

# The Ruthmere Record

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

SPRING/SUMMER 2011

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## RUTHMERE...SUPER-SIZED!

By WILLIAM A. FIRSTENBERGER



It isn't every day that you build a five room addition onto your existing house, but that's exactly how it feels at Ruthmere these days, yet not a shovel full of new ground was broken. So how was this illusion of a 2,000 square foot addition and major tour expansion pulled off in three short months? Answer – a new home, strong backs and a simple plan – in a word, we *moved*. But who moved and why?

Ruthmere's main house comprising 10,000 square feet of luxurious style has

been available for public exhibition since 1973. During this same time, the two floors of the service quarters portion attached to the north side of the main house have served as administrative offices, staff eat-in kitchen, gift shop, and storage space. Nevertheless, originally in 1910 this 2,000 square foot segment of the home served a variety of needs as living quarters for the cook and head maid, a place for household maintenance chores, food storage, cooking, meal presentation and even a little space set aside for a well-

*continued on next page 3*

# 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 (\$50)    Family (\$75)    Patron (\$100)  
 Bronze Patron (\$250)    Silver Patron (\$500)  
 Gold Patron (\$1,000)    Rose Gold Patron (\$2,500)  
 Platinum Patron (\$5,000)

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 \_\_\_\_\_

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**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 - \$50

Free admission to all Ruthmere attractions (Ruthmere and Havilah Beardsley House) for the individual member and one free guest for an unlimited number of visits throughout the year, electronic access to The Ruthmere Record (our newsletter), and advanced information regarding all upcoming Ruthmere special events.

### Family - \$75

Free admission to all Ruthmere attractions (Ruthmere and Havilah Beardsley House) for the member and up to three free guests for an unlimited number of visits throughout the year, electronic access to The Ruthmere Record (our newsletter), and advanced information regarding all upcoming Ruthmere special events.

### Patron - \$100

Free admission to all Ruthmere attractions (Ruthmere and Havilah Beardsley House) for the member and up to five free guests for an unlimited number of visits throughout the year, The Ruthmere Record (our newsletter) mailed to your address, Patron level recognition in The Ruthmere Record, and advanced information regarding all upcoming Ruthmere special events.

### Bronze Patron - \$250

Patron level membership benefits plus Bronze Patron level recognition in The Ruthmere Record and free tickets to the Spring Lecture Series.

### Silver Patron - \$500

Patron level membership benefits plus Silver Patron level recognition in the Ruthmere Record and free tickets to the Fall Concert Series.

### The Louis Comfort Tiffany Leadership Circle

is a special membership level that provides all the benefits of the Patron membership, plus free tickets to the Spring Lecture Series, Fall Concert Series, and invitations to all other special events. Recognition for Louis Comfort Tiffany Leadership Circle is offered at three membership levels:

- \$1,000 Gold Patron
- \$2,500 Rose Gold Patron
- \$5,000 Platinum Patron

For Leadership Circle membership information, please contact us at 574-264-0330.

## RUTHMERE MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS EXPANDED

Starting January of 2011 the member benefits at Ruthmere have been expanded.

Now all levels of membership include unlimited visits for a year and member discounts on special events. (*details below*) The change in benefits is designed to encourage members to visit the mansion multiple times each year and to bring family and friends along to *Experience History, Art and Architecture* at Ruthmere.

Tour Ruthmere and see the newly restored Service Quarters portion of the mansion. Stop by this summer for a cup of coffee on the piazza, to attend a special program or to watch the growth of our quilt garden. We want you to include Ruthmere as a regular part of the cultural enrichment in your life.

Membership dues and contributions help to support the costs of educational tours for school children, Free Family Sunday outreach for the community and historic preservation of one of the best collections of decorative and fine arts in the region.

Our doors are open six days a week. Guided tours start on the hour Tuesday through Saturday 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. and Sunday 1 – 3 p.m. As a member you may come for a tour as often as you like.



