

The Ruthmere Record

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

FALL/WINTER 2008

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AUTUMN ABUNDANCE AT RUTHMERE

By LAUREL SPENCER FORSYTHE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Autumn is surely here again, as the blowing leaves and the chill air affirm, and it brings us a host of programs and projects. Some of them are familiar favorites; some are exciting and new.

Professor Nicholas Roth's concert, held the evening after Thanksgiving, commences the festive Edwardian Yuletide season at Ruthmere. This year's decorations, including live poinsettias and fresh garlands, are

generously sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Art and Pat Decio. Numerous Christmas trees, decorated in period style, adorn the already ornate rooms of the mansion. A truly special feature this year is an exhibition of Imperial Russian porcelain, highlights of the collection of Raymond F. Piper. You won't want to miss this stunning display, which includes pieces once owned by Catherine the

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This lovely brick English Tudor-style home at 818 N. Main Street is one of five private homes on this year's Neighborhood Holiday House Walk. The 2008 Walk features homes in the Beardsley Avenue Historic District, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Also included is the Havilah Beardsley House at 102 W. Beardsley, which is currently undergoing restoration and will feature an art show by the Elkhart Art League. The "endpoints" of the Walk are two landmarks designed by architect E. Hill Turnock-- Ruthmere, and St. Paul's United Methodist Church. Tickets are \$25 in advance and available for purchase at Ruthmere. Call (574) 264-0330 or visit ruthmere.org.

IMPERIAL RUSSIAN PORCELAIN COLLECTION OF RAYMOND F. PIPER

Ruthmere is fortunate to host part of “the most comprehensive private collection of Imperial Russian Porcelain in the United States” and to feature aspects of this splendid collection in a series of special exhibitions during our centennial celebration (2008-2010). The first of these is now on display in the Game Room in time for the festivities of the holiday season, Edwardian Yuletide. The collector, Raymond F. Piper, has been collecting Russian porcelain and related objects for more than thirty years. This collection has travelled extensively and has been exhibited most recently at Hillwood Museum and Gardens in Washington, D. C., the former home of Marjorie Merriwether Post.



*Top: Armorial Sauce Boat of Tsar Nicholas II (c. 1915)
Lower: Detail of Sauce Boat showing the double-headed eagle topped with one large and two small crowns.
Made by the Imperial Russian Porcelain Factory, St. Petersburg*



*Top: Soup Bowl from the Alexandrinsky Service of Tsar Nicholas II (c. 1900)
Lower: Detail of Soup Bowl showing birds in naturalistic poses; used in the Alexander Palace, Tsarskoie Selo
Made by the Imperial Russian Porcelain Factory, St. Petersburg*

NICHOLAS ROTH RETURNS TO RUTHMERE

Traditionally, Elkhart native Nicholas Roth returns each Thanksgiving to entertain us with a piano concert, and he will not fail us this year. This year he promises us another intimate concert featuring the eight Novelletten of Robert

Schumann, Opus 21. If you missed last year’s concert when Professor Roth interspersed his playing with program notes, you will not want to miss this treat, and you will undoubtedly want to make your reservations early.

Call 574 264-0330 for your reservations for either or both of these promising events. Tickets for this concert are \$12 for members and \$15 for non-members.



BOBBY'S CHRISTMAS MEMORIES

ROBERT BEARDSLEY, PRESIDENT

My life has been lived in a series of contrasts. How I have celebrated Christmas over the years is a case in point.

I was conceived in the Hoover Administration and born in the Roosevelt Administration, so I saw the Depression from beginning to end from two different perspectives, at least when it came to Christmas. In 1937, at the depth of the Great Depression, a Herbert Hoover phrase to take the sting out of the more familiar word Panic, I was well settled in the Home for Little Wanderers in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. It was an orphanage, and we kids loved living there, some 15 or 20 of us. Regular meals, warm beds, somebody to look after us. . . more than some could say about their lives in those days. Unemployment in Toledo when FDR was sworn in in March 1933 was over 25%.

Christmas, as with all children, was the highpoint of the year. One snowy evening Santa arrived with a "Ho! Ho! Ho!" and a sack full of toys. Never mind that most of them were second-

hand, and many well- and lovingly-mended, too, we were excited for weeks knowing he was coming. We sat in a semi-circle around the lighted Christmas tree awaiting his arrival. Going straight to his task, he opened his bag. "Let's see what we have here!" Out came a teddy bear. "This one is for Bobby and Billy!" We both leaped to our feet. A tug-of-war followed. I got the body, Billy the arm. I would not give up my teddy bear with a missing arm. Billy cried.

