



Morgan County Historic Preservation Society  
 P. O. Box 1377  
 Martinsville, IN 46151  
<http://www.mchps.org>

Fall 2009

# PRESERVATION NEWS

## GRASSYFORK'S FUTURE?

INFORMATIONAL MEETING for MCHPS MEMBERS and GRASSYFORK NEIGHBORS

Wednesday, November 11 • 7:00 p.m.  
 Art Sanctuary (the former Methodist Church)  
 corner of Sycamore and Pike Streets, Martinsville

You are invited to meet Grassyfork's prospective new owners and learn about their plans to restore the building and gardens. Sale of the property is contingent upon rezoning from its current agricultural classification to business. See below.

### Message from the President

Joanne Stuttgen (765) 349-1537  
[jstuttgen@comcast.net](mailto:jstuttgen@comcast.net)

It has been a busy autumn for the Board as we work to complete the sale of the Grassyfork property and do double duty on the Board of Rediscover Historic Martinsville, the new Martinsville Main Street organization.

Our triumphs and frustrations in the 18 years since MCHPS's founding seem to have merged this year in many valuable projects. Successes are imminent in many areas, yet none of our projects has exactly been smooth sailing. We surround ourselves with capable professionals to advise us in major decisions, yet repeatedly we discover just how little we really know. Preservation is a constant learning experience.

Personally, I am thrilled to have established several important new partnerships over the past year. Sheila Snider has been invaluable in directing the Grassyfork project, which should soon result in a sale to a local couple who have long had the dream of the building and the gardens. Art Brill of Real Living Town and Country has been our agent for Grassyfork and has also taken over as leasing manager of the Old Jail. Ben Rawlins, a Martinsville resident and landscape architect with Odle McGuire Shook, has been involved in major ways in three current projects: Grassyfork, Martinsville's downtown revitalization plan, and a feasibility study for

the Veteran's Building on the south side of the square. Read more below.

The City of Martinsville has also become a major partner in preservation in 2009. The Common Council passed a new ordinance making downtown Martinsville a historic district and providing certain measures for its maintenance and protection. The City also submitted an application for a grant to fund the downtown revitalization plan. Further support came with an endorsement of MCHPS's application for federal funds to prepare the feasibility study for the Veteran's Building.

Yet another important preservation partner is the Board of Trustees of the Morgan County Public Library, which owns the Veterans Building. The Board is partnering with MCHPS on the feasibility study to the building's future use and cost estimates for its rehabilitation.

My head spins with everything that MCHPS is involved in right now! The next three years will bring the culmination of these important projects. There is much to look forward to.

### Grassyfork Heritage

Joanne Stuttgen (765) 349-1537  
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The Board of Directors has reached an agreement to sell the historic Grassyfork building and rock gardens to Terry and Deb Bunton, MCHPS members who have long dreamed of restoring the building and gardens. This sale

has several contingencies, one of which is the successful rezoning of the property from agricultural, the current zoning, to business.

The Buntons are working with Ben Rawlins, a registered architect and Martinsville resident, to develop a site plan that is sympathetic to the rural residential neighborhood and sensitive to the concerns of adjacent property owners as expressed at the meeting held at Grassyfork this past summer.

The Buntons will appear before the Martinsville Plan Commission to petition for the rezoning on Tuesday, November 24, at 7:00 p.m. If you wish to attend, the meeting will be held upstairs in the Council chambers in the Martinsville City Hall.

Prior to the rezoning meeting, the Board of Directors invites you to meet Terry and Deb Bunton and learn about their vision and future plans for the Grassyfork property. This is an informal opportunity for you to ask questions and share your concerns and interests. This meeting will be held at:

**Art Sanctuary  
(the former Methodist Church)  
corner of Sycamore and Pike Streets,  
Martinsville  
Wednesday, November 11, 2009  
7:00 p.m.**



**Birdseye view of Grassyfork Office and Display Room and gardens, c. 1936. Photo contributed by Ed Ferguson.**

## **Grassyfork: Message from Terry and Deb Bunton**

(317) 831-9794  
[bunton@grassyfork.com](mailto:bunton@grassyfork.com)

Please allow us to introduce ourselves. We are Terry and Deb Bunton and we have an agreement with the Morgan County Preservation Society to purchase the Grassyfork Fisheries Showroom/Office building and grounds, contingent upon re-zoning.

It is our intent to renovate and add improvements to the building and grounds in order to provide a facility to accommodate special occasions such as weddings, banquets and/or business functions. We plan to restore and preserve Grassyfork's early dignity, beauty and surroundings as closely to its original profile as possible, while bringing it up to code with modern additions that will allow us to function efficiently and environmentally. The grounds will include gardens to entertain weddings and other outdoor venues, as well as to energize patrons and inspire relaxation.

