

# The Ruthmere Record

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

SUMMER 2006

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## ASIAN GAMES

*Exhibition Featured in the Game Room through August 13*

*By Rowenna Miller, Intern (IU-Bloomington)*



Five wooden crates arrived at Ruthmere last month, sturdily made but nondescript from the outside, each large enough to provide housing for a baby elephant. Opening them involved a little muscle and patience, but the process was more like unearthing buried treasure than anything else. Inside those crates were the pieces for Ruthmere's visiting exhibition on Asian games. Each new layer uncovered pieces both unfamiliar and recognizable; each piece was a work of art, yet one could sense that each piece had a history as a functional accessory to recreation.

### Asian Games Day at Ruthmere

**Sunday, August 13, 1- 6 pm**

Enjoy free admission to the Asian Games exhibition during our closing reception from 1- 4 pm.

**2:30 pm Japanese Tea Ceremony**  
with Professor Yoshiko Green and Shie Otani \$5 fee (\$4 members)

**4- 6 pm Mah Jong and Dim Sum**  
Enjoy a light buffet of Chinese finger food and try your hand at Mah Jong. Experienced players are welcome. \$10 fee (\$8 members)

The exhibit comes to us as part of the National Endowment for the Humanities' NEH on the Road program, which has developed traveling exhibits specifically for smaller and mid-sized museums like Ruthmere. NEH on the Road seeks to facilitate learning in these museums by combining artwork, text panels, artifacts, and interactive elements. In this exhibition, Asian Games: the Art of Contest, visitors can read about the origins of some of their favorite games and encounter new ones through artwork and artifacts. The exhibit offers an opportunity for insight into the cultures of Japan, India, China, and other Asian countries as well, with the belief that games serve as a microcosm of the culture, revealing mores, values, and history.



The exhibition has been installed, aptly, in Ruthmere's Game Room. Highlights of the collection include hand-painted Indian *ganjifa* playing cards, a lacquered wood backgammon set accompanied by an art panel illustrating the invention of the game, and an inlaid board and accessories for the East Asian game of *go* or *weiqi*, which is displayed in the Library as though ready to be played. The importance of Asian influence on our leisure time is easily discernable. Without Chinese-invented playing cards, we wouldn't have our bridge clubs

*"Asian Games" continued from previous page*

and poker tournaments; chess enthusiasts would lack a game without the Indian version based on battle strategy. Even the favorite children's game Chutes and Ladders would be missing from the

toy chest without the Indian Snakes and Ladders that preceded it.

The games and panels go back into their crates on August 13th.

Ruthmere thanks Jane Burns and Brian Byrn of the Midwest Museum of American Art for assistance with the Asian Games.



# Ruthmere's

## EDWARDIAN ELEGANCE BRIDAL FAIRE

On Sunday August 20, 2006 Ruthmere will host its first bridal fair, an Edwardian Elegance Bridal Faire. The purpose of the fair, the only bridal event in Elkhart, is twofold. First, it draws attention to Ruthmere as a wedding site. Second, it provides an ideal opportunity to bring together couples seeking special services to design an elegant, smaller wedding with vendors who cater to those tastes.

The fair will be held outdoors from 2:00-6:00 pm throughout the grounds and garden. Vendors will include caterers, florists, photographers, musicians, a horse-drawn carriage, formal wear shops, and bridal boutiques. One of the highlights of the event is a fashion show previewing popular trends for the upcoming wedding season in tuxes, bridal gowns, flower arrangements, and bridesmaid

resses. Gail Martin will be the emcee for the fashion show. Admission is free and door prizes will be offered. The event is sponsored by North Central Indiana Wedding Day Magazine and Matzke Florist. In case of inclement weather, the event will be rescheduled for the following Sunday, August 27. For more information, please call (574) 264-0330.

