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Sainte Marie Foundation News

To celebrate our very special hometown's summer season 2009

Volume 2, Issue 3

COMING UP

Hope To See You on Sept. 5

Last year it was called "Come Back Home." This year we've changed the name to **Hometown Celebration**, but the format will be the same – just a great time to welcome all former Ste. Marie residents, their families and friends to a lively event.

You have the brochure (sent in the spring newsletter) so you know that we are starting off the day with a 5K run at 8 a.m. (Separate registration required; send to Annette Hahn Kirts). The buffet lunch first seating is at 11:30 a.m., followed by another seating at 12:15 and another at 1 p.m. **Get your reservations in early and specify the time.** Cost: \$10 adults; \$5 children under 12. Prices at door are \$12 and \$6. Call 618-455-3227 for a registration form or check website.

Visit the bank

Sometime between the Run and lunch, take some time to visit the lobby of the Sainte Marie Bank (8:30 – noon), where you will find paintings of old Ste. Marie done by **Helen Keller Graham** (see story on p.2). **Don Ablinger** has had these commissioned over the years, and they tell a wonderful story about the history of our town.

PIX (caption): *Kathy Hahn Slankard views a Helen Graham oil painting in the bank lobby.*

See the wedding pictures

The wedding picture display is going to be priceless. We have pictures from as early as the late 1800's. Where possible, we are putting families together, so get your pictures in NOW. We will accept them on Sept. 5, but would prefer to have them in advance so that they can be displayed appropriately. Scan and e-mail to lookamazing@consultant.com. Remember to include date and location of wedding, names and your current address.

Parade with Mary Hartrich, Parade Marshall

Don't miss the 2 p.m. non-motorized parade. Pick up an entry form at the Post Office and decorate your

wagon, bicycle, golf cart, yourself and/or a friend, whatever. You might win a prize – and for sure you will have some fun.

Marvel at the artists Ste. Marie has produced

We have more artists coming: **Phyllis Hartrich Moraga** (paintings, etching, sketches) and **Elizabeth Hartrich-Thacker** (who designed and executed the Burl Ives memorial stone at his grave near Willow Hill) and Elizabeth's grandson, **Maverick Goss** (pastels, charcoals, pencil drawings) and maybe some other talented Hartrich family artists. **Deb Ritz Reich** who owns **Bumblebee Inks** in Newton will bring paintings, floor cloths, graphite portraits, glass etching, etc. for her display. **Cindy Sheridan Carlson**, Mahomet, will be there with her watercolors. **Helen Keller Graham** is coming (see story below). Other interested artists should contact chairperson **Kathy Yager** 618-455-3521 (work) for information.

Foundation House Open 4 -6 p.m.

Here's something special!! **Joan Kirts Heneberry** and **Ron Kirts** will be your hosts at the Foundation House Open House from 4 – 6 p.m. Both grew up in this grand old house and will be happy to share their stories about what it was like when they were children.

Thanks for Donations for Foundation House

Donating \$200 for the final sets of table and four chairs:

Joan Kirts Heneberry

Josephine Spitzer

Jud/Sandra Cameron

Other donations include the following:

-**Richard and Joyce Ochs** donated a much-needed, new front storm door.

-**Mark Handzel** gave the Foundation a muzzle-loading gun that his father, Bill Handzel, purchased at the 1962 Quasiquicentennial auction. The auctioneer said the gun was fired at the dedication of Ste. Marie.

-**Bonnie Beaucherie Jackson** donated an antique sick-call kit used by St. Mary's priests in the late 1800's.

-**Dave and Scott Reis** gave \$\$ to replace the dining room window that has been a problem for us.

Helen Graham Donates Art

The Foundation has received a much cherished gift from an artist who grew up just outside of Ste. Marie. Helen Graham is giving us fourteen 8”x10” pencil drawings of women who served on the 1923 Golden Jubilee Committee for Father Virnich (Rev. Peter Joseph Virnich). Helen made the drawings in 1982 from a souvenir copy of the booklet* – “I loved those ladies in the big hats,” she says.

When she was young growing up on her family’s farm southwest of Ste. Marie, **Helen Keller Graham** thought everyone could draw like she did. “My mother drew; so did my sister **Dorothy** (Hahn). I did not know I had a special talent,” she says. One of four daughters of Joe and Minnie (Stark) Keller, Helen never knew then that she would be the recipient of many awards and much recognition for her artwork throughout her life.