Grassyfork will inject new life into Morgan County while preserving the history and providing a much needed service for Morgan and surrounding counties. There are few facilities in this area that can bring people together to celebrate important events in their lives and there are no facilities in the area with the atmosphere and ambiance of historic Grassyfork.

Our plan will include working closely with a local caterer, local florists, bakeries, bridal shops and other merchants to provide the services necessary for a successful event, while we aid in generating employment, tourism, volunteer opportunities as well as revenue for the community. Our goal is to partner with Grassyfork's neighbors and surroundings to ensure cohesiveness, privacy and mutual respect. The creation of this unique atmosphere will differentiate us from the competition and offer the community an opportunity to participate and profit from its success.

Among the many memorable elements of Grassyfork are the beautiful gardens. In addition to restoring the building, our plan includes restoring the property, utilizing any existing elements of the landscape and gardens remaining. We have contacted the Master Gardeners of Morgan County who have enthusiastically agreed to provide their services and expertise in restoration of the landscape and gardens. They are already looking forward to restoring the once lavishly landscaped rock gardens, paths, bridges, waterfalls, etc. This long term project provides yet another opportunity for community participation and volunteerism.

We are anxious to restore the elegance of Grassyfork and create a welcoming green space that will provide everyone in the community with a gathering place to celebrate important events in their lives, restore old memories and create new ones.

We hope that you will share in our excitement. We invite you to contact us with any suggestions, questions, concerns or comments regarding our plans for Grassyfork.

## Rediscover Historic Martinsville

Del Chafey (765) 342-6082  
[chafey@usa.com](mailto:chafey@usa.com)

Are you concerned about vacant buildings, struggling retail businesses, and the overall deteriorated conditions in downtown Martinsville? Then here is a plan for you!

The City of Martinsville, in partnership with the new Main Street organization, Rediscover Historic Martinsville, has applied for a \$50,000 grant from the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs. This grant will be used to hire Odle McGuire Shook, an Indianapolis architectural and engineering firm, to research and prepare a downtown revitalization plan. The project manager will be Ben Rawlins, a Martinsville resident. Merlin "Gene" King, another Martinsville resident and owner of Merlin King Construction, will also be part of the team.

We anticipate that this project will begin before the end of the year. We are currently waiting for word to begin from the State of Indiana.

The downtown revitalization plan will have three major components:

1. a retail and marketing study and plan;
2. a facade rehabilitation plan for selected buildings, including a structural condition assessment, facade renderings, and cost estimates for the rehabilitation of selected buildings and anticipated financial results (e. g. rental income); and
3. a landscape improvement plan.

Upon the completion of this plan, the City and Rediscover Historic Martinsville intend to pursue a \$500,000 implementation grant to make landscape improvements and to establish a facade improvement grant program that will direct money into the rehabilitation of privately- and publicly-owned buildings. Other possible uses of grant funds are the development of downtown gateways, a public festival-marketplace area and public restrooms. We anticipate that \$500,000 won't go nearly as far as we need or would like.

If you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact any of the members of the steering committee listed at the upper right of this page. Many are MCHPS members. They are all more than happy to talk about the future of downtown Martinsville for which the groundwork is now being laid.

### Downtown Revitalization Grant Steering Committee:

Joanne Stuttgen, Chair	(765) 349-1537
Ron Stanhouse	(812) 345-1091
Jamie Thompson	(765) 342-8110
Gary Lester	(765) 342-9611
John Badger	(765) 342-0744
Del Chafey	(317) 965-7712
Karen Melaniphy	(630) 417-3267
Danny Stewart	(765) 346-8144

For more information about Rediscover Historic Martinsville or to get involved, contact Del Chafey at [chafey@usa.com](mailto:chafey@usa.com). Del is a MCHPS Board member and President of Rediscover Historic Martinsville.

### Veterans Building Feasibility Study

Joanne Stuttgen (765) 349-1537  
[jstuttgen@comcast.net](mailto:jstuttgen@comcast.net)

MCHPS and the Morgan County Public Library Board of Trustees are partnering to pursue grant funding to prepare a feasibility study for the Veterans Building located at 75-77 E. Morgan Street in downtown Martinsville. The total project cost is estimated to be \$21,000. The estimate was prepared by MCHPS member Ben Rawlins, a landscape architect and partner in the Indianapolis architectural and engineering firm Odle McGuire Shook.



Built about 1915, the Veterans Building, 75-77 E. Morgan Street, is targeted for rehabilitation.

A request for federal preservation dollars in the amount of \$10,500 was submitted to the state historic preservation office in early October. The local cost share is also \$10,500. Historic Landmarks Foundation will contribute \$3,000 in the form of a grant; MCHPS will contribute \$5,400; and the Board of Trustees will contribute \$2,100. We expect to learn whether or not we will receive the grant in March or April 2010.

