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# MEMPHIS HERITAGE

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## KEYSTONE

January - February 2016 | Vol. 20, Issue 1

### MEMPHIS HERITAGE'S 2016 PRESERVATION LECTURE SERIES IS COMING IN MARCH

The 2016 Memphis Heritage Preservation Series will meet on all four Mondays in March. Our theme this year, "Everything you need to know about your Old House." Our 2016's annual series will be on March 7, 14, 21, and 28, and will be panel presentations

#### Series Topics

- Modernizing your "old" kitchen and bath and still keep it real.
- Opening up the space in your old house while respecting its integrity
- Old windows: when to fix, when to replace
- Is your house in an historic district... just what does this really mean?
- Old house walls: Plaster vs. Sheetrock
- Choices for heating and cooling your old house

Now what about your old house's yard: fencing, gates, etc

Our 2016 Preservation Series lectures will be held from 7:00pm till 8:30pm at Howard Hall. We hope you will plan to join us!



The registration fee is \$50 for MHI members and \$65 for non-members.

Registration is for the complete series; individual class tickets are not available.

Nights for specific topics and speakers will be posted on our website and Facebook.

**Class size is limited,  
so register today!**

To register by mail, address checks to:

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For credit card registration,  
call (901) 272-2727, or to register and  
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[www.memphisheritage.org](http://www.memphisheritage.org)  
and follow the PayPal instructions.

If you have any questions, email:  
[info@memphisheritage.org](mailto:info@memphisheritage.org).

#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

The Bowling Palace of the Nation  
Adapt-A-Door was a Success!

Heard in the Streets

MHI's 2016 Calendar

# THE BOWLING PALACE OF THE NATION

by Charlie Lambert



**A**mong the varied and unique stories about Memphis history is one that concerns the Southern Bowling Lanes located at 299 Cleveland not far north of Poplar. If you look at the picture above you are immediately struck by the elegance of the façade and the stately columns. Southern was not intended as just another place to bowl but a destination for people who had never bowled in the past, as interest grew in this emerging sport among men, women, and children. Southern was twenty years ahead of its time in concept.

In 1940 two local scrap dealers (Aaron Brenner and George Perkins) formed a partnership with a man from Lancaster, Ohio named Joe Altfater to build a state of the art bowling alley in midtown Memphis, away from downtown congestion. The facility opened on August 11, 1941



Martha McAnespie, at home, enjoying fond memories of her long and beautiful life

and the event was broadcast live over WMPS radio, just a few months before the U.S. was forced into WW2. Dubbed the “bowling palace of the nation” by local columnist Mose Hartley (writer for the old PRESS SCIMITAR and a bowling Hall of Famer himself). The building cost a monumental \$150,000 and attracted bowlers from all over the city, prompted by its promoters’ solicitation of companies to sponsor teams in the spirit of good exercise and competition.

Among those who joined up was one Martha Kallaher, 25, who worked downtown at the Columbia Mutual Life Insurance Company (incidentally, in the employ of the notable Lloyd T. Binford, President of the company and longtime thorn in the side of the motion picture industry because of his strict censorship of films that played in Memphis). Martha did not know anything about bowling but proceeded to show up at the designated time her team was supposed to begin in the league. She had no idea what her decision to begin bowling would have on the rest of her life.

In the early 1940’s there were just a few places in Memphis to bowl. Among them were the basement alley at the Catholic Club at Third and Adams; The Health Center Bowling Alleys on Madison; and Newman’s second-floor facility on Third St. All of these were pretty basic, no-frills venues where mostly men hung out. None offered a colonial façade, dining facility with table service, a 17-table billiards room, spacious dressing rooms for bowlers, a ladies powder room, air-conditioning, a game tracker called a “TELISCORE”, or the convenience of a large, free, off-street, parking lot.

Joe Altfater wanted to assure that his new bowling palace was properly managed so he moved one of his best Ohio managers to Memphis to run it for him. That man was Eddie McAnespie, 31, who arrived and undertook his duties shortly before Martha Kallaher showed up looking for someone to help her learn how to bowl. Eddie offered to show her the ropes. He was a splendid bowler himself, once bowling a record 713 in a three-game series.



