Visit Tuscany or the lush green valleys of the Italian Alps and you will discover the original 19th- and 20th-century sun-washed, stucco-clad homes and villas that inspired the design for Spokane’s Witherspoon House. With arched windows, red and green tiled roofs, and breezy al fresco loggias and balconies, the multi-storied Italian homes sprang up among fruit trees, vineyards, and pastures on steeply terraced hillsides. In America, the Italian Renaissance style—a revival of forms, features, and finishes found at casa anche villa ducale (fine homes and fashionable villas) in Italy—was popular with the moneyed classes from 1890 to 1935, and was translated into grand homes and large estates in New York and Miami, and resorts like Newport, Rhode Island. Out west, a handful of well-heeled clients paid architects to create high-style Italian Renaissance homes in Spokane, the largest being the Witherspoon House, located in the Rockwood National Register Historic District.

Like its cousins in the Italian Alps, the Witherspoon House is perched on a steep hillside high above Rockwood Boulevard. Designed for Spokane attorney and businessman Archibald W. Witherspoon, and his wife, Eda Mauseth Witherspoon, the spacious two-story home was built in 1912 with cream stucco cladding, arched windows, wide porches, and a green tile roof. The Witherspoon House was designed by Charles R. Wood, a prominent local architect who trained under master architects Albert Held and Kirtland Cutter. Praised in a Spokane newspaper as a designer of schools and “a large number of the better-class residences” in the city, Wood’s design for the Witherspoon House was lauded in 1910 as “palatial” in “design, arrangement, finish, and location,” and was promised to “add to Spokane’s list of beautiful structures.” Besides the hill-and-valley settings of Italy, the Witherspoon property’s high, terraced hillside, and rugged basalt rock retaining walls were also influenced by suggestions from the Olmsted Brothers, the renowned landscape architects who designed Central Park in New York City, the 1893 World Exposition grounds in Chicago, and the Rockwood Neighborhood on Spokane’s South Hill.

After the Witherspoons, the home was owned by a handful of prominent Spokanites, including William & Florence Hopkins, Dr. Ryle Lewis and his wife, Marion Lewis, Ralph & Margaret Rosenberry, and Edward & Kathryn Parry. Owners Anupam Narayan & Judy Sugg have spent many months carefully renovating the Witherspoon House, now a recognized historic landmark listed on the Spokane, Washington State, and National Registers of Historic Places.

Saturday, December 12, 2009
6:00 pm to 9:00 pm
The Witherspoon House
2124 S. Rockwood Blvd
Hosted by Judy Sugg & Anupam Narayan
Tickets $25 in advance, $30 at the door.

From Plateau Road, walk north up driveway toward Rockwood Blvd. Turn right at front porch, enter through front door.
SPA President’s Message

Whether or not you voted for Proposition 4 in the November election you have an opinion about what goes on in your neighborhood. In an Inlander commentary from October 22nd on Proposition 4, “The friction between the neighborhoods and the city over land use policy, there is a growing feeling that the deck is stacked against the neighborhoods—that the city’s Comprehensive Plan is no more than lip service to the rights of homeowners who want some control over what their corner of Spokane will look and feel like.” It continues, “But it makes you wonder why the entire measure wasn’t simplified into four simple words: ‘Enforce the Comp Plan.’ “ Although The Comprehensive Plan is continually under attack, we’re seeing positive changes at city Hall and elsewhere in the community.

We lost the Rookery Block; however, in the process the demolition ordinance was developed. The Bernard Street reconstruction project led to the city’s listening to citizens and postponing the Lincoln Street reconstruction project. Corbin Park residents were listening to citizens and postponing the demolition ordinance. The demolition ordinance has not saved any buildings to date and needs to be re-examined.

The citizens and neighborhood groups are working to preserve their neighborhoods and way of life in Spokane. We have scheduled presentations with neighborhood groups throughout the city. Our goal is work with the neighborhoods to accomplish historic preservation and planning on a larger scale.

The holidays are fast approaching, which means SPA volunteers are busy preparing for SPA’s upcoming events featured in this edition of the newsletter. Please mark your calendars so you don’t miss any of the fun: December 6th: Holiday Home tour December 12th: Holiday Home Open House March 20th: Gala & Auction

Kelly Lordan
President

Historic Schools to be Renovated

This year, Spokane voters approved a bond which will fund the renovation of three beloved neighborhood schools: Jefferson, Hutton and Finch. District 81 administrators have recognized the architectural and historic significance of these buildings and promise special care will be taken to maintain their character.

Jefferson’s original 1908 building on Grand Avenue will likely be restored for some kind of community use and the 1948 addition will be razed. The new school may be constructed along the west side of Hart Field, although other sites are being considered. Jefferson will be the first of the three projects, breaking ground in 2012.

At Finch and Hutton, the old main buildings will be renovated and additions in keeping with their historic styles will be built. At all three schools, non-historic additions and portables will be removed. Construction at Finch will begin in 2013; at Hutton in 2014.

