STARVING ARTIST FAIR

Preservation Racine traditionally staffs a booth at Racine's Starving Artist Fair to kick off the promotion of our Tour of Historic Places. The weather was perfect and the patrons were warm and friendly. We had PR's notecards, publications, steeple posters, mugs, and tour tickets to sell. I think we broke a record for the number of tickets sold at this event. Karen Urben organized the event and she, Tony Merlo and Xanthi Merlo setup and broke down the booth.. Thank you to Beth Jurgaitis, Pat Simonsen, George Mangold, and Tony Merlo for handling sales. A special thank you to Chuck and Barbara Vallone for taking the house photos George Mangold used to produce the outstanding, promotional poster. What a happy way to spend an August summer day.

Vivian Merlo & Karen Urben
Co-chairmen

PRESERVATION RACINE, INC.

NEWSLETTER FALL 2009

2009 TOUR OF HISTORIC PLACES

The booklet included with this newsletter describes our 34th Annual Tour of Historic Places to be held on Sunday, September 27. The tour is titled ***Follow the Red Brick Road***. The sites are:

The Plymouth Congregational Church - 1143 College Avenue - 1912
The Owen W. Williams House - 847 College Avenue - 1878
The August Frank House - 1520 College Avenue - 1894
The Lawrence DuFour House - 1628 College Avenue - 1858
The Jerome Ritter Home - 1746 College Avenue - 1907
The Martin S. Field House - 1753 College Avenue - 1881

The sites can be visited in any order during the tour hours of noon to 5:30 p.m. Refreshments will be a complimentary ice cream social located in the 1700 block of College Avenue. This block will be closed to car traffic during the hours of the tour. We will have a barbershop quartet and period automobiles to add to your pleasure. You will have an opportunity to view a private collection of historical Racine souvenir pieces on view in the Plymouth Congregational Church. For additional information on this special exhibit, please refer to the tour booklet. This is a must see.

Advance tickets are $12.00 and can be purchased at the outlets listed in the tour booklet. On the day of the tour, tickets are $15.00 and will be sold at 1520 College Avenue. See photos of the sites at our Web site www.preservationracine.org.

From the President

This issue of the Preservation Racine newsletter accompanies the 2009 Tour of Historic Places tour book.

We are especially indebted to the home owners who lovingly restored, preserved and opened their homes to the public, all for the betterment and enjoyment of our Racine community. An event of this magnitude could not happen without the work of many volunteers. Vivian Merlo and Karen Urben, co-chairs of this year's tour, deserve accolades. Don Vanderleest provided the skillful drawings of the houses. House captains Cindy Hertzberg, Betty Brooks, Pastor Glenn Lawson, Barbara Walter, Holly Hess, and Sybil Knop put in many hours organizing their volunteers, meeting with home owners and manning their assigned houses during the entire tour. Researchers Barbara Walter, Mary Whitman and Pippin Michelli put in many hours researching their buildings. Nearly 200 volunteers and tour guides make this event possible. Tour attendees have the opportunity to view some of Jim and Lynn Mercier's collection of early Racine souvenir pieces. Additional appreciation goes to our florists, sponsors, and members for their continued financial support.

This year's tour celebrates the living history of College Avenue – the distinguished brick street with stately homes that whispers to us of a time long ago.

While you will read, hear about and visit those beautiful houses I thought I would take a moment to write a few lines about the street. Most of the streets in the older parts of the city were paved with brick around the turn of the century. College Avenue was done in 1897. Old photographs make it appear that College Avenue was not paved prior to 1897. As far as can be determined, the bricks were not made in Racine. They have a very hard glaze, a glaze so hard that they show very little deterioration after more than a hundred years of traffic. I wonder how many times and at what cost the asphalt streets in town have been paved and repaved since. Back in 1897 they sure knew how to build quality work that has stood the test of time.

Our tours underscore the richness of Racine's architectural heritage and the lives and times of the people who built them. It also reminds us of the importance of their preservation. We are dedicated to historic preservation. Our organization's volunteers have played critically important roles in the preservation of historic places. When historic buildings have been threatened with destruction, they stepped in to restore them. The Walker House, Edward Jordan Hall, and the Lucius Blake House are all examples of the blood, sweat and tears our volunteers have given to preserving our history for future generations.

As our historic homes and buildings age the need for volunteers to care for them continues to grow. Are you interested enough in historic preservation to volunteer in any way to help restore them? We need you!

You can help us:

- Paint, landscape and maintain historic buildings
- Work on plumbing and electrical rehab
- Work on facade and carpentry rehab
- Compile the oral history of our community
- Develop design standards for our historic neighborhoods
- Advocate for historic preservation at the local government level
- Organize and catalog historic materials
- And more – just contact us!

To volunteer or let us know about endangered buildings, please contact me at emarcus@wi.rr.com or feel free to contact any board member.

All of us at Preservation Racine hope you enjoy the 2009 Tour of Historic Places and its nostalgic journey to an era long since past. Let our 2009 Tour be the catalyst that gets you involved with preserving our past.

Eric Mercus
President