



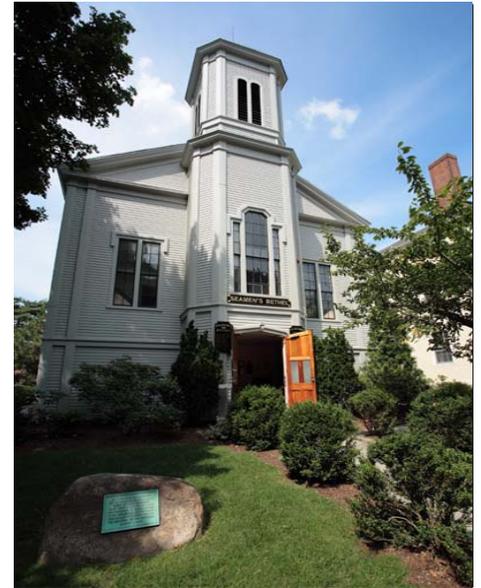
## Care for Your Historic Windows and They Will Care for You

Far too often, homeowners make the choice of replacing historic wooden windows with vinyl replacements believing that the new windows will result in lower maintenance needs and significant energy savings. In many of these cases wood window sashes that have been working fine for a century or so (or could easily and cheaply be made to work fine) are replaced by new windows that are only marginally more efficient and have a life of 10-15 years before needing to be replaced again.

In an effort to bring some of these facts to light, the New Bedford Historical Commission, working with the New Bedford Preservation Coalition, sponsored a window restoration workshop on May 9, 2009 in celebration of National Preservation Month. Jade Mortimer of Heartwood Window Restoration provided the workshop participants with valuable information on the importance of windows to the architecture of a home, the cost effectiveness of making repairs, and led hands-on opportunities for attendees to learn how to re-glaze windows, cut sash rope, and easily install weather stripping. The workshop was filmed for airing on New Bedford Cable Access (check your local listings for air times) and the Preservation Coalition intends to host another window restoration workshop in spring 2010.

A great example of a first rate window restoration has just been completed in the national park by the New Bedford Port Society for the Seamen's Bethel. The original windows are a character defining feature of the Bethel, and this project will help to ensure that Herman Melville's "Whaling Chapel" will be preserved for future generations. The Port Society also has plans to restore the windows of the Mariner's Home as part of their ongoing stewardship efforts.

There are many resources available to homeowners and DIY folks of all skill levels who love the rewards of working on their own historic house. Please contact commission staff for more information and remember that if you love your windows, they will love you back!



**Left:** Participants in the window restoration workshop in May. Workshop presenter Jade Mortimer (center) holds a reglazed basement window repaired during the workshop.

**Above Right:** The Seamen's Bethel on Johnny Cake Hill.

**Right:** Contractor Michael Mawn painting the exterior trim after reinstalation of restored windows on the Seamen's Bethel.

### Notes from the Chair...

We recently painted our house, and in the process gave each of our 150 year old windows a much needed tune-up. We replaced dried out sash cords, re-glazed as needed, adjusted and re-caulked the exterior storms, and finished it all off with a fresh coat of paint—all for about \$75 per window. I must confess that we were thinking about replacing the windows, but had trouble with losing that much historic fabric, and once I realized we would save more than \$600 per window I was sold!

I learned that original windows are almost always in better shape than we think, and replacements are never as good, or save as much energy, as we are told. My advice is to take the time to work with experienced local professionals, and with a little elbow grease, you can save your historic windows, energy costs, and more than a few bucks.

Derek Santos, Chairman

### Did You Know?

- Studies show that a properly maintained wood window, weatherstripped and with a storm window, can be just as energy efficient as a vinyl replacement window.
- Restoring wood windows is a sustainable, green practice by salvaging and keeping historic materials out of landfills and providing jobs for local economies.
- Vinyl replacement windows that contain polyvinyl chloride are toxic to fabricate and create toxic by-products.