and Colonial Revival styles opposite the city-owned green space.

Between 1895 and 1915 triple-deckers were built in large numbers on Munjoy Hill. These dense residential building types housed the Hill's increasingly diverse European immigrant population in the first decades of the 20th century.

Why Should We Preserve the Munjoy Hill Neighborhood?

Munjoy Hill's historic buildings are significant features of the neighborhood's streetscapes and help make the area a desirable and attractive place to live, work and play. These buildings tell the story of the neighborhood and the role its residents played in the social and cultural history of Portland. The history embedded in this neighborhood is just as important as the story of Portland's West End or Old Port and just as worthy of our preservation efforts. It is critical to create a historic district now, before more of the Hill's historic identity is lost. ■

Benefits of a Local Historic District

Historic Preservation is about keeping buildings alive, in active use, and relevant to the needs of the community. To best accomplish this, zoning and building regulations need to be flexible and responsive to change even as they try to preserve what is special about each building.

Local districts encourage better quality design. Better design can produce a greater sense of cohesiveness, more innovative use of materials, and greater public appeal all of which are shown to occur more often within designated districts than non-designated ones.

Local districts give communities a voice in their future. By participating in the process, citizens can help direct their communities' path. Making these decisions together in a structured way rather than behind closed doors or without public comment gives everyone involved a sense of empowerment and confidence.

Local districts allow density without demolitions of historic houses. Accessory dwelling units, additions, and new housing units within existing houses, are all ways that a historic district can offer more housing options, without destroying the history, beauty, integrity, and urban tree canopy of these neighborhoods.

Local districts help tell the story of our city in all its complexity and diversity. Historic districts have a reputation of only featuring grand historic homes and affluent residents, but historic districts also celebrate modest communities that have been home to generations of working-class families. The history embedded in these communities is just as important, and just as worthy of our full preservation efforts.

Local districts can protect a property owner's investment. Regulations are intended to prevent the demolition or inappropriate alteration of historic properties, and thus, the fabric of the historic district that gives properties their value. They offer predictability for residents and for those considering investing in the community.

Local districts do not preclude the use of renewable energy technologies. Portland's Historic Preservation Board reviews the use of renewable-energy technologies on a case by case basis and has approved the use of solar panels in local historic districts.

Reuse of historic buildings typically offers greater environmental savings than demolition and new construction. The 2016 Preservation Green Lab study found that it can take up to 80 years for a new energy efficient building to overcome the climate change impacts created by its construction.

Who We Are – Hilary Bassett

BY MAGGIE PERKINS

AFTER NEARLY 20 YEARS leading the region's preservation movement as executive director of Greater Portland Landmarks, Hilary Bassett is retiring on June 30th. Under her guidance, Landmarks has influenced the revitalization and preservation of many of the dynamic neighborhoods, architectural streetscapes, and parks that tell the story of greater Portland's communities. Grounded in sustained community engagement and education, paired with advocacy among public officials and policymakers, Hilary's tenure has shaped the region as we know it. Her decades of hard work have generously demonstrated how historic preservation enriches our lives.

Before assuming her role as executive director, Hilary joined the Landmarks board in 1994 and served on its education committee. She helped develop resources like *Buildings Make Community*, a teacher resource guide, and *The City is a Classroom*, a workbook for third graders. Hilary believes, "If kids grow up learning about their history and the special places that tell that story, when they are voters and policy-makers, they will support preservation. Local characters and places tell our country's story—like John Calvin Stevens or James Phinney Baxter, the Abyssinian Meeting House or the Portland Observatory. It's not just George Washington and the White House."

When Hilary saw several local historic sites struggling with the same need to recruit volunteer tour guides, she helped establish the Portland History Docent program, a shared effort to recruit and train docents and equip them with a foundation in local history and architecture. Twenty-five years on with eight participating historic sites, the program educates approximately 50 people annually. People around the country have reached out to ask how they could emulate this collaborative program in their communities.