**MEMPHIS HERITAGE  
KEYSTONE**

The Keystone is a publication of  
Memphis Heritage, Inc.

Memphis Heritage’s mission is to educate and coordinate individuals and groups to save, improve, reuse, and maintain architecturally and historically significant buildings, neighborhoods, parks, and cultural artifacts of Shelby County

Our offices are at **2282 Madison Avenue**. You can write to us or call us at **901-272-2727** or visit our website at [www.memphisheritage.org](http://www.memphisheritage.org)

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Later in 1941, Eddie and Martha began dating and were married at St. Thomas Church in November of 1942 during the war, shortly before he went into the service. During the rest of the war she and many others played on Victory Leagues to help the war effort. Twenty-four women's teams and sixty men's teams played at Southern during that period. Unlike most of our recent wars, the population of the U.S. worked tirelessly on behalf of WW2 to support our soldiers all over the world. Bowling leagues were a big part of the back-home effort and Martha was a big part of the bowling scene.

By the end of the war in 1945, bowling was firmly entrenched in the American psyche. There is a short scene in David O. Selznick's classic film, SINCE YOU WENT AWAY, his tribute to WW2, which takes place in a bowling alley; that scene in a major film suggests the popularity of the sport at that time. Bowling peaked in the 1950's and Southern kept abreast of that popularity by installing AMF's automatic pin setting machines, under-lane ball returns, circle seating featuring what were known then as "plastic glass" chairs, and automatic scoring machines to all 24 of its alleys in 1956. The place was mobbed every night. The dining facility had plate lunches, snacks, and drinks for people waiting in the long lines to have their turn bowling. One result of the automated system was loss of the "pin boys", youngsters who had worked as pin setters, resetting pins for two alleys each. These mainstays had been fixtures in bowling since it began. But modern changes were required to attract people to spend time at Southern and the place flourished. Eddie and Martha were spending more and more of their time at the alley. Their three girls almost grew up at Southern, both as spectators and bowlers. They thought it was fun having a place to play that offered so many opportunities to have a good time and constantly meet new people.

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Eddie set up leagues for local clergy, Christian Brothers, and a newspaper worker's league. Children's leagues, authorized by the Junior Bowling Congress, competed with juvenile bowlers as far away as Japan, sending scores back and forth as the competition ensued. And, not surprisingly, Elvis rented the lanes for private, midnight bowling parties over the years.

But bowling began to change as the 1950's ended and television and other diversions kept people at home more. Newer, larger alleys were constructed further east of midtown and some of the glitter went out of the Southern Lanes. Southern was like the friendly neighborhood movie houses of our youth compared to those awful multiplexes we find today – people didn't much like the change but went to them anyway because that was the trendy thing to do. People were dazzled by a 40-50 lane complex "in the suburbs" where the population was moving in droves. It did not matter much because bowling had already begun to decline in popularity. By the 1960's bowling had reached its pinnacle.

Eddie McAnespie died prematurely in 1966 at the young age of 55. Southern Lanes continued to operate for another three years. It closed unceremoniously in 1969. Martha has kept her memories, both mental and documentary, close to her heart. She and her girls love to recall the wonderful days they spent at Southern Bowling Lanes with "Daddy". The building is still standing today. It serves as a tire warehouse. The façade is no longer in place. The neighborhood has become a little rundown. However, nothing can erode the brilliant history of this "palace" or the memories it provided so many mid-century Memphians, including Martha McAnespie, 99, and her three daughters. Southern Bowling Lanes was a major factor in her life and she will never forget how special those times were to her, especially her precious Eddie.



Eddie McAnespie, bowling at Southern, where he was manager for over 20 years.

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# ADAPT-A-DOOR 7 WAS A GREAT SUCCESS

**M**emphis Heritage's annual Adapt-A-Door auction, party, and fundraiser went off without a hitch on November 14 at Howard Hall. Door artists picked up doors from the collection at MHI last spring. With half-a-year to work on them, the creative donors turned out almost thirty pieces of furniture, art, and other useful or fanciful pieces – all made from the doors and each one unique. They all sold at the auction and over \$10,000 was raised for Memphis Heritage by the 200 plus attendees. "Recycling the Past" is one of the specialties of MHI and this event is without any doubt the most synonymous of the activities we do in respect to our mission.

