



Sainte Marie Foundation News

To celebrate our very special hometown's summer season 2008

Volume 1, Issue 3

Update from the President

Since our last newsletter (April), much has happened in Ste. Marie and with the Foundation.

The River Does It Again

The Embarras River rose to record levels on June 8, broke levees north and south of Ste. Marie (for the 1st time since 1957) and generally left farmers with no crops and major messes to clean up. The overflow even threatened the village's sewer system, as one of the breaks was very close to the Ste. Marie lagoons behind St. Mary's cemetery. The Embarras and Wabash River flooding was devastating to thousands of acres of crops in both IL and IN. Food prices are bound to be affected and local farmers took a hard hit. We wish them the best.

Foundation Receives House

The Foundation's big news: one of the historic houses in Ste. Marie was given to the Foundation in late April. Don Albers, owner of DCA Construction, Breeze, IL, bought the Lena and Harley Kirts house nine years ago to house his workers who build agricultural buildings throughout central and southern IL. Since no workers have been in the house for the last two years, Foundation leaders approached Mr. Albers last fall with the proposal to donate the deteriorating house.

Our agreement with DCA: the Foundation owns the house, but the construction company's workers have first priority to rent the house for the next five years from Monday through Friday noon, if they have a job in the area. After the five years are up, the Foundation will have full use of the house.

The 125-year-old house will require some major renovation, especially to its foundation, chimney and gutters before we even begin to tackle falling plaster inside. But volunteers have already started cleaning up the grounds and the inside. Our thanks to the many folks who volunteered on May 1 and May 30th workdays and to Hartrich Meats Catering for supplying a delicious lunch on both days. Check our website for pictures of the house and workday activities www.saintemariefoundation.org.



May 30 Workday

Back row l to r: Ron Kirts, Jack Thompson, John Michl, Maxine Calvert, Marge Thompson, Anna Lou Stone. Sitting: Brady Reis, John E. Michl, Carolyn Keller, Maurice Calvert. Front: Clayton Reis. Not pictured: Dakota and Jack Michl, Gracie Hartrich, Annette Lynch, Bill Hartrich, and Pat Reis.

We hope to make the house available to former Ste. Marie residents for the next five years on weekends and holidays – so they can stay for a day or two in Ste. Marie if they wish to do so. After five years, it may become the historical museum we are hoping to start.

The Foundation House (as we are calling it) is a gift to the Ste. Marie community and to all those who still want to maintain ties to their hometown. It is a formidable challenge we have taken on – and we hope we have your \$\$ support as we move ahead.

I'm sure some people wonder why the Foundation would want an old, dilapidated house, even as a gift. Here's an answer from the Illinois Historic Preservation website: "*It is reasonable to ask, "Why preserve?" when faced with the decision of what to do with an older property. The thought of starting fresh when faced with the problems of an older home or building is attractive in our modern society. The downside of this tendency, however, is that we lose*

part of our history every time we raze an old building. Without the old structures, cities take on a different character; neighborhoods lose their identity; we more easily forget those who went before us. Each time an old building is torn down, one of our cultural roots lets go.

When we preserve and restore our historic resources-buildings, sites, structures, objects, and landscapes-we gain a lot:

-We maintain our community's appearance and character, which gives it an identity and a personality all its own.

-We give our children a glimpse of the architecture of their forefathers and mothers.

-We save the artistic workmanship so evident in older structures."

From Illinois Historic Preservation website

We Get Letters

It is SOOO nice to receive the little notes from former Ste. Marie residents (or grandchildren) when they send us a donation:

Margo Regas (Indpls.), Jean Barthelme Regas' daughter, recalled how she loved visiting her grandmother Evelyn Barthelme in Ste. Marie. She wrote: "Love what you are doing! Thank you for helping preserve all my wonderful memories!"

Carol Cameron Martin wrote: "I have lived in TX for the past 45 years but still consider Sainte Marie as my precious childhood home. I sometimes think the world would be a better place if we lived as we did in the 40's and 50's in Sainte Marie. I always visit there when I'm in IL to see my brothers and sister. What a wonderful childhood we have to remember!"