## SPRING LECTURE SERIES

Join us in May for the Spring Lecture Series. We are continuing the popular Secret Treasures theme this year with three sure to be popular topics and guest lecturers. The series will start on Tuesday, May 10 at 4 p.m. Nationally recognized sculptor Tuck Langland will present information on Ruthmere's collection of sculptures by Auguste Rodin. The second program on Tuesday, May 17 at 4 p.m. will feature stories by members

of the Deputy family, who lived at Ruthmere from 1945-1967. The final lecture will focus on the architect of Ruthmere, E. Hill Turnock with information presented by John Stamper Associate Dean and Professor, Notre Dame School of Architecture. Tickets are \$10 per session or series pass for \$25. Member price is \$8 per session or series pass for \$20. Call us to reserve your tickets.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Ruthmere needs volunteers for a variety of positions including leading tours, helping with the gardens, office support and many more opportunities. We have ongoing training sessions and welcome involvement by volunteers of all ages. Please call Laura Horst at Ruthmere 574-264-0330 ext. 101 for more information.



deserved respite from staff duties. The second Beardsley family owners, Arthur and Stella, placed their mark on Ruthmere with an impressive 1938 Art Deco style renovation of the kitchen and pantries complete with Coppes cabinetry from Nappanee, yet these too have largely been hidden from public eyes. The Deputy family who owned and lived at Ruthmere from 1945 to 1968 used the old service quarters for a far different purpose—housing for the six young Deputy brothers – the only children who may lay claim to growing up in the big house. Oh, how these walls would talk!

So the rich stories were there waiting to be told behind office desks, file cabinets and a fax machine, but how does one run a house museum without compromising interpretive space? In the summer of 2010, the answer arrived 100 feet directly to the north in the form of Ruthmere’s neighbor, Kristine Rolston, the owner of the two-story home at the southeast corner of Grove St. and Crawford St. Kristine, a former Ruthmere caretaker, was going to be moving to a new home in Goshen closer to her family, and she offered Ruthmere first option to purchase her lovely home at 303 Crawford St. After approval was granted for a change of use variance from the City’s Planning Commission, the stage was set for this shell game to begin. The staff



*Caption Here*

offices and nearly all daily operations would be moved from the Ruthmere service quarters to 303 Crawford St., thus freeing the service quarters for public interpretation for the first time. And for this grand plan to work, it all had to happen in the three-month window from January to March in early 2011.

But it wasn’t just a matter of hiring “Two Guys and Truck” (in truth, the staff executed nearly the entire move in house—no mercenary muscles required). We had a long list of “to-do’s” - update electrical wiring in both facilities, prepare the new office space at 303 Crawford, transfer all communication and operational systems to the new location, execute a proper investigation of the service quarters’ original interior designs, demolish any offending alterations that had spawned in the last quarter century,

apply restored finishes, and finally, furnish the spaces appropriate to original use and appearance. With help from a small army of experts ranging from historic preservationists to cabinet makers, Ruthmere’s service quarters gave up her secrets day by day, with perhaps one of the greatest surprises coming in the revelation of a long lost Arts & Crafts stencil design (see inset). The blood, sweat and tears produced stunning results.

So how did Ruthmere miraculously transform and expand in only three months? No smoke, no mirrors, slight of hand notwithstanding, even Houdini would be proud of this magic. The stories have gotten better, and the visitor’s experience will be richer. In the end, this was no parlor trick after all, this is the real Ruthmere.



## QUILT GARDEN 2011

Ruthmere’s quilt garden design this year is called “Prairie Rose.” The stained glass windows located in the main entrance at Ruthmere inspired the design. In the center of each window is an English tudor rose design, which we have used as the pattern and will be planted with a variety of flowers. The quilt gar-

den is located at the south east corner of Ruthmere’s property along Beardsley Avenue. Planting will take place towards the end of May and will be ready for viewing by Memorial Day Weekend. A new addition this year will be a viewing platform that will give our visitors an excellent vantage point to see garden. Please stop

by Ruthmere this spring and summer and watch the garden as it matures throughout the season. A map showing all the quilt garden locations throughout the county is available at the Ruthmere garden location or at the Elkhart County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

## ROBERT RECALLS. . . “THE GREENHOUSE”

By ROBERT BEARDSLEY, PRESIDENT, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Is it a greenhouse or is it a conservatory? Which it is has been argued for years but then and now we still refer to the easternmost part of the museum at the end of the loggia as The Greenhouse. We'll let the purists argue the fine points.