How did she start, this mainly self-taught artist? When she was a teenager, she bought a \$1.19 set of oil paints and started painting. Her future husband gave her a much grander set of paints a few years later, and she started painting seriously. But after marriage, three children arrived, and there was a farm which required her attention. “I never thought too much about my art until people started coming to ask me to do a painting for them,” she admits. “Wow, that was something!”

She still lives, at 87, in the house she and her husband bought some 60 years ago – about four miles east of Hunt City. For some thirty years, she appeared at numerous art fairs, loading her gear and artwork into a pick-up truck to set up and display her work. No longer able to do it, (“It’s hard work,” she admits), she has shoeboxes full of ribbons, awards and other recognition to show for her efforts.

We will be displaying the pencil drawings at the Sept. 5 event. And for one last time, Helen says she is going to bring her art fair set-up and display her art with the other artists. “I can’t miss this chance to be back in my hometown with younger artists,” she says. We welcome her back!

Storm Impacts Area and Foundation

On June 21, a tornado or severe wind did some serious damage around Ste. Marie (but, thankfully, not IN town). **Julius Reis’** 1915 barn collapsed. Several hog building at **Borgic Farms**, southwest of town, were damaged. **Bob and Donna Keller**

reported that their dog was missing for a day – probably off to the land of Oz, Donna said. Other farm buildings were damaged in various ways.

(PIX) caption: *A lonely silo and the roof is all that is left of the 1915 Julius Reis barn that collapsed in the windstorm.*

The storm had an impact on the Foundation: **DCA Construction**, Breeze, IL, who gave us the house last year, brought in an eight-man crew to repair the Borgic buildings. According to our agreement when we accepted the house, DCA can use the house for the next five years whenever they have a job in the area. We welcome them back. They are a very self-sufficient group – bring their own beds and bedding, towels, kitchenware, etc. They pay for weekly cleaning services, and the Foundation receives a modest bit of money besides. It is good to have people in the house from Monday to Friday.

We can use the house on weekends if we wish. Several families have booked for Saturday stays, with the understanding that they must leave the house as they found it (it is cleaned on Fridays) so it will be ready for the construction crew on Monday. Call **Sandy Hartrich** to book the house: 618-455-3575/ sjh@psbnewton.com.

An Elegant Old House for Sale

Don Hartrich is selling the old, “Free Classic Queen Anne” house and six acres of land (some wooded, with pond and creek) just south of the Foundation House. Built by lumberman Lease Bolander in the early 1900’s, the house has been unoccupied for a number of years and is in dire need of repairs. Don thought about tearing down the house, but was convinced by Amish carpenters who gave him repair estimates that it was truly a house that should be saved. It has virgin timber inside – beautiful woodwork, a stunning stairway, a stained glass window, a 3rd floor attic that is astounding. Some Ste. Marie residents think it is the most valuable house to save in Ste. Marie.

As preservationists, we hope there is someone out there who would LOVE to restore an old house (and own all that great property). Call Don at 618-455-3548 for further details about the sale.

News Notes

-Garage Sale report – We made about \$691 on the Garage Sale on May 23. Thanks to all the donated items and to our loyal volunteers who worked to make it a success, especially chair Dottie Valbert Rumpp.

-We say fare-thee-well to several good friends who have passed on: **Jack Shedelbower** (74, Newton) in late June, and **Loretta Zuber** (99) in early July.

-Seen in town: **Janet Faltemier Sitkewich** spent one day in Ste. Marie in late June, visiting with friends and family. Her one request: she wanted to see the Foundation House. Our super-volunteer **Anna Lou Stone** happily took her on a tour. Come home anytime, Janet! And next time, plan to stay at the Foundation House.

-**Garden Walk**, June 20 – The Community Club reports that about 80 people donated \$5 each to see the seven gardens. It was a muggy, hot HOT day so we were grateful to all who came. The Foundation did publicity on the event and even managed to snare a big story in the **Effingham Daily News**. The Foundation gave canvas bags to the participating gardeners, including **Susan Phillips** (Event Chairperson), **Maurice/Maxine Calvert**, **Bob/Tammy Fry**, **Annette Lynch**, **Leila Rennie**, **Sue Wheat**, and **Francis/Judy Yager**. The gardens were beautiful, even though a heavy rain the night before threatened to swamp everything in sight. Thanks to **Robert Rumpp** for taking photos of all.

PIX

Caption: *Sue Wheat's grandsons Braden and Mason Mitchell, Sullivan, help water her garden.*

-The family of **Mary (Mattingly) Hartrich** has big plans for Sept. 5. Since Mary has the honor of being our **2009 Parade Marshall**, her children are planning a Mattingly reunion for all her siblings and their families. Fifty people have been invited. We hope a few of them march in the parade as Mary's entourage.

