PRESERVATION RACINE, INC.

NEWSLETTER
FALL 2011

2011 TOUR OF HISTORIC PLACES

The booklet included with this newsletter describes our thirty-sixth annual Tour of Historic Places to be held on Sunday, September 25, 2011. The tour is titled *Modern History* with an emphasis on mid-twentieth century modern houses. The sites are:

- 3609 Waterbury Lane — Thomas and Katherine Bones House (1845)
- 2300 Washington Avenue — William H. and June Sidley House (1959)
- 4001 Haven Avenue — Louis H. and Marie Hamilton House (1949)
- 1001 Russet Street — John Randal and Josephine McDonald House (1953)
- 245 Wilnette Spring Drive — Hans M. and Estelle Geyer House (1964)
- 500 South Creek Road — Richard J. and Ada Christensen House (1952)
- 745 Main Street — First United Methodist Church (1914)

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 early Johnson Wax memorabilia on display at the First United Methodist Church. For additional information on this special exhibit, please refer to the tour booklet. Refreshments will be served at the church.

Advance tickets are $12.00 and can be purchased at the following locations:

Borzynski's Farm & Floral Market 1160 Washington Avenue, Sturtevant
First Weber Group 1100 North Main Street
Larsen's Bakery 3311 Washington Avenue
Milaeger's 4838 Douglas Avenue
Milaeger's 8717 Hwy. 11, Sturtevant
Miller's Flowers 219 Sixth Street
O & H Bakery 1841 Douglas Avenue
O & H Bakery 4006 Durand Avenue
Personal Touch Flowers by Julie 5445 Spring Street
Personal Touch Flowers by Julie 4060 North Main Street
Uncorkt 240 Main Street

On the day of the tour, tickets are $15.00 and will be sold on the grounds of the Sidley House, 2300 Washington Avenue. Information is also available at www.preservationracine.org.

In addition to the houses featured on this year's tour