The winner of Best of Door Prize, which is voted on by all who attend, was Mollie Riggs. Mollie created a shelf with hooks from an very old wooden door. She painted an amazing image of the old Anderton's restaurant that stood on Madison just west of Tucker Ave. for over 75 years. Unfortunately, the building was demolished several years ago. Many of the exterior and interior artifacts from Anderton's can be seen at The Cove, on Broad Street.

Best of Door winner Mollie Riggs (left) with MHI Executive Director, June West



Special thanks to our wonderful friends at Bar Dog Tavern, Slider Inn, Tart, and Kroger for their generous involvement, furnishing and serving a spectacular array of pub grub throughout the evening. The food was fresh, hot, and delicious. Beverages were furnished by several board members and other members and guests. Music was provided by The Sheiks.

We welcomed Eleanor McKay, Executive Officer of Niermann-Weeks in Annapolis, Maryland, a manufacturing company to the celebration this year. She was one of the original members of MHI in the 1970's. She met with June during the following weekend and they compared notes on what constituted some of the early successes at MHI.

We look forward to next year's event in early November 2016. We are actively recruiting door artists to enter 2016 AAD. The Dunkin Donut Door Dash where doors are picked up will be held in April. Watch for details.



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# HEARD ON THE STREETS

by Gordon Alexander

future of midtown's free-flowing network of roadways. The issue was being debated at the City Council on Dec. 1st when Councilman Strickland offered an amendment to not only make Idlewild a one-way going north but included language allowing left turns off Union onto McLean, to which both parties were agreeable. When these two changes are approved by the new administration and city engineer in January, the issue of the gate installation will become null and void.

**WE ARE WAITING** to see how the mediation goes with the sides in the Overton Park Greensward parking controversy. The Zoo Board made a decision to take the City and the Overton Park Conservancy to court at the same time they said they are willing to mediate. Time will tell. Mayor Strickland has reached out to the Overton Park Conservancy and the Zoo in an attempt to find a solution. Meanwhile the Overton Park Conservancy has hired a team of experts to coordinate an overall plan for parking for all entities in the Park including Brooks Museum, The Levitt Shell and the Memphis College of Art. Let's hope the Zoo will become a part of the team and work on a solution rather than steadfastly refusing to come up with alternatives, which may include a new parking garage. Stay tuned for more details.

**WE WERE GRATIFIED** to be featured in High Ground's "Know Your Non-Profits" series this month. The article promoted Memphis Heritage and its 40th anniversary by saying that "Memphis Heritage is employing new strategies to preserve old structures. This local non-profit is committed to protecting and revitalizing the region's history through advocacy for the county's oldest buildings."

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**WE WERE RELIEVED** that Mayor-Elect Jim Strickland stepped up to the plate and brokered a compromise with the opposing sides on the Idlewild gate issue. If you'll remember, the Belz Investco company filed an application to erect a gate closing off S. Idlewild between Union Avenue and Linden Street, in connection with their proposed \$43 million mixed-use development at the corner of McLean and Union. The Midtown Memphis Development Corporation and Midtown Action Coalition had an agreement in principle with Belz' attorney to substitute a one-way going north on Idlewild instead of closing a public street, which the majority of the neighborhood thought could set a bad precedent for the



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**WE THINK IT'S WONDERFUL** that an upcoming nationally televised program "10 Parks that Changed America", being produced by WTTW in Chicago for broadcast on PBS stations in April of next year, features our own Overton Park. Overton's selection stems from a pivotal court battle that not only established a precedent for protecting parkland, but stands as a testament to the potent power of citizen activism. In 1971, ruling on a case styled Citizens to Preserve Overton Park vs. Volpe, the U.S. Supreme Court blocked the construction of Interstate 40 through the park along a route approved by the City Council and various agencies.