A year later, Daddy Warbucks having arrived in his autogiro to whisk me to my new home in Elkhart, IN, I was in a suite on the tenth floor of the Biltmore Hotel, wondering how Santa could fly that high with no roof to land on. There was a tree with presents all around, including a low-slung single-engine monoplane painted white almost as big as I was, along with a head-spinning variety of toys and stuffed animals that somehow looked familiar. Dad took home movies. A few days before

we had visited Fifth Avenue's famous F.A.O. Schwartz, where my greedy little eyes took in hundreds of beautiful toys to dream about. That day I waited in line to sit on Santa's lap. When my turn came, ever a doubting Thomas, I asked, "Are you real?" and tugged on his beard. As my mother and grandmother gasped in horror, it came off in my hand. I was hustled off fast. Santa took a brief coffee break, I noticed, on my way out the door.

The following year was the best Christmas of all, 1939. That year we were in Elkhart. I was so excited I could hardly wait until daylight, about 7:30 am I guess, when I tumbled down the long staircase in my Dr. Denton's. It started on the newel post, where a yellow and deep blue silk clown's costume and cap were draped. On the floor at the bottom of the stairs was a bugle – a bugle! – with a red ribbon. Near the door to the kitchen was a 3' square model airport laid out like a monopoly board with toy airplanes, models of

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GARDEN NEWS

The garden committee met on October 23 to discuss plans for the 2009 quilt garden. The 2008 garden, "Beardsley Mariner's Compass," was enjoyed by Ruthmere visitors and brought many additional garden and quilt enthusiasts to the museum. The Elkhart County Convention and Visitors Bureau estimates that more than 1500 visitors came to the area to view the twelve gardens and related quilt

murals. Since this year's garden was not as visible as some, plans for next year include building up the bed at the rear of the garden in order to make viewing and photographing from the sidewalk easier.

Next year's quilt garden at Ruthmere will feature a new design, again based on a Beardsley family quilt in the museum collection, along with new varieties of flowers. Seasonal staff

member advanced master gardener Pam McIntire is already deep in the planning stages, selecting favorite flowers such as marigolds and red salvia to develop the "Flower Basket" pattern. Grounds manager Ron Wolschlager has mapped out the pattern, modifying the actual Flower Basket quilt pattern to make it possible to plant in garden form.



CONFLUENCE: THE RUTHMERE WRITERS

COORDINATED BY DARLENE MATHIS EDDY

We hope to bring together writers who will meet once or twice a month in the Ruthmere Library to discuss the projects that they are undertaking and/or authors that they find meaningful in relation to their own creative work. All

persons interested in participating in this group are invited. A second meeting is scheduled for Saturday, December 13 at 2 p.m. Writers may be focusing on poems, short stories, novels, memoirs, journals, essays, among a variety

of forms, and will have opportunities to share with others in a nurturing and supportive setting. Participants are encouraged to bring either one sample, of moderate length, of their own writing or a selection from a writer whom they admire. This meeting will provide time to become acquainted, set goals, and plan future activities. The meeting will be coordinated by Darlene Mathis Eddy, Professor Emerita of English and Humanities at Ball State University and former Poet in Residence in the College of Arts and Sciences there and a former member of the Seminar faculty of Notre Dame. For further information, please contact Laurel Spencer Forsythe at 264-0330 or Mrs. Eddy at 266-4394.

HAVILAH BEARDSLEY HOUSE RESTORATION



A



B

A. During excavation of the West Wing, a unique old radiator was discovered beneath the subfloor. Like the East Wing (c. 1890s), the floor, subfloor and joists on the c. 1870s west addition were badly damaged by insects and rot. Because of their deteriorated condition, the flooring materials had to be removed. This made it possible to stabilize the foundation and treat it against further insect damage.

B. When the poplar subfloor was removed, an early below-floor heating system was found. This type of radiator, a metal box encased with wood, was used throughout the lower floor of the house during this period to supplement the heat from the three fireplaces. Although it is badly insect damaged, the radiator will be saved as an early artifact.

