

NOVEMBER 2015



Dates To Remember:

DECEMBER 12

Home Tour VIP Preview Party

DECEMBER 13

Holiday Home Tour

JANUARY 21, 2016

HBEA Happy Hour

MARCH 16

Spring General Meeting

MAY 7

Home Preservation Fair

MAY (TBD)

HBEA Annual Meeting & Elections



Volunteers Needed:

To assist with any of our upcoming events:
> 313.883.4360 ext 2
bostonedison@gmail.com



Presents:

The 41st Annual Holiday Home Tour & VIP Preview Party

A Detroit Holiday Tradition

The Historic Boston-Edison Association announces its 41st Annual Holiday Home Tour and VIP Preview Party which will feature five beautiful and historically significant homes that have been decorated for the holiday season.

The Holiday Home Tour will take place on Sunday, Dec. 13, 2015, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; the VIP Preview Party will be on Saturday, Dec. 12, 2015, from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Typically this November issue of our newsletter would encourage neighbors to purchase tickets for both the VIP Preview Party and the Holiday Home Tour. However, this year — for the first time ever — BOTH events SOLD OUT in record time! To respond to the unprecedented interest in Sunday's tour, the Home Tour Committee added two morning tours and a few additional guests to each existing tour. We regret that we are unable to accommodate everyone who wishes to attend. This speaks volumes for what is going on in Detroit, the spotlight on our neighborhood and the power of social media. Needless to say, the Home Tour Committee is already brainstorming ideas for the 2016 tour.

We are excited about the enthusiasm for our events, however, that means many of our fellow residents will not be able to attend this year. But don't worry, there are still opportunities to be involved. We are calling for volunteers to be house docents, work the cookie room at the Seminary, donate cookies, and help with other tasks. Please email bostonedison@gmail.com if you would like to be a part of these events!

Thanks in advance for your support for our largest fundraiser of the year and a true showcase of the beauty of our Boston-Edison homes!



Company is coming — and more of them!

Please mark your calendar for December 12th and 13th as we will have over 900 visitors for the VIP Preview Party and the Holiday Home Tour.

Hint: this would be a great time to check that your yard and the islands are free of trash and debris. Also, show your holiday spirit and get your decorations up!

B-E SECURE
How secure is your home?
Take our quiz on page 7!



A Special Message from our "Cookie Monster"...

I am alerting all of you to the fact that the "Cookie Monster" needs cookies for the Holiday Home Tour on Sunday, Dec. 13. I will probably pester you with a call later unless you email me about your donation!

Last year, the cookies were absolutely wonderful!! Some folks brought coffee breads to slice or small cream puffs. Variety is always good. Always bring something that you yourself would like to eat. If you are not able to home-bake and prefer to buy cookies, please buy homemade quality. Or, feel free to drop money in my mail slot, and I will buy some at a good place. Please drop money off by Friday, Dec. 11.

If you are delivering cookies, deliver them to my house, 758 Longfellow, between 1-5 p.m. Saturday, Dec 12, or take them to Sacred Heart Seminary any time after 9:30 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 13th.

Please do not ask me to return a cookie tin. We "pretty up" everything onto decorative trays back in the cookie room, mixing and arranging each of your contributions.

If you can help in the cookie room on Sunday afternoon, anytime between Noon and 6 p.m., it would be a great help. Please let me know.

Questions? Call Cleo at (313) 865-6306, or email me using james.hamilton@wayne.edu.

Many thanks,

Cleo Hamilton aka "The Holiday Home Tour Cookie Monster"



From the HBEA President *Debbie Baldwin*

Can you believe it is fall already? We've had a remarkable year here in Boston-Edison.

Our HBEA Membership elected a new board which has brought new ideas to move us forward as a neighborhood. Committee chairs have taken the helm and started to implement positive changes, and more members are getting involved. It is exciting and inspiring to watch and be a part of this energy.

