

## News and Notes for Historic Homeowners - September, 2009

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### Coming Soon!

Insights on Site: Thursday, September 17, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.,  
Gropius House, 68 Baker Bridge Road, Lincoln, Mass.

Join fellow historic house mavens for a free and exclusive event open only to Historic Homeowner members. *Sustainable Design at the Gropius House* is a behind-the-scenes tour of the 1938 Gropius House focusing on how famed modern architect Walter Gropius incorporated sustainable features into the house he designed for his family. Learn what green lessons the siting, landscaping, and scale of the house offer today's homeowners and how Gropius adapted this modern house to its New England setting.

This event is limited to ten Historic Homeowner members. To register, contact Sally Zimmerman at [szimmerman@historicnewengland.org](mailto:szimmerman@historicnewengland.org) or call (781) 891-4882, ext. 226. We look forward to seeing you there!

### The Economical Historic Home: Energy Efficiency Basics for Old-House Owners Saturday, September 26, 9:00 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.

Preserve Rhode Island's Philip Walker House, 432 Massasoit Avenue, East Providence, R. I.

Enhancing the energy performance of an older home doesn't require spending lots of money on cutting-edge furnaces, pricy replacement windows, or the latest insulation!

Historic New England partners with Preserve Rhode Island, the Newport Restoration Foundation, and the Providence Revolving Fund to offer this hands-on workshop providing basic information on how to "green up" your historic home. The c. 1724 Walker House, recently upgraded for energy efficiency, is the setting. Bring your questions about how to reduce energy consumption without harming the environment, your budget, or your historic home.

Members of Historic New England receive a discounted rate of \$15 for the session. For more information, or to register, go to <http://www.newportrestoration.org/calendar/details/12973-the-economical>.

### And speaking of energy efficient historic homes:

#### Congratulations to Historic Homeowner members Martha and Neil Chayet!

In February, 2009, the Chayet's restoration of their home, the 1811 Judge Joseph Story House in Salem, Mass., became the country's first National Historic Landmark residence to be awarded LEED Silver Certification. LEED, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, the nation's premier green building rating system, provides standards for sustainable new construction and renovation.

A recent article in the Salem News includes tips from the Chayets on how they navigated the LEED certification process at their brick Federal home, the residence of noted jurist, Joseph Story, appointed an Associate Justice of the U. S. Supreme Court at the age of 32 in 1811. See this link for the "Story story": [http://salemnews.com/pulife/local\\_story\\_219002421.html](http://salemnews.com/pulife/local_story_219002421.html)

### Introduction to New England Architecture: 1640-1940

Tuesdays, October 6, 13, 20, 27, 2009, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m., and Saturday, October 31, 9:30 - 11:00 a.m.

#### Codman House Carriage Barn, Lincoln, Mass.

Brush up on your New England architectural history or get the broad picture on how our region's residential architecture has evolved over a span of 300 years. Senior stewardship manager Joseph

Cornish and preservation specialist Sally Zimmerman present a series of illustrated lectures on the rich architectural heritage of New England, using high-style and vernacular examples from around the region.

Attendees are encouraged to bring photos to learn more about the architectural history of their own "historic" homes. For more information, or to register for the course, check the Calendar section of the Historic New England web page at:

<http://www.historicnewengland.org/things/calendar/Events.asp>

Historic Homeowner members receive discounted admission!

### Secrets of a Preservation Specialist:

#### Using Google Books Search to learn more about YOUR old house

When I write the reports that accompany Historic Homeowner members' requests for technical or paint color assistance, I always try to include a bit of research on the history of the house, its architectural style, or its occupants. I want you as stewards of an older or historic home to be able to connect with the history and architecture of your house and get to know its "life" a little better. But I can't come out to your historical society, town clerk's office, or public library to check into local records, so I turn to Google Books Search.

Google Books Search, located under the "more" tab at the top of Google's home page, opens a vast window onto the past, in the form of the many thousands and thousands of out-of-copyright books and other printed sources in libraries around the world that Google has scanned and posted on the internet. While books still under copyright protection can often only be accessed in "limited" or "snippet" previews, out-of-copyright books can be opened, read, and downloaded for free.

In this remarkable online archive, an Aladdin's cave of historical data, lie countless tidbits of information that can connect you to the people, materials, design, and history of your home. It's hit and miss, but the clues provide a great starting point for further research in local archives. Try searching on the name of an early owner of your home, or just type in the address and see what comes up (remember to spell out state names: they didn't use zip code abbreviations in the 19th century!).

#### And remember to take advantage of your Historic Homeowner membership . . .

By calling or emailing with your questions about maintaining and preserving your "historic home"! Contact Sally Zimmerman, [zimmerman@historicnewengland.org](mailto:zimmerman@historicnewengland.org) or call (781) 891-4882, ext. 226. I look forward to working with you.