



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

Spring 2008

PRESERVATION NEWS

2008 Annual Meeting

Remembering Kivett's Remembering Kivett's



The historic Kivett's Store has recently been sold to a new owner. Experience the landmark building in downtown Martinsville once again before renovation begins.

WANTED! Your memories and stories about Kivett's. Did you buy souvenirs, store fixtures, or other items at Kivett's going-out-of-business sale? Bring them for a fun show-and-tell! *Also*—Did you once live in one of the apartments on the second floor? Are you an older Mason who remembers the third floor Masonic Hall, which was discontinued in 1951? We're eager to hear from you!

Please join us for the 2008 Annual Meeting

Saturday, May 17 6:00 – 8:00 p. m.

Kivett's 5 & 10 • 110 North Main Street (corner of Main and Morgan)

A brief business meeting, awards, and announcements will precede the program. The building is empty, so please bring your own chair.

Questions? Call Joe Mills at 342-0391 or Joanne Stuttgen at 349-1537

Message from the President

Joe Mills (765) 342-0392
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It is with some very mixed emotions that I announce to my friends and co-workers in MCHPS that I am stepping down from the Board of Directors. I will miss being at the helm of an organization that gets things done. That credit goes to the hard working members of the Board and support of the membership.

Never has the issue of preservation been so important in Morgan County as it at this time. Hopefully, we are about to emerge from an era of complacency, neglect, insensitivity, and even disdain for heritage conservation. The Barnard House became a symbol in 2007 of the price we might pay for having public leaders that care little, if not at all, for preserving the best of our historic structures.

I am encouraged that virtually every candidate for county office in this year's primary election was queried by the

media on preservation positions. I sense a groundswell of support for holding our public officials accountable for how they treat our structures of history. This bodes well for the near future. I will be watching with great anticipation to see the momentum carried forward, and I have every confidence it will.

I have abundant excitement about the remaining years of my life. I will be devoting considerable time and energy shepherding a growing addictions and jail ministry at Eastview Christian Church, where the love of my life, Sharon, and I worship. The leaders there recently asked me to take on the responsibilities of Elder, a role that I have now been filling for three months. I feel the gentle nudging of God, calling me to be an even more faithful servant.

I will cherish the years that I have been a part of historic preservation in Morgan County, and I pledge to remain a member of the organization and participate whenever I can be of assistance.

One Last Parting Shot – Vote for Preservation on May 5th

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Editor's note: Joe wrote this letter to the Reporter Times in response to an article about Vickie Kivett's candidacy for Morgan County Council. Vickie advocates abandoning the historic courthouse and replacing it with a new judicial building. When you go to the polls on May 5th, vote for preservation. For the article about Vickie's platform, go to: http://www.reporter-times.com/?module=displaystory&story_id=98711&format=html

I am compelled to respond to Vickie Kivett's political platform that says county government should abandon the Morgan County Courthouse in favor of a new facility to be built adjacent to the Morgan County Jail. There are so many things wrong with her position, it is hard to know where to start.

Let me begin with the domino effect of her proposal. When the county abandons the courthouse, it will trigger a stream of courthouse-related offices moving out of the downtown. Already faced with building vacancies and in some cases, building owners unwilling to maintain their properties, the Martinsville square will become a ghost downtown.

About the proposal to turn the courthouse into a museum. I'd be interested to know if that notion was based on research of towns similar in size and demographics that

have successful museums in abandoned courthouses. Morgan County has two small museums now that struggle to keep their doors open to the public. I can't take this proposal seriously on any level.

Now, do the math. Yes, maintaining a nineteenth century building is expensive, but not more so than being saddled with the costs of maintaining the building through years of trying to get office tenants or a museum to locate among the ruins of the abandoned downtown. Add to that the costs of all the new construction Vicki proposes, and you have the formula for a hefty increase in taxes to pay for the mistakes.

Vickie's comments that the courthouse has outlived its usefulness because of its age and condition reminds me of what another county official told me last year as he was sharing his views on historic preservation. He said, "if it is 50 years or older, it is inefficient and should be torn down."

Folks, we can do better than this. Our county government started the process of cut and run when the county administration building was built on South Main Street. At least it was within easy walking distance of the courthouse. But already planned is some major expansion of that facility and more homes leveled for parking.