Please mark your calendar for December 12 & 13 to participate in our 7th VIP Preview Party and our 41st Holiday Home Tour. Both showcase the splendor of Boston-Edison.



On a personal note, thanks to my Boston-Edison neighbors who attended the October City Council meeting in which I received the Spirit of Detroit Award (Outstanding Volunteer Award).

It is great to see so many new neighbors moving in, participating in our neighborhood forums, becoming active in their block clubs and joining longtime residents in sharing with others why living in Boston-Edison is so great. Among those who make that happen are area real estate agents, including some whom are Boston-Edison residents. Thank you to them and everyone who helps our neighborhood continue to grow and shine!

Enjoy this holiday season and the splendor of our beautiful neighborhood!

Picnic in the Park—a great time

Thank you to all the neighbors who attended the "Picnic in the Park". A little rain did not stop many neighbors and their children from attending. We welcomed many neighbors who joined us for the first time. We look forward to you joining us again next year. Planning is starting early so it can be our best yet! If you are interested in helping contact Dianne at dbosticrobinson@historicbostonedison.org or Karen at kseaman@historicbostonedison.org.



WHAT'S HAPPENING ON YOUR BLOCK? Email: newsletter@historicbostonedison.org

Create and enjoy the beautiful spaces around you

As residents of Boston-Edison we enjoy the pleasure of living in a beautiful neighborhood, living in homes whose collective architecture is second to none. It is our pleasure and honor to live among such beauty. We have just finished our fall clean up, weeding, and cut back for the fast approaching winter. It is now crunch time as we are hurrying to get bulbs in the ground before it freezes.

Some neighbors have invested time, labor, and funds into the beautification of Boston-Edison and those efforts have been evident in everything from an entire island or on the corner entry of a block. The Beautification Committee applauds and supports those efforts. In order to make sure we are functioning as one community, if you as an individual or group have adopted (or are interested in adopting) a common space for beautification, please email Kim at kwilliamson@historicbostonedison.org with the following information:

- Contact name, address and phone
- Location of the adopted area
- Duties you are taking responsibility for: weeding, watering, planting, etc.

It is our desire to enhance the beauty of our streets and we all play a role in this.

As homeowners we are responsible for the upkeep of the exterior of our homes and lots **which means the "zone" extending from 10 feet** in front of each lot to 10 feet behind. Basically, from the middle of the street to the middle of the alley is the area which each resident is responsible to keep clean. We have had an ongoing challenge in maintaining our alleys and our curbs. Often the alleys are so completely

overgrown that we cannot see through them. This overgrowth can turn into a desperate situation, forcing various neighbors and groups to conduct an alley clean up once or twice a year.

It is our hope to get away from this practice. Instead we encourage residents to add the perimeter of their property to their list of regular lawn care. There is a fine line between what is an issue of beautification and a blight issue. Allowing alleys to become overgrown is a violation of the municipal code. Please contact your Boston-Edison Board representative if you need assistance in keeping your block clean. Lastly, if you are interested in having a waste basket or pet station on your block please contact beautification so we can assist you with this process.

In light of what the No. 1 priority for the beautification committee (as determined by the votes cast at the Fall General Meeting), the committee will continue our efforts to beautify entries and common spaces. We have contracted with a team of professionals to assist in this endeavor – The Serengeti Group – led by horticulturist Fred Jackson. A special thank you to all who expressed gratitude and encouragement to the team – it was a lot of hard work and your support means a lot.

Until next time be sure to create and enjoy the beautiful spaces around you!



BEAUTIFICATION
COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP
COMMITTEE

Neighbors relax and get happy

Neighbors had a great time at the Boston-Edison Happy Hour Night in September at the Mercury Bar in Detroit. The Membership Team has been receiving positive feedback about events so far, along with great turnouts, but as always, the more the merrier!

Join us for another... HBEA Happy Hour!

January 21, 2016 – Location: TBD

Join your fellow neighbors for a happy hour in the City. Look for an email or check the website in the coming weeks for more details.



