

The Ruthmere Record

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

SPRING/SUMMER 2018

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FIELD TRIPS MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

By WILLIAM A. FIRSTENBERGER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The recent quest for Ruthmere Campus Student Field Trips began on September 23, 2011, with one school and one group of engaged teachers and parents who were not going to allow their students to be denied an unforgettable experience, and the rest as they say, is history.

But wait, let's back up. For over 45 years Ruthmere has been delivering field trips to wide-eyed youngsters, eager to get out of their classrooms for just one day to see the treasures of Elkhart in the "Big House on Beardsley Avenue," and for many, this experience is the most enduring field trip memory of their lives. Today, virtually every month we see returning adult visitors who first came to Ruthmere as 3rd graders. We estimate there are somewhere around 100,000 of them. But when the millennium turned in 2000, things started to change rapidly.

School budgets dramatically tightened, especially on subjects of art, culture and history. The 2008-2010 recession was the coffin nail for extracurricular trips—tax dollars were going to support classroom based education of the "3 R's"—period. Field trips were dead in terms of school funding.

During that time Ruthmere tried everything to do its part, first reducing admission prices, then making student field trips admission entirely free, but it still wasn't enough. Increasing transportation costs seemed an insurmountable hurdle even for local trips. Then came Hawthorne Elementary.

Shortly after the start of school in 2011, Hawthorne teachers scheduled an early year autumn field trip while the weather was nice and the chance for support was better than later in the year. I should mention that Hawthorne serves some of the most economically challenged neighborhoods in the Elkhart Community Schools district, but these teachers and parents scraped up enough support to get their 3rd grade kids HALF the transportation money needed for their trip to Ruthmere and Havilah Beardsley House.

Ruthmere Record Editor - Carolyn Bonanno

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BUCK MOON FARM REMEMBERED

By ROBERT B. BEARDSLEY, FOUNDING DIRECTOR



It was July 17, 1958, I was not quite 25, and I had just bought that morning what I soon called Buck Moon Farm. Located on County Road 10, it is a mile south of Bristol, Indiana. It eventually totaled 207 acres of farmland and apple orchard with a 5-acre wood lot of maple ash and oak. Buck Moon is the Iroquois name for the July Moon, just as Harvest is their name for the September moon.

The farm's highest point is 850' above sea level and is known as Golden View. It supposedly is the second highest point in the entire state of Indiana. Our crops were corn and "beans," or soybeans, and my vegetable garden, next to the old cow barn, produced the best Honey and Cream sweet corn I've ever tasted, thanks to the cows. The sweet basil there grew 4' tall.

It was a sunny breezy mid-summer the day that I bought the farm. The thrill of ownership washed over me in waves as I walked my land and started back to the farmhouse. I remember ripping off my tee shirt and suddenly running whooping for joy through fields of ripening wheat, the wind beating against my chest, shouting with the joy of youth and waving my arms and body at the world and never having been happier in my life. I felt as "Corny as Kansas in August, High as a kite on the Fourth of July," and I was.

Often my father, Walter, lived with me summers. As a Republican National Committeeman for Indiana for 16 years, he hosted many political events on Golden View in late summer when, as he liked to say, "the political pots are beginning to boil." Once in 1960 we had over 2000 people up there politicking and feasting for a Corn and Pig Roast rally. Several governors showed up over the years to harangue their political foes at those affairs and many Senators and representatives from the House, too. Bill Jenner was far and away was the most colorful of the Senators. I remember him earlier in 1956 getting a big laugh saying, "Why, comparing Adlai Stevenson with Dwight David Eisenhower is like comparing chicken "you-know-what" with chicken salad." Homer Capehart was often around, too, one of Indiana's most famous politicians, who always reminded me somehow of Huey Long.

Winters the Bristol Ski and Toboggan Club kept the big hill busy and my one acre pond brought out the ice skaters. One time Fritz Wambaugh and his nephew Sam tried ice fishing too soon (the pond was stocked with rainbow) and suddenly got a very icy bath. Old John our caretaker and I rescued them with a long ladder and pulled them to safety and gave them dry clothes and an adult beverage to revive them. But they lost their chainsaw forever.

