

Newsletter

February 2012

BEAUX ARTS IN BIRMINGHAM

Please join us for the annual meeting of the members at the residence of David and Mary Kimerling on Sunday afternoon, February 12, from 3 to 5 p.m.

Jeremy Erdreich will present remarks entitled “The Ecole des Beaux-Arts and the Steiner House” and treat us to a tour. Not familiar with “L’Ecole des Beaux Arts,” the French fine arts school that trained the earliest generations of American architects and continued the classical traditions of the Roman world? Don’t worry. Erdreich promises to provide easy entry into this realm of symmetry, proportion, grand plans, and landscape vistas. The Steiner House atop Red Mountain will be his case study. He will also note in this 1928 landmark the emerging American suburban ideal.

Mr. Erdreich has practiced architecture in Birmingham since 1998. Trained in architecture at Yale, Harvard School of Design, and King’s College Cambridge, his Birmingham work includes mixed-use and mixed-income urban housing and neighborhood redevelopment projects. The renovation and reprogramming of the Phoenix Building and 2nd Row — the lively 2300 block of Second Avenue North — are perhaps his best known projects. He currently teaches at the Auburn University Urban Studio and blogs on urban and civic affairs at www.constructbirmingham.wordpress.com.

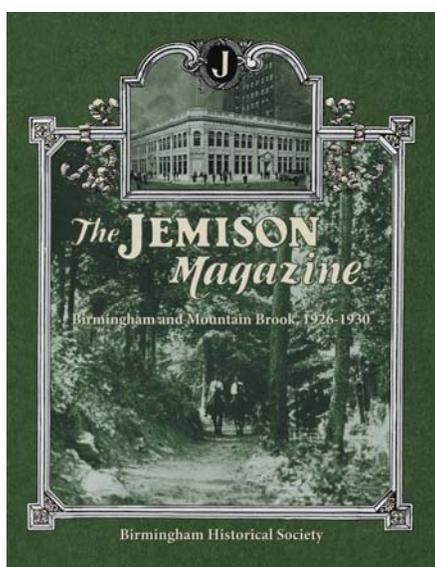
David and Mary Kimerling have just completed a three-year fine tuning of their residence and its gardens at 2900 Argyle Road. Mary Kimerling has become an expert not only on the construction of the house and grounds, but also original owners Leo and Dian Steiner. Katherine Owens guided the architectural program and Stephen and Lori Dorsky’s firm

served as general contractors. Mille felicitations and appreciation for the major efforts to restore this Beaux Arts gem!

Dues for 2012 will be received at the meeting.

EVENTS COMING IN 2012

- Spring Solstice Plowing Party at Duncan House Gardens, TBA
- Annual Heritage Society Gathering at the Swann House, the Redmont Road residence of Brooke and Daniel Coleman, April 22, Noon
- Publication and celebration of *The Jemison Magazine: Birmingham and Mountain Brook, 1926-1930*, late spring.
- “History of Ice in Alabama,” a talk by the former director of the Huntsville Museum of Art, David Robb, at the Avondale Brewery, July 15, 2 p.m.
- Presentation of the Historic American Landscape Survey (HALS) project on Mountain Brook, TBA
- *The Arthur Shores Scrapbook*—An Exhibition at the Birmingham Public Library Gallery, Nov. 4-Dec. 28
- Preservation Awards at the Iron City Live Music Hall, September
- Opportunities every Second Saturday to join in the fun to help fix up Duncan House



The Jemison Magazine: Birmingham and Mountain Brook, 1926-1930

The 2012 Members’ publication will debut this spring at the Jemison & Company “model estate” on Mountain Brook Parkway, the first of a sequence of impressive structures built by the firm to set the tone for its 4,500-acre planned community. When the Mount Vernon replica sold, Jemison & Company believed their then far-out subdivision would soon become reality. Times were good and vision was great.