Our apologies for the fuzzy pictures...it may or may not have had anything to do with the beer!

2015 “Sounds of Music” Series most successful to date!

The 2015 “Sounds of Music” House Concert

series ended on Oct. 17, with a jazzy serenade from award-winning vocalist Kathy Kosins, accompanied by the wonderful Cliff Monear on piano. Kathy told interesting musical stories in-between the vocal selections, including sharing that her father **owned the famous Kosins Men’s Store** in downtown Detroit and outfitted many famous musicians of the 1950s, 60s and 70s. In addition, Kathy is an accomplished visual artist and created a painting during the evening. The beautiful home of Jim and Cleo Hamilton provided a wonderful setting for the **evening’s sold-out** performance. At intermission, guests enjoyed a fall-themed buffet served by Chef Jeff Toney of Chef Toney Private Catering, (313)-285-7078.

A big thank you goes to Music Director Michelle May for once again putting together a spectacular musical season. This **year’s attendance numbers were nearly double** from last year. Special thanks also to Boston-Edison Association President Debbie Baldwin, house concert co-chair, and volunteers, Gaye Butler, Jaye Williams,

Darlene Hunt, Barbara Cronan, Mazi Wadlington, Russell Rhea, Kevin

Thompson, Zene Gibson, Michael Mowers, Gregory Sikora and Victoria Edwards. Extra special thanks to homeowners Dr. Wanda Shurney, Jonas and Teresa Hill, and the Hamiltons.

We are truly appreciative of our **CO-SPONSORS**, The Barthwell Group (Dr. Akosua Barthwell-Evans, president) and Robinson Realty & Management Group (Gaye Butler, Owner/Manager)

and our **ADVERTISERS**: Nicholas Schrock of Allstate Insurance, (248) 547-4010; Ann Demers of C&N Party Rentals, (248) 435-3580; Marty and Roman Kmiecik of **Roy’s** Electric, (313) 369-0400; David Steinberg, CPA of Detroit Professional Tax Service, LLC, (248) 563-0604, Beverly Lochard of State Farm Insurance, (586) 296-1616, Dawn Henderson-Wiltz, Keller Williams Realtor (313)-220-1769, and Rochelle Morton, Soul Purpose WellNess Company (313) 418-4555.

We hope to see you next year for another great season of good music, delicious food and great company!



Property Taxes: Up, Down or What?

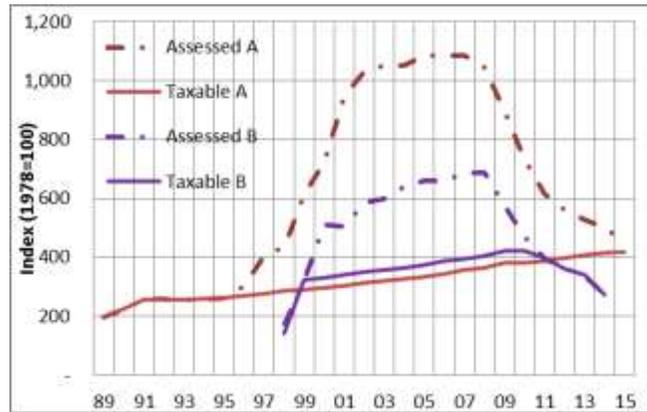
When the City of Detroit mailed “2015 Notice of Assessment and Taxable Valuation,” some homeowners saw that property taxes for 2015 went up yet again, while others saw their taxes fall.

How can property taxes go up for some and down for others? The “Notice” has two key numbers. Assessed Value is approximately 50% of market value. Property taxes are calculated on Taxable Value. In principal, Taxable Value = Assessed Value. However, in 1994 Michigan passed Proposition A, which cut property taxes and increased sales taxes as part of school finance reform. Prop A put a cap on how much Taxable Value can increase each year.

The Prop A cap is the reason why property taxes go up for some and down for others. In the chart, House A was purchased prior to 1994. House B was purchased in 1998.