The Greenhouse has been an endless source of concern and expense since that cold day in January 1969 when the Deputys and their big happy family turned the keys over to us. Back then the “us” was me. It was only years later, when I was trying to find somebody to blame for how much it cost to make Ruthmere the beaux-arts house mansion that it is today, that I dubbed myself the Founding Director, and it seems to have stuck.

During renovation we discovered that the underground pipes of the original 1910 heating system were badly insulated and without a circulating pump. Very little warmth had ever entered the greenhouse. Then in the 1930's the original coal-fired furnace gave way to oil. The new furnace did not put out enough BTUs to heat the house and the greenhouse. This was the death knell of the structure and it declined into ruin for more than 30 years.

Then, sometime later, during a storm, a giant limb from a sugar maple on the south side crashed through the cartouche (glass roof), tinkle-tinkle, doomed its integrity, and invited the elements in.

We could not open the wood sash windows and the cranks for the ventilation windows at the apex of the cartouche were rusted and out of commission. The once-silver radiators, intended to release heat brought from the main house, were rusty red and rotting away. Poor Humpty Dumpty. Of the seven marble potting shelves, four were broken, their bottoms



*Caption Here*

fallen away and some of the nickel-plated support legs buckled or gone.

But step by step we brought it all back. Day one, we cleaned the greenhouse of the accumulated detritus of many years: gardening pots, garden hoses, step ladders, bicycle parts and I can't remember what else going back (then) almost 60 years.

Restoring the cartouche presented some extra difficulty. Think of a glass box with rounded corners and sloping sides. Fabricating an exact replica, the way to go, of course, was prohibitively costly. The figure of “maybe \$100,000” made me pale even then so we resorted to trickery, the only choice we had. “Trompe l’oeil” in the form of locally molded quarter-inch plastic panels was our solution. It even was striated, just like the original glass!

The sash windows were carefully taken out, their wooden frames cleaned of ancient paint, then sanded and planed. Several large panes of double-thick glass were replaced also. The frames were

painted the pale enamel yellow originally there. (We had verified the color match.) Finally the weights were restrung and the windows again set in their proper place.

The crank mechanisms for the ventilation windows at the apex of the cartouche were cleaned, sandblasted and painted where appropriate and reinstalled. The ventilation windows, painted now, opened easily with the window cranks. Also the original three iron transverse beams holding up the ceiling were sandblasted and painted. As part of the same project several iron ribs, disintegrated beyond further use, were replaced by wood artfully painted black. For years nobody knew the difference and I was not telling.

The Fire Department made us enlarge the railing around the steps to the tunnel below (we originally planned house tours to begin here) and the steps were resurfaced and painted. The iron gates at the bottom of the steps, rusted and sagging on their hinges, were taken down, repaired and painted their deep



bronze green again.

The radiators were taken out, sandblasted, flushed, reconditioned, painted and finally re-installed. A brand new furnace dedicated to the greenhouse was installed to keep it warm and toasty. You now may have 75 degrees any old time, if you please. “Oh frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!”

Beyond these projects we painted its many doors, windows and moldings and rescreened the screen doors, in copper, of course. A blacksmith made new legs for the potting shelves, we obtained similar marble from Bedford, IN for the sides and one broken bottom, the beds were filled with dirt and gravel, the heat turned on, and we were now almost ready for plants. Christmas 1970

we lined the south windows with a dozen large poinsettia plants for passersby to enjoy. “Oh my, I see you have the greenhouse working again!” we heard more than once.

From the museum’s growing library of reference books, I researched period plant materials, faithfully eliminating interesting varieties that came later, much to the lament of some of our early gardeners. “Salmon geraniums, yes, would be nice, but in 1910 it was only red. Sorry.” Hence we have our 16’ diameter **red** geranium bed in the east front lawn where there had always been



*Caption Here*

a flower bed, only I made it bigger. I derived the plan from an identical bed of red geraniums in the forecourt of Queen Victoria’s Osborne House on the Isle of Wight.