The question is, do we want the downtown "public square" to be a vibrant, active, aesthetic, and economically productive area, or will we have to rely on some old postcards to remind us of what it once was? There are some alternatives, and we need for our politicians to wake up, study the alternatives, and start making sense.

One such alternative is to become a Main Street community. I visited one recently -- Aberdeen, Miss. -- a town of about half the size of Martinsville. Their downtown is a successful story of a public-private partnership in which they have great pride. There are hundreds of such success stories, but in order for Martinsville to be another one, we will need political, commerce, and community activist visionaries and doers that work together.

Tell Vickie, no way.

Martinsville Main Street Program Being Explored

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A subcommittee of the Chamber of Commerce's Community Development committee is researching the

Main Street program with the intent of establishing one in Martinsville as a key component in downtown revitalization. A nationwide program of the National Trust, Main Street takes a Four-Point Approach to restoring historic downtowns as follows:

1. **Design:** Enhancing the physical appearance of the commercial district by rehabilitating historic buildings, encouraging supportive new construction, developing sensitive design management systems and long-term planning.

2. **Organization:** Successful and effective Main Street programs are not-for-profit organizations with a staff solely dedicated to downtown revitalization. Cooperation from both the public and the private sector is critical to achieve visible results. The committee believes a fulltime manager guiding a corps of volunteers and working closely with city officials will be essential to Martinsville's success.

3. **Promotion:** To keep investors, visitors, and businesses coming downtown, Main Street must reshape the community perspective of downtown as a hub of activity. Successful downtown image campaigns, as well as promotional activities that build upon the community's unique heritage and culture send a consistent, compelling message promoting the downtown area. Martinsville's downtown merchants already sponsor a number of events.

4. **Economic Restructuring:** Main Street's ultimate goal is to create downtowns that are economically viable. Researching the regional market and consumer trends give Main Street organizations a realistic picture of what market mix will work for their downtown. Based on their research, Main Street organizations can begin stabilizing existing businesses and recruiting new businesses to fill the gaps.

For more information about Main Street, go to:

<http://www.mainstreet.org/> and

<http://www.in.gov/ocra/mainstreet.shtml>

2008 Cabin Fever Yard Sale and Antiques Market

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Editor's note: This article by Aaron Blevins appeared in the Reporter Times on March 9.

Overnight snows that put down four inches of the white stuff could not dampen the spirits of determined garage-salers Saturday morning.

Between 300 and 400 people braved the snow and frigid temperatures to make to it the annual Cabin Fever Yard Sale and Antique Alley at the Indiana National Guard Armory in Martinsville, according to Joe Mills, Morgan County Historic Preservation Society president.

The annual sale is a fundraiser for the preservation society, according to director Pam Badger, owner of the Candy Kitchen in Martinsville, who said donations for some items at the sale, along with booth space rental, would, they hoped, net the society around \$2,000 in funds.

But it was the thrill of finding something new that was old to someone else that brought most to the sale.

Collector Jim Brewer hunted through collections of old maps and postcards, not really searching for anything in particular. "Anything from the past, just like me," Brewer joked.

Numismatist Mike Barker, a collector of old coins, particularly pennies, said while there weren't many coins to peruse Saturday, collecting was more about the hunt than anything else.

Dish and quilt collector Patricia Wheeler agreed that the shopping for a find was half the fun. "I just love going to garage sales," she said.

Wheeler, who hadn't purchased anything yet, said she had her eye on a quilt and some older dishes after being in the door only 10 minutes.

Mills said part of the proceeds from the sale would be used to fund the society's activities, such as the Facade Improvement Grant, which offers up to \$1,500 each for owners of a residential and nonresidential structure to improve the outside appearance of a building that has some historic significance.

"It's not just an age thing," Mills said, who noted that anything with historic significance, i. e., that could be included on the National Register of Historic Places, would qualify.



Grassyfork Heritage Formed

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Grassyfork Heritage, a group of local residents intent on saving the Grassyfork office and showroom building, has recently organized. They have been in discussion about their interest with Larry Cleveland, owner of Ozark Fisheries, which acquired Grassyfork Fisheries in 1970. Mark Dollase of Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana and Joe Mills and Joanne Stuttgen are serving as consultants.