The District invited SPA to be involved with the planning of these renovations. Sensitive renovation involves more than just retaining a building’s shell. SPA will advocate saving as much as possible of each building’s historic setting, original interior finishes and features. We’ll work with designers and neighbors to ensure new additions are compatible with these historic buildings.

Please consider attending meetings and working with District 81 planners. Contact Advocacy Co-Chair (advocacy@spokanepreservation.org) for more information.

At the north end of Audubon Park, on a little over four acres, sits Finch Elementary School. Built in 1924, it honors early Spokane business leader and philanthropist John A. Finch, for whom Finch Arboretum and Finch Hall were also named.

“Education is the apprenticeship of life,” reads the pediment over the school’s main entrance on Milton Street, quoting nineteenth century literary editor, Robert Aris Willmott. Combining elements of neo-classical and Federal Revival styles, the building’s formal exterior gives no hint of its unusual and lively interior features.

Finch School started with an office, two classrooms boasting slate blackboards, cabinets and floors of oak, and two large bathrooms. In 1926, just two years later, five more classrooms were added. Over the next 20 years, the school continued to grow at Spokane’s flourished. During WWII, students double-shifted and teachers shared their classrooms. Even with morning and afternoon sessions, class sizes ballooned to 48 students, demanding a third major expansion in 1946.

This phase added a number of unique and playful accommodations: a fireplace with a tile surround of storybook characters in the kindergarten room, the only such feature in the city, not to mention the state! Today it’s a focal point in the library, albeit a non-blazing one.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the gym also served as a movie theater, with a large stage, a projection room, and a ticket booth fronting the street. The basement floor was made of fine, smooth cement, doubling as a roller skating rink! Now that’s what we call a true multi-purpose room. Students and teachers used the south wing of the basement during their (then) 60 minute lunchtime break. What a fun place to go to school!

Now, as then, it all happens in their beautiful and welcoming building.

Historic Schools continued on page 6

Tell Us What You Think

Accuracy is our goal but if you see something we need to correct, please let us know.

We welcome your comments and story ideas too. Contact the Communications Chair or any Board member, listed above.
This year’s tour features three historic homes bordering Coeur d’Alene Park in Browne’s Addition. Originally platted in 1883 and listed in 1979 on the National Register as a landmark historic district, Browne’s Addition was developed as one of Spokane’s first residential suburbs and this year was awarded a national designation as one of “America’s Top 10 Great Places” to live.

Enjoy holiday music from Dickens carolers as you wander through the stately Phelps Mansion, the turreted Fotheringham House, and the eclectic 111-year-old Patsy Clark estate. Marked by extraordinary woodwork, vintage lighting, colored cathedral-glass windows, and antique furnishings, these landmark homes embody Spokane’s lavish and opulent “Age of Elegance.”

Sunday, December 6, 2009
12:00 noon to 4:00 pm
$15 per person
Buy tickets the day of the tour at 2118 W. Second Ave.

The Phelps House
2118 W. Second Avenue
At the dawn of the 20th century, Moses & Netta Phelps commissioned Spokane architect Albert Held to design their dream home on West Second Avenue, which commanded an uninterrupted view of Coeur d’Alene Park and within waving distance of the Patsy Clark mansion. Also built by David B. Fotheringham, the historic Phelps House is an exquisite example of the “Free Classic” Queen Anne style and was finished with a unique reception hall/stairway design and an outstanding display of the finest honey-colored, quartersawn oak woodwork. Discover well preserved original lighting, brass doorknobs, inlaid floor medallions, and an original cast iron hitching post still standing from the time the home was built in 1901.

The Fotheringham House
2128 W. Second Avenue
David B. Fotheringham, a prominent Spokane building contractor and city mayor, built the Fotheringham House in 1891 for himself and his family while he also constructed a large mansion across the street for Patsy & Mary Clark. A hallmark example of the Spindlework Queen Anne style, the Fotheringham House boasts a fanciful design with lacy spindles and fretwork, cutaway corner windows, a wraparound front porch, and a prominent three-story corner tower with a third-floor turret. You’ll see curved tower windows, velvet portieres, unique woodwork designs, ten-foot-high ceilings, and the collection of antique bottles, papers, and other treasures found hidden behind walls and under floorboards for more than a century.

The Patsy Clark Mansion
2208 W. Second Avenue
Built in 1897, with a panoramic view of Coeur d’Alene Park and Browne’s Addition from a third-floor tower, the immense Clark Mansion was designed by the celebrated architect Kirtland K. Cutter. The client was Patsy Clark, a Spokane mining millionaire who told Cutter to design the “most luxurious mansion ever” and gather the world’s finest furnishings and materials to embellish it. Discover the mansion’s provocative fusion of architectural elements from Moorish, Islamic, and Italian Renaissance influences; extraordinary woodwork; European antiques, and breathtaking stained-glass stairwell windows designed by Louis Comfort Tiffany.
Jefferson Elementary School
by Jane Barry

In February of 1909, the Spokesman-Review reported that Spokane Schools needed six new buildings to house a huge increase in the city’s schoolchildren. The 11,122 students of 1908 had soared to 12,944 eager learners, a 16 percent jump in just one year.

