Letter from the president . . .

Greetings neighbors,

Since the last newsletter much has been going on in the neighborhood. We had our annual meeting and new board members were added and the executive committee was elected. On page 5 of this newsletter is a complete list of board members. I appreciate everyone coming to the meeting and all the individuals who agreed to serve and make FGHD an even better place to live in Terre Haute.

Over the past couple of weeks the neighborhood has come alive with flowering trees, shrubs and an array of colorful plants. In fact, I think that the colors this spring have been the best that I have seen in years. Much of this spring color has been the result of people working to make the neighborhood more beautiful. We need to thank TREES Inc. for planting street trees and dogwoods over a number of years, and to thank the neighbors who were willing to adopt these trees. I would also be remiss if I didn’t mention all of the daffodils and other flowers that have been purchased and planted by many of you.

Our spring cleanup is Saturday, May 2. So, by the time you get this newsletter, FGHD may have completed yet another spring clean up. Your willingness to participate in this annual spring and fall neighborhood cleanup is important if we want to maintain the beauty of the area. Special thanks go to Tom Burkett and Colleen Chestnut for coordinating this effort yet again, and to Republic Services for their generous contribution of dumpsters.

Within a couple of weeks we will receive our new street signs with the FGHD logo on them. Hopefully you had an opportunity to see the one that was temporarily placed at the intersection of S. 6th and Washington for your review. The city’s Street Department will put up the signs as soon as they arrive from the sign company. These signs will better define the boundaries of our large historic neighborhood. Also, thanks to the generosity of residents and landowners we were able to cover the cost of approximately half of the intersections.

Thanks to the hard work of neighbors Mark Frederick and DeVere Woods we will soon have an analysis of the distribution and types of crimes that have occurred over the past year or so. Once we have this study available we should be able to develop strategies to reduce crime and be better positioned to work with the Terre Haute Police Department.

Please remember that the first Saturday in June (June 6, 2009) is when we will have our neighborhood yard sale. I know that the past couple of years there has been rain on this day, but hopefully we will have good weather and this neighborhood-wide yard sale will attract many people into our neighborhood. Contact Kaylynn Sanders if you have questions.

Enjoy the summer.

. . . Steve Pontius

Status Report from Crime Task Force

By Dr. DeVere Woods, Assoc. Professor, ISU Dept. of Criminology and Criminal Justice

In December, I requested from Chief Plasse, Terre Haute Police Department, Farrington’s Grove crime data for the past year. Because I planned to use students to assist me with the first phase of the project, I told him we did not need any information that would identify individuals (names, date of births, telephone numbers, etc.). This is an exploratory project that will focus on addresses, crime types, dates and times. Chief Plasse promptly provided 640 pages of central dispatch call data. My students and I have begun analyzing that data during this past semester.

The first phase of the project involved data entry. In January my students and I began typing the 640 pages of data into a spreadsheet. Once the data entry was completed, the data set had to be checked to ensure the entries were accurate and to eliminate any duplicate entries from the original data pages. The data is now recorded in an electronic format ready to analyze.

The next phase of the project will be to explore the data to determine an overview of the crime in Farrington’s Grove. There are over 2700 call entries to analyze for last year. When finished, the Security and Crime Taskforce should be better able to propose measures to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood.

Upcoming Events

FGHD, Inc. board meetings First Tuesday of every month except December at 7:00 p.m. at the Former Crawford School Park in south lot, come in back door and up to second floor. Everyone is welcome!

Semi-annual Clean-up Day Saturday May 2, 2009

Neighborhood-wide yard sale Saturday, June 6, 2009

Annual Ice Cream Social Block Party—Sunday, August 30, 2009
The History of Farrington’s Grove—Starting with 1200 South 6th Street

By Marie Pontius

A while ago, Charlie Lee suggested we form a History Committee in the neighborhood, and while we haven’t done anything formal about such a committee, several people have been researching information on their own houses and on the neighborhood in general. As time allows, I have spent some wonderful hours talking with reference librarian and long-time ‘Grove resident, David Lewis.

My intent is to compile a history of Farrington’s Grove – its houses, people, and interesting stories – that will eventually be posted on our website, www.farringtonsgrove.org. Current residents, prospective residents, realtors and other interested people will be able to access this information in a searchable format. That’s the plan.