In the late 1990s, Landmarks was instrumental in restoring the Portland Observatory (1807), and of course, Hilary was central to that work. In partnership with the City of Portland, Munjoy Hill Neighborhood Organization and the Portland Marine Society, Landmarks created the Portland Observatory Restoration Trust (PORT) to save the beloved building. Hilary

mobilized the fundraising effort with fellow trustee, Eric Altholz. "Her creativity, her organizational skills, her quiet determination, her passion for preservation, and her magic touch with donors was on display throughout the campaign," Altholz reminisced. "Without Hilary, I don't think the Observatory would be a success story."

In 2000, just after the Observatory reopened to the public, Hilary transitioned from the board to her role as executive director of Landmarks. She

prioritized programs, strategies and fundraising campaigns that would ultimately triple the budget, establish a new headquarters, and ensure that Landmarks could sustainably expand its advocacy, education and outreach in the greater Portland community. "A true collaborator, Hilary has so significantly expanded the scope of Landmarks' activities and influence in Portland and Greater Portland," remarked Deb Andrews, Historic Preservation Program Manager for the City of Portland. "She has put such a positive face on historic preservation for the community."

Over the years, Hilary built strong relationships with community leaders, which helped Landmarks make progress with City policies and programs. After months of intensive advocacy, in 2004, the City Council updated the historic preservation ordinance to meet national standards, gain eligibility for grants, and elevate the status of the review committee to a full board.

In 2010, the City Council voted unanimously to establish the Congress Street Historic District, protecting properties along Portland's principal street. The Council designated new districts for House Island in 2015, India Street in 2015 and expanded in 2016, and the Portland Company site in 2016. With extensive Landmarks involvement, preservation priorities are integrated in the city's 2016 comprehensive plan. Hilary's last year at Landmarks is defined by her fearless advocacy on Munjoy Hill, "We're right in the middle of collaborating with neighbors to promote a potential new historic district for Munjoy Hill, and are witnessing an escalating pace of new development all over greater Portland – the largest I've seen in my 25 years living here," says Hilary. "Being proactive and being part of the conversation are more important than ever. Changes are happening so rapidly that you could say that we are truly under siege."



Another powerful tool in making the case for preservation is gathering basic information. Hilary took the helm on Landmarks' book *Deering: A Social and Architectural History*, published in 2010 and written by William Barry and Patricia Anderson. It offers the only comprehensive architectural and social history of Portland's off peninsula neighborhoods to complement the *Portland* book published in 1972. Similarly, neighborhood surveys conducted in downtown Portland, Deering, and South Portland create essential tools to evaluate resources and determine potential historic district designations. Always looking to do more, Hilary recognized survey work provides additional educational opportunities. With Director of Advocacy, Julie Larry, she expanded the internship program to include survey work as well as community engagement events that bring local constituents together while sharing neighborhood histories.

Surveys are part of Hilary's work to broaden the scope of preservation beyond greater Portland's more grand and iconic structures. Deb said that "preservation can be seen as stopping things, protectionism, but Hilary has always defined preservation as what opportunities exist to take advantage of these extraordinary assets in our community."

Through *Places in Peril*, established in 2012, Landmarks calls attention to properties that need help, signaling that there is more work to be done to preserve iconic places along with the everyday places that define our shared built environment. The program is a catalyst for adaptive reuse and community revitalization throughout the region, and continues to build awareness of the fragility of these places. As Executive Director, she oversaw Landmarks' advocacy for 4 (hopefully 5) new historic districts that celebrate diverse stories including African-American, immigrant, and working class histories.

One of the largest undertakings in Hilary's tenure was the 2009 move to the Safford House (1858) prominently located at the site of Landmarks' early victory to stop the widening of Spring Street. Hilary oversaw the sale of Landmarks' former office at 165 State Street and lead the search for a new, highly visible headquarters to

support programing and demonstrate best practices in preservation and environmental sustainability. After she secured a National Endowment for the Humanities Challenge Grant, Hilary worked with the board to execute a successful \$2.2 million capital campaign to purchase and rehabilitate the building. Hilary made it a priority to hire local preservation experts to develop a master preservation plan and to conduct major projects, from a brand new roof with R-60 insulation, to state of the art HVAC systems, to essential structural repairs. Now, 10 years later, the building is in constant

use, fully leased to tenants on the upper floors, and host to a wide variety of programs, meetings, and events. Hilary believes it is essential to foster connections between experts, trades, and craftspeople and property owners through educational workshops, presentations, personal contacts and information.