Visitors often showed up unexpectedly. One evening a friend and I were on the terrace watching the sun go down when we heard a "hissing" sound overhead. Looking up it was a hot air balloon with six passengers about to make an emergency landing in the pasture 100 yards away. Welcome all! Everybody stayed for pizza and beer and in the morning the pilot gave me a free ride. Seeing my much-loved farm from a hot air balloon was a memorable treat.

And then there was a friend and his wife who arrived for a party in their Brantley B-2 helicopter and had to stay overnight because my cows, curious creatures, damaged their rudder. I was offered a free ride the next morning and whirred up and away for a thrill I will never forget.

Trees were and still are some of my best friends. When my mother died in 1992 I planted two weeping beeches in the driveway in her memory and Walter's (1905-1980). I was on a sugar maple kick all the years I lived there and the farm is ablaze with their

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BUCK MOON FARM REMEMBERED CONTINUED

By ROBERT B. BEARDSLEY, FOUNDING DIRECTOR

golden foliage every fall. The now-ancient walnuts that populate the lawn are beautiful in leaf but it's a nasty chore to dispose of their nuts. Once I saw an ad offering \$85 a barrel for walnuts only to learn they had to be SHELLED. Have you ever tried shelling a walnut?

When I arrived in 1958 the Bing cherry orchard that was planted when the farm was homesteaded in 1832 was down to 6 trees but still produced bushels of the delicious fruit we gorged ourselves sick on every June. When they were all gone by 1990 I bravely replanted. But despite 6' fencing deer got the tender shoots long before I got any cherries. In compensation, sort of, we counted a sleek herd of 25 Whitetail grazing placidly in the corn field nearest the house one fall morning, no doubt fattened on my cherry saplings in their youth. Unfortunately, despite "No Hunting" signs posted everywhere, hunters and the encroachment of urbanization took their toll and when I left there was not a deer to be seen. Like Ten Little Indians, then there were none.

For ten years I raised pedigreed Aberdeen Angus cows and worked up to a herd of 30. When bull Langwater Alexander arrived every spring by truck for his annual "visit," the cows went crazy, kicking up their heels, tossing their heads, and running around like mad. I had papers on each of these cows, and that was a lot of work, and silver chains with numbers to identify each cow. But Old John, ignorant of pedigree and paperwork, he himself being unable to read, worried that his "bossies" might choke on a hedge apple and took all the chains off. So the bull stopped coming and the cows eventually ended up in freezers.

And then there was Mr. Oak, 125' tall and with a circumference at its base 3 men could barely get their arms around. I discovered this giant the day I bought the farm. Tree experts said this white oak was probably at least 200 years old, a seedling when George III was on the throne. I cut out deadwood and made a clearing around its base with a bench for visitors to sit on to contemplate this awesome tree. I wrote an article about it for the Bristol Banner and many came to see it, a wonder in the County.

Unfortunately, Mother Nature plays no favorites and about 1995 lightning killed Mr. Oak, splitting him right down the middle. He really was too big to cut down and to this day remains his own monument. I continued to visit my leafless friend until the day I left. Joyce Kilmer was right: "Only God can make a tree," at least one like Mr. Oak.

Buck Moon Farm is and probably always will be one of the most scenic and visually beautiful farms anywhere. When putting it all together I fancied myself a kind of Capability Brown. From the terrace on a lovely summer evening the views down the fields and to the East and West were carefully planted and landscaped to imitate his work. A visiting English friend once made it all worthwhile: "You know, Robert, all this makes me think I'm back in England. I feel right at home here! It's just beautiful."