If you have done your own research I would appreciate your forwarding it to me and I’ll add it to the inventory. I can now scan flat photos, which gave me those you see on this page. To start with, I’ve found out some very interesting information about the houses and people who occupied 1200 South 6th Street — my home.

There may have been two houses that preceded the current (Homer Talley) house at this location. According to David Lewis, Henry D. Williams built the first house around 1852; a house that later came to be known as "Rowdy Hall." Mr. Williams came from Weathersfield, Connecticut and had the biggest pork packing business in town. About 20 years later, in 1871, a young, wealthy Baltimorean, Samuel McDonald, moved to Terre Haute and bought 1200 South 6th Street and a farm in Lost Creek Township. It was apparently his activities that gave the house the moniker of "Rowdy Hall." He was a handsome young fellow, very courteous and gentlemanly when sober, but drink transformed him into a demon. . . . His home was Rowdy Hall, where unbridled license ruled. He was indifferent to public opinion and flaunted his vices in public view as he did his disreputable companions, male and female. After a severe spell of illness he formed good resolutions and moved all of his Sixth Street belongings to his farm. . . . [T]he last few weeks of his life was a prolonged debauch, and he died alone except for the hired help in his house, in the most dreary and neglected surroundings, after a wild fevered delirium." He died August 20, 1877 at the age of 28. An additional note: David Lewis tells me that Sam McDonald was said to race chariots up and down 6th Street pulled by his racehorses; an interesting image. The students would love it.

After Sam McDonald’s death, Col. Richard W. Thompson bought Rowdy Hall at 1200 South 6th Street. (Still not the one I live in.) Col. Thompson, originally from Culpeper, Virginia, moved to Indiana around 1834. “He had seen Jefferson, Madison, Monroe and Lafayette, had heard their voices, and as a boy had leaned against the knees of Revolutionary veterans and heard their tales.” He became a lawyer, was elected to the Indiana legislature and senate, where he served as president pro tem. He served for four years on President Hayes’ cabinet as Secretary of the Navy. In 1880 he became chairman of the American Department of the Panama Canal Company and after his resignation

Residence of Col. R. W. Thompson and Sam McDonald aka Rowdy Hall retired to his home in Terre Haute, where he spent his last years. “At his home at 1200 South Sixth Street, one of the famous landmarks of the city, he lived in his library among his books, surrounded by his family and friends." He died on February 9, 1900.

Here’s where I have some gaps in my knowledge. Rowdy Hall was reportedly "cut up," not demolished, and its pieces became parts of at least two other homes south of Farrington’s Grove, one in the 2200 block of South Center and one in the 2200 block of South 7th Street. I don’t know when this happened. There may have been a house on the site after Rowdy Hall and before the Homer Talley House. Again, more research is needed.

Homer and Carrie Talley built their colonial revival, Pennsylvania fieldstone house in 1928. Homer and his brothers owned and operated the Talley Coal Company. Homer died in 1935 of a heart attack in England en route from South Africa. When Carrie died in 1951, their son, Delbert and his family inherited the house. Delbert and Kitty’s daughter, Joan, was married in the house in 1951. Then in the mid 1960s, Delbert and Kitty sold the house to the Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity and it saw 35 years of hard use by about 40 guys living in the house each year. It has surprised me how many now-upstanding members of the Terre Haute community lived in this house as students, and helped to tear it up. When, in the winter of 2000, the fraternity could no longer afford to maintain the house and the heat broke down, the alumni housing corporation sold the house to the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana (HLFI). HLFI owned the house until September 2002 when Steve and Marie Pontius bought the house and renovated it. We moved in July 2003 and continue to live there.

Homer Talley House c. spring 1929 (note the car)

*Source: Greater Terre Haute and Vigo County, by C.C. Oakey, 1908
**The House with Nobody in it**

by poet Joyce Kilmer (1866-1918) submitted by Tom Balduf

Whenever I walk to Suffern along the Erie track
I go by a poor old farmhouse with its shingles broken and black.
I suppose I've passed it a hundred times, but I always stop for a minute
And look at the house, the tragic house, the house with nobody in it.

I never have seen a haunted house, but I hear there are such things;
That they hold the talk of spirits, their mirth and sorrowings.
I know this house isn't haunted, and I wish it were, I do;
For it wouldn't be so lonely if it had a ghost or two.

This house on the road to Suffern needs a dozen panes of glass,
And somebody ought to weed the walk and take a scythe to the grass.
It needs new paint and shingles, and the vines should be trimmed and tied;
But what it needs most of all is some people living inside.