Having begun her tenure at Landmarks with the reopening



of the Portland Observatory, it is fitting that in the year before her retirement, Hilary has played a major role in commissioning and fundraising for new interpretive displays, currently being installed (see related story page 4). Attendance has more than doubled since 2000 thanks to enhanced self-guided tours and Portland's increasing popularity with tourists. Likewise, education programs continue to flourish, including the revised *City is a Classroom* workbook, expanded walking tours, and guided tours of the US Custom House.

"I came to Landmarks to work with Hilary," Board President, Ed Gardner says, "her kindness and grace in the face of any obstacle encourages everyone around her. For years to come, locals and visitors will benefit from Hilary's impact on Greater Portland." In all of her pursuits, large or small, Hilary's commitment to the Landmarks mission remains steadfast, and her pledge to education, outreach, and advocacy always stays top of mind. "Preservation is really why a lot of people like this place," says Hilary. "They love the way it looks and feels – they love the stories – and Landmarks can help them make that connection. There is so much still to do to preserve and enhance our special place and I believe that Landmarks will continue to make an enormous difference in how our community evolves." ■

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Thank you Greater Portland Landmarks for a wonderful show!
 ~Rory Brennan

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The mid-century restaurant currently occupied by Woodford F&B, formerly known as Valle's sandwich shop, is one of fifteen historically and architecturally significant buildings along Forest Avenue that city planners proposed to be historically designated.

Forest Avenue Buildings May Be Designated Locally Significant

FOREST AVENUE HAS ALWAYS been a critical transportation and business corridor linking the Portland peninsula to off-peninsula neighborhoods and communities to the west. Along the corridor is Woodfords Corner which has historically been the commercial and civic heart of its surrounding suburban neighborhoods. In the early 20th century part of the corridor gained the moniker, Portland's Auto Row, because of the concentration of auto dealerships that were built there. Because of its history and continued vitality, Forest Avenue has been the focus of nearly a decade of study and planning by the city and state to restore its character as a destination business district and create a functional and safe environment for all forms of transportation.

Landmarks has worked in collaboration with local community organizations over several years to improve public awareness of Forest Avenue's history and significance in the development of Portland. Our work began with a survey of Forest Avenue in the summer of 2015 (*Observer*, Fall 2015). The Maine Historic Preservation Commission identified several National Register eligible buildings at Woodfords Corner and near I-295 that reflect the economic and community importance of the area. The survey results and the findings by the Commission led Landmarks to advocate for the designation of several potential local landmarks in advance of development pressures.

City staff have assembled a proposal, currently under consideration by the Historic Preservation Board, to designate 15 buildings along Forest Avenue as locally significant buildings.



City planners also hope to designate several former auto showrooms, including the former Studebaker dealership at 533 Forest Avenue.

The designation includes a number of auto-related commercial buildings as well as buildings significant to the development of the Woodfords Corner neighborhood like Odd Fellows Hall and the former Deering fire station, now occupied by Big Sky Bakery.

What can you do? Please email planning@portlandmaine.gov or write of letter of support to the Historic Preservation Board urging them to recommend historic designation of the following buildings along Forest Avenue to the City Council. ■

Forest Avenue Nominations

536 Deering Avenue	Engine Company No. 8 Firehouse, 1907
331 Forest Avenue	A.S. Hinds Laboratory Building, 1920
343-349 Forest Avenue	Miles B. Mank Motor Car Company, 1916-1917
351 Forest Avenue	L.C. Gilson Automobile Co. Building, 1922
364 Forest Avenue	Oakhurst Dairy, 1951-1953
495 Forest Avenue	Packard Motor Car Co. Showroom, 1927
501 Forest Avenue	Gleason Chrysler Auto Dealership, 1927
517 Forest Avenue	Clifton R. Shaw Auto Dealership, 1928
525 Forest Avenue	John S. Goff Chevrolet Building, 1927-1928
533 Forest Avenue	Studebaker Automobile Dealership, 1928
617 Forest Avenue	Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co. Store, 1915
630 Forest Avenue	Darling-Kidder Motor Car Company, 1917
643-651 Forest Avenue	Odd Fellows Block, 1897
646-650 Forest Avenue	Chapman Block, 1916
660 Forest Avenue	Valle's Sandwich Shop, 1964