In April, the Board of Directors accepted the request of Grassyfork Heritage to become a special MCHPS subcommittee until such time that the new organization is ready to incorporate and move off on its own.

Grassyfork Heritage members are Brenda Zody, Chair, Pam McDaniel, Marie Dake, Sheila Snider, Ben Rawlins, and John Zody. As part of the agreement with MCHPS, John will be serving a turn as MCHPS Board member. Brenda can be reached at (765) 342-8627 or grassyfork@comcast.net.

To date, Grassyfork Heritage has successfully negotiated for permission to nominate the building and associated fish ponds, which comprise Farm No. 1, to the National Register of Historic Places. Joanne Stuttgen has offered to prepare the nomination at no charge. Listing will make the building eligible for a variety of grants, and it will allow Ozark to use rehabilitation tax credits in future restoration of some of the ponds.

Much of the discussion between Grassyfork Heritage and Cleveland involves a pending lawsuit by some Shireman Estates residents over the maintenance of the dam and neighborhood park areas. This matter will have to be resolved before Grassyfork Heritage can gain ownership of the building.

For many years, MCHPS has included the Grassyfork building on its list of Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties in Morgan County. For just as long, MCHPS has been part of various attempts by different parties to acquire the building. At long last, Grassyfork Heritage just may be the best-positioned to succeed at this goal. If you would like to be involved, contact Brenda Zody.

Annual Meeting
Saturday, May 17 6-8 p.m.

"Remembering Hivell's"

Wanted! memories, stories, photos, and memorabilia.



Approach to Grassyfork Gardens and Show Room, unused linen postcard, c.1940.



Grassyfork Fisheries Office and Show Room, unused linen postcard, c.1940.

News Briefs

Board of Directors

Downtown Rezoning Ordinance (Joanne Stuttgen) •

Revisions continue on the proposed ordinance to rezone downtown Martinsville as a unique historic district. A final draft is expected to be completed in May. A second public hearing is tentatively scheduled for June 23 at 7:00 p.m. Watch for updated information on the MCHPS website.

The proposed Historic Downtown District is intended to provide for the special needs of Martinsville's downtown business area of Martinsville as follows: A) protect and enhance the core downtown business district, which contains many unique and historic structures; B) promote high density development of mixed uses with storefront retail, professional office, and residential dwelling uses; and C) incorporate development and design that is pedestrian-oriented.

The proposed ordinance provides for multiple uses and addresses issues such as parking, building maintenance, signage, weeds and ornamental plantings, and guidelines for development and redevelopment.

The Historic Downtown District is bounded by Pike and Jackson Streets to the north and south, and Mulberry and Sycamore Streets to the west and east.

Martinsville Sanitarium/Kennedy Home (Joanne Stuttgen) • WellSpring struggles to find a way to finance restoration of the remaining portion of the Martinsville Sanitarium. In a recent visit to WellSpring, representatives of United Way, a major donor, expressed concern over the condition of the building, which has been vacant since the Kennedy Home closed in 2002. The sanitarium building is deemed a major liability and a threat to the building now occupied by WellSpring. To top it off, the sanitarium suffered damage in January's straight-line wind storm, with roofing material blown off and windows blown in. Interior water damage is widespread. No solutions are in sight.

Façade Improvement Grant (Del Chafey) • The application deadline for this year's grant(s) has passed. The deadline was April 30. Recipient(s) of this year's award(s) will be announced at the Annual Meeting on May 17.

Barnard House (Joe Mills) • The situation with the Barnard House is unchanged. The family interested in acquiring the house from the county, along with the Crone House, must sell its house first in order to finance the deal. This has not yet happened. Everything remains on hold.

Wilbur Schoolhouse (Randy Marsh) • The Wilbur Community Center Corporation will hold its annual rummage sale on Friday, May 16, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p. m. Donations will be accepted on Wednesday and Thursday. Contact Kathleen Hull at hullk@ccrtc.com if you have items to donate. Otherwise, shop for buried treasure at the little red schoolhouse and help WCC raise funds to continue its good and important work.