## COLLECTION FOCUS



*This 19th century Chinese white porcelain teapot features hand-painted scenes of gardens, flowers and everyday life. Ruthmere's teapot collection also includes two 19th century cast-iron Japanese teapots. Join us August 13th at 2:30 pm, for a Japanese Tea Ceremony with Professor Yoshiko Green and Shie Otani.*

Ruthmere appreciates its volunteers, who have given their time and talents to assist the museum with tours, events, gardening, and more. Volunteers are truly an integral part of the museum. Thanks go to:

Barbara Adcock  
George Adkins  
Tom Artley  
Paula Barb  
Judy Bechtold  
Elmer Billings  
Isabelle Freeman  
Kathy Freese  
Bob Frey

Agnes Grahmbeek  
Dean Hupp  
Rick Kennedy  
Annette Kozak  
Carrie Mathews  
Paul Randall  
Marie Smith  
Peg Trobaugh  
Emma Wynn

# SUMMER MEMORIES

Robert B. Beardsley, President, Board of Directors

## BLUEBERRY PIE

When Ruthmere first opened in 1973 as a House Museum (33 years ago), all tours started in the Game Room. One of our docents first welcomed our visitors and then gave a brief talk about the house and its restoration. This was followed by a ten-minute slideshow projected on the giant roll-down silver screen from the 1920s that hangs over the fireplace. Several images were of Ruthmere and old Elkhart, all were black and white. Most were local landmarks, like the 1914 construction of the Johnson Street dam over the St. Joseph River, the Dr. Miles Medical Company Building on Franklin Street, and early downtown Elkhart when trolley tracks still ran the length of Main Street as the automobile started coming in.

Early formal photos of Elizabeth and A. R. Beardsley then flashed on the screen. The best showed Elizabeth in “full court dress” from about 1900 where she is decked out in an elaborate full-length gown and wears a pearl choker, an ibis feather headdress, and her celebrated fleur-de-lis diamond broach. She is seated in a gold chair and holds a fan. (Incidentally, thanks to 4th generation relatives, two lovely ladies who inherited this sparkler, the fleur-de-lis pin is now part of the Ruthmere collection.) An equally dramatic photo of A.R. followed, showing him to be the serious man of business he was. One uncharitable visitor seeing the image for the first time remarked that Senator Beardsley, as he liked to be called (from his days in the Indiana Senate), looked like he had just cornered the pig market in Chicago.

The most charming of these historic images was an informal portrait of Elizabeth and A.R. in their later years on the front steps of Ruthmere with their little dog Wang. They doted on this dog (not popular in the neighborhood for some reason) and often put him with a red bow around his neck. One can imagine that it was something of a family portrait for them, since they were childless.

Suddenly from the back of the Game Room a little old lady with a pronounced midwestern twang shrilled: “I remember that dawg. It had a purple tongue!” “Well, yes” said the docent. “Wang was a chow, and I believe chows have purple tongues, don’t they?” “No, no”, the old girl persisted, determined to make her point: “But do you know WHY it had a purple tongue? It’s because they fed him blueberry pie every morning for breakfast!”

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## A SUMMER HEIST FOILED

One hot humid summer day in the early 1920s my Grandmother Helen (Mrs. Andrew H. “Hub” Beardsley) was having two ladies for “luncheon” at her house at 226 East Beardsley directly across the street from Ruthmere (“lunch” apparently was a thing of the future.) Despite the heat, they ate in the dining room, under the L.C. Tiffany “Waterlily” shade at the 60” round mahogany table covered with a white embroidered cloth with matching monogrammed napkins. Ruthmere’s dining room table is almost identical.

Having dispatched the asparagus on buttered toast with grated parmesan cheese along with the first of their iced-teas, the ladies waited patiently for second-maid Nancy Morningstar to arrive with cook Goldie Mae Mills’ celebrated Floating Island for dessert. When Nancy appeared, however, she was empty-handed, her face as white as a sheet. “Mrs. Beardsley, there’s a man in the kitchen with a gun. He and his accomplice got Albert from the garage and he’s in there, too, along with Goldie.” Albert was the gardener and chauffeur who had been with the family for many years and would live to be 99. “Oh, oh, here he is.”

With that the swinging door from the pantry opened. A masked man dressed in black with a pistol at his side entered the room. “Good afternoon, Mrs. Beardsley. I

must ask you and your ladies to get up and go into the living room for your dessert where your staff will join you. But first, please remove your rings and personal jewelry and place them on the table. My associate will remain with you while I go upstairs. Under no circumstances are you to leave the living room to telephone the police, or it will go very hard with you. After we leave you are to wait ten minutes before trying to contact the authorities. Please do as I say.”