If I had a lot of money and all my debts were paid
I'd put a gang of men to work with brush and saw and spade.
I'd buy that place and fix it up the way it used to be
And I'd find some people who wanted a home and give it to them free.

Now, a new house standing empty, with staring window and door,
Looks idle, perhaps, and foolish, like a hat on its block in the store.
But there's nothing mournful about it; it cannot be sad and lone
For the lack of something within it that it has never known.

But a house that has done what a house should do, a house that has sheltered life,
That has put its loving wooden arms around a man and his wife,
A house that has echoed a baby's laugh and held up his stumbling feet,
Is the saddest sight, when it's left alone, that ever your eyes could meet.

So whenever I go to Suffern along the Erie track
I never go by the empty house without stopping and looking back,
Yet it hurts me to look at the crumbling roof and the shutters fallen apart,
For I can't help thinking the poor old house is a house with a broken heart.

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**Across the Backyard Fence**

**By Anne Burkett** (moanbeach@yahoo.com) send Anne your news

We were glad to welcome Pat and John McIntyre to our March Meeting. John originally comes from Alaska, but they were living in another neighborhood before buying the house on South 6th. They moved into Farrington's Grove as it was more convenient to St Mary of the Woods College where John is the chair of the Music and Theater Department and Pat is an assistant professor of Theology and Philosophy. So glad you have joined us in our neighborhood.

Mixed beagle, "Jimmy Chestnut" made the front page of the TH Tribune Star, having been shopping at the new Dog Bakery-LOVE OF DOGS- at 4th and Margaret, with his mistress, Colleen Chestnut. He looked as happy as dog could be. And a lucky dog at that with his Puppy treat on a stick.

We would like to extend a welcome to Kristin and Shane Carter with son David, to the best neighborhood in Terre Haute. They bought Jay Gatrell's former home on South 6th Street in December. (I'm slow getting around, especially in the winter) They came here from Ohio, and Kristin originally comes from Taiwan. David attends Farrington Grove School and Shane is the Interlink Director at ISU.

Mike and Jackie Carrell just returned from their son, Matt's, graduation from Navy Boot Camp. He received a medal for Sharp Shooter and was his division's leader. Also his division was entered into the Hall of Fame at Great Lakes for achieving the highest score ever, Way to go, Matt!

It made us proud to see our neighbor as well as our City Council Pres., Todd Nation, participating in the First Homeward Bound Walk last Sunday on the National Heritage Trail. It was a very cold and rainy day, but there were some 200 walkers that made the trek. Thanks to Todd for representing the City Council as well as Farrington Grove. Also congratulations to Todd and Pete and Melony Sacopulos for their award for renovating their downtown building so well.

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Jim Bopp’s mother, Helen Marguerite Hope Bopp, on April 14. Our sympathy and prayers go out to Jim, Tina and their family.
Status Report on the New Street Signs

I hope you saw the sample street sign posted at the corner of Washington and S. 6th. If not, you will soon see new signs on all the street corners in Farrington’s Grove. You can still sponsor two signs for an intersection for $60. Send Marie Pontius an email or give her a call at 478-0686 if you would like one or more intersections. Checks should be made payable to FGHD and sent to PO Box 9281, Terre Haute 47808. At last report, we have received $1,385 for 22 of the 58 intersections. If you haven’t sent in your sponsorship donation, don’t wait.

May is Historic Preservation Month, 2009 – This Place Matters! By Tom Balduf, HLFI

What, one might ask, do Frank Lloyd Wright and shovels have to do with one another? Well, of course, they are both “found” on the National Trust list of 11 Most Endangered Historic Places for 2009. Wright’s Unity Temple in Oak Park, Illinois and the Ames Shovel Shops in Easton, Massachusetts are facing challenges, the Temple of structural deterioration and the shops of unsympathetic rehabilitation. The Unity Temple stands alone in its importance as an architectural icon, and the shops represent the industrial architectural infrastructure of the nineteenth century United States. Easton is also home to a wonderful collection of buildings designed by H. H. Richardson, another of our truly great architects, as well as landscape designs by Frederick Law Olmsted, while Oak Park hosts other examples of Wright’s work.

