

# The Ruthmere Record

THE RUTHMERE FOUNDATION, INC. • 302 E. BEARDSLEY AVENUE • ELKHART, INDIANA 46514

FALL 2009

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## MARBLE ANGEL TO GRACE RUTHMERE GARDEN

By LAUREL SPENCER FORSYTHE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Early on the morning of September 3, a large semi-trailer pulled up at Ruthmere, having made the journey from Portland, Maine with a special delivery. Ruthmere's building and grounds manager Ron Wolschlagel met with Gary Salustro of Mid-States Construction to strategize the removal of more than 2,000 pounds of crated marble statuary from the truck. Ron, Gary and I had met with Architect Eric Leedy the previous week to talk about the angel's imminent arrival and to make sure that she would safely make the passage from the truck to the ground. We also wanted to begin planning for her ultimate location in the garden, and Eric was working on designing a scenario or two for that purpose.

The angel had been sculpted to Robert Beardsley's precise specifications from a small version that he had collected years earlier. The small piece was a baptismal font; it resides in the dining room at Ruthmere. The larger angel had been planned by Robert to serve as his private memorial at his former home in Kennebunk, Maine. She was to preside and protect him in his eternal rest. Once the house was sold, however, new plans had to be made. We are very glad that Ruthmere is now the beneficiary of this lovely work of art.



### **Now you can be a part of this story!**

If you'd like to make a special contribution to the Angel Fund, please send your check to Ruthmere, 302 E. Beardsley Avenue, Elkhart, IN 46514



Marble angel statue is Ruthmere's newest acquisition, thanks to Board of Directors President Robert Beardsley.

### Membership Levels

#### Individual - \$35

3 issues of The Ruthmere Record, one free tour for 2, and information regarding all upcoming Ruthmere events.

#### Family - \$50

3 issues of The Ruthmere Record, one complimentary family tour, and invitation to the children's summer party.

#### Patron - \$100

3 issues of The Ruthmere Record, listing in newsletters, one complimentary tour for 4 plus information regarding all upcoming Ruthmere events.

#### Bronze Patron - \$250

3 issues of The Ruthmere Record, listing in newsletters, one complimentary tour for 8 plus information regarding all upcoming events.

#### Silver Patron - \$500

Same as Bronze Patron above plus one complimentary tour for 12.

Special membership opportunities are available at higher levels. Please contact Laurel Spencer Forsythe at (574) 264-0330.

**All memberships include a 10% discount in the Museum Shop.**

## RUTHMERE IS GOING GREEN!

This issue of Ruthmere Record is the first one to be available on e-mail. In the last issue we asked for e-mail addresses for those of you who want your copy delivered by e-mail. The response was good and those people should be receiving their Record on their computers.

If you would like to become a member of this group who not only save paper but also save Ruthmere money, please send us your e-mail address. Go to [ruthmere.org](http://ruthmere.org) and click on "contacts" on the left side, then simply send an email to us with your address. Thank you.



# Ruthmere

### DISCOVER THE REWARDS OF MEMBERSHIP

Please fill out this form and mail or fax it to:  
Ruthmere Museum Membership  
302 East Beardsley Avenue  
Elkhart, IN 46514  
Telephone: (574) 264-0330  
Fax: (574) 266-0474

Individual (\$35)    Family (\$50)    Patron (\$100)  
 Bronze Patron (\$250)    Silver Patron (\$500)  
 Gold Patron (\$1,000)

Name(s) as you would like to be listed in publications \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Business Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is a check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Please make check payable to Ruthmere Museum

Please charge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to my:

Visa    MasterCard    DiscoverCard

Account Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature (Required for Credit Card) \_\_\_\_\_

This is a gift membership for:

Name(s) as you would like to be listed in publications \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Matching gift form enclosed. Membership contributions to Ruthmere Museum may be matched by your employer. Ask if your company participates in the matching gift program.

Memorial In memory of \_\_\_\_\_  
Memorials are available anytime at Ruthmere.