“Very well” said Grandmother, a really calm and unflappable lady (somebody you would want on your side in a war). She removed her diamond wedding ring and one gold bangle, all the jewelry she was wearing, and placed them on the table. Her niece, Lillian Burwell, and her other guest did the same. “Ladies, shall we?” They rose in unison, Grandmother leading the way, a Helen Hokinson grand dame if ever there was one. Full-figured and corseted, she swayed slightly as she walked with natural dignity into the living room, a fine lace handkerchief tucked into one sleeve of her light summer dress. The ladies followed. Nancy, Goldie, and Albert were already there. “Oh, Mrs. Beardsley!” Nancy and Goldie wailed. “Now, girls, sit down. All this will all be over in a few minutes.” And then, with her dry sense of humor to put them at ease, she said: “I think the gentleman upstairs will be disappointed when he doesn’t find anything very much up there to interest him!”

Within five minutes the “gentleman” came down to the living room and motioned his accomplice to follow him. They fled wordlessly through the house and out the back door to their waiting getaway Model T flivver parked on Grove Street, their driver waiting nervously, the engine running. They vaulted in and peeled rubber half a block to Beardsley Avenue, where they turned west, heading, no doubt, for the County Line. Albert and the ladies jumped from their chairs when they heard the kitchen door slam (I am

*"Summer Memories" continued from previous page*

sure Grandmother "arose"). Albert immediately went to the only phone in the house those days, a wall phone in the kitchen hall with a hand crank, to call the police. "Hello, Hello, Operator? Give me the police! There has been a robbery at the Beardsley home!"

From there it was a Hollywood cops-and-robbers chase. Grandmother heard sirens all over town as the constabulary piled into their open squad cars in hot pursuit. Half an hour later at the County Line, the calculating but inept robbers (an unfortunate combination) were caught

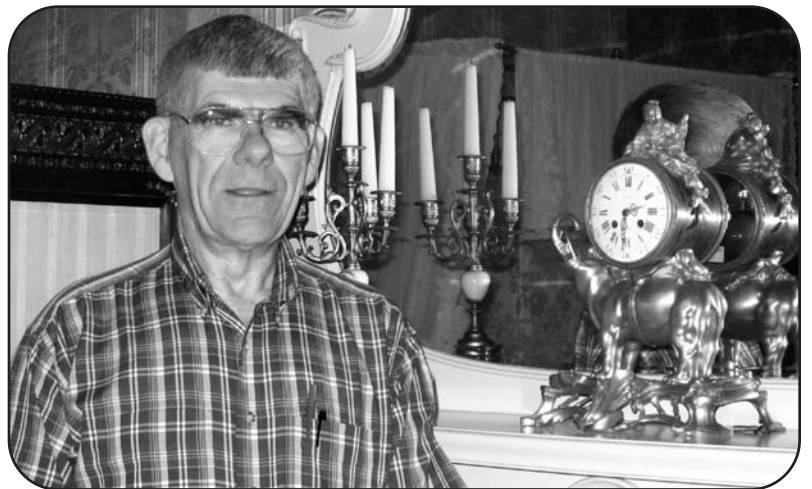
with their stolen loot, not that there was much of it for all their trouble. Both went to jail for a year and the driver, I believe, was put on probation. After all, all he did was drive and none too well at that. The ladies got their jewelry back and Grandmother her silver letter opener and two picture frames from her sitting room (the extent of the second floor haul). Peace restored, the ladies returned to the dining room for Goldie's Floating Island. The robbery made headlines for days!

# Ruthmere

Discover the Rewards of Membership



*Dean Hupp, volunteer Curator of the Antique Automobile collection, drove his vintage Huppmobile to Ruthmere recently. On July 8, Mr. Hupp started Ruthmere's 1917 Cadillac and brought it into the driveway, where more than 400 participants on the Michiana Master's Gardeners' Walk admired its sleek lines. He is currently working on the 1916 Milburn Electric and hopes to get it started this summer.*



*Mr. Hosea Jump, Curator of Ruthmere's Clock Collection, recently attended to all of the museum's clocks, thanks to Board President Robert Beardsley. Mr. Beardsley, who believes that clocks are the "heartbeat" of a house, is generously sponsoring Mr. Jump's ongoing care for these unique timepieces.*

## NOTES FROM AN OAKEN AERIE...

Marilou Ritchie, Archivist/Librarian

While the Beardsley Arts Reference Library continues to function at its usual leisurely pace, plans are going forward for the Book Arts Festival which will be held at Ruthmere September 9, 2006. The festival celebrates the library's establishment more than 25 years ago.

Some of the features for children will include a children's author reading from her books and an activity tables where children can make a bookmark and a booklet of their own. We will also have a

story teller. The exhibits and activities will not be limited to children, however. Erasmus Book Store of South Bend, a wonderful old-world-style shop, will bring a display and show techniques for caring for leather bound books. Sue Toth of Books-Bound To Be Used will demonstrate book restoration.