And so the good fight was fought. One of the skirmishes was my ban on plastic hoses, pots, and watering cans. I heard, “They are so easy to use and store right under the counters and nobody will know!” Handbooks in hand I had to make my point again and again.

Today, under the competent management of our Head Gardener, Pamela McIntyre, the greenhouse struts its stuff

throughout the year. One of the highlights each summer is the brilliant flowering of our night-blooming cereus. More ordinary but equally spectacular in the greenhouse is the pink bougainvillea that winds its labyrinthine way over our trellises in late summer.

Yet our beautiful greenhouse once again needs work. My “trompe-l’oeil” continues to serve in its imitative and functional beauty, but the wood surround on which the roof rests, where the rubber meets the road, so to speak, is rotting away and soon will need replacing. This means removing the cartouche - sort of “Off with its head!” Some mortar and brick repairs to the top of the loggia’s perimeter wall are needed as well.

On cold winter days with snow deep on the ground, you can look from the greenhouse to the house and see where the pipes are. The ground there never freezes. We need even better insulation to save on heating costs.

The price estimates for these projects are all over the place and in today’s money, while quite different from the 1970 dollar days, they are still scary. We are hoping Ceres’ followers will come forward to lead the way. We do not have much time, although the walls are not likely to come tumbling down any time soon. Perhaps a re-read of Kipling’s 1885 “A Child’s Garden of Verses” will give someone inspiration to help raise our roof.

Robert Beardsley  
March 1, 2011



## HAVILAH BEARDSLEY HOUSE: HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

With spring approaching, progress is imminent as the Havilah Beardsley House becomes the focus of a continuing restoration process beginning with The Best Parlor. A symbol of the early entrepreneurial endeavors of the Beardsley family in Elkhart, the house will become a destination point for visitors who enjoy Elkhart's early history.

The Havilah Beardsley House enhances the quality of life in Elkhart by offering visitors of all ages meaningful experiences about architecture and historical restoration as well as a glimpse at future public programs that will be brought to life the stories of Elkhart. The Havilah Beardsley House will become the natural setting for exhibits and urban archaeological investigations as well as provide a living learning laboratory for educating the public.

Now that winter is passing and the new reinterpretation of Ruthmere is

complete, the Havilah Beardsley House will take its place as a key link from the Lerner Theatre, the IUSB Elkhart Center and the RiverWalk in downtown Elkhart to the new Wellfield Botanic Gardens north of the Havilah Beardsley House.

For more information on how you can help provide financial support for the restoration of the Havilah Beardsley House, please contact Gail T. Martin at 574-596-1804.



*Caption Here*

## COFFEE ON THE PIAZZA

'Piazza (pi-az-za). A large covered porch' (Webster's)

*"When a lady has a piazza, she has a place on which to sit. . ."* a famous actress once sang. Ruthmere's piazza is a delightful place on which to sit on Saturdays from 9:30 a.m. to noon beginning Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend. Relax in vintage wicker chairs, chat with visitors and staff or read a magazine or newspaper. Coffee is available at a nominal cost, as well as juice and water. The Coffee Hostess will supply you with area brochures and other local information.

Visitors from all states and from abroad have come to Ruthmere and often meet others from their state or town while having a cup of coffee. A few words of greeting turn into thirty min-

utes of spirited conversation! The piazza is a great gathering place for locals as well who meet for coffee and conversation, the tour and then on to lunch.

*"And when there is a garden wall..."* with majestic pine trees enclosing flower beds and a fountain, the view from the Ruthmere piazza is one of serenity. Angels stand guard in quiet dignity, as birds and butterflies seek their favorite snacks. You may nod off for a bit, it is permitted. We'll wake you when it's time for a docent-led tour of the elegant Ruthmere mansion. We guarantee, you will be charmed by the warmth and beauty of this 1908 home.

