

The Ruthmere Record

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

SPRING 2010

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CLASSICS COME TO RUTHMERE

By LAUREL FUNK

Gleaming chrome. Highly buffed paint job. Power under the hood. On April 30, looking in every way as they did in their heyday, eleven classic cars of the 50's and 60's pulled into the Grove Street driveway at Ruthmere Museum. They made their way around the back, under the porte-cochere, ready to nose their way onto Beardsley Avenue when it was time to leave. The drivers of these cars were members of the Great Lakes Region Vintage Chevrolet Car Club of America on a three-day jaunt to points of interest in northern Indiana, Ruthmere being one of them.

This group – from the Chicago area and its suburbs – meets every month to glean and share information about the care and maintenance of their cars. They also enjoy the social interaction of road trips in their restored cars to rallies, competitions and car shows. One of the tenets of the club is that the car being restored has to be older than a 1975 model; the oldest car in their club, although not on this trip, is one dating back to 1937.

When asked what they enjoyed about the museum, the visitors commented on the woodwork, the tastefully chosen furnishings,



and the well kept grounds. For Leslie Ann (9) and her brother Avery (14), traveling with their father, the game room and the front hall had an appeal. As their father stated, “They’re getting an education outside the classroom today.” And a museum is, indeed, a good place to learn.



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.

NOTES FROM AN OAKEN AERIE...

MARILOU RITCHIE, LIBRARIAN / ARCHIVIST

Spring is always a time of renewal and new directions; this year is no different at Ruthmere and at the Robert B. Beardsley Arts Reference Library. Ruthmere will soon announce the hiring of a new director although we have been functioning well under the supervision of interim director Bob Edel, and the library will make its catalog available in a new way.

After years of association with SCION, the website of the Indiana Shared Library Catalog, the library is moving its catalog to the Elkhart Public Library's online catalog. We are excited about this move, which we hope will bring us more local activity. Our good resources too often sit here unused.

We will still retain our policy of a reference-only library, but local clients may find us more easily accessible and visit us for browsing occasionally. We're convenient; we're comfortable; and we have lovely items for browsing. One of

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 _____

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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.

HIDDEN TREASURES OF RUTHMERE

Some time ago Robert Beardsley wrote for our newsletter an article entitled "Little Things Mean a Lot," which described some of the treasures of Ruthmere that are not on display, but still make up part of Ruthmere's enormous inventory.

This spring our seminar series will display some of those "little things" that mean a lot but may be hidden from view: "Secret Treasures of Ruthmere." On three consecutive Wednesdays starting May 5, the staff and one guest lecturer will display and discuss items on each of the three floors of the museum that are not obvious to the public, either because they are not on display or because they are not emphasized on tours.

For example, the first program will include pieces of Beardsley jewelry, including a diamond pin often worn by Elizabeth, Helen Beardsley's amethyst suite, and Midge Beardsley's rubies, as well as others. At the same time the Beardsley furs will be on display and the Roosevelt items from the collection will also be on display. See "Robert

Recalls" for more on that subject. Wine and cheese will be served.

The second program introduces a guest artist from Goshen College who will discuss the artwork of William Morris Hunt and Samuel F. B. Morse. Master Gardener Pam McIntyre will lead the third program in the garden; she will discuss the planting and care of the Ruthmere gardens and this year's design for the quilt garden.

The public is invited to these programs where refreshments will be served.

Reserve your place now for one or all of the sessions.



ROBERT RECALLS. . .

By ROBERT BEARDSLEY, PRESIDENT, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In reference to Ruthmere's spring programs, we are running an article written by Robert Beardsley for our Fall, 2004 Ruthmere Record.

In 1960 the Republican National Convention was held in Chicago in August. My father, Walter Beardsley, as National Republican Committeeman from Indiana was there, naturally, and I tagged along as his guest. Notable Indiana politicians of the day United States Senators Homer E. Capehart and Bill Jenner and Representative Charlie Halleck were there along with other names from the past like Senators Everett Dirksen of Illinois and Robert Taft from Ohio. (Taft got stuck in the freight elevator at the Hotel Elkhart trying to sneak up to an Athenian Room reception in the early 1950s. The dignified senator clambering out of it was some sight.)