We'll also have a small secondhand book sale of materials that have been removed from our library. Our discards could become your treasures. Please

include us in your fall plans.

Meanwhile the library is open as usual. One of these steamy afternoons, why not choose the air-conditioned library, where you can relax with one of our books or with one of our treasured magazines from the early twentieth century.

(Library hours are Wednesday 10 am to 3 pm, Thursday 1 pm to 3 pm and by appointment.)

**Book Arts Festival:**

**Saturday, September 9 1pm to 4pm.**

## My Ruthmere Internship

Rusty Heckaman



*Rusty Heckaman, now a senior at IU-South Bend, has completed cataloguing archival materials received from Bayer several years ago. In connection with this project, Rusty developed a display of Miles Laboratory artifacts, which can be seen in Ruthmere's Baldwin room on the third floor.*

While interning at Ruthmere Museum I have participated in several projects. My involvement at Ruthmere has increased my interest in local history, museums, and in pursuing a career in the museum field. My experience at Ruthmere has been enhanced by a friendly and extremely helpful staff that has welcomed my input while also providing guidance, which has increased my knowledge and understanding of museum projects. Participation in the variety of events that Ruthmere hosts, work with cataloguing the museum's col-

lection and participating in the docent program, have given me a strong introduction to museum work.

My major project was to catalogue archival material received from the Dr. Miles Medical Company. The Beardsley family's contributions throughout the company's history made Ruthmere a good place for housing a portion of the Miles Company archives when Bayer Corporation discontinued the company archives based in Elkhart several years ago. The Miles archives include documents, papers, and large numbers of ledgers and other financial records. Meeting journals and correspondence revealed the company's involvement in a wide range of activities. The company's products and advertisements were among the most interesting discoveries. I used them, along with some possessions of Dr. Franklin Miles, to put together a display celebrating highlights of the company's history. This display is on the third floor, in the Baldwin Room at Ruthmere.

Developing the Miles display is the culmination of a semester's worth of work with the archival collection. Cataloguing the materials has given me valuable experience in working with a museum's collection. This, along with participation in the museum's other activities, has reinforced my interest in pursuing a master's degree

after I receive my Bachelor's Degree in History from Indiana University of South Bend in December.



*Ruthmere's Development Director Gail Martin recently accepted the challenge of managing WNIT Public Television's capital campaign. Ruthmere staff celebrated her new position with mixed feelings. We know she will do a fantastic job for WNIT, as she has done for Ruthmere, but we insisted that she come back to visit with us often. We will miss having her as a part of the staff!*

**Museums**  
2006: YEAR OF THE MUSEUM

## GARDEN UPDATE

Over 400 people visited Ruthmere July 8 when the gardens were featured on the Michiana Master Gardeners' Walk which took them through many of Elkhart's beautiful gardens. Beds at the front gates feature geraniums, dusty miller, and coleus, all popular at the time Ruthmere was built in 1910. Central to the Ruthmere's garden was the "carpet garden" on the front lawn where circles of alyssum, petunias, coleus, and other period plants surround the raised center of golden yellow cannas, a typical turn-of-the-century bed. Before the visitors left they had an opportunity to study the garden Master Plan which was prepared by

Buettner and Associates.

As a part of the Master Plan process, a new Garden Committee has been established, to include staff and volunteers. One feature that the Garden Committee has decided to develop is a Tiffany Garden. Research in the Beardsley Arts Reference Library led to a list of plants used in Louis Comfort Tiffany's stained glass lamp shades; and some of these are the plants that will be used in the garden, which will be planted on the Beardsley Avenue side of the greenhouse in a design that reflects the windows that are found in the Dining Room and the Library of Ruthmere. In addition, Mrs. Beardsley's

rose garden will expand to include several more heirloom varieties. Work will start on the gardens soon with plans to show it next summer, although it can take several years for such gardens to reach their full potential.

Advanced Master Gardener Pam McIntire has been joined by her sister Carla Riley this summer. Together they make a marvelous gardening team. Their work is most evident in the blue and white garden and the greenhouse, but healthy plants and delightful blossoms may be found throughout the grounds.