After your tour you may stroll on the grounds and visit the Heritage Trail Quilt Garden, adjacent to Ruthmere.

We look forward to welcoming you to **Coffee on the Piazza** this season.

Mary Ellen Shamory  
Volunteer Coffee Hostess

# Piazza Picture

# LOUIS COMFORT TIFFANY LEADERSHIP CIRCLE MEMBERS

## \$5,000 PLATINUM

Arthur J. & Patricia Decio  
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David Stutsman  
Anne & Dick Treckelo  
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Betty Wiley  
Ron & Phyllis Wolschlager

### \$50 FAMILY

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Mr. & Mrs. Harold Atkins  
William & Jan Atwood  
Rufus & Marilyn Beardsley  
John & Pat Bickart  
Beryl & Barbara Boss  
Sally Boyer  
Dennis Buettner  
James & Anke Chandler  
Richard & Kathy Collins  
Bettie Diplo  
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David & Nancy Smith  
Jack & Ann Turnock  
Blake & Marla Unger  
Donald & Cidney Walter  
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### \$35 INDIVIDUAL

John Abell  
Martha Ball  
Trudy Basquin  
Judy Bechtold  
Mary Jane Blanken  
J. Kent Borgaard  
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Phyllis Warrick  
Jeanne Wells  
Marilynn Wilson

*Thank you for your continued support of the Ruthmere Foundation please contact us if an update is required.*



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### APRIL

- 1: Open for Guided Tours
- 16: Free Family Sunday 1-4pm

### MAY

- 1: Free Family Sunday 1-4pm
- 10, 17, 24: Spring Lecture Series 4pm

### JUNE

- 5: Free Family Sunday 1-4pm
- 5: Havilah Beardsley House Opening for tours
- 25: Jazz on the piazza 1-4pm

### JULY

- 3: Free Family Sunday 1-4pm
- 16: Children's Summer Garden Party 1-3pm

### AUGUST

- 7: Free Family Sunday & Ice Cream Social 1-4pm
- 12-29: IUSB Archeology Mini-Field School at Havilah Beardsley House

Check the website for up to date event details.

[www.Ruthmere.org](http://www.Ruthmere.org)

*Ruthmere*

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

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## BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

In addition to the move of the museum offices to 303 Crawford Street and the set up of the new service quarters display at the museum, general maintenance operations continued throughout the winter. With five properties to maintain there are always a number of projects waiting to be completed. Cleaning, making minor repairs, maintaining the Greenhouse, and snow removal are the main functions of the Build-

ings and Grounds crew at this time of year. Additionally, in order to prepare the new offices, several rooms in the new building were painted. Creek House painting and updates continue as time permits.

The five properties currently being maintained by the staff include: Ruthmere, Creek House, Havilah Beardsley House, 303 Crawford Street, and our storage facility located at 926 Grove

Street. We are fortunate to have a talented Buildings and Grounds Crew that can handle a variety of projects saving Ruthmere from having to contract out work at a much higher cost. With the addition of the new office building the crew will have another property to maintain this season. We plan to improve the level of maintenance and upgrade the landscaping at the new property this spring and summer.

## I-SPY ELKHART TOUR TAKEN TO NEW HEIGHTS

Since our 'quiet opening' of the i-Spy Elkhart Tour last September with the Beardsley Historic District Tour track, 217 visitors from 13 different states have spent over 700 minutes on tour via their cell/smart phones. An additional 44 folks downloaded the entire tour as a podcast from our web site, and 317 more

tried our mobile web version of the tour exclusively for smart phones. The best part of this new high-tech gadgetry is that it's absolutely **FREE** to the public (a caller's normal usage plan applies).

What was great, is about to get even better. In addition to the Beardsley Historic District Tour track, Ruthmere

will launch three new tour tracks this Spring—the E. Hill Turnock Architectural Tour, Elkhart's Musical Instrument Industrial Tour, and the Ruthmere Gardens and Grounds Tour. Listen to all the i-Spy Elkhart Tour tracks at one easy to remember local number, **574-584-7007**.