Prior to 1994, Taxable Value = Assessed Value for House A. But after 1994 Assessed Value soared far above the capped Taxable Value. For House B, the sale in 1998 reset Taxable Value = Assessed Value. But from then on, its Assessed Value soared far above its Taxable Value. Since Taxable Value was capped, taxes increased each year only by the percentage that Prop A allowed the capped Taxable Value to rise.

Since about 2006-8, Assessed Values have plummeted for both houses. The reason is the collapse of the U.S. housing market. However, since the capped Taxable Value still was less than the Assessed Values, capped Taxable Values continued to rise. Property taxes went up every year, even as Assessed Values fell.



The situation changed in 2011 for House B. Its Assessed Value had fallen to be equal to the Taxable Value. Now its Taxable Value = Assessed Value again. As its Assessed Value continued to fall, so did Taxable Value, and so did the property taxes! For House A, however, property taxes continued to rise right up to 2015, because its Assessed Value continued to exceed its Taxable Value. These are examples. The timing of these events is different for different houses.

As the housing market in Detroit begins to rebound, higher home prices eventually will push Assessed Values back up. But, since Taxable Value still will be capped, taxes will increase only gradually.

Contributed by: James Hamilton, Emeritus Professor of Economics from Wayne State University.



B-E Trivia:
This physician was born in Alabama in 1915. His

parents, both doctors, operated a hospital in Montgomery, but were forced to flee the Ku Klux Klan and moved to Detroit in 1916. In 1917, they opened the first Black-owned and operated proprietary hospital in Detroit, Mercy General Hospital. He grew up in Detroit and attended the University of Detroit before going to Nashville, TN to attend Meharry Medical College and Fisk University. As a student, he served in WWII with the Medical Corps of the Army; he was later called to serve during the Korean war. After his military service was complete in 1955, he returned to Detroit to help run Mercy General with his mother. He eventually ran the hospital himself, along with his wife, overseeing its operation for over twenty years. His family has lived at 2314 Longfellow for over 60 years.

Who was he? (Answer on p. 8)

HELP WANTED:

Calling all designers! Perhaps our note in the last issue wasn't snazzy enough to catch your attention. We know you're out there!

We are looking for the best Boston-Edison, Detroit, design for clothing and other swag (mugs, keychains, etc.). Think on it.

To request specs or additional information: PRCR@historicbostonedison.org

Submission deadline: Jan 5 (we mean it this time)



Getting HDC approval

We all know that exterior work on our homes must be pre-approved by the City of Detroit Historic District Commission.

HOW does one get pre-approval? **Be aware: don't expect last minute pre-approval.**

STEP ONE: Good News! Some simple projects actually don't need pre-approval!

Does yours? Don't guess!

- The HDC publishes **What You Need to Know...** including what does and what does not need pre-approval. See www.historicbostonedison.org/zoning/HDCintro.pdf.
- Ask the HDC staff. Jennifer Ross: rossj@detroitmi.gov, (313) 224-8907 or Crystal Wilson: wilsoncr@detroitmi.gov, (313) 224-6543

STEP TWO: Start the Pre-Approval Process

Contact HDC staff and describe your project. They can advise you so you **don't create problems by proposing work that clearly won't be approved.** *Work with them.*

STEP THREE: Complete an Application for a Building Permit

See www.detroitmi.gov/How-Do-I/Apply-for-Permits and look for Plan Review/ Building Permits.