-**Caleb Bradham**, home after completing his first year at the University of Pennsylvania, is working at **The Gas Station** for the summer. He reports he is looking forward to his second year. Congrats, Caleb.

-Congratulations to **Gene and Madonna (Hahn) Shackman** who celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary in June.

Foundation House Update

Since our last newsletter, the four rooms upstairs have been renovated, thanks mainly to the hardy volunteers who finished stripping wallpaper (thanks, **Annette Lynch!**), filled holes in plaster (thanks, **Maurice Calvert**, **Ron Kirts**, **Bob Helregel**), painted walls (Thanks **Maurice and Maxine Calvert**, **Anita Steber**, **Anna Lou Stone** and cleaned (thanks everyone!). **Ron Kirts** put in a ceiling fan at the top of the stairs and new light fixtures in the upstairs bath. So the upstairs is in very good shape once again

We had professional help with several rooms that were beyond our volunteers' capacity. **Larry Hahn** repaired holes in the fascia (goodbye to all that wildlife who were coming and going through those holes!). He also replaced plaster with wallboard in several of the upstairs rooms (the middle room was one we were told we would have to gut, but **Maurice Calvert** put in at least 60 plaster washers and screws to re-attach plaster to lathe on sidewalls, so that new wallboard on the ceiling could finish it off). Professional plasterer **Jim Robards** did the front upstairs (south) bedroom in late June. We still need to prime and paint it, but have taken some time off in July. I think we volunteers just needed some R & R after all the work we did during the winter and spring! We hope to finish before the Open House on Sept. 5.

We are pleased that DCA has returned the old clawfoot tub to the upstairs bath. Thank you, **Don Albers!**

Outside the House

The Village Board approved a new sidewalk and curb for the front of the house from their sidewalk improvement fund, so we have a new look in front. **Maxine Calvert** hung a basket of flowers on the front light post. The old porch columns now support containers of flowers. It all looks smashing.

Carolyn Litzelman Kirts planted flowers outside the north kitchen window – a place where Lena Kirts always had a flower garden. **Jack Thompson** spent almost an entire day in the yard -- mowing, trimming, cutting back branches and shrubs, cleaning up piles of refuse with his tractor, etc. We send a big thank you, Jack!

Thanks also to volunteers who are mowing the lawn this summer – **George Kirts** (organizer), **Bob Helregel**, **John Michl**, and **Jack Thompson** are our regulars.

What's Coming Up?

WORKDAYS AT THE FOUNDATION HOUSE - put these on your calendar!

August 28 & 29 - Finish inside painting and prepare for Hometown Celebration Open House

September 25-27 - Outside work on landscaping

October 2-4 - Winterizing Party. Join us as we prepare the house for winter.

Newsletter Via E-Mail

As printing and mail costs increase, we are looking for ways to get the newsletter to you in a more efficient manner. If you have e-mail, we would like to send it to you that way. The advantage: you get the news sooner (usually takes several weeks to get it through the printing and mailing process) and the pictures are in color (black ink is less expensive for the paper copies). Let us know if we can take you off the mailing label list – though you may still receive at least one postal mailing from us each year. Send a note to Pat Reis at patreisprpr@yahoo.com.

For those of you who live in Ste. Marie, you can either get the newsletter via e-mail or pick up a copy at various places around town.

Our Finances

You may wonder why we are always asking for \$\$ donations. The Foundation is a non-profit organization – dependent on donations for its survival. Perhaps if we had not accepted the Foundation House, we would be in a better place financially today. Our renovation expenses, even with all the volunteer labor, have been high. Energy costs at the house challenge us. Then there are taxes and insurance. And repairs. But it's a great house!!

This past year, we have not done much with our historical mission, concentrating instead on getting the house to a level where it is safe, secure and clean. Our historical interviews are on hold. The “museum” is in the concept stage for the time being. We have applied for some small grants but are finding that other non-profits with longer histories and greater needs are first in line for the smaller amounts of money that is available.

We believe the Foundation has made a positive impact on Sainte Marie, and we thank everyone who has supported our vision. Just know that you will continue to get requests from us – either for donations or volunteer time. We thank you for your understanding and your continued support.

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.

**Sainte Marie Foundation
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**See www.saintemariefoundation.org
for current news & updates**

**See you Sept. 5 at the
Hometown Celebration!**