



February 2003

# Historic Takoma

## NEWSLETTER

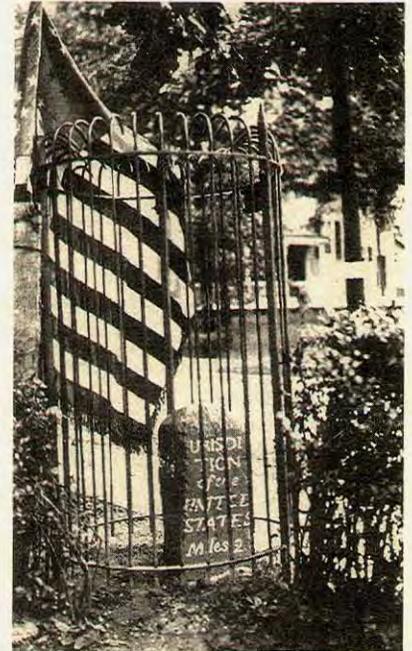
### Preserving NE #2, Takoma's Oldest Monument

By Alan Abrams

**E**arly last fall, a truck backing out of the front yard of an apartment building near the corner of Maple and Eastern Avenues clipped a circular wrought iron fence that was partially hidden by weeds and shrubbery. The 85-year old fence crumpled, but did its job: it protected the small sandstone obelisk within it from damage.

The obelisk, known as "Northeast Number Two," is one of forty boundary markers erected in 1791-92 when the District of Columbia was initially surveyed. George Washington ordered the survey, which was carried out by Benjamin Banneker, an African American mathematics prodigy born in Baltimore and Andrew Ellicott, later Surveyor General of the United States. Larger stones were set at the corners of the original boundaries of the District (prior to the 1846 retrocession to Virginia of the area west of the Potomac), with smaller markers, including NE #2, set at one-mile intervals along the perimeter. Thus they are considered the oldest monuments of the capital city. The iron fences that protect each stone were commissioned and donated in 1917 by the Daughters of the American Revolution.

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*The Boundary Marker in 1917.  
Photo courtesy of the DAR.*

### Preserving NE #2

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Special thanks in accomplishing this repair go to:

DC Councilmember Adrian Fenty  
DDOT Assistant Director Michelle Pourciau  
DDOT Chief of Street and Bridge Maintenance Bob Marsili  
DC Architectural Historian Tim Dennee  
Montgomery County Preservation Staff Planner Susan Soderberg  
Takoma Park Councilmember Joy Austin-Lane  
Takoma Park City Engineer Delester Monk  
Gayle Harris, DC Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution

### HTI Expands Board, Elects Four New Directors, One New Officer

**A**t the 2002 Holiday Party and Annual Meeting, held December 15, 2002 at the historic Davis-Warner Inn, former HTI President Doug Harbit presented recommendations from the 2002 Nominating Committee that address immediate administrative needs of Historic Takoma, Inc. The Committee suggested adding to the Board one new officer, a vice president, who would take responsibility for the regular operations of the organization. The other vice president would focus on preservation activities. In addition the Committee advised adding four new seats to the Board of Directors to implement Development (including membership), Events, Publications, and one seat At-Large. This plan was unanimously accepted by the membership.

Elected as Director for Development is Jared Hughes. A California native, Jared has been a resident of Takoma Park for several years and works as a development professional with non-profits in the Washington area. He will supervise fund raising, planned giving, and membership administration for HTI.

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## HTI Expands Board

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The new Director for Events is Robert Patenaude, co-owner of the award-winning Davis-Warner Inn, now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Robert brings a background in the entertainment industry to this new position and has already coordinated two successful events for HTI.

Heading up the Publications Committee will be Dr. Sabrina A. Baron who teaches history at the University of Maryland. Sabrina is a former academic editor and a published author who has volunteered with the Archives Committee for several years. She has plans for Historic Takoma to begin publishing an historical magazine.

The At-Large seat on the Board remains vacant, but HTI would like to hear from members and others who might be interested in serving in this position.

The membership elected a fourth new Director to chair the Maryland Preservation Committee, Suzanne Copping. Suzanne, a Rhode Island native, has volunteered with the Archives Committee for several years. She has deep preservation roots in her own family and currently is pursuing a graduate degree in historic preservation at the University of Maryland, which will allow her to bring professional expertise to preservation work with HTI.

One new officer was elected. Mark Freedman will serve as Vice President for Operations. Mark, a resident of North Takoma, holds a law degree and has been on the HTI Board for two years. He is also active in many areas of neighborhood and community life, as well as foster animal care.

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## Preserving NE #2

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A neighbor who noticed the damage promptly notified officials at the City of Takoma Park and staff at the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission, as well as Historic Takoma. But since the stone—owned by the National Park Service—lies on the boundary between Maryland and the District, and the fence itself straddles that boundary, determining which jurisdiction had responsibility—not to mention permission—to repair the fence became a thorny issue. The DAR maintains sentimental ownership of the iron fences.

Because Historic Takoma represents the Takoma communities in both the District and Maryland, we were uniquely placed to coordinate the repair effort. An ad hoc committee was established to contact various public officials. HTI was also prepared to hire a private contractor if resolution became delayed. Vice President Loretta Neumann initiated the process with some key communications and subsequently Education Committee Chair Diana Kohn helped coordinate with Maryland officials while DC Preservation Committee Chair Bonnie Moss worked with the DAR and DC preservation officials.

Following a flurry of communications, DC Ward Four Councilmember Adrian Fenty stepped in. Through DC Department of Transportation Director Michelle Pourciau, Fenty obtained the services of the Street and Bridge Maintenance Division to implement the repair. In late November, I met with Bob Marsili, chief of DDOT maintenance, to plan the repair. Within two weeks, their crew had removed the damaged section of the fence, repaired it (preserving as much original material as possible, and replacing unsalvageable portions with like material), and reinstalled it.

However, much work remains to adequately preserve this important little monument. Despite a quick coat of primer applied by HTI volunteers, the fence still needed a thorough scraping and repainting. So HTI enlisted the City of Takoma Park to help with that effort.

Delester Monk of the Takoma Park Public Works Department has committed to properly scrape and repaint the fence. Takoma Park Ward Two Councilmember Joy Austin-Lane is working with local officials and adjacent property owners to landscape the site. This cooperative repair in effect celebrates the bi-jurisdictional character of the monument and the community that contains it.

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*The Boundary Stone today, all restored.  
Photo courtesy: DDOT*