Here I also met Governor Nelson Rockefeller of New York, who ran against Nixon for the nomination in 1960 and again in 1964, and his lovely wife, Mary Todd Hunter Rockefeller, who seemed above it all even then. The governor worked hard for Walter's vote; he did not get it despite making a staunch supporter out of me. He had a way of smiling and winking at you at the same time so I knew he HAD to be the better man, but I didn't have a vote.

Conventions were fun and drama-packed events in those days, where the great and near-great from across the country politicked around the clock. The "receptions" everywhere were really nothing but never-ending cocktail parties, and everybody fought to get invited. And those who weren't crashed. Former Elkhartans Dick and Helen Snideman had a suite at the Ambassador East Hotel on the Near North Side (Irv Kupciner

was probably down in the Pump Room that night doing radio interviews of VIPs), and a lot of fancy people showed up. Coat-tailing Walter, I managed to meet most of them, including Richard M. Nixon, who managed a big hello until Dad started talking to somebody else; suddenly I was toast.

Across the room in a window-seat in a corner, I saw an erect and very alert little lady I was sure I knew. At the time she was about 77 years old. Her signature lacquered black straw hat with the dark blue silk band, the Liberty blue-and-white shirtwaist dress with a wide black patent leather belt, and the single strand of pearls told me everything. I was about to meet Alice Roosevelt Longworth, Teddy's famous daughter, about whom he said when asked what he could do to keep Alice under control: "I can either run Alice or I can run the country, but I can't do both!"

She stood. We were introduced. "Well, young man, tell me about yourself!" Her hand shake was firm and she held on. She looked me right in the eyes, and I felt I was being

asked to explain myself. She radiated energy and was no-nonsense and absolutely charming at the same time. She also had a wicked sense of humor. Nobody was spared, including me, although she had me laughing in seconds.

I think we talked about 20 minutes. At that time my political hero was Theodore Roosevelt (still is) and I had a lot to say about him and questions to ask; who better to ask than Alice! She told me about life in Oyster Bay, Long Island, growing up, her life as wife of the Speaker of the House Nicholas Longworth (See *Crowded Hours*, 1933), and what she thought of Woodrow Wilson and his wife Edith Galt Wilson (not printable).

Soon someone rudely interrupted my enchantment (I can't remember who), but she sent me on my very happy way with a hearty clap on my back and wished me well. What a lady!

Some years later I found in an autograph shop a reprint of the famous photograph of Alice taken about 1906, the year of her marriage. She had written on the photo, which Ruthmere owns today. "Here is the old girl 50 years after this picture was took!" That picture now hangs in the china room next to an autographed photo of Teddy Roosevelt.

In later years I met Eleanor Roosevelt, a great lady, but for me the best of them all was Alice. She was "Alice Blue Gown" all the way.



HAVILAH BEARDSLEY HOUSE RENOVATION UPDATE

Some work continues on the Havilah Beardsley House renovation. A new door is being installed for the new gallery area in the east wing of the house. A window in this area of the house was removed and filled in with brick.. Once the new door and sidewalk are installed the gallery will be available for use. The Foundation plans to hold its May Board meeting in the gallery area. Other improvements to the house are in planning stages at this time. Additional funding will have to be raised before any additional renovations can take place. Strategy planning is underway to formulate plans for funding this ongoing project into the future.



RUTHMERE PLACES IN ARRAY OF ELEGANCE

On April 23 Ruthmere participated in the Eighth Annual Array of Elegance, a luncheon/fashion show sponsored by Elkhart General Hospital Auxiliary, which features a competition in tablescap design.

This year's site was the Matterhorn Conference Center, where Ruthmere was pleased to place second among thirteen beautiful designs. Our table featured clear amethyst plates and silver from the Ruthmere collection displayed on a lovely tulip quilt designed and handcrafted by Sally Roll to call attention to the tulip design which our gardeners have chosen for the theme of this year's quilt garden..

Planting will be done early in May in order to have the annuals blooming as early as possible for your viewing.