STEP FOUR: Take the Application to HDC

Mail, email, or carry the building permit application to HDC. The HDC booklet has details on what supporting materials are required for different kinds of work.
Detroit Historic District Commission

Coleman A Young Municipal Center, Suite 808
2 Woodward Avenue
Detroit, MI 48226

STEP FIVE: Pre-Approval is Given (or Denied)

- Staff can pre-approve some projects quickly that are *simple and clearly within the guidelines*. If your proposal is not within the guidelines, the best advice is to work with staff to modify the proposal to conform. Then staff can pre-approve. Staying within the guidelines is, in any case, the best way to preserve the historic integrity of your home.
- Commission hearing is required for any application that staff does not have the authority to pre-approve or that does not conform to the historic guidelines. *Approval is not guaranteed.*

STEP SIX: Building Permit

Once a project is pre-approved, HDC staff issues a Certificate of Appropriateness. Attach the certificate to the permit application. Take both to the Department of Building Safety, Engineering, and Environment, which will issue a permit for the project (unless it violates the building code, other than the historic standards). There is a fee for a building permit, but no fee for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

NEED MORE HELP?

The Boston-Edison Zoning Committee sometimes can help. Email questions to zoning@historicbostonedison.org. Also, Boston-Edison resident Jim Hamilton is on the HDC. Call him at (313) 865-6306.



Is your home secure? Take the quiz and see!

Rules:

For each of the following questions, for *Yes* or *Always*, give yourself 10 points; for *Sometimes*, give yourself 5 points; for *No* or *Never thought about it*, 0 points. And be honest!

Questions:

1. I turn on my front porch light at night. _____
2. I turn on a light in the back of my house at night. _____
3. I keep at least one light on all night in my house. _____
4. My first floor windows are closed and locked securely at night and when I am away from home. _____
5. I do not keep power tools in my garage. _____
6. I keep my garage locked. _____
7. My garage alley windows are boarded or barred. _____
8. I park my car far back in my driveway. _____
9. I park my car in my garage. _____
10. I never leave inviting items in my car. (cell phones, CDs, bags, etc.) _____
11. I do not park my car on the street overnight. _____
12. I have a gate across my driveway. _____
13. My front door is secured with a deadbolt lock. _____
14. My rear door is secured with a deadbolt lock. _____
15. My side door is secured with a deadbolt lock. _____
16. My basement door is secured with a deadbolt lock. _____
17. I keep the sales circulars and newspapers picked up around my home. _____
18. My home looks like I am there and that I care. _____
19. The shrubs and trees in front of my home are not overgrown. They do not provide a hiding place for wannabe criminals. _____
20. I report all my losses to 311. _____
21. I report suspicious, ongoing activity to 911. _____
22. I know both of my neighbors on either side. _____
23. I know my neighbors across the street. _____
24. I watch out for my neighbors' house and cars. _____
25. My basement windows are barred and locked. _____
26. My coal chute is secure. _____
27. I have a security alarm on my home. _____
28. I set the alarm at night and when I am not at home. _____
29. My alarm system is monitored by a service. _____
30. I have put identification (address, phone number, driver's license number; NOT your social security number) on my power tools, lawnmower, snow blower, etc. _____

TOTAL POINTS = _____



Score: 

Above 240 POINTS
Congratulations! You are doing an outstanding job protecting yourself and your possessions.

Score: 

240 to 215 POINTS
Good job! You could do more.

Score: 

210 to 160 POINTS
Beware! You need to improve your security equipment and practices.

Score: 

BELOW 160 POINTS
Look out! You're a target!

Does your house shine at night like these bright examples?



For other security tips, visit:
<http://www.historicbostonedison.org/security/security.shtml>

HISTORIC BOSTON-EDISON ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 02100, Detroit, MI 48202

Website: www.historicbostonedison.org | Email: bostonedison@gmail.com | Hotline: 313.883.4360

Trivia Answer: Dr. David C. Northcross

B-E Connected!

Are you receiving [Boston-Edison Emails](#) for neighborhood events? If not, email us and we will add you right away! Email: bostonedison@gmail.com

Care to share on the [BE Discussion Google Group?](#) (For HBEA Dues-Paying Members) Email: discussion-boston-edison@googlegroups.com to join or contact us at bostonedison@gmail.com and we will add you.

Want real-time [Security Alerts?](#) (A Security Google Group for DSS Subscribers) Contact the Security Committee for information (313) 883-4360 Security *Mailbox 3



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