LOUIS COMFORT TIFFANY LEADERSHIP CIRCLE MEMBERS

\$5,000 PLATINUM

Arthur J. & Patricia Decio
Joan Beardsley Norris

\$2,500 ROSE GOLD PATRON

Robert & Mary Pat Deputy
Dorinda Miles Smith
Leedy\Cripe Architects

\$1,000 GOLD PATRON

Robert Beardsley
James F. Bisson
Corson Family Foundation
Thomas & Lois Dusthimer
George & Kathy Freese
Craig & Connie Fulmer
Keith & Nancy Holmes
Laurel Spencer Forsythe
KeyBank

\$500 SILVER PATRON

William Bissell
Jack & Karen Cittadine
Thomas & Dorthy Corson
Robert & Gail Martin

\$250 BRONZE PATRON

Thomas & Dorothy Arnold
Stuart & Paula Barb
Steve Brown- Elkhart Community Bank
Laura Funk

\$100 PATRON

Stephen Barton
Jane Burns
Jan Cawley
William Cloar
Peter Combs
Virginia Combs
Linne Dose

Rachel Dose
Donald & Judy Findlay
Robert & Karin Frey
Charles Gordon
Jan Grodnik
LaVerne Herzberg
Dean & Judy Kelly
Neil & Pat Klockow
James & Ann McNamee
Lawrence & Lynne Miles
Edward & Florence Monger
Clifford & Jean Murray
Peter & Becky Parmater
Bonnie & Phil Penn
James Pettit
Marilou Ritchie
Harold Smith
Jon Smoker
Robert & Mary Lou Stackhouse
Frances Stock

Don & Claudia Stohler
David Stutsman
Terry Trimmer
Donald & Cidney Walter
Susan Warner

Spitfires and Messerschmitts, the planes of the early war years. The Battle of Britain was then raging. Also there was a whole box of lead toy soldiers, lined

up and ready to march, and Tinker Toy models of tanks and khaki-colored army vehicles with tiny black rubber tires that I could take off and put on,

and many wrapped boxes with red ribbons still to be opened. My mother and dad watched from their room above, later marveling that at first I just walked around and around and did not touch a thing, not believing it was all for me, I suppose. Once again, camera in hand, Dad took movies from their bedroom, home movies that we have at Ruthmere today. I guess I knew my parents were there, but I had more important matters at hand.

Christmas during the war when Dad was away was quite different. Mother bought a tabletop three-tiered gold-painted Christmas tree from Constance Spry in New York and decorated it with artificial fruit and small electric candles and artificial greenery. She burned balsam punk in ashtrays and played a lot of Bing Crosby on the RCA radio/gramophone in the study, trying to give the house a Christmassy atmosphere. In 1943 "I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas" first came out. I

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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 (\$25) 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.

Membership Levels

Individual - \$25

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.

remember her playing it over and over and crying a lot. We missed Dad who was in India for two and a half years, lean Christmas years for all of us.

I remember Christmas dinner at Uncle Art and Aunt Stella’s at Ruthmere one year, the house beautifully decorated, of course, with Goldie and other family cooks working together in the big kitchen to produce one of those memorable killer meals. After the turkey, stuffing, gravy, mashed potatoes with real cream and butter, Brussels sprouts, glazed carrots, dinner rolls, and apple, mince and pumpkin pies with whipped cream and ice cream, everybody either took a nap somewhere in the house or went home. In 1944 shortly after one of those holiday feasts, Uncle Art died upstairs in his bedroom.

Looking back, my biggest “haul” as a child, perhaps my happiest Christmas ever for getting presents, was the Christmas of 1939. Beginning then and every year until she died in 1956, Great Aunt Ada, Uncle Charlie’s wife, gave us

kids in the family \$2.00 cash in a bank holiday envelope with a sweet note, the same for birthdays. One very cold day in the Christmas season, perhaps in 1942, I ran into Aunt Ada in the dime store, got the money, and promptly bought a hideous dresser set with comb and mirror for my mother. The fact that it said “Made in Japan” did not help. She made polite noises opening it, but I later noticed my precious gift in one of the maid’s rooms. Towards the end Aunt Ada upped our take to \$3.00.

One year during the war, I got into trouble with my two grandmothers, writing each a lavish note of thanks, but mixing up the envelopes. Since Grandmother Helen had given me a \$25 Savings Bond and Grammy, Mother’s English mother, a book or something more modest, the two letters were mailed back with terse little comments to the effect that “Bobby got us mixed up!” Next year I got another War Bon and another book so I guess they did not hold it against me.