The List of 11 is issued each year by the Trust (2009 is the 22nd such recognition) to bring the nation’s attention to historic places that are unique, irreplaceable and often very vulnerable to structural deterioration, cultural sidelining and deferred maintenance. These places speak directly of the culture of building in this country, the value of historic styles, the context of their times, and the memorialization of buildings, sites, and objects that have real meaning to people and communities.

Also on the list is the former South Dakota State Hospital for the Insane in Yankton (the Human Services Center). The Center is especially meaningful to me, as I have seen the old State Hospital in Traverse City, Michigan transformed from a hulking ruin to a vibrant mixed-use community of apartments, shops, offices, galleries, a bakery and winery, thanks to the dedication of a developer who is passionate about historic preservation and community members who decided they would not accept the loss of their old State Hospital, its arboretum and grounds.

While a Queen Anne house or 1920s bungalow in Terre Haute does not communicate the impact of a sprawling hospital grounds, it is still important to the historic integrity, quality of life, and urban fabric of the Farrington’s Grove Historic District or Collett Park or our other historic neighborhoods. As the urbanist Jane Jacobs said: “Old ideas can sometimes use new buildings. New ideas must use old buildings.” Our historic downtowns and neighborhoods can and do thrive and grow new vibrancy through preservation, rehabilitation and reuse of existing historic buildings, residences, and other resources. In other words, while we certainly need not reject new architecture, some of which is highly desirable, we should first make use of what is already available and where irreplaceable, high quality materials already exist.

The List of 11 has been released just before Historic Preservation Month in May. This is the perfect time to recognize and commemorate the historic places that mean so much to us and our community, as well as the individuals and groups who make their protection and continued use possible. Historic preservation provides broad long-term benefits (aesthetic, cultural, and economic) and in these times of dwindling resources it is smart and environmentally responsible stewardship to make full use of the energy that is already embodied in historic places. After all, THIS PLACE MATTERS, whether it is Easton, Oak Park, Yankton, Traverse City, or your own historic house in the Grove. Our blocks of fine old houses, front porches, sidewalks, and trees are the threads that make up the historic quilt that is Farrington’s Grove. We unravel those threads to our own peril.

Tom Balduf  west@historiclandmarks.org
HISTORICAL SOCIETY HAPPENINGS

By Barbara Carney

The Vigo County Historical Society has two exciting events on the horizon! We invite residents of the Farrington’s Grove neighborhood to participate and enjoy these with us.

On Thursday, May 7th, the Society has chartered a Turner Coach to take 47 passengers to Indianapolis where we will begin our day at the 48th annual Decorators’ Show House. The Show House is located this year in Carmel. We will tour the house and have a “Dutch treat” lunch in a spring-like setting on the grounds. The Decorator’s Show House is a combined effort of interior and landscape designers in and around the Indianapolis area. It is always sponsored by the St. Margaret’s Guild with proceeds going to benefit Wishard Hospital. Both the house and gardens promise to be spectacular.

We will then visit the Museum of Miniature Houses, also in Carmel. There, an exhibit of antique and contemporary dollhouses, room boxes, vignettes and accessories await us. Our group will leave from the Historical Museum in the morning at 9:30 and be back in Terre Haute about 5 p.m. The cost of the day, excluding lunch, is $55.00.

Our second event takes place on the evening of Saturday, May 30th. This is a fundraising party at the Hulman Lodge, east of Terre Haute, across from Rose Hulman Institute of Technology. The setting alone is spectacular, but there’s more. The party is being called “The 1930s Gatsby Celebration” and the 1930s is the era being celebrated. Music for dancing or listening to the big band sounds will be provided by the Men of Note and Claudia and a delicious assortment of food will be catered by the Saratoga Restaurant. We look forward to seeing you at this marvelous gala under the stars. Tickets for this entertaining evening are $50.00.

Reservations for both these activities may be made by calling the Historical Museum at 235-9717.


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**Farrington’s Grove Historical District, Inc. – Board**

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Farrington’s Grove Historical District, Inc.  2009 Membership Application

Make checks payable to FGHD, Inc. and mail to FGHD, Inc. P.O. Box 9281, Terre Haute, IN 47808

I have included a tax deductible donation of $ ______________

Name(s): ____________________________________________________________________________

Address: ____________________________________________________________________________

City: ___________________________ State: ___________________ Zip: ___________________________

Telephone: _____________________ email: _______________________________________________________________________________________

Total amount enclosed: ______________

$200   Benefactor membership
$100   Corporate membership
$35    Patron membership
$20    Regular membership