



Morgan County Historic Preservation Society
2004
P. O. Box 1377
Martinsville, IN 46151
<http://www.mchps.org>

Preservation News

MCHPS co-sponsors Author Visit and Book Signing

Monday, July 12, 2004 7:00 p.m. Morgan County Public Library
110 S. Jefferson Street Martinsville

Gwenyth Swain, a Nashville native and children's book author, will talk about how to incorporate local and history into fiction. Gwenyth's new novel, ***Chig and the Second Spread***, does just that. Based on stories told by her father, ***Chig and the Second Spread*** is set in Brown County, Indiana. A powerful mite of a girl—"no larger than a little red chigger"—Chig tries to find a way to help her neighbors in the hills and hollers make it through the Great Depression. Her desire to become a big person, both in stature and in spirit, leads her into many adventures. They culminate in the Great Niplak Train Disaster, which unexpectedly gives everyone a little more to spread between the covers of their sandwiches.

Copies of ***Chig*** and Gwenyth's other titles of interest to Hoosiers will be available for sale and signing. Proceeds benefit the Society. For more information, contact Joanne Stuttgen at (765) 349-1537 or stuttgen@insightbb.com

Helen Wildermuth Named Preservationist of the Year at Annual Meeting

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At our Annual Meeting held April 20th, Martinsville resident and cemetery restoration professional Helen

Wildermuth was named the 2004 Preservationist of the Year.

Initiated last year, the award recognizes a Morgan County resident who has made significant contributions to the protection and preservation of Morgan County's historic sites and structures. Last year's winner was Jerry Payton, who oversaw the addition of the security entrance to the south side of the courthouse.

Helen has been engaged in cemetery restoration for several years and for the past two has operated her own fulltime business, Stonehugger Cemetery Restoration. She also partners on large projects with fellow professional Mark Davis. She first volunteered to assist with the Cemetery Committee of the Morgan County History and Genealogy Association (MCHAGA). For over seven years, she spent several days a month locating, researching, surveying and urging repair and maintenance of the county's cemeteries.

A few years ago the county's first cemetery restoration workshop was led by John Walters at Mahalasville Cemetery. Helen participated with the hands-on activities and took copious notes. She became impassioned about this kind of work, and it became her dream to be a full-time restorationist. On her own and at her own cost, Helen worked on more stones at Mahalasville Cemetery, and then moved on to other local cemeteries where she perfected her skills, techniques, and documentation.

The first serious test of Helen's mettle occurred with the tornado of September 20, 2002. The day after found Helen taking care of her mother and mother-in-law, who both lived in the tornado's path. On Day Two, Helen drove up and down SR 37 to assess damage to the county's pioneer cemeteries in the swath of destruction, beginning with Stitt-Maxwell and moving north. The damage to South Park and Hilldale Cemeteries, both in Martinsville, was devastating. There were many downed trees, and a variety of building debris littered the grounds. Many stones were damaged and toppled, including the huge Milton Hite monument and a 20' figure of woman whose head lay on the ground. Even more damage occurred during the cemetery's early clean up. Trucks clearing the felled trees and limbs pushed over the headless woman.

Restoring Hilldale Cemetery became Helen's mission. She single-handedly organized a clean-up day on October 19, 2002. Volunteers from as far away as Michigan filled up many large trucks and dumpsters with tree and building debris. She and Mark Davis repaired 25 stones in a single work day, and then she did an additional 80 herself—all pro bono. Although their efforts were featured in an *Indianapolis Star* article, the work went largely unrecognized.

"We were watching and quietly noting Helen's work," explains Joe Mills, president of the Society. "When it came time to consider individuals deserving this year's award, no one came to the front like Helen. We are very proud of what she has accomplished. She deserves being named Preservationist of the Year."

Together with Dale Drake, Helen has quietly tackled other necessary work in Morgan County. The women have surveyed and GPSed all of the county cemeteries, especially along the I-69 corridor. They have also completed documentation of all the MCHAGA cemetery work, and have completed the cemetery headstone index for the GenAssist data base at the Morgan County Public Library. Helen has also transcribed all of the stones in Hilldale and Green Lawn Cemeteries. Together, they have also applied for and received grants to restore the Old Methodist Cemetery in Mooresville. Helen's restoration work there is ongoing.