Hall School (Randy Marsh) • For the Hall Civic Association, the past four years of negotiation for title to the historic Hall School has been filled with frustration. Paul Kaiser, the current superintendent of Monroe-Gregg schools, has insisted on a 90-day release clause, which means that HCA would be given title to the property but could have it revoked at any time. HCA has refused to consent to such terms. Recently, however, a verbal agreement has been made to acquire title to only the historic school building, which would be literally separated from the 1950s addition. On the one hand, this would allow HCA to gain title to the building; on the other hand, it would leave the historic building without restroom facilities.

Suddenly, there is a new twist to the dilemma. Superintendent Kaiser is actively seeking a new position; in fact, he is now a leading candidate for the position of

superintendent of the Beech Grove schools. For HCA, the saga continues!

Fundraising (Tina Chafey) • MCHPS saw a surge in sales of books by Coach John Wooden after his late-winter fall that resulted in a broken wrist. One order of 30 copies of *My Personal Best* through the Academy of Hoosier Heritage brought in unexpected yet very welcome income to the museum, which shares the profit with MCHPS. A second large order from a college basketball coach for his team members is currently pending. Meanwhile, we await the publication of a new history of Martinsville based on vintage postcards. Due out in August, this book is a companion to the postcard history of Morgan County by Joanne Stuttgen and Curtis Tomak that came out a year ago.

Also, sales of Cat's Meow pieces continues to be steady. We have recently sold out the 2006 special edition piece depicting the Grassyfork Fisheries office and show room. More have been ordered. We had hoped to create a 2008 piece featuring Goethe Link Observatory, but Indiana University's licensing policy will make this impossible. (IU owns the Observatory.) Instead, we are planning to produce the Home Lawn Sanitarium, which will be an excellent companion to Martinsville Sanitarium/Kennedy home piece from 2007.

All items for sale by MCHPS are available at Hummingbird heaven and the Martinsville Candy Kitchen. Members receive a 20% discount.

Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana Sponsors Spring Workshops

MAY 17 DIY day *Restore Indy*, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., offers education and tips for do-it-yourself restorers and those who live in older neighborhoods, including sessions on window repair and weatherization, achieving energy efficiency, low-labor landscaping, researching your home's history, and the rules for those who live in the city's 16 locally designated historic districts. The \$25 workshop cost includes lunch. Hosted by Irvington Presbyterian Church, 55 Johnson Avenue. For reservations, call 317-639-4534 or 800-450-4534.

MAY 20 History mystery Historic Landmarks' Suzanne Stanis leads a workshop for research novices on uncovering a house's history. At the Morris-Butler House, 6-7 p.m. \$5 per member; \$10 per non-member.

MAY 24 This old house Learn to identify historic architectural styles at a workshop at the Morris-Butler House, 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m., followed by a guided walking tour through Indianapolis's Old Northside. \$17 per member; \$20 per non-member. Reservation required.

Register by May 14 and receive a \$5 discount. Call 317-636-5409.

MAY 29 Modern marvels Historic Landmarks Foundation sponsors a **free lecture** by Will Miller, *Eero, Irwin and Xenia: The Design of Two Houses*, 5:30 p.m. in Shelton Auditorium at Christian Theological Seminary. Miller, chairman and CEO of Irwin Financial Corporation, reflects on the relationship between his parents and famed Finnish architect Eero Saarinen, who designed two houses for his family. Famous for his design of the St. Louis Arch, the TWA terminal at Kennedy airport, and a dozen other iconic buildings of the 1950s and '60s, Saarinen created three buildings in Columbus, all designated National Historic Landmarks. Saarinen collaborated with J. Irwin Miller, Will's father, in bringing modern architecture to Columbus. At a reception preceding Miller's lecture, Historic Landmarks presents the annual Indianapolis Preservation Awards.

MAY 31 Way cool! Historic Landmarks Foundation stages *Back to the Future: The Mid-Century Modern Tour*, Saturday, May 31, 1-6 p.m., showcasing five homes in a northside Indianapolis area noted for fine examples of the period. Tickets are \$10 for members of Historic Landmarks, and \$12 for non-members (\$15 day of tour). Call Historic Landmarks of Indiana, 317-639-4534 or 800-450-4534 for tickets.

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