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From the Chair... Diane Ellis

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From the Chair...Diane Ellis

Dear Foundation Friends,

How do they find buyers for historic houses in Mobile? What are folks in Fayetteville and Pulaski doing to revitalize their downtowns? Who determines what changes can be made to buildings on Huntsville's square? Where do we apply for a CLG grant? What IS a CLG grant?

These are the kinds of questions we've been tossing back and forth in committees and board meetings as we try to "practice preservation" in Huntsville and the county while educating ourselves about how the Foundation fits into the whole scheme of preservation efforts and resources nationwide. What we've been discovering as we try to figure out who does what and how and where—besides the fact that the more we learn, the more we need to know—is the variety and number of preservation programs that we can look to for aid, advice, and inspiration.

The venerable National Trust for Historic Preservation is one of those programs. The Foundation has a membership in the Trust, and it paid for itself during *Preservation Week*, when we used the Trust's theme, Preserving Community, and its excellent PR packet to publicize the Foundation's activities for the week. (The Trust is suffering major funding cuts in Washington and needs your support. I urge you to look into joining the Trust and to consider protesting the cuts to your congressional representatives.)

The Foundation also has a year's membership in the National Trust's Main Street Network to gather information about downtown revitalization. Main Street has years of experience reviving the declining centers of America's cities and towns, and the program now includes more than 1,200 revitalized communities across the country.

Preservation resources closer to home include the Alabama Historical Commission, the Alabama Humanities Foundation, the Alabama Preservation Alliance, and the Mobile Historic Development Commission. (We benefited from the considerable expertise of Mobile's Mark McDonald at our revolving fund workshop in early October.)

Here in Huntsville, we're blessed with the Land Trust, the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society, good museums, and helpful city staff. Several current preservation initiatives educate and inspire: Jane Barr and the Monte Sano Historical Society adding the Monte Sano State Park Historic District to the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage; Carol Ann Samples completing the impressive adaptive-use restoration of the 1907 Freeman House for Central Presbyterian Church; Brenda Heinsch and others working for neighborhood preservation in Five Points; and Dr. Ben Ferrill trying to recycle a turn-of-the-century bridge to help showcase an historic canal site downtown.

The Huntsville Historic Preservation Commission also plays a key role in the preservation of our community. In looking into the Commission's work, I was struck by the debt we owe to earlier preservation efforts. The vision and determination of citizens who created our historic districts, established the commission, surveyed the downtown, brought to life the Weeden House, and saved our historic passenger depot are preservation models we honor. I hope we can keep up the good work.

I'm looking forward to seeing you at the Foundation's Holiday Tea, Sunday, December 8.