Helen's business, Stonehugger Cemetery Restoration, is thriving. She has worked in cemeteries all over Indiana and will also be working in London, KY, and St. Genevieve, MO. She is so busy she is booked a full year ahead. Locally, she is contracted to restore the White Lick Cemetery in Brown Township. "My goal is to make a difference to pioneer cemeteries," Helen says.

Wooden Book Sales Continue

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To date we have sold approximately 600 copies of *Inch and Miles*, the charming children's book by John Wooden, netting approximately \$4,000. Sales continue. Coach Wooden's new pictorial biography, *My Personal Best*, has

also been selling well despite the lack of a major gift-giving season. MCHPS ordered 400 copies from McGraw-Hill in April, of which more than 350 have already been sold. The approximate profit on these books is \$2,500.

Coach Wooden's support of our fundraising efforts has been a significant part of our success. He has generously and without complaint signed 900 specially designed bookplates, with the promise of more to come as we need them.

If you have not yet picked up your copy (or copies), hurry in to Hummingbird Heaven in the Old Jail. We expect to be out of stock on both titles before long. *Inch and Miles* retails for \$15.95 + tax. *My Personal Best* retails for \$19.95 + tax. Members receive a 20% discount.

In addition, copies of Gwenyth Swain's children's novel, *Chig and the Second Spread*, set in Brown County, Indiana, during the Great Depression will also be available at Hummingbird Heaven following her July 12th presentation and book signing at the Morgan County Public Library. *Chig* will sell for \$14.95 + tax. Paperback copies of Gwenyth's Johnny Appleseed and Levi Coffin biographies will also be available for \$5.95 + tax.

Hats Off to the Hat Style Show and Auction

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MCHPS played host to a vintage hat style show and auction at Hummingbird Heaven Tea Room on Sunday, May 16th. The event brought in \$457.

Member Terry Bell organized the event and contributed her collection of hats ranging in age from about 1865 to 1970 for the style show. Phil Deckard called the auction that followed. "This is one of the most unique sales I've ever had," Deckard said as he launched into the 40 minute bidding session. Included in the sale were an assortment of hat boxes from the 1950s and 1960s and hats decorated with ostrich feathers, artificial fruit, flowers, and ribbons and lace. Some of the most spirited bidding was on a 1950s child's felt cowboy hat with metal pistols sewed to the brim and a straw hat designed by Hattie Carnegie. This hat featured black net, red cherries and a feathered bird.

The event was such a hit with participants and so fun to put on that it will definitely be repeated. Our auction-going members are instructed to keep an eye out and a hand up for interesting vintage hats. For more information, contact Tina.

Log onto our website at www.mchps.org

Grant Projects

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Designing Places: Architecture as Community Arts Curriculum • MCHPS has received two grants to develop and implement an eighth grade architecture course to be taught by Kathy Maxwell at West Middle School in Martinsville. \$2,000 has been received from a [Historic Preservation Education Grant](#) sponsored by Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana and the Indiana Humanities Council. \$515 has been received from a community arts grant offered through the [Central Indiana Community Foundation](#). We had requested \$2505. This means approximately \$2,000 will have to be raised by MCHPS to meet project costs. To this end, we have submitted a request for \$750 to the [Community Foundation of Morgan County](#) for a community arts grant.

The course will be taught during the 2004-05 school year. Students will learn to identify historic architectural

styles and learn about the historical and social impulses that brought new styles into fashion. They will apply their new knowledge by designing and creating a traveling educational display to be used by MCHPS. They will also design signs that will designate Morgan County's four historic districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places. These signs will be crafted by a local sign contractor. It is this aspect of the project that remains under-funded at this time.

Gutter Restoration, Morgan County Sheriff's Residence and Jail • \$11,250 has been received from the Preservation Fund, administered by the Indiana Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology (DHPA), to repair the box gutters on the Old Jail. The early administration phase of the project has begun. On June 22, Joe Mills and Tina Chafey met with DHPA staff members to discuss the project and specific grant requirements. Construction work is expected to begin in September.

An important aspect of this project is providing training opportunities to local roofing contractors and other construction professionals who would like to gain experience in restoring box gutters. A box gutter is a one built into the roof plane, rather than one that extends beyond and below the roof itself. They are not common, and as a result, it is difficult to find experienced contractors to repair them. If you or someone you know would like to serve a small apprenticeship to the contractors we hire, please contact Joe Mills.