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The Portland Observatory and Baltimore's Signal Tower

BY NANCY ELLENBERGER

PORTLAND RIGHTLY acclaim its Observatory as the longest-standing maritime signal tower in the country – but it was not the earliest structure built in eastern ports to improve communication between vessels at sea and merchants awaiting them on shore. In 1797, a decade before Lemuel Moody (1767-1846) erected his tower on Munjoy Hill, a signal station opened on Federal Hill in Baltimore, MD. Baltimore was certainly the larger port at the time, with a population six times that of Portland. Nevertheless, Lemuel Moody's ambitious project of 1807 reflected Portland's startling growth as Customs revenues grew from \$8,000 in 1790 to over \$300,000 in 1806.

The solutions to improve maritime signaling eventually used in Baltimore and Portland show remarkable similarities. Both were private ventures that raised capital by selling shares to local merchants – 100 businessmen in Portland, 300 businessmen in Baltimore. Both spent generously on telescopes to spy out individualized signal flags, then flew duplicates to announce the identity of ships approaching from fifteen miles down the Chesapeake Bay or twenty miles off Portland's wharfs. Both charged \$3 a year for unlimited access to the building, or pennies for a single visit. Both reduced turnaround times in port and provided early notice of accidents, approaching storms or the need for pilot boats. With an observation deck 65' above the street, Portland's structure was more than twice as high as Baltimore's, and more substantially built. Still, the parallels between the two ventures might suggest that Moody had knowledge of Baltimore's pioneering system, and adapted it for Portland conditions.

The name most associated with the Baltimore structure is David Porter (1754-1808), father of the 1812 Naval hero who shared his name, and grandfather of Admiral David Dixon Porter of Civil War fame. A daring and persistent privateer during the American Revolution, David Porter senior had moved his family from Boston to Baltimore in the early 1780s. He later commanded a revenue cutter in the Chesapeake Bay, authorized by Congress to reduce smuggling and tax avoidance. In that



In 1888 this Victorian tower with an ice cream stand at its base replaced the 1797 Federal Hill Observatory in Baltimore. It was destroyed in a summer storm in 1902 and never replaced. Image courtesy of the Maryland Historical Society.

capacity, Porter organized the business community to fund the Federal Hill tower. At the same time, he, like Moody, served as an instructor of navigation and occasional ship's captain.

A direct personal connection between these Massachusetts seamen is possible, though unproven by archival sources. Born in 1767, Lemuel was too young to serve in the Penobscot expedition of 1779, but Porter was there as 1st lieutenant on the privateer *General Putnam*. So was Lemuel's older brother William, a drummer in Col. John Mitchell's Cumberland County Regiment of militia. Perhaps these two came across each other in the chaos of scuttled ships and cross-country escape that ended the venture. Two decades later and from different ports, Lemuel Moody and Porter were both ship masters, following similar routes, encountering similar dangers, and

sharing the word-of-mouth intelligence networks of mariners engaged in the West Indies trade.

As a captain, Moody provided news on ships, masters, home ports and market conditions from his journeys. Of particular interest were the depredations experienced by seafarers at the hands of privateers as the 'quasi war' with France developed. In 1799 Moody himself was imprisoned in Suriname and forfeited a \$1500 cargo of cotton, sugar, molasses, and coffee bound for the Widgery dock in Portland. So uncertain were these coastal/Caribbean passages that merchants began sailing in convoys of vessels from ports all along the eastern seaboard.