The Veterans Building is owned by the Morgan County Public Library Board of Trustees, which received it as a gift in 2002 on behalf of the local veterans organization. The Trustees are reluctant to invest in the building's repair and are contemplating donating it to another not-for-profit organization. At the same time, the Trustees are wondering if the building can provide for the expansion of library functions. In addition, the City of Martinsville and Rediscover Historic Martinsville (RHM), the new Main Street program, believe the building could provide for other downtown needs, such as public restrooms, office space for the Greater Martinsville Chamber of Commerce, and public meeting space.

The Veterans Building is threatened by the after-effects of a fire that destroyed the building to its east and general long-term neglect. The roof leaks and rain seeps between the concrete coating and bricks on the east wall. The condition of this thermal shocked wall is unknown due to the cement-like covering. Water intrusion along the south (rear) wall of the building has caused the floor girders, columns and joists to rot. In the adjacent Veterans Park, which replaced the burned building, dirt mounded against the east wall is causing interior mold and mildew issues, and dogwood trees planted against the wall have the potential to cause serious additional foundation and wall damage. The building is further threatened by several outspoken Trustees who feel that a 2005 structural engineer's report and the current condition of the building warrant its demolition.

A qualified professional architectural and engineering team will be hired to develop a feasibility study for the Veterans Building. Information will be gathered through interviews with individuals, organizations, steering committees, and/or public input sessions to determine the highest and best uses for this building. The building itself will be studied to determine how these uses can be best accommodated. Architectural and site concepts consistent with the Secretary of Interior Guidelines will be developed to make such uses serviceable. Estimated construction costs will be determined through research and consultation with construction professionals.

The final feasibility study will consist of the following components:

- building program to define potential interior space concepts;

- architectural concepts that define interior spaces to comply with the program;
- exterior building façade renovation strategy including potential development of additional door and window fenestration on the east side of the building facing the adjacent Veterans Park;
- development of site concept for interfacing the potential new access points on the east side of the building with the Park; and
- development of the estimated construction cost for the selected interior and exterior concept.

The feasibility study is projected to begin in August 2010 and be complete by June 2011. Funding for the rehabilitation of the Veterans Building is proposed to come from a \$500,000 Community Focus Fund grant available from the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs. The building could be completely rehabilitated by the end of 2013.

## News Briefs

Board of Directors

**Hall Civic Association** • Preservation is an expensive endeavor, but the Hall Civic Association is up for the challenge of raising funds for restoration of the 1911 Hall School. This year will mark the sixth year of HCA's major event, the Hall Dinner Theater.

*The following story by Amy Hillenberg appeared in the Mooresville Times on October 25.*

Randy Marsh is president of the Hall Civic Association, which uses the dinner theater as a fund-raiser for the historic Hall School renovation. He said the title for this year's play is "Live from Monrovia, It's Saturday Night." It will be held at Monrovia Elementary School on Nov. 21 at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$25 each, and this will pay for the entertainment, a full steak dinner and a chance to visit with friends and neighbors.

"We will be doing Saturday Night Live skits from 1975 up to the present," Marsh said. "This will be our fifth dinner theater, and it will be our second comedy that we've attempted."

Last year, with the economy taking a nose dive, the civic association wanted to get people laughing again. The production included dancing and music from Reba Brummett and the Gold Dust Band. The theme was "Hall's Hilarious Hillbillies," and it was based on television sitcom favorites like Hee Haw, The Waltons and the Carol Burnett Show.

"I was very proud of the job they did last year," Marsh said. "There was a tremendous amount of work put into it."

Director Volitta Fritsche, who is also a local author and is well known in county law enforcement, said the cast is practicing every Tuesday and on alternating Saturdays. Production participants are Tonya Caplinger, Dick and Kim Heald, Paul Brown, Brandi Fritsche, Thomas Fritsche, Brandon Miller, Sam Cones, Stephen Kuehn, Claudia McGoewn, former county commissioner Janice Bacon, Kenny Hale and MC Jim Samons. Danielle Brown is doing the curtains, Roberta Miller is in charge of the lights, Robin Brummett is helping with props and Brad Marsh is doing the sound.

Mariann Berlin is the school liaison for the civic association and the school.



**Hall School, 1910. Designed by Harry H. Dupont of Indianapolis and built by O. J. Whitaker of Morgantown, this building was completed in September 1910. Two months later it was destroyed by fire. An identical building—the existing Hall School—was constructed in 1911. The Hall Civic Association intends to restore it and return it to community use.**

Fritsche said Hall School is dear to her heart. When she first began attending Hall, she was in a room that had both fourth and fifth grades. She said a rinky-dink merry-go-round was the pupils' main source of entertainment at recess. "At first, I was scared. Here my parents were sending me to a school way out in the sticks. But then, I grew to love Hall. I later graduated from Monrovia High School," Fritsche said.