News Briefs

Board of Directors

Annual Meeting, April 20, 2004 • At the 2004 Annual Meeting held at Hummingbird Heaven Tea Room, the full board of Directors was unanimously re-elected to serve another year. Following a brief business meeting, recap of the year's activities, and elections, Helen Wildermuth was honored as Preservationist of the Year. The meeting concluded with a presentation by Don and Joyce Robinson, owners of the historic William M. Macy Farm west of Mooresville, who shared their search for the story behind the people who called the farm home, and their success in persuading INDOT to alter its plans for the expansion of SR 42. (See more below.)

William M. Macy Farm, Mooresville • On April 28, application of this farm to the National Register of Historic Places was debated and denied by the Indiana Historic Preservation Review Board. This all but brings a close to a year-long effort to have the property listed. The Board did leave open the possibility of resubmitting the nomination based on the historic significance of William M. Macy. Still, the Board's firm position on the house and farm's general loss of integrity does not promise future success. The effort has been shelved for now.

At a well-attended public meeting held July 1 at Mooresville High School, INDOT unveiled its revised plan for SR 42. The Robinsons are pleased, as was most everyone in attendance. The meeting lasted less than one hour, with only a handful of people making comments.

I-69 Tier 2 Environmental Impact Study • MCHPS President Joe Mills, Morgan County Historian Sam Cline and Joanne Stuttgen, representing Traditional Arts Indiana, are serving as local consulting parties to the Federal Highway Administration in the Tier 2 Environmental Impact Study now underway. Morgan County is divided into two study sections. Section 5 consists of SR 37 north of Victor Pike in Monroe County to SR 39. Section 6 includes SR 37 from SR 39 to I-465.

The purpose of the Tier 2 study is to determine the impact of the development of the I-69 corridor on historic and archaeological properties. Laura Thayer, who prepared the East Washington Street and Northside Historic District National Register nominations nine years ago, is the historian for the project.

Of special interest concern in the Area of Potential Effects (APE)—because they have not previously been noted as historic sites—are the former Grassyfork fish ponds scattered along the east side of SR 37. Laura will be conducting in-depth research to determine their age and use during the past 50 or more years.

Mahalasville Bridge • After an alert by Sam Cline that the two-span Mahalasville Bridge over Indian Creek was being demolished, Director Del Chafey contacted Morgan County engineer Larry Smith for an update on the

county's replacement project. According to Smith, one of the spans was damaged beyond salvage or repair while the new bridge was being constructed. The remaining span was removed and put into storage. Smith underscored his commitment to preservation of Morgan County's historic iron bridges by saying, "Where possible any iron truss removed from traffic will be preserved until a suitable relocation is found."

Wilbur Schoolhouse, Gregg Twp. • MCHPS Board member Randy Marsh recently stepped into the position of Wilbur Community Center president. He replaces Margaret Cass, who initiated the current effort to restore the one-room schoolhouse built in 1883. Margaret has moved to Indianapolis. Replacement of the roof is topmost on the WCC Board's list of priorities. A new roof of cedar shingles will replace the old layers of material. Donations of time and labor will make the project affordable, but \$5,000 is needed to cover the cost of the cedar shingles. To meet this cost, the Board is planning its second annual rummage sale and flea market to be held August 26-27-28. If you have items to donate or would like to help, call Randy at (317) 996-3980.

Morgan County Public Library, Martinsville • The theme of historically accurate roofs is also being played out at Martinsville's 1908 Carnegie library, where a new roof of red clay tile is being installed. The original clay

tile roof was replaced with asphalt in 1962. Director David Ross has long advocated for going back to clay. In preparation for the current work, last summer the dome and metal fascia was stripped and repainted. The dome now sports a striking two-color appearance that complements the clay tile. Pause and admire it when you check out your next books—or when you attend Gwentyth Swain's presentation and book signing on July 12th.

Obituaries

LOST! Hubbard Mill, Monrovia • As a Monrovia resident and MCHPS director, Randy Marsh has long been concerned about the future of Hubbard Mill, a Monrovia landmark since at least 1856. He and many other Monrovia residents were stunned when after two weeks of unsuccessful listing on eBay, the mill's owner, Inweld Corporation, tore it down and ran its massive, hand hewn poplar beams and millworks through a grinder. After nearly 150 years in which its history was synonymous with Monrovia's, Hubbard Mill had been turned into mulch in just a few hours. The mill site has been cleaned up, so that a passerby would never realize what has been lost.

