

**ALTON AREA LANDMARKS
ASSOCIATION
BOX 232, ALTON, IL 62002
WWW.ALTONLANDMARKS.ORG**

March 2012

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING: The next meeting will be Monday March 19th at 7:30 pm at the Hart House, 524 Belle Street. Last month our meeting was about saving and repairing original windows. We had so much fun, we decided to do it again this month.

We will be talking about restoring wooden windows. Simple repairs will prolong the life of your windows and will keep them energy efficient. This is an open forum. Everyone is invited. Bring a neighbor.

ENDANGERED: The AALA nominated four buildings to be on Landmarks Illinois' TEN MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES IN ILLINOIS list. We nominated the Grand Theater, the Wise Olin House at 1128 State Street, the Bruch Guertler House at 101 Blair, and the Kendall Cracker Factory at 201-207 East Broadway. The "winners" will be announced in the spring.

HISTORY: Hayner Library has a local history program Wednesday April 18th at 6:30 p.m. The guest speaker Tom Tomlinson will present "Stories of New Piasa Chautauqua and Elsah". Call 1-800-613-3163 to reserve a seat.

PLAYHOUSE: The Lucy Haskell Playhouse Committee has a fund drive to paint and restore the exterior of the Playhouse. Not knowing how much it might cost, their goal is to raise \$12,000 to \$15,000. Some of the architectural elements need to be repaired. The whole Playhouse needs to have layers of paint removed, primed and repainted. Roof repairs may begin soon.

Call Debbie Schuneman at 433-1991 for more information.

WINDMILL: Millers First Insurance Company has no plans at this time to repair the blue neon windmill that sits atop their building at 111 East Fourth Street. Several people have asked about it. The windmill was a landmark sign of Alton when crossing the Clark Bridges. The wings are off and the lights are gone.

FOR SALE: There are many historic houses for sale in Alton.

1128 State Street- Wise-Olin House is in foreclosure.

1700 Liberty- The very elegant James Beall House

1211 Washington- Call Building/Zoning at City Hall

1330 State Street- next to Catholic Children's Home

403/405 Langdon- \$62,000, circa 1880, riverview

Please remind people you know who are house-hunting to drive around Alton. Contact the AALA for suggestions.

SEND IN YOUR DUES FOR 2012. REMEMBER YOUR OTHER FAVORITE NON-PROFITS.

DUES: Please remember to support us with a check. Dues can be mailed to the AALA, Box 232, Alton, IL 62002.

Individual dues are \$15.00 a year. Family membership is \$25.00 a year. Contributions are tax deductible. Help us be a strong voice in preserving historic Alton. Thank you for your support.

STATION: A new train station is being proposed by the city where the Wadlow Golf Course is. The "multi-modal center" would have a new station for Amtrak high speed rail trains, residential development, commercial development and Madison County Transit connections. Nothing has been proposed yet for the College Avenue Amtrak train station.

Alton Aldermen: Ward 1 - James Ryan 463-0209

Ward 2 - Mick McCahill

210-3273

Ward 3 - Michael Velloff

208-7010

Ward 4 - Alice Martin

462-5665

Ward 5 - Charles Brake

462-7253

Ward 6 - Gary Fleming

465-1412

Ward 7 - David Boulds

465-8002

WINDOWS: The two things that disturb preservationists

greatly are replacement windows and vinyl siding. The companies that sell these products make many claims about their energy saving and longevity. New research is questioning those claims. We will be examining some of those claims.

This coming year we are trying to convince renovators to keep and repair original windows. But we will also try to find uses for windows being replaced.

WATCHING:

The Cracker Factory on Broadway still has a blue tarp for a roof. It was damaged in a storm two summers ago. A renovation plan has been proposed.

The Hotel Stratford has closed. Just what Alton doesn't need, another vacant building. Maybe owner Bill Moyer can quickly sell it to a developer who can give Alton the downtown hotel we have been waiting for since the gambling boat came. Wouldn't it be nice if the Grand Theater could be included in that renovation?

Vandals destroyed the widow's walk that enclosed a small viewing area on the east end of the City Hall parking lot. No arrests have been made.

SIDEWALKS: Brick sidewalks are important elements to our historic city. When they get overgrown, people don't use them. And when they don't get used, they get more overgrown. The AALA would like if everyone picks an overgrown brick sidewalk and cleans it off. Find one in your neighborhood and spend an hour scraping off the dirt, grass and leaves. It is good exercise and it will encourage walkers to use the sidewalk. People with over-hanging bushes, please trim them back off of sidewalks, also. Thanks.

CEMETERY: Alton now has ten individual sites listed on the

National Register of Historic Places. The newest is the Alton National Cemetery, 600 Pearl Street. The National Cemetery is adjacent to and formerly was a part of the Alton City Cemetery. The cemetery has 533 U.S. veterans buried there, including about 220 Civil War veterans. The VA says that the North Alton Confederate Cemetery at 635 Rozier is also on the list of nominations to the National Register.

OLYMPIC SAVINGS: Work is being done on the former Olympic Savings building at 620 East Third Street, across from the old Wedge Bank Building. Historic preservationists are now focused on Mid-Century buildings. These buildings built in the 1960's now have reached the 50 year old mark and are being surveyed for the best examples. A Swiss firm, Ziemer USA, has bought the building and is beginning a \$1,000,000 renovation.

GRAND: The Board of Aldermen voted to overturn the Historic Commission's vote to give the Grand Theater local landmark status, the question remains, "What is going to happen to the Grand Theater building?" Are we waiting for the building to fall in on itself? What is the plan? Is the owner going to be allowed not to do any maintenance and hope he finds a buyer for it? While Edwardsville celebrates the reopening of the Wildey Theater, we can watch Alton's last theater slowly be destroyed by a negligent owner. Do trees usually grow out the sides of buildings?

WATCHING: Buildings on the AALA Watch List- Wise-Olin House (1128 State St.), Bruch-Guertler House (101 Blair), Grand Theater (230 Market St.), the Old Post Office (Alby St. and East Third St.) , 622 State Street and the Alton Womens Home at 2224 State Street. What buildings are you concerned for?

SAVE WESTERN: The Mississippi Valley Christian School is selling the old Western Military Academy in the Upper Alton Historic District. Charles "Bo" Jackson, whose family was associated with the academy since its inception, is leading the drive to preserve it. He has created a website with information about it, savewestern.com. This is another large building in Alton which we need to find a new loving owner.

HISTORIC COMMISSION: The Alton Historic Commission is the body set up by our historic preservation ordinance to review changes in Alton's three historic districts. Visit their website at <http://www.historicalton.com/>.