Birmingham Historical Society’s soon-to-be-released volume will reproduce the 14 original company magazines that tell the tales of the success of the industrial region and of Jemison & Company efforts to sell the concept of country living, with nature as your nearest neighbor, to people who then lived on the other side of the mountain and elsewhere across the nation who might be attracted to move their businesses to Birmingham and live in Mountain Brook.

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Julius Linn Jr., Katherine Tipton, and Marjorie White serve as publication editors, providing an introduction to the era and the Jemison Company. The volume will have 188 pages and more than 250 illustrations of city and suburban scenes and landmark structures in Mountain Brook, including residences, the old mill, the riding academy, the village, and the Mountain Brook Club.

Members' books will be available at the spring gathering and mailed to those members whose dues are paid for 2012. Additional copies will be available for sale from the Society.

BHS Books Are for Sale

Since the 1970s the Society has published more than 30 publications. Most of these are available for sale by mail. See our web-site, www.bhshistorical.org, for a listing of books and an order form. We accept cash and checks and mail orders promptly upon receipt of payment.

Little Professor, The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, The Birmingham Museum of Art, Sloss Furnaces, and the Vulcan Park Gift Shop carry Society books. Gilchrist and the Pappagallo Shop carry *Mountain Brook Village: Then & Now*.

Daniel to Debut in September

Birmingham bottle collector Steve DeMedecis will soon exhibit his renowned jugs and bottles once filled with spirits distilled by the legendary master Jack Daniel. The venue will be Demedecis' Iron City Live Music Hall, which opens this fall in two former Southside automotive buildings. Paul Vilord, a veteran of musical ventures in other cities, will manage the new hall. Digging into the fact and fiction surrounding Jack Daniel and his business-partner nephews as well as the manufacture of Jack's "medicinal and home brew" in Birmingham are researchers Regina Ammon, David Herring, Julius Linn Jr., Holly Morgan, Katherine Tipton, and Marjorie White. Marc Bondarenko has photographed the DeMedecis collection for a future publication. The Society is currently developing an exhibit to tell the story of Jack, his distilling and marketing genius, and his award of a Gold Medal at the World's Fair in St. Louis at which Birmingham businessmen brought home gold for the statue of Vulcan. During the early 20th century, Jack Daniel was distilled in Birmingham.

Officers and Trustees to be Elected

Per the Bylaws, at the Annual Meeting, Members elect the Officers and Trustees who serve a one-year term. They may be reelected. Their professional skills and enthusiastic participation make possible our educational programs. Trustees form the life-blood of the Society. In 2011 alone, they donated more than 1,600 hours. These volunteers guide the institution; conduct archival research and oral interviews; produce publi-

cations, exhibits, and parties; shepherd finances and investments; review conservation easements that safeguard historic properties; and work to develop and improve our historic house and gardens at Sloss Furnaces and, in myriad other ways, to help others understand and preserve our community's history and heritage. 2011 Trustees are listed on page 1.

New Trustees for 2012, whose names also will be presented for election at the Annual Meeting on February 12, are Ronnie Bates, Diane Burnett, Elizabeth Crawford, Anne Jemison Heppenstall, and Cherrye Fincher Parker. Carol Slaughter chairs the Nominating Committee.

Second Saturdays

President Wayne Hester has set a goal of completing the rebuilding and painting of the lattice panels and the back porch this spring. Future Eagle Scout Elliott Martin will soon undertake the building of a new fence surrounding Duncan House. Members of the Alabama Trust will tour the gardens Saturday, May 12, so we hope to have house and gardens looking good for them and the many spring visitors to Sloss Furnaces. Those with carpentry, painting, and gardening skills will be most welcome on the grounds at Sloss to assist us beginning at 9 a.m. each Second Saturday.



2012 MEMBERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Enclosed is my contribution:

____ Individual Member @ \$40.00 \$ _____

____ Donor Member @ \$100.00 _____

____ Heritage Society Member, receives
invitations to special gatherings @ \$400.00 _____

____ Contribution to the Endowment _____

My TOTAL GIFT. \$ _____

BHS Membership is for the calendar year: January 1-December 31.