That same day, in the 5-acre wood lot, I discovered the largest white oak tree I'd ever seen, 200' tall, estimated to be over 300 years old. I pruned its dead branches and made a clearing around its base. Three men with their arms outstretched could barely get around its base. There I placed a bench where we came to admire its majesty on warm summer moonlit nights. I wrote stories about it for the local newspaper and soon learned it was the biggest oak on record in the county or anywhere else we could find.

But Mother Nature plays no favorites and one stormy night 20 years later, my Mister Oak was destroyed by lightning.

Just think. Mr. Oak was a sapling when King George III was on the throne. At the time his loss to me was like the death of a loved one. When I would go to see my tree, I would always greet him as Mr. Oak and think about how the mighty have fallen. I could never bare to cut him down. I'm sure he's still there, what's left of him. I often wonder would Joyce Kilmer would say. God took a long time to make Mr. Oak.



Aerial View of Buck Moon Farm

SEE BUCK MOON FARM AT THE 2018 “POM PARTY ON THE ROAD!”

By WILLIAM A. FIRSTENBERGER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



So after hearing Robert Beardsley’s wonderful experiences at his beloved Buck Moon Farm, who wants to go see it? I know I do! Luckily for you, we’ve arranged to take our 2018 Adopt a Pom for Preservation Party on the road—guess where? We’ll start by taking a quick tour of Buck Moon Farm from current owner Abby Thomas, and then hop, skip and jump less than a mile away on State Road 15 to Fruit Hills Winery & Orchard for an evening of local wine tasting, craft hors d’oeuvres and a beautiful sunset in the Bristol fruit hills.

Make your reservations for Thursday, September 27th with the tour at Buck Moon Farm beginning at 5pm sharp. Cost is \$60 per individual or \$100 per couple to attend. Adopt a \$200 Pom for a group of four, \$300 for a party of six, or \$500 for a private table of eight. A \$1,000 Pom let’s you invite 15 of your closest friends for two private tables of eight. Let Ruthmere do the legwork putting together this unforgettable once-in-a-lifetime experience, and you take all the credit for hosting a great end-of-summer event for friends and family!

Your Adopt a Pom donation goes toward supporting preservation needs on Ruthmere Campus with 2018 proceeds funding the Ruthmere Perimeter Wall Restoration Project. You can register online at Ruthmere.org/Adopt-a-Pom or call Executive Director Bill Firstenberger at 574-264-0330 ext. 105.

FIELD TRIPS MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

By WILLIAM A. FIRSTENBERGER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

What happened next was extraordinary. With only half the needed bus money, they organized to walk half of the distance. Yes, 75 students walked 26 blocks (over 2 miles one-way!) from Hawthorne school to reach Ruthmere Campus. And these kids were awesome! No whining, no horseplay, all well-behaved, focused and ready for an unforgettable day. They changed Ruthmere, and they changed history.

Those bold actions 7 short years ago from one school have snowballed into the annual Ruthmere Field Trip Assistance Program that brings thousands of students every year to our sites. This program exists at no cost to the schools and students, provides a transportation stipend to the school, and each student receives a membership valid until they graduate from high school. Supporting partners range from local sponsor companies to family foundations, and from private individuals to services clubs, to cover the costs of pre-K to 12th grade trips for all Elkhart County students—public schools, private schools and home schools.

In 2018, we have a new bold idea. Let’s pour gasoline on this successful program by offering the same field trip assistance to every school in every county adjoining Elkhart County—a total of 9 counties in both Indiana and Michigan! With seed grant help from the Community Foundation of Elkhart County and many regional support partners who care about student field trips, Ruthmere is redefining the future of students in ALL of Michiana. Don’t think we can do it? Let’s ask the good folks at Hawthorne Elementary!



TEA ANYONE?

By, JOY OLSEN, COLLECTIONS MANAGER

While visiting England last April, my husband, Denny and I traveled to Bath. Any fan of the author, Jane Austin, knows Bath was the location she used for many of her novels. We were delighted to visit Jane's childhood home that now serves as a small museum.

