PRESERVATION RACINE, INC.

NEWSLETTER FALL 2013

2013 TOUR OF HISTORIC PLACES

The booklet included with this newsletter describes our 38th Annual Tour of Historic Places to be held on Sunday, September 29. The tour is titled ***Yesterday's Tomorrows***. The sites are:

The Alice Foley House, 1501 Park Avenue - 1915
The Miss Stella Sears House, 1413 College Avenue - 1911
The Edward and Helen J. Hoernel House, 1632 South Wisconsin Avenue - 1899
The Dr. Elizabeth Allen Steffen House, 1225 Main Street - 1956
The Thomas P. Hardy House, 1319 Main Street - 1905
The William and Katherine Spencer House, 1530 Main Street - 1905
Holy Communion Lutheran Church, 2000 West Sixth Street - 1928
Luther College, 2000 West Sixth Street - 1902

The sites can be visited in any order during the tour hours of noon to 5:30 p.m. Trained guides will be stationed at each site to give pertinent information regarding history and architecture. You will have an opportunity to view a private collection of historic Horlick Malted Milk Company memorabilia at Holy Communion Lutheran Church; for additional information on this exhibit, please refer to the tour booklet. Refreshments will be served at the church.

Day of tour tickets are $15 and will be available at Main and 14th Streets. Advance tickets are $12 and can be purchased at the following locations:

Borzynski's Farm and Floral Market 11600 Washington Avenue, Sturtevant
First Weber Group 1100 North Main Street
Larsen's Bakery 3311 Washington Avenue
Milaeger's 4838 Douglas Avenue or 8717 Hwy. 11, Sturtevant
Miller's Flowers 219 Sixth Street
O & H Bakery 1841 Douglas Avenue or 4006 Durand Avenue
Personal Touch Flowers by Julie 5445 Spring Street or 4060 North Main Street
Uncorkt 240 Main Street

Forty-Year History of Preservation Racine, Inc.

In 1972 The Junior League of Racine invited interested citizens to attend an environmental aesthetics seminar. For approximately a decade, the national Junior League leadership had been involved in the emerging preservation awareness and Main Street movements and the timing in Racine was propitious. In 1973, from the interest generated by the seminar, the Junior League of Racine formed Racine Urban Aesthetics Inc., which oversaw funding of the ensuing independent interest groups, among them one that indicated interest in "Old Buildings." This group initially called itself the Landmarks Committee but subsequently changed its name to Preservation Racine when the city appointed a Landmarks Commission.

Thirty years ago Suzanne Foreman, a founding member, wrote a newsletter article entitled "Happy Birthday Preservation-Racine." It is fitting to reprint the article that celebrated the organization's tenth anniversary and so well presented its vast growth and accomplishments within that time:

> Preservation-Racine, Inc., reaches a landmark in its history this year…its tenth birthday. It has been a decade of growth, achievement, and much hard work.
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> The organization began as a standing committee within Racine Urban Aesthetics which was founded by the Junior League in 1973. The Johnson, Johnson and Roy Architectural Survey of Racine was the first major project attempted. This survey was the first extensive effort to identify and evaluate the city's historic architecture. It provided dates, photographs, architectural styles, and ratings for buildings within a 140 square block area and mapped concentrations for potential historic districts. The information became the resource for the Southside and Northside bus tours, for publications, educational efforts, and a slide program which has been seen by thousands of people.
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> The National Trust for Historic Preservation awarded P-R a Consultant Services Grant in 1975 for a preservation economics conference which was well attended by the community's leaders. An outgrowth of this conference was formation of a coalition to fund the restoration of the Blake House in 1976.
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> Membership and activities had expanded so dramatically by 1976 that Preservation-Racine became separately incorporated as a non-profit organization. Its association with Racine Urban Aesthetics has continued on other levels.
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> One of P-R's proudest achievements came in 1977 when the Southside Historic District was named to the National Register of Historic Places. It was the culmination of more than two years of research and advocacy on local, state and national levels. Hundreds of volunteer hours by members accomplished the district and various individual nominations.
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> P-R has been a responsible advocate for preservation on Housing and Community Development Committees by promoting the establishment of the city's Landmarks Preservation Commission and the Architectural Conservationist's position. P-R has taken the inherent risks which go with being visible and vocal on controversial or complex legal issues affecting our architectural heritage.

Certainly, other highlights of the decade include hosting special tours for the National Trust's annual meeting, for the State Historical Society, as well as ten years of bus tours during summer art fairs and seven annual historic house tours. Finally, the establishment of Preservation-Racine Foundation in 1981 will ultimately provide financial assistance to threatened historic properties.