News Notes

-Mary Jean Huss recently retired from the Sainte Marie State Bank after 62 years of service. Yes, you read that right. Sixty-two years! Mary Jean started the day World War II ended in 1945. "They declared the next day a holiday," she recalled, "and I was so disappointed because I wanted to go to work." We hope you are enjoying your retirement, Mary Jean.

-Dave and Jane Geltz hosted daughter **Jenny Geltz McIver** and her son Elliott for an 8-day visit in May. They live in the state of Washington.

-Ste. Marie resident Susan Phillips (who lives in the former Ruth Picquet house) is now the Activity

Director for Newton Rest Haven. Susan's garden is charming, so take a peek next time you are in Ste. Marie.

-And speaking of gardens, there is none more outstanding than the one belonging to Bob and Tammy Fry of Old World Reflections (the house where John and Chris Alblinger lived). Their many redbud trees bloomed gloriously in early spring. Stop by to see their six-stage water feature and the 150 different varieties of hosta that grace the lovely grounds. Bob and Tammy have kept this 1875 house in pristine condition. You can view it if you come to their annual open house, scheduled for Nov. 20, 21, 22, 28 or 29, where they display and sell their crafts (sold in prestigious stores around the country).

-Other gardens you won't want to miss: Francis Yager, 115 Columbia Street, has a variety of flowers that is truly outstanding. He loves for people to stop by. Be prepared for some really good stories about his plants. Francis also makes beautiful, hand-crafted wood furniture in his shop.

-Just south of the Yager garden is John Michl's vegetable garden, truly a work of bountiful art. John says he gives most of the vegetables to folks who don't have gardens. I'm standing in line for his tomatoes and green beans this summer! John is using his carpenter skills at the Foundation House, and we thank him for all his efforts.

-Congrats to Kathy Yager, who received the Illinois Postmaster of the Year award from the National League of Postmasters. Kathy became Ste. Marie (her hometown) postmaster in 1982 after 24 years in other area post offices. See articles about Kathy's award on the website www.saintemariefoundation.org/news.

-The music at Viola Litzelman's funeral in late May was glorious thanks to her two grandsons, **Dr. James Litzelman**, professor of music at Catholic University in Washington, DC, and **Terry Kirts**, cantor at SS Peter & Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis, IN. Both are former Ste. Marie "kids" who truly make the town proud.

-Richard Ochs serves as a director on the Illinois Farm Bureau. His work takes him across the state to various meetings, and he is often quoted in *Farm Week*, the IL Farm Bureau newspaper. He and his wife Joyce spent several weeks in Germany this spring visiting a grandson who was in a "semester abroad" program.

- Wedding anniversaries celebrated recently --
Congrats to Newton residents **Gene and Roberta Zuber** on their 50th. And happy 25th to **George and Chlorine Kirts**.

Come Back Home – Are you coming??

We need your luncheon reservations **NOW** for the August 30 reunion. We are planning a gala afternoon on Sat., August 30, starting with a buffet lunch at the Hideout from 11:30 – 2:30. There will be free fun inflatables for the kids to bounce around in, a simple but fun parade (get those golf carts and bicycles decorated NOW) at 2 p.m. and tours of Ste. Marie that will astound you with some good ol' time stories. The Foundation House will be open for tours (sorry, no staying there yet – it's just not ready). And the American Legion will be open in the evening if you want to visit with old friends for a bit longer.

We're looking for some live music. Anyone have any suggestions? We can supply a keyboard, sound system, and a bassist. Anyone else out there to fill in? Call Maxine Calvert 618-455-3227.

Send in your reservation today. We need to know numbers, folks, so let us hear from you now. Your lunch tickets will be held at the door for you.

And don't forget to come to the St. Mary's Picnic the next day. What a weekend it will be!