Before we left the quiet little town of Bath we thought we would take time for tea. We came to a very old but quaint tea room. The Bridge Tearoom was built in the early 1500's. We were delighted to be served an authentic and proper tea. "Wonderful," I thought. I wanted to see how close we come to serving our teas in the correct manor. This is my chance.

As soon as we walked through the tiny door, we were transported back in time. I doubt that the dining space has changed at all. in the past 300 years. Everything was tiny -- tiny room, tiny set of stairs, very low ceilings. Just so quaint, and oh so ENGLISH!

Katherine, the proprietor, is fourth generation of her family's ownership of the tearoom. She made sure our Earl Gray was always fresh, and our sweets were full. I mentioned that I also served teas back home. She liked that. I was delighted to learn that our teas at Ruthmere are virtually the same as what Katherine and her staff provided. I could not wait to tell Bill that we are doing it right.

If you ever find yourself in England, look up the Bridge Tearoom at Bradford-on-Avon. I highly recommend it. But if your life's journey doesn't take you that far, join us for tea on this side of the pond. We will make sure your pot is always hot and of course, serve you with a smile.

Ruthmere will be hosting four themed Teas this year. Make sure you make your reservations early, they always fill up fast! Oh, excuse me; it's time to pour out....tea, anyone?



The Bridge Tearoom at Bradford-on Avon



VOLUNTEER AT RUTHMERE TODAY!

By VICTORIA JOHNSTON, OUTREACH COORDINATOR

Help make a difference in your community by volunteering!

At Ruthmere Museum, we are always looking for new volunteers to join our team and we invite you to explore our opportunities below:

- **Tour Guide:** As a tour guide, help to make learning fun for visitors of all ages! Help others to discover local history and heritage through insightful and educational tours of both the Havilah Beardsley House and Ruthmere Museum.
- **Gardener:** Do you enjoy gardening or wish to take it up as a hobby? Then consider helping our Campus Coordinator plant flowers in the gardens and tend to the Ruthmere grounds. We could always use the extra helping hands!

If you are interested in becoming a Tour Guide or Gardener, email vjohnston@ruthmere.org or call 574-264-0330 ext. 116.



2018 WEDDING TRENDS

By, JOY OLSEN, COLLECTIONS MANAGER

Over the past few seasons the trend in weddings has been soft and romantic but things are changing. You can expect to see a shift away from the light and airy to a dramatic and almost edgy feel. Deeper colors and richer textures are making the scene. Bohemian styles and new age concepts are right around the corner for weddings. But, in this Midwestern city rustic elegance is still the rage.

Today few wedding ceremonies are held in churches but take place in nature - God's true sanctuary. Brides share with me their wedding dreams and most of them are in an open-air outdoor setting with nature as the backdrop. These conversations give me the opportunity to share Ruthmere's beautiful and elegant wedding garden as a prime location right here in Elkhart County. Original to this romantic garden site is Elizabeth Beardsley's marble water fountain surrounded by a manicured assortment of colorful flora. It is an exceptional setting where a couple can begin their life journey together.

Another trend the contemporary couple wants is a wedding venue that provides the ceremony and reception all at the same location. Ruthmere has wedding packages that can be crafted to fit every couple's plans all on the property of a historic mansion.



BEARDSLEY FAMILY HEIRLOOM EXHIBIT

By JENNIFER JOHNS, CURATOR



It's been 3 years since we finished the renovation of the Havilah Beardsley House. At that time, we had very little to no items that belonged to the Beardsley family that lived in the home. Over the years, descendants of the Havilah Beardsley have reconnected with their Elkhart roots and donated family items back to the house.

We will be having a special exhibit entitled "Beardsley Family Heirlooms" July 24 – October 31, 2018 at the Havilah Beardsley House. This exhibit will highlight recent donations from Havilah Beardsley family as well as Beardsley family with Ruthmere connections. Furniture, artwork, jewelry and other decorative pieces that once adorned Beardsley houses will be featured in this exhibit.