## WE'RE GEARING UP!

Restoration of the Havilah Beardsley House is entering into a new phase, with the help of a grant of \$25,000 from the Elkhart County Community Foundation. Work will commence soon to refinish original floors, replace wallpaper, finishings, and restore original woodwork. If you would like to contribute to this important project please contact The Ruthmere Foundation at 302 E. Beardsley Avenue, Elkhart, Indiana 46514 or email [lforsythe@ruthmere.org](mailto:lforsythe@ruthmere.org).



## VISIT RUTHMERE.ORG FOR UPDATED INFORMATION

Would you like to hear an "Elkhart History Minute" or listen to a longer version of our new podcast series, *Where the Rivers Meet?* Visit [Ruthmere.org](http://Ruthmere.org) and click on the icon at the lower left of the home page to hear some fun and clever narratives about early Elkhart history, including a recent interview with board President Robert Beardsley. And, you can see photographs and read about developments in the restoration of the Havilah Beardsley House on our blog.

Visit the Havilah Beardsley House section, then click on "restoration." A new area for educators features the curriculum-based PowerPoint presentation *Exploring Elkhart's Roots with Ruthmere*. Plus, there is always up-to-date program and special event information in the calendar and news section. Visit [Ruthmere.org](http://Ruthmere.org) and then visit us!

## SAVE THIS DATE: DECEMBER 5, 2009

Gail Martin and Director Laurel Spencer Forsythe are working on plans for the Annual Neighborhood Holiday House Walk to be held on Saturday, December 5, 2009 from 1 to 4 p.m. An important Greenleaf Boulevard historic landmark will be featured in this year's walk. As in previous years, the walk will feature a number of delightful homes, each beautifully decorated for the holiday season. Ruthmere and the Havilah Beardsley House will be open and refreshments will be served during the afternoon. More details will be forthcoming soon.

# BOBBY GOES TO WAR—MERRIECOURT, SEPTEMBER, 1939 PART TWO

By ROBERT BEARDSLEY, PRESIDENT, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

It had been twenty-one years since the end of World War I. Mary was a young girl in Warsaw at that time and remembered the brutality of German soldiers and the devastation they brought to the city and land of her birth. She still limped from a foot injury she got climbing out of the rubble of her shelled home. “Those dirty Bosch,” she muttered in heavily accented English. “I wish I had my hands (she said ‘hants’) around their necks.” She then made a slow wrenching twist with her “hants” that left no doubt about what she had in mind. We listened in fascinated silence to the rest of the broadcast. Even as a child I realized that something really big was happening. I knew that my parents were trying to get home (at that moment they were at sea, but I did not know it). I knew what u-boats were and what they could do. Before sailing from New York for Southampton that August my parents sent me a battery-operated toy submarine from F.A.O. Schwartz (with a cork so you could make it dive) that I had “practiced” with all that August in Uncle John’s 10’ square cement pool by the caretaker’s cottage. I knew all about submarines.

Well, if there was going to be a war, we should get busy, my pal Dean and I decided. Dean roomed across the hall. His mother was an actress living in New York City. Therefore she was very glamorous. Dean was going to be an aircraft designer. He said I could be his assistant. He was one year older. After supper Dean and I retired to the sunroom with pads of blue drawing paper to start to work. First we sketched P-40s, Spitfires, Hurricanes, Messerschmitt 109s and, I think, P-38s before we went on to improve them, aerodynamically, of course. The quality

of our drawings was somewhat skimpy on detail, as I recall. Stretched out on the floor as busy boys often work, we labored with pad and pencil late into the evening until we were “hooked” off to bed around 8:30 pm. We took ourselves very seriously. We were already hard at work for the war effort.