In this context, Moody could well have learned from personal inspection, or simply from scuttlebutt, how Baltimore merchants were improving their harbor. Increasingly reliant on shipping for their economic growth, Portland and Baltimore shared the expansive trade opportunities of the early republic, as well as a commitment to activities that benefited individual enterprise while providing a public good. For Moody, Baltimore's proven system would have represented the best practices of the day for a similar venture on Munjoy Hill. ■



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The 2019 Old House Trade Show, March 30-31, 2019 was a huge success. Almost 900 people and 50 exhibitors enjoyed two days of talking about houses, attending workshops, and celebrating preservation. Left to Right, Ed Gardner (right) from Gardner Real Estate Group chats about Stevens Square; Bagala Window Works' sample window in action; Erin Watkins (left) of Old House Parts Co. shows off some hardware; David Erickson (right) discusses his refurbished Portland Stove Foundry collection that was on display.



Dedicated docents and staff wait for the March "worm moon" at the top of the Observatory. A crowd gathers to watch the raising of the Irish Flag for St. Patrick's Day, a collaboration with the Maine Irish Heritage Center. Docents' celebrate Valentine's Day at the Safford House.

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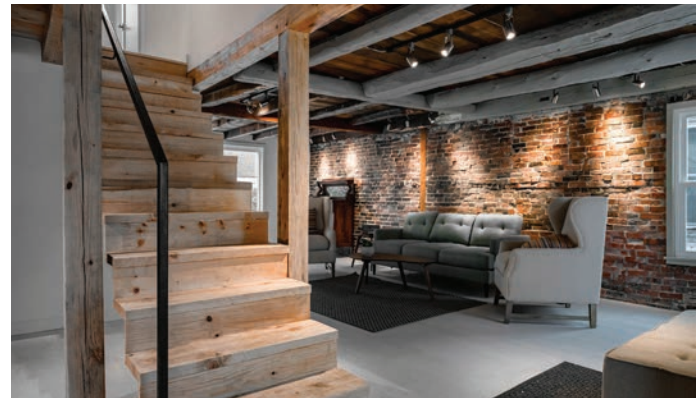
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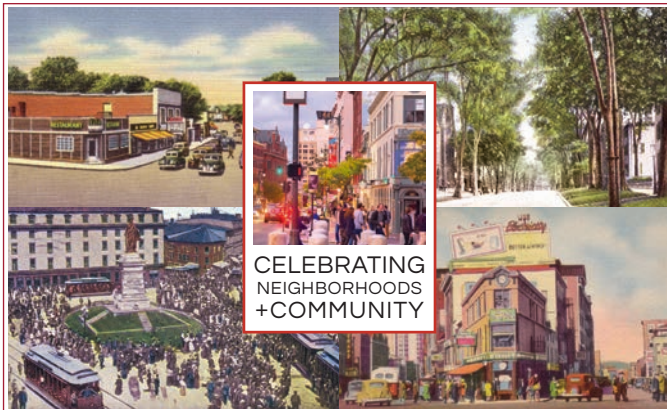
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 Flag Day on page 7

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Homes of Portland's Golden Age explores
 the area that, in the early 19th century
 was considered "the most beautiful
 neighborhood in Portland." Guided walking
 tours feature stately homes along High,
 Spring, State and Pleasant Streets that
 showcase Portland's early prosperity
 through its architecture.

Tuesdays and Fridays at 10:00 am
 from June 25 to October 18.

Tours begin at Landmarks' headquarters at 93 High Street.



**Neighborhood Stories: Portland's India
 Street** discovers the fascinating history of
 this busy commercial center of Portland in
 the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Thanks
 to a partnership with the Committee to
 Restore the Abyssinian the tour ends with an
 exclusive look inside the 3rd oldest African-
 American meeting house in the nation.

Mondays at 10:00 am from June 24 to October 14.
 Tours begin at One India Street.



**Portland's Western Promenade in the
 Gilded Age** is a brand new tour this year.
 You'll walk through one of Portland's most
 exclusive neighborhoods uncovering the
 hidden connections between neighbors
 during the area's building boom from the
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Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. from June 27 to October 17.
 Tours begin at the corner of the Western Promenade and
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 generations as a symbol of stability, wealth
 and strength.

Open exclusively for these tours on Wednesdays
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