**WE ARE WAITING TO SEE** what the new development proposed by Charlie Ryan for the southwest corner of South Cooper and Central will look like. Supposedly it will include a small hotel, both commercial and residential space and utilize the lot now occupied by Cook Plumbing Company. To the best of our knowledge, Ryan has no intention of demolishing the existing structures but incorporating them into his site plan. This is yet another in a seemingly endless stream of new projects that has midtown Memphis bursting at the seams. Most of the new redevelopment seemed to begin with the revitalization of Overton Square, which was vigorously supported by Memphis Heritage and many other community activist groups. Midtown, you rock!

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## MEMPHIS HERITAGE'S 2016 CALENDAR: IT'S ALL ABOUT THE SUCCESSES

Every year MHI prints a calendar for its members. The last three years featured A. Schwab on Beale, The Orpheum Theatre, and The Malco Theatres. We are pleased to announce that this year's 2016 calendar highlights many of the Historic Preservation success stories happening in and around Memphis. The repurposed landmarks mentioned in this year's calendar were built from the mid 19th Century to the mid 20th Century. Using images from the historic Don Newman Photography Collection, this calendar shines a light on some of the latest success stories such as the TN Brewery, The Chisca Hotel, The Lowenstein Bros Building (aka Rhodes Jennings), Sears Crosstown along with many others.

We are honored to dedicate this 2016 MHI Calendar to all our MHI members and supporters past and present for helping keep the spirit of historic preservation alive in Memphis and Shelby County for the last 41 years.

**Calendars are available to all MHI members  
(one free calendar per membership)**

**2016 Calendars will also be for sale at local retailers:**

Burkes Books, Booksellers at Laurelwood,  
Dabbles, Brooks Museum Shop,  
Maggie's Pharm, South Main Book Juggler,  
The Arcade, and Diane's Gifts

For more information contact Memphis Heritage:  
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by Martin Gorman, Jr.

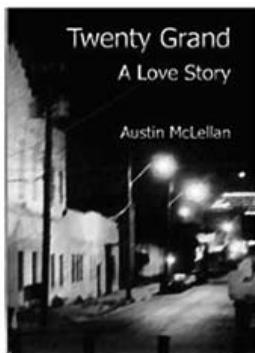
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We are Memphis' only non-profit organization that works to preserve historic neighborhoods, buildings and landmarks in all of Memphis and Shelby County - let us all preserve the beauty and history that some people still take for granted. Thank you for supporting our efforts in giving Memphis' past a future, we cannot do it without you, visit us at [www.memphisheritage.org](http://www.memphisheritage.org) and [www.newmansmemphis.org](http://www.newmansmemphis.org)

## THANKS TO OUR GREAT VOLUNTEERS

### HOWARD HALL

A special thanks to the following for helping to keep MHI beautiful:

Jerry Bradfield, Larry Davis,  
John Dulaney, Mark Bieber, Robert  
Paulus, Scott Schaeffer, Gordon  
Alexander, Charlie Lambert,  
and Jeff Droke

### ADAPT-A-DOOR VOLUNTEERS

Amanda Grace, Amy Money, Ben Rednour, Betsy Petterson, Bill Crowder, Charlie Lambert, Christin Mains, Cody Donahue, Connor Kasaitis, MJ & Davey Weaks, Elizabeth McNeely, Gordon Alexander, Jane Harwood, Janet Dillard, Janice & Sam Tune, John Griffin, Leigh Gilliland, Mark Bieber, Mark Schnert, Marriam Ebeid, Michael Michaud, Monty Shane, Scott Schaeffer

### MEMPHIS HERITAGE EVENTS

#### FEBRUARY

**None**

#### MARCH

**Monday 7, 14, 21, and 28 evenings**  
"annual preservation series"

**Tuesday March 29, 2016**  
MHI Annual Membership meeting

#### APRIL

##### Saturday, April 30

Dunkin Donuts Door Dash  
at Howard Hall for  
Adapt-A-Door door artists



## MEMPHIS HERITAGE

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Yes, I want to become a member of Memphis Heritage.

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