DRIVE-IN FRIDAYS TURN THE CORNER

By WILLIAM A. FIRSTENBERGER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Drive-In Fridays at Ruthmere are back and better than ever! Building on last year's success, this year's DIFs will feature MORE show cars, a full range of tasty food truck vendors, luxury upgrades, better public access for event goers, and house tours of Ruthmere's first floor! A big "Thank You!" goes to our 2018 Presenting Sponsor Kem Krest—they definitely their way around great cars!

June 29th will kick things off in spectacular fashion with the nationally touring interactive mobile exhibit Auto Indiana: History on Wheels and the night's theme will be Cars, Cars, Cars. Bring the whole family to check out this educational, gadget-filled exhibit on wheels that covers the history of everything automotive in the Hoosier state.



The covered Loggia next to the Greenhouse will be the designated "High Volume Hooper's Hang-out" and the place to strut, shimmy and spin your way to an unforgettable time! We're moving the beverage station to better serve BOTH sides of the wall making the cruiser lot "Beverage Friendly" and convenient for everyone. Speaking of the wall, your "Tips at the Wall" will go toward supporting the Perimeter Wall Restoration Project. If you get really generous and make a Wall Donation of \$30 or more, you'll receive the NEW "Just Another Brick in the Wall" T-shirt as a FREE GIFT.

July 27th Surfin' Jam Night will be AWESOME, TOTALLY AWESOME! Duuudes and Duuudettes, we want you to strap on your favorite gnarly flip flops, and rock your best Hawaiian shirt to help set the ice-blue, cool mood. So catch a sweet wave in and ride on over to Ruthmere to have your mind melted by epic hot road machines. It's a feast for the senses, Bro.

Membership has its privileges. Be a Patron Member and get 6 in the DIF gate for free! That's right, you can skip paying DIF event admission, and instead show us your support by being a Patron member for \$120, and you and 5 of your friends are IN for Drive-In Fridays all season long. Patron members MUST show valid membership card and accompany all guests at entry gate.

"Grease is the Word," Daddy-O, on August 31st as we break out the poodle skirts and leather jackets for a 1950s sock hop! Attendees are invited to transport themselves back in time to the doo wop Elkhart era of the Wolves and the Fighting Fifty. No rumbles, please! New for 2018—Do you have a great ride and want to live out a fantasy? Your car can be a Drive-In Friday Show Car on Ruthmere's front lawn and you can live it up as a Show Car VIP. Find out how at Ruthmere.org/Drive-In-Fridays.



RUTHMERE ANNOUNCES FIRST ANNUAL BEARDSLEY PIANO COMPETITION

By, MARK DODDINGTON, MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR



Ever tickle the ivories? Well, here's your chance to put your skills to the test for real.

Ruthmere Museum is proud to announce the First Annual Robert B. Beardsley Piano Competition. In what we believe will become a long and cherished Ruthmere tradition, Ruthmere seeks to display the most talented sets of fingers in the music world today.

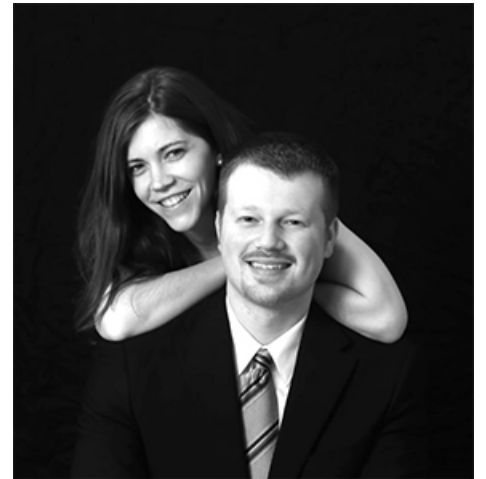
The competition will take place on Saturday, September 15, 2018, in the Ruthmere Game Room, and everyone is invited to attend this prestigious inaugural event. And if you think you've got the winning touch, you're always welcome to submit an entry. The winner will receive a \$1,000.00 cash prize, and have his or her name engraved on a plaque displayed alongside the Beardsley Cup at Ruthmere.