Please reserve Buffet Lunch Tix:

___ Adults - \$9 (at door \$11)

___ Children under 12 - \$4 (at door \$5)

Make check payable to *Sainte Marie Foundation* and send to Foundation address (or in enclosed envelope) with your name, address, e-mail and phone. **Due no later than August 22.**

Can He Fix It? Yes, He Can

Ok, so he's not Bob the Builder – but he's certainly the next best thing. **Larry Hahn** does remodeling and construction in Jasper and nearby counties, concentrating on residential projects. He recently finished a corporate office (a renovation of the old broom factory in Newton) and has done work at the huge CIPS power plant in Jasper County, among other business projects. He's generous with his time too – he built all the computing desks for St. Thomas School without charging for his labor, and he has proved invaluable as an advisor on the condition of the Foundation House (thank you, Larry).

Larry's mom (**Dorothy**) and sisters, **Annette** and **Kathy**, still live in Ste. Marie. Larry's son **Corey** assists his father and just received a scholarship award to attend Indiana State University in the fall to major in Construction Management. And congrats to **Larry and Denise** on their recent 25th Anniversary. Our best to all.

From Ste. Marie to the Ivy League



Caleb Bradham, a resident of Ste. Marie since he was seven years old, has big plans – and the grade point average to accomplish them. A May graduate of NCHS, Caleb's 4.7 grade point average and impressive activities (National Honor Society, Math Club, etc.) have launched him into the University of Pennsylvania on a full scholarship (that even includes two trips home each year as well as room and board).

“This application was to my ‘this-will-never-happen-school,’” says Caleb. “I also applied at the U. of I. (accepted) and St Louis University (accepted). But Pennsylvania was my first choice. The freshman class of 2400 was selected from over 23,000 applicants.”

Caleb has worked part time for **Hartrich's Meats** for the past four years. He also worked at **The Gas Station** for the past year. He hopes to major in philosophy, political science and/or economics and eventually go on to law school and to a career in business.

“I couldn't have done this without the support of the Ste. Marie community. Hartrichs have been so encouraging – and so has everyone in town. I even get little congratulatory notes from the postmaster every once in a while!”

We wish Caleb the best and look forward to hearing about his experiences out east.

Teresa Ochs Ikemire now lives in Oblong where she does mural painting among other creative endeavors. A few years ago, she wrote a poem, CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF GROWING UP IN STE. MARIE for her parents, Pat (now deceased) and Betty Ochs. The poem is a thank you to her parents, but here are some excerpts about Ste. Marie in the '60's/'70's:

*.....Kraus's owned the saw mill, Donnie Ablinger ran the bank up town,
Bob Swisher owned the gas station, we'd go past all these places as we walked around.
Bud Stone owned the dozers and Joe Goss worked the township roads,
While Lightening Kocher ran the Case place where the tractors and equipment were sold.*

*Ablinger and Kirt's Hardware, the trucks lined up at Hartrich's Feed Mill,
Telling ghost stories at the cemetery, oh my, what a chill.
The Wesleyan Church, St. Mary's Church, the Labor Day Picnic fun,
Bingo, good food, quilts and more, dolls and raffle prizes to be won.*

*Visiting friends and going places, like Sunday school and the stock car races,
Walking to school and home again, about everyone around would be our kin.
Georges Tavern, Mac's Tavern, Burgund's Bar, American Legion,
We couldn't wait for the turkey shoot which was held just once a season.
Barthelme's Store, Hartrich's Store, walking through the high waters,
Extra food and extra beds for neighboring sons and daughters.*

*Broken hearts or stomach pain, or playing in the side ditch when it would rain,
The Mission House, the Christmas plays, Mrs. Bigard and the Nuns from the old school days
Down the river road we'd fly like a breeze, to play in the houses we built in the trees.
When we'd get too many guppies, we'd just flush; things back then were not in such a rush.....*

Thanks, Teresa, for the memories.

The Sainte Marie Foundation newsletter is published quarterly. Send comments to writer/editor Pat Reis, patreisprpr@yahoo.com. The Foundation is a tax exempt 501(c)(3) organization, duly recognized as an Illinois charitable corporation. Donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

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See www.saintemariefoundation.org
for current news & updates

**Don't forget:
Send in your reservation
NOW for the Come Back Home
Reunion on August 30, 2008**