One of the new buildings, Jefferson Elementary School, was made of sturdy red brick and named for our third President. It stands on the corner of 37th and Grand Blvd. Curiously, the building’s original main entrance faced neither 37th nor Grand, but to the north.

The original north-facing door was not generally used by students in the early days of the school. According to R.C. McIntyre in Good Old Days, the “only times it was used then by the students was at 12 noon when we marched out by grades.”

Mr. McIntyre also remembers:

In the morning and after lunch we had to gather outside the rear door which was at the top of a long flight of wooden stairs at the south side of the building. We weren’t allowed to enter the building on our own except on extremely cold or snowy days. The first bell, rung by hand by the janitor, Mr. Mason, at 8:40 a.m. and at 12:40 p.m. caused us to line up, two abreast, by grades. Shortly after each teacher came outside and led her grade into the building to recorded (78 rpm) Sousa band music played on a bilious Victrola phonograph... The school had only one record — “The National Emblem March” on one side and “Under the Double Eagle” on the other side. We marched to class for 7 years to that one record — one side in the morning, the other side in the afternoon.

Jefferson students remember the custodian in the early days who sharpened every student’s pencil with a knife because there were no pencil sharpeners. And the overcrowding during the Second World War drove classes into the basement boiler room, where teachers had to compete with clanking mechanical noises.

A new addition to Jefferson School, designed in the Streamline Moderne style, opened in 1947 with an entrance on 37th Street. A wing of classrooms stretched to the west and a curved bank of windows rounded the corner north to Grand. The steps of the new entrance became a popular gathering place for students.

When the new school is built, students will have another place to gather, and if all goes well, the community may have its own gathering place in the venerable old school.

Hutton Elementary School
by Suzanne Scheiner

Deep in the Rockwood neighborhood, nestled among a stand of pines, the tile roof and stucco-clad walls of Hutton Elementary School peers out at the surrounding homes. Built in 1921 for a grand total of $96,200, it taught the children of Spokane’s 104,437 souls. The new building, described by one observer as “of the Spanish bungalow type,” replaced the one-room Rockwood School at 24th Ave. and Hatch, built in 1917 for a mere $515.

The name honored Spokane pioneer and philanthropist, Levi W. Hutton, one of the owners of the Hercules Mine in the Coeur d’Alenes. The school board explained his “interest in children has been manifested by his donation of the Hutton Children’s Home.” The home continues to this day as the Hutton Settlement.

In the early days there was music; namely, students playing marches on a piano and a triangle, helping still yawning children to step lively as they streamed in to Hutton School’s corridors. Encore performances heralded lunch and the end of the school day.

Spokane continued its rapid growth and by 1930 there were plans to add four rooms and an auditorium to the school. Still squeezed for space, seventh grade girls were sent to Roosevelt for home economics classes, which apparently inspired them to rank their efforts against a study of the goodies at the Dutch Girl Bakery at 14th and Grand on the way back.

In April of 1929, the Spokesman-Review ran an article on Hutton. The writer, Leoti West, noted there were 310 pupils enrolled in grades one through seven. They were a happy, industrious and high-minded lot, if their principal is to be believed. The boys planted hundreds of tulips in the fall, which were beginning to peep up that spring. Miss Marie Fitzgerald, principal, declared, “The boys and girls are constantly trying to improve their citizenship. A fine type of leadership and responsibility is being developed.”

But even Miss Fitzgerald allowed there were one or two imperfections: An auditorium was sorely needed and though there were “many library books in each room” due to the largesse of the P.T.A., she felt “a library building would be a wonderful addition, but there is no spare space.”

No spare space, classes of unwieldy size, and a need for more resources — a world any 21st century teacher would recognize. At least the children were all above average!
THE SPA GALA RIDES AGAIN IN 2010!

by Suzanne Schreiner

Save the Date! Saturday, March 20, 2010 at 5:30pm

Bring your six-shooters and your 10-gallon hat because it’s going to be “The Wild, Wild West!”

Glover Mansion caterers will be slingin’ plenty of chow at the chuckwagon, with some lively two-steppin’ to follow.

Auctioneer Austin Booker will put on his best Texas twang while you bid on all the loot you could ever wish for!

We’ll be at the Grand Ballroom of the Masonic Center again but with all the hay bales and the hitching posts, you’ll swear you’re back in Dodge City or Tombstone.

So, come as James West or Artemus Gordon, Miss Kitty or Calamity Jane. You’ll get in touch with your inner cowboy, saloon girl, or riverboat gambler and have a rootin’, tootin’, hootin’, hollerin’ time!