The following year, tottering towards age seven and still doing time at Merriecourt (actually I loved being there), I “invented” a spotlight for detecting u-boats. The idea was to have a high-intensity light shine through a glass bottomed boat to illuminate, for bombing purposes, of course, u-boats on the bottom. I would work out the details for fog or deep water later, but I did want to get the concept across for immediate wartime release. My father was so amused by my invention that he sent my sketch to the War Department in Washington, as the Department of Defense was known until 1947. In time, I got a very respectful letter from a Lt. Commander Mahon, USN, addressed to Master Bobby Beardsley, if you please, thanking me for my invention and wishing me luck in all my future endeavors!

That letter, now framed, of course, is at Ruthmere and hangs beside a letter signed by Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1918 as the then Under Secretary of the Navy. He wrote it to some citizen in New Jersey, thanking her for her offer to give certain binoculars and telescopes to the Navy for the war effort, no longer needed, thank you. There had been a call for such equipment, but the response had been so overwhelming that F.D.R. had to call off the drive.

PS: I add, in remembrance of a wonderful woman who was a friend and mother to all of us kids at Merriecourt,

an anecdote about Mary that shows how we bonded. I never knew her last name. It was a child’s world then. We knew and loved her only as Mary. When I first arrived, I was not quite six but already quite a reader. Mary lived in a tiny room with one window on the third floor of our home built in the 1890s in the Queen Anne Revival style. The house, at the end of a long winding driveway lined with big old trees, sat on five or six acres of land, part of it a hill down which we sledded in winter.

In any case, Mary, then perhaps thirty years old, could not read. We kids decided she should learn, so we taught her, using books like “See Dick, See Jane,” spelling out each word night after night by the light of her single lamp while we were supposed to be asleep. We piled together on her bed as she slowly mouthed the words and began to read. When I left (no doubt to enlist in the war effort), she was reading newspapers out loud to anybody who would listen until finally Aunt Ruth suggested she might like to read just to herself.

Mary, being Polish, made the best corn fritters (always served with butter and real maple syrup) I have ever eaten. Her meatballs, sausage, and cabbage dishes I remember to this day. She could slice bananas into a bowl faster than anybody I have ever seen before or since. Oh, yes, that 1920s song just went off in my head: “Yes, we have no bananas! We have no bananas today!”



# WHY YOUR MEMBERSHIP MATTERS: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, CULTURAL EDUCATION, AND LIFELONG LEARNING

## *Our Mission*

The Ruthmere Foundation, Inc. inspires the imagination and promotes excellence in fine arts, architecture and historic preservation to advocate life-long learning and the entrepreneurial spirit.

## *Our Vision*

The Ruthmere Foundation, Inc. will be recognized as a learning center for architectural, decorative and fine arts and will be positioned at the heart of the community's cultural and historical identity.

Membership support enables us to deliver high quality cultural programming for all audiences. Membership offers benefits, of course, such as free tours, invitations to previews, programs, and other special privileges, but the best reason for becoming a member is that your investment in Ruthmere helps to strengthen our community.

Ruthmere's collections include works of art that rival those held in much larger museums found in our nation's major cities, yet they are easily accessible to area residents. Your membership contribution helps to fund work in preservation, education and care of the collection. Through your gift to Ruthmere, you choose to make a significant contribution to the cultural life of our community, to celebrate its entrepreneurial roots, and to lay the foundation for its promising future.

The Ruthmere Foundation, Inc. recently acquired the 1848 Havilah Beardsley House at 102 E. Beardsley—the home of the community's founder and his family. Your gift helps to make possible the ongoing restoration of Elkhart's oldest house and to provide a community center that is accessible to all. This project will prove to be a key part of the development of a new cultural corridor for the city that will stretch from its current downtown revitalization, particularly the redevelopment of the Lerner Theater arts and entertainment district, to the Wellfield Botanic Gardens on North Main. Please let me know if you'd like a personal tour of the Havilah Beardsley House to see what work has been done and what is planned.

Should you have any questions about Ruthmere membership or any other aspect of the current operations of The Ruthmere Foundation, Inc. please contact me at (574-264-0330) or email [lforsythe@ruthmere.org](mailto:lforsythe@ruthmere.org).