I do remember the Christmas of 1941 helping my dad wrap a pair of ruby and diamond earrings for my mother from Traubert and Hoeffler, a jewelry company in New York. From the same company he had bought her tenth wedding anniversary present in 1939, a ruby and diamond bracelet, and in 1940 a handsome brooch to match. Since good things come in small packages, we started with a tiny box, beautifully wrapped by the store, of course. That went into a bigger box, then into a bigger box, and finally into a bigger box still. By the time the present was ready for the tree, it almost took both of us to carry it up the basement steps. Mother was very pleased when she finally got down to “it” and we had a Merry Christmas, about our last one since World War II for the United States had already started.



“Autumn Abundance at Ruthmere” continued from page 1

Great in the mid 18th century through Nicholas II and Alexandra in the early 20th century.

This year’s Neighborhood Holiday House Walk, will be held on Saturday afternoon, December 6 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Save this date to stroll the Beardsley Avenue Historic District and view lovely private homes never before seen on the tour, as well as several important restoration projects, including St. Paul’s United Methodist Church and the Havilah Beardsley House. Of

course, you’ll want to stop for refreshments at Ruthmere.

A new project that can be found on Ruthmere.org is our podcasting feature, Where the Rivers Meet. Developed with Dave Dufour, these clever history recordings give insight into a number of topics about Elkhart’s early history, including Havilah Beardsley, oral history with Board President Robert Beardsley, and the story of C. G. Conn’s development of the music industry.

Also new this fall is a writers’ group,

Confluence, which offers writers of all types the opportunity to gather and share information in a supportive environment. Detailed information may be found in this newsletter.

With colder and darker days ahead, there is much warmth and light to be found within the walls of Ruthmere this season. Please join us!



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Ruthmere

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

PRESORTED STANDARD
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Elkhart, IN 46515
Permit No. 151

NOVEMBER

27: Thanksgiving (closed)

28: Nicholas Roth Concert Admission \$15/ \$12 members 7:30 pm

DECEMBER – EDWARDIAN YULETIDE

Imperial Russian Porcelain from the Collection of Raymond Piper

06: Neighborhood Holiday House Walk 1:00 – 4:00 pm \$25
in advance

13: Confluence: Ruthmere Writers' Group meets at 2:00 PM
(Arts Reference Library)

14: Christmas Tea 2:00 PM Reservations required \$15

24, 25, 26: Christmas Holiday (closed)

31: New Year's Eve (closed until April 1, 2009)

FEBRUARY

8: Juliana and Friends Brahms Concert -- Free -- 2:30 PM. Call for
reservations (574) 264-0330 (Game Room)

NOTES FROM AN OAKEN AERIE...

MARILOU RITCHIE, LIBRARIAN / ARCHIVIST

Our beautiful maple tree is turning to shades of yellow and a bright, brilliant red as fall arrives for the twenty-second time since we joined the staff at Ruthmere, and the tree still brings the same awe that it did in 1986. I was reminded recently of the beginnings of the library when I sorted all of the Arts Reference Library notations from Robert Beardsley's considerable notes on the restoration of Ruthmere. While we are closed this winter, I will try to edit them into some kind of print.

A flurry of new books has filled our already-crowded shelves to their limits. The wonderful exhibits of Winslow Homer watercolors and Edward Hopper work at the Art Institute in Chicago earlier this year yielded two beautiful catalogs to add to our collection on American artists; and a later exhibit of Georgia O'Keeffe

added another, along with *Full Bloom; the Art and Life of Georgia O'Keeffe* by Hunter Drohojowska-Philp and *A Woman on Paper: Georgia O'Keeffe* by Anita Pollitzer. The O'Keeffe books were acquired in connection with our centennial exhibition at the Snite Museum of Art this summer, *Blue I and Beyond*, which celebrated the collections and philanthropy of Walter R. Beardsley. The focal point of the show was O'Keeffe's *Blue I*, normally on view in the Snite's Walter R. Beardsley Gallery of Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Art. This painting, which hung in the offices of Miles Laboratories for some years, was given to the Snite Museum of Art by Walter Beardsley, along with a number of other works of art and, later, a substantial endowment for the purchase of contemporary art.

To add to our collection on domestic architecture, we now have *Great Houses of Chicago, 1871-1921*, which shows interiors as well as exteriors of the homes of such familiar families as the Pullmans and the Palmers and the Fields. Another addition to the collection on architecture is a reprint of the first edition of Edith Wharton's *Italian Villas and Their Gardens*. This beautiful volume is illustrated with many photographs and with paintings by Maxfield Parrish.

Drop in to visit us some autumn afternoon. These are only the most recent of the many treasures to be found here. The library is staffed on Wednesdays from 10 to 3 and on Thursdays from 1 to 3 or by appointment. Call 574 264-0330.