This is the fourth play for Dick and Kim Heald of Monrovia. Dick is a Plainfield native, and Kim is originally from Mooresville. Dick was the former police commissioner in Mooresville.

"We started acting mainly because Volitta (Fritsche) twisted our arms," Kim Heald laughed. "But we have a good time and it's great for the community."

Heald said she plays the "Fruit Cake Lady" in the production, and Dick plays the "Secretary of Homeland Security."

"There's less interaction between the actors this time. Everyone sort of does his own routine," Heald said. She added that even her oldest son performed in two of the plays, but now lives too far away to get to practices.

Marsh said the event will include a silent auction and has been successful for the civic association in the past. "Area businesses and sponsors have been good to donate items," he said. "Last year, we had a great turnout for this event. There were around 220 in attendance. I was getting nervous about being able to seat everyone. We sold tickets up to play time. That was risky, but the sale of tickets had taken off slow. We'll have to see how this year goes with the economy like it is."

Marsh said he thinks that people will come out for dinner theater, because they can enjoy a three-act play and have a steak dinner with a salad and desert — and they won't have to travel far. "We're still holding the price of the evening at \$25," Marsh said. "We'll have some nice door prizes to give away between the acts."

Marsh said it takes 50 people coming together that evening to make it happen. All the funds go towards the restoration of the 1911 Hall School Building.

Fritsche said later this year, a library will be opening in the old building, and there will be a section for county and Hall memorabilia. Marsh said the Kendrick Foundation has helped the civic association toward the medical section of the library, and the Community Foundation of Morgan County, Inc., is helping with grants, along with Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana.

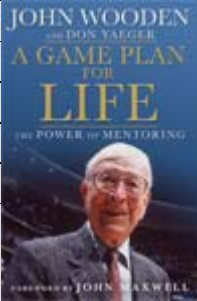
"This is our biggest event of the year," Marsh said. "After all bills were paid last year, we cleared \$4,000. We are thankful to be able to do this."

**Fundraising (Tina Chafey) • Morgan County Courthouse Hits the Big 150 •** And you thought 50 was historic! In honor of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the completion of the Morgan County Courthouse, MCHPS has created a new Cat's Meow piece depicting the building as it looks today. Only a limited number of pieces were produced, so get yours before they are sold out. They are available at the Martinsville Candy Kitchen on the west side of the square in



**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FORM • MORGAN COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION SOCIETY**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Please check membership: new <input type="checkbox"/> renew <input type="checkbox"/>		For office use only	
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	\$18.00	<b>Thank you for your support.</b> Memberships expire December 31. Memberships received after October 1 will be extended through the following year. Please mail completed form to: MCHPS P. O. Box 1377 Martinsville, IN 46151 For more information call (765) 342-0391 or (765) 349-1949 or see our website at <a href="http://www.mchps.org">http://www.mchps.org</a>	
	\$25.00		
	\$35.00		
	\$50.00		
	\$200.00		
	\$		

historic downtown Martinsville. Cost per piece is \$21.95 + tax. MCHPS members receive a 20% discount.

Rediscover Historic Martinsville has reproduced an original work of art depicting downtown Martinsville by Gretchen Ten Eyck Hunt, an artist with a studio at the new Art Sanctuary, as a full color **postcard**. Gretchen has also produced **note cards**. These are available at the Martinsville Candy Kitchen and at Art Sanctuary. The MCHPS member discount does not apply.

*A Game Plan for Life* by Coach John Wooden was released from the publisher on October 14, Coach's 99<sup>th</sup> birthday. This is an inspiring, easy-to-read book about the power of mentoring. Coach writes seven chapters, each on an individual who has mentored him during his lifetime. These include four from his Morgan County years: Nellie Riley, his high school sweetheart and wife; his father, Joshua, and basketball coaches Earl Warriner (Centerton) and Glenn Curtis (Martinsville High School). Then, seven individuals who have been mentored by him each write a chapter. The book is available at the Martinsville Candy Kitchen for \$25 + tax. MCHPS receive a 20% discount.

**MCHPS has a worldwide presence at [www.mchps.org](http://www.mchps.org)**

**FOR SALE BY OWNER**

Former home of Indiana Governor Emmett Forrest Branch at 510 E. Washington Street, Martinsville. The owners have been commuting two hours to work and wish to relocate. They would like to sell quickly, and price and terms are very negotiable. See the following links for more information:

<http://www.mchps.org>

<http://www.mchps.org>

<http://www.mchps.org>

**2008-09 Board of Directors**

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