Very truly yours,

Laurel Spencer Forsythe  
Executive Director

## CONFLUENCE

MARY ELLEN SHAMORY, RUTHMERE VOLUNTEER

We gather together on Saturday afternoons to share our love of words, be it poetry or prose, which Webster's defines as: "an ordinary form of written or spoken language." We may be ordinary in some ways, but sharing our individual talents makes each one of us unique. We listen attentively as the writers share passages from their favorite authors, or their current projects. Little did we know when we first began this journey that it would be so uplifting and rewarding.

Today we are seated around the table in the library at Ruthmere prepared to share our assignments with each other. The assignment, given at our previous session, was to choose something within the room, research it, and write about it. So many choices, which to choose, how to put into words how a particular piece speaks to us, what it reveals about the artist, the writer, the period, the past.

I remember glancing around the room and thought "so many beautiful pieces of art—books, photographs, paintings. What shall I select?" Then I realized I was focusing on the lamp in the center of the table. I admired it because it was much like one in my childhood home. So there it was – my assignment!

*continued on page 6*

# LOUIS COMFORT TIFFANY LEADERSHIP CIRCLE MEMBERS

## \$5,000 PLATINUM

Arthur J. & Patricia Decio  
Joan Beardsley Norris  
Jonathan Beardsley Norris  
Andrew Carter Norris

## \$2,500 ROSE GOLD PATRON

Peter Deputy  
Tom & Peggy Deputy  
Dorinda Miles Smith  
Peggy Weed

## \$1,000 GOLD PATRON

Robert Beardsley  
James F. Bisson  
Dorris Carr Bonfigli  
Robert & Mary Pat Deputy  
Thomas & Lois Dusthimer  
George & Kathy Freese  
Craig & Connie Fulmer  
Keith & Nancy Holmes  
Laurel Spencer Forsythe  
David & Janet Weed  
Jacqueline Wonso, Daniel Kuhn, Alan O'Day

## \$500 SILVER PATRON

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Philip & Jeannette Lux  
Robert & Gail Martin

## \$250 BRONZE PATRON

Thomas & Dorothy Arnold  
Laura Funk  
Harold & Patricia Smith

## \$100 PATRON

Elkhart Community Bank  
Stuart & Paula Barb  
Stephen & Jean Barton  
Richard & Patrica Brotherson  
Jan Cawley  
Jack & Karen Cittadine  
William Cloar  
Peter Combs  
Virginia Combs  
Rachel Dose  
Donald & Judy Findlay  
Robert & Karin Frey  
Charles & Phyllis Gordon  
Jan Grodnik  
LaVerne Herzberg  
Dean & Judy Kelly  
Edward & Florence Monger  
Clifford & Jean Murray  
Peter & Becky Parmater  
Bonnie & Phil Penn

Marilou Ritchie  
Russell & Anita Miller Ritchie  
Jon & Carol Smoker  
Robert & Mary Lou Stackhouse  
Jeffrey & Elizabeth Steele  
Frances Stock  
David Stutsman  
Terry & Peggy Trimmer

## \$50 FAMILY

Jane & Harold Atkins  
Beryl & Barbara Boss  
Dennis Buettner  
Bettie Dippo  
Susan Edwards  
John & Dian Holdeman  
Frank & Jacqueline Hughes  
Dan Naylor  
Lewis & Ann Naylor  
Allen & Betty Plunkett Norris  
James & Susan Pettit  
Steve & Sue Reim  
Bob & Marilyn Ronk  
Kirk & Sue Root  
Rev. Willard & Alice Roth  
Jack & Ann Turnock  
Donald & Cidney Walter  
Sandra & Candace Woodiwiss