In addition, the winning entrant will deliver a performance of twenty to thirty minutes on Ruthmere's magnificent 1955 Steinway concert grand, once owned by noted concert pianist Arthur Rubenstein, as part of our 2018 Fall Concert Series opening night on Thursday, October 8.

We are also pleased to welcome back Luke and Mary Rose Norell, better known as

the Norell Piano Duo. The Norells will open the 2018 series on October 8. They have also agreed to serve as judges for the Beardsley Competition, along with a third judge, yet to be announced. Luke and Mary Rose are both music teachers at Goshen College, and have a long string of triumphs to their credit, including a magical performance at Ruthmere in 2016.

Entrants for the Beardsley Competition are required to prepare a video audition, 10 to 15 minutes long, showcasing two contrasting styles of music. All musical styles are welcome. There is a \$30.00 entry fee for all submissions, with a deadline of August 1, 2018. The judges will select up to six finalists to compete on September 15. All finalists, except the ultimate winner, will receive a \$100.00 cash award.



CREEK HOUSE CENTER 2ND ANNUAL GARAGE SALE

By CARLA RILEY, CAMPUS COORDINATOR



If you missed the 1st Annual Creek House Garage Sale you are in luck. We are having another one on Thursday, June 7th from 8am - 5pm. If you have any items that you wish to donate, please call Carla Riley at 574-264-0330 ext. 113. We will not be accepting drop-offs. You must call ahead if you wish to donate your items.

THE Havilah Beardsley HOUSE

The Ruthmere Foundation is pleased to announce that we have reached our Phase 1 goal of building the Havilah Beardsley House Endowed Fund to a corpus of \$500,000 in less than 3 years from the grand opening of the Havilah Beardsley House in May of 2015. This first push of endowment building has set a positive path forward for this community asset, but we are still in need of additional donations to achieve the final goal of 100% financial sustainability. Gifts made to the Havilah Beardsley House Endowed Fund at the Community Foundation of Elkhart County receive a 25% match from the CFEC. Legacy gifts from estate plans are particularly welcome as a memorial to keep the founder's vision for Elkhart alive now and forever.

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RUTHMERE IS SUPPORTED BY ITS MEMBERSHIP, PRIVATE DONATIONS, PLANNED GIFTS AND LEGACIES.

ONE NIGHT AT RUTHMERE – WERE YOU THERE IN 2018?!

By WILLIAM A. FIRSTENBERGER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dinner for eight at Ruthmere? Right this way! One Night at Ruthmere is back for 2018, and the time is NOW to reserve your seats for this September 22nd extravaganza. When's the last time you arrived in style driving THROUGH Ruthmere's front gates, dropping off your auto for valet service? Next as you step out, you're handed a flute of French Champagne and you gaze out in amazement to garden party that would make Jay Gatsby jealous.

One Night at Ruthmere is a black tie event party, with emphasis on the word party. Unique in approach, it is an evening filled with luxury and excess, raising funds for the good cause of Ruthmere to be certain, but we don't use the “M-word” (money) on this night—no solicitations allowed.

Moving indoors your dinner party finds their reserved seats throughout the sprawling Ruthmere Mansion. Course after course of epicurean delights dazzle your palate. The announcement comes, “Dessert will be served in the Game Room,” but there's much more to be had than sweets. A ripping good jazz vocalist entertains until the wee hours—that's how you properly finish off One Night at Ruthmere!

Seats and tables in every room of this storied mansion have their “One Night price,” but it's impolite to ask how much. All are welcome to inquire and attend, as Ruthmere belongs to the entire Elkhart community. To receive an invitation to THE EVENT of 2018 in Elkhart, merely ask. Call Executive Director Bill Firstenberger at 574-264-0330 ext. 105 or send a discreet email to bfirstenberger@ruthmere.org to be placed on the invitation list or learn further details.