WINTER PROJECTS AT RUTHMERE

As most of you know, Ruthmere Museum is closed from January 1 to March 31 each year. During this period, while the museum is closed to the public, the staff continues to be busy with projects to prepare for the next season. On a regular schedule different sections of the house are cleaned thoroughly. This past winter the first floor was cleaned. All the woodwork was waxed, the lace curtains were sent out for professional cleaning, windows cleaned, humidifiers placed to keep the humidity levels correct, and all museum artifacts evaluated and inventoried. In addition, this past winter a painting in the library, the Madonna della Sedia, was sent out for cleaning. This particular painting had not been removed from the wall since it had been hung nearly 100 years ago. You could see the fading of the silk wall coverings around the protected area behind the painting. The Hudson Valley painting was reframed due to slippage

in the frame. It is now secure and in good condition. A technician from the Bunn Minnick Organ company from Columbus, Ohio, was asked to do a preliminary review of the Choralcelo instrument in the foyer. A complete evaluation is going to be scheduled soon to give us costs for repairs and possible upgrades.

Since the house's entire electrical system had not been evaluated since the house was renovated 40 years ago, L&M electric was asked to come in and evaluate the electrical system throughout the entire house. This project has just been completed. We will soon be getting a report to update us on any electrical issues that must be addressed. L&M Electric had not been involved with the museum in the past. We thought a new set of eyes looking at the house would be a good idea.

Several other evaluations are in progress with reports to come in the near

future. Architect Eric Leedy has been contracted to help determine courses of actions regarding structural issues.. The greenhouse roof is being examined for structural integrity, and several foundation issues around the house are being evaluated. Eric will be providing a report letting us know what emergency issues must be addressed, what issues must be addressed in the near future, and possible suggestions for preventative maintenance programs for the exterior of the house which will protect the structure in the future. He also provided us with a garden plan for the area around the new angel statue.

Now that Creek House is empty with Laurels departure the house is being thoroughly cleaned and prepared for interior painting. We want the house to be ready when the new Executive Director is hired.



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

William & Katie Bissell
Thomas & Dorthy Corson
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

Ruthmere

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

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
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Elkhart, IN
Permit No. 151

MAY

- 2: Free Family Sunday
- 5: Secret Treasures - From The Vault
- 12: Secret Treasures - Ruthmere's Art Work
- 19: Secret Treasures - Ruthmere's Gardens
- 22: Confluence - Ruthmere's Writers Group
- 22: Coffee On The Piaizza
- 29: Coffee On The Piaizza

JUNE

- 2: Coffee On The Piaizza
- 6: Free Family Sunday
- 12: Coffee On The Piaizza
- 19: Coffee On The Piaizza
- 19: Confluence Writers Group
- 26: Coffee On The Piaizza

JULY

- 3: Coffee On The Piaizza
- 4: Ruthmere Closed For Holiday
- 10: Coffee On The Piaizza
- 11: Free Family Sunday
- 17: Coffee On The Piaizza
- 24: Coffee On The Piaizza
- 31: Coffee On The Piaizza

***** Date for the Edwardian Garden Party to be announced *****

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 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 and then visit us!

STAFFING CHANGES AT RUTHMERE

In December of 2009 the Ruthmere Board of Directors began the search for a new Executive Director. Laurel Spencer Forsythe had just resigned her position as Executive Director due to personal issues. In order to provide leadership at the museum and to handle day to day operations through this transition period Robert Beardsley hired Bob Edel to manage the facilities and serve as Interim Executive Director until a new Executive Director could be found. Bob had recently

retired from the City of Elkhart as their Director of Parks and Cultural Resources and was available to fill the position.

Additionally, Megan Richards, Ruthmere's Administrative Assistant resigned her position in November to move from the Elkhart area. Laura Horst was hired in February to fill this position. Laura is a graduate of Goshen College with a degree in Fine Arts. She served as Executive Director of a Regional Arts organization in Southwestern Montana

until her return to the Elkhart area. Laura's husband Randy is a Professor of Art at Goshen College.

The search committee, comprised of Robert Beardsley, Susan Edwards, Alice Martin, and George Freese has been interviewing prospective candidates for the Executive Director position since the first of the year and are getting close to making decision. The new Executive Director should be in place by the first of June.