## \$25 INDIVIDUAL

William & Jan Atwood  
Stuart & Trudy Basquin  
Judy Bechtold

Mary Jane Blanken  
William & Deborah Burton  
Tana Clementz  
Doloris Cogan  
Beverly Croxall  
Peter & Kathy Dotlich  
Darlene Eddy  
Carol Emens  
Robert & Joanne Franklin  
Gary & Elaine Gillespie  
Marilyn Grubb  
Norman & Alice Hessert  
Mary Hiles  
Cecila Hubbard  
Dale Kern  
James & Kathleen Knopick  
Thomas & Barbara Kurth  
Claire Luther  
Margaret McMillan  
Patricia Morison  
Georgene Nelson  
Peg Owens- Donated extra \$25 in  
memory of Mary Ann Graves  
Mary Ellen Shamory  
Phil & Carole Staal  
Jeri Stahr  
Peg Trobaugh  
Robin Vance  
Phyllis Warrick  
Jeanne Wells  
Marilynn Wilson

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## SEPTEMBER

- 19: Confluence: The Ruthmere Writers 2 PM
- 20: Bob Milne Concert 2 PM & 7 PM

## OCTOBER

- 4: Free First Sunday 1-4 PM
- 17: Confluence: The Ruthmere Writers 2 PM
- 29: Jim Pickley & Victoria Garrett Concert 7 PM

## NOVEMBER

- 1: Free First Sunday 1-4 PM
- 21: Confluence: The Ruthmere Writers 2 PM
- 26-27: Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday

## DECEMBER

- 5: Holiday House Walk 1-4 PM
- 17: Elkhart Symphony Christmas Ensemble 7 PM
- 19: Confluence: The Ruthmere Writers 2 PM
- 24-26: Closed for Christmas Holiday
- 31: Closed for Season re-open April 1, 2010

*Ruthmere*  
THE RUTHMERE FOUNDATION, INC.  
302 EAST BEARDSLEY AVENUE  
ELKHART, INDIANA 46514  
574.264.0330  
WWW.RUTHMERE.ORG

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### *“Confluence” continued from page 4*

When I returned to the library several days later to begin my research, Marilou was there and I asked her something about the lamp. She said there was very little information about it, other than it was “original to the furnishings” at Ruthmere. We examined the lamp for identification, some clue to its origin. Marilou looked through several art books, but found nothing specific to this piece. This was going to be harder than I thought! No date, designer or artist’s name, no manufacturer or lamp maker, no particular style, other than Victorian. I realized that whatever I needed to know must come from the lamp itself; thus I asked the lamp to “tell me a story.”

I began by examining it thoroughly. The base measures nine inches and is embellished with rolled scrolls and shields. It is twenty-seven inches tall. The ornate shade has eight sections measuring eight inches each. The metalwork covering the

shade contains shields, acorns, and leaves. Four bulbs illuminate the pale green and yellow stained glass. Acorns are a fruit of the oak tree, and the table on which it stands is an oak library table from Harvard University.

Could this warm sturdy lamp once have been on this very oak table at Harvard, where studious young men discussed urgent matters beneath its golden glow? Are their aspirations and thoughts written within the scrolls? Guarded and protected by the shields? Confluence of lamp and table.

I realized when I first saw this impressive piece at our first session that it resembled a lamp which belonged to my grandmother, eventually residing on a table in our living room. That lamp was a much smaller version, but I thought it quite beautiful. No vibrant multicolor, but a stately black metal with opalescent

glass. My mother used it as a nightlight and would leave it on when we left the house in the evening. What a comfort when we returned, to see it warming our living room, its glow welcoming us home.

Marilou remembered the library lamp had been moved from the house to the library some time ago. Perhaps it will move elsewhere in Ruthmere in the future. In the meantime we will “let its light shine down on us” as we continue to share and explore our love for the written word.



Visit [Ruthmere.org](http://Ruthmere.org) to hear new podcasts featuring the work of the Confluence authors. Simply click on The Writers Group and select a podcast icon. Enjoy the diverse voices of our Confluence writers as they reflect upon some of the unique works of art in the Robert Beardsley Arts Reference Library.