*Ruthmere Collections Care Coordinator Joy Olsen and summer intern Rowenna Miller donned Edwardian-style costumes for the recent Michiana Master Gardeners Walk. The walk brought many garden enthusiasts to Ruthmere's grounds to view a new 1910 style garden bed and the traditional blue and white garden.*

## VOLUNTEERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE AT RUTHMERE

Ruthmere volunteers have logged more than 700 hours this year in a wide range of activities, from accounting, to gardening, to assisting with Coffee on the Piazza. The value of these volunteer hours is in excess of \$10,500. This in-kind donation of service demonstrates significant community support of Ruthmere. Thanks to all of our valuable volunteers! We could not do what we do without your generous gifts of time and talent.

Other volunteer activities have included antique car care, help with special events such as the Children's Summer Garden Party, and work with the museum collection, including cataloging the book collection. A new initiative for this year is the Volunteer Docent program, which includes a training program designed to prepare volunteers to give tours of Ruthmere. Our governing body, the Board of Directors, is another special group of

volunteers. They give of their time and expertise to chart the course of the Foundation's future.

If you have an interest in volunteering at Ruthmere, please contact Kathy Sponseller or Laurel Spencer Forsythe at (574) 264-0330. Whether you have a few hours a week or a month to offer, we will welcome your interest and can accommodate your schedule.

# LOUIS COMFORT TIFFANY LEADERSHIP CIRCLE MEMBERS

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*Help, when it is forthcoming, is often contagious*

*-RBB*

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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## AUGUST

- Every Saturday in August: Coffee on the Piazza (9:30-12:00 pm)
- 12 All American Ice Cream Social (4-6pm)
  - 13 Japanese Tea Ceremony 2:30 pm (fee)
  - 13 Asian Games Closing Reception 1-4 pm
  - 13 Mah Jong and Dim Sum 4-6 pm (fee) Reservations.
  - 20 Ruthmere Edwardian Elegance Bridal Showcase (2-6p)
  - 26 WTRC Live from Ruthmere: Green Thumbs up with Mike Maloney 9-11 am
  - 26 Saturday Garden Seminars: Create a Fall Container Garden (10 am) free
  - 27 Ruthmere's Edwardian Elegance Bridal Showcase Rain Date (2-6 p)

## SEPTEMBER

- Every Saturday in September: Coffee on the Piazza (9:30-12:00 pm)
- 3 Free Family Sunday. Tours at 1, 2, 3 pm.
  - 9 Book Arts Festival and Library Open House (1-4 pm)
  - 16 Teddy Bear Picnic (1-3pm) For our youngest friends and their families
  - 23 Juliana & Friends Concert. Piano Quartet. (7 pm) \$12 (\$10 members) Reservations.
  - 29 Lake Effect Winds Concert (7pm) \$12 (\$10 members) Reservations.
  - 30 Saturday Garden Seminars: Make a Wreath from Dried Flowers (10 am) free

## OCTOBER

- Every Saturday in October: Coffee on the Piazza (9:30-12:00 pm)
- 1 Free Family Sunday. Tours at 1, 2, 3 pm.
  - 8 Ragtime Pianist, Bob Milne in Concert (2 pm and 7 pm) \$15 Reservations.
  - 21 Saturday Garden Seminars: How to Put your Garden to Bed (10 am)

*Ruthmere*

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## MONTHLY GARDEN SEMINARS & COFFEE

Join Advanced Master Gardener Pam McIntire at Ruthmere's Saturday Morning Garden Seminar Series and have your coffee on the piazza too! Garden seminars are offered Saturdays August 29, September 30 and October 21 at 10 am. See Calendar of Events for special topics for each date. Coffee is served every Saturday from 9:30 am to noon. A bottomless cup \$2.00 for members (\$3.00 for nonmembers) and a single cup of hot or iced coffee is \$1.50.



## All-American Ice Cream Social Offers Old Fashioned Fun on Saturday, August 12 from 4 – 6 pm

Cool down with an ice cream sundae or a refreshing root beer float on Saturday, August 12 from 4 pm to 6 pm on the grounds of Ruthmere.

The Ice Cream Social is a Ruthmere tradition that invokes the spirit of the time the mansion was built. The focus is old-fashioned community fun, music, and sweet treats. Magician Steve Vaught will entertain the young and young at heart with his bag of magic tricks and engaging style. The magic show begins at 4:30 p.m. A barber shop quartet, Chord-N-Aires will perform at 4:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

Admission to the grounds, including music and entertainment, is free. Ice cream and beverages are available for purchase.