How successful have we been? Success is often hard to measure but surely the work described above reflects the effectiveness of volunteerism, the generosity and dedication to preservation of our membership, and an ever-increasing appreciation of Racine's architectural heritage by the community.

Happy Birthday, Preservation-Racine, and may the next decade breathe new life and economic vitality into Racine's historic assets.

This is the model that the organization has been challenged to emulate. As with any organization, some dreams are met and others are not. The Foundation and its hoped-for revolving fund were not realized, but College Avenue still has its brick pavement. For many years continual presence in meetings and negotiations of preservation efforts to save the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad Depot contributed to its survival. The threatened prairie-style Walker house was Preservation Racine's excursion into moving a building from Lake Avenue to Sixteenth Street in 1986. St. Luke's Hospital Board of Trustees leased Jordan Hall to Preservation Racine and the Junior League in 1989. As with the Blake House a dedicated group renovated Jordan Hall and in 1998 the hospital's Board of Trustees donated the building to Preservation Racine. In 2005 Jordan Hall was sold and the Blake House now serves as Preservation Racine's headquarters. The Blake House had been saved from demolition by a consortium of Preservation Racine, the Racine County Historical Society, Junior League of Racine and Racine Urban Aesthetics in 1977 when a twenty-year lease was negotiated with the Beth Israel Sinai Congregation. Following an extension of the lease, Preservation Racine took ownership of the building in 2005.

Continuing in the tradition, monthly meetings, that are open to the public, are held on the first Monday of most months in relevant locations and often with correlated speakers. The annual Tour of Historic Places occurs on the last Sunday in September. Through the years more publications have been printed and a PowerPoint and DVD have been produced. For twenty-six years Century Buildings Awards have been presented most frequently in the Great Hall of DeKoven Center in May, which is National Preservation Month. Awards are presented to owners of buildings that are at least one hundred years old and are in fine repair. As with the tour buildings, century buildings are carefully researched and documented.

The quarterly newsletter continues to be issued by a dedicated committee. Through the cooperation of the UW-Parkside Archives back issues of the newsletters have been made available on the Internet. Periodically, Preservation Racine contributes an article to the Journal Times Community Newsletter. The Journal Times and the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel generously publicize the annual Tour of Historic Places with articles covering the event and featuring aspects of particular interest of the tour. In these ways the organization is kept in the eyes of the general public. May there continue to be growing support and interest in the principles, aims and goals of preservation in Racine.

Barbara S. Walter

President's Letter

Dear Members and Friends,

Recently, I walked over to The DeKoven Center, strolled the grounds and reflected on the Garden Party. What a beautiful day we had to celebrate our 40th Anniversary! Music filled the air. A harpist was located just beyond the Cloister. The gardens were perfect in all their splendor. Hunter, the beautiful black Clydesdale stood proudly with his carriage. People conversing. Playing croquet. Enjoying the food samplings. Special exhibits, a dessert buffet, stunning art and auctions in the Halls at the timeless and endearing DeKoven Center. St. John's Chapel with doors open, people sitting in the pews facing each other. The pipe organ playing. It was very special.With a passion for the past and a love of preservation on July 28th, 2013 we honored your commitment and dedication in a place where classic architecture, Racine history, and a touch of romance can still be found.

My sincere thanks to Sybil Knop for all her hard work and kindness. A special thanks to Fred Hermes, Doug Wick, Samira Gdisis, Dominic Kegal, and Ron Dunnett for the debut of the Venetian ARTifact Project, including all of the contributing artists and local exhibiting businesses. Thanks to the entire team at the DeKoven Center for their enormous support and our sponsors and patrons for their continued financial support. Additionally, thanks to our board, members and volunteers who made this event a success in many ways.

We now look forward to another special day, September 29th. Preservation Racine's Tour of Historic Places. I encourage everyone to enjoy the stories, architecture and history of these homes and buildings. Thank you to the homeowners for their contribution and generosity to Preservation Racine. I have been introduced to so many people who do good things, and we have increased our exposure and opportunities to include more advocates of preservation in our wonderful city. I am humbled by this experience.

Thanks to all!

Sincerely,
Robin Sutherland Coventry

Mark Your Calendar

The organization invites new and returning members as well as guests to upcoming meetings. At 7 p.m. Monday, November 4, Mary Murdoch will present a historical re-enactment as Mary Todd Lincoln at the Racine Masonic Center, 1012 Main St. At 7 p.m. Monday, December 2, the program will take us back to old-time soda fountains in Racine at Kewpee's sandwich shop, 520 Wisconsin Ave.