LOST! McPherson-Henley House, W. Main St., Mooresville • Torn down in April to make way for expansion of the Mooresville Public Library, this c1895 Queen Anne style house had long been used as a rental property. It may have been the oldest house on this stretch of Mooresville's Main Street. The Library salvaged a pair of multi-light French doors and a built-in cabinet for its new Indiana Room. Also demolished was a tidy ranch house just east of the property and three other houses, all vernacular cottages.

Candidates for Morgan County's Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties

The following is a list of candidates for the 2004 list of Morgan County's Ten Most Endangered Properties. Please select ten properties and rate them on a scale of 1 to 10 by placing a number in the appropriate blank before each entry. 1 is most endangered. 10 is least endangered. Return this self-addressed and stamped form **by July 2004**. The Board of Directors will prioritize the list based on member votes. This list will then be presented to Morgan County fairgoers and readers of the *Reporter-Times* and *Mooreville Times*, who will be asked to vote on the top ten endangered properties.

____ **Hite-Finney House, 183 N. Jefferson St., Martinsville** • Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1996, this c1855 side hall plan house was bought in 2002. The owners began an ambitious restoration plan in late fall 2003 but encountered serious trouble with the collapse of the north wall. The house has been open to the elements and virtually untouched for the past eight months.

____ **I.O.O.F. No. 406/Knights of Pythias No. 431, Union St., Paragon** • Located in Paragon's historic downtown, this three-story building built in 1898 is the finest example of Romanesque Revival style architecture in Morgan County. Rated outstanding in the *Morgan County Interim Report*, this beautiful fraternal hall has been vacant and neglected for many years.

____ **Goethe Link Observatory and Link Daffodil Gardens, Observatory Road, Clay Twp.** • This 1937 observatory and the surrounding 20 acres of daffodil breeding beds kept by the late Helen Link is owned by Indiana University. The Observatory itself is no longer used by Indiana University because of light pollution; it is leased to the Indiana Astronomical Society. The entire property is maintained by IU.

____ **Hall School, 5955 W. Hurt Road, Gregg Twp.** • Designed by Indianapolis architect Henry H. Dupont and built in 1911, this elementary school faces an uncertain future after it closes in 2005. Hall residents are working to find a new use for the community landmark. Listing on the National Register of Historic Places is pending.

____ **All pioneer cemeteries in Morgan County** • Despite the efforts of the Morgan County History and Genealogy Association to locate, document and publicize the plight of pioneer cemeteries, they largely remain ignored and neglected.

____ **Grassyforks Fisheries Office and Showroom, East Morgan Street, Martinsville** • Built in 1939, this building has been vacant for several years and is heading toward demolition. The owners of a local business are pursuing acquisition and adaptive reuse, but setbacks and obstacles make it far from a sure thing.

____ **House, 340 E. Washington St., Martinsville** • This large Free Classic style is cut up into several apartments. It has been vacant on and off for the past few years and is in a serious state of disrepair. The arrest this spring of its most recent occupant for running a meth lab has highlighted its plight.

____ **Post Office, Martinsville** • The federal government's search for a larger location for the city's post office has been put on the back burner. The uncertainty about this building's future lingers.

____ **City Hall and Fire Station, Martinsville** • The city has outgrown its home and has purchased a West Morgan Street property for future expansion. Alterations to this building have been less than sympathetic to its

original character and seem to forewarn a similar future.

_____ **Norman T. Cunningham Building** (*aka* Buskirk Building) Last autumn's facelift that accompanied the restoration of the neon sign on the roof was much needed, but long-term vacancy keeps this anchor of the courthouse square on this list.

_____ **First Presbyterian Church office, 240 E. Washington St., Martinsville** • Scheduled to be demolished this summer to make way for church expansion.

_____ **Martinsville Sanitarium/Kennedy Living Center, Martinsville** • Community Service Center (CSC) is the current owner of the remaining historic portion of the Martinsville Sanitarium, remodeled to its current appearance in 1927. It remains vacant although future uses(s) are being explored.

_____ **All historic properties along the I-69 corridor** • Approximately 50 historic properties ranging from houses and farms to fish ponds and cemeteries stand to be lost by the development of the new I-69.

_____ **Write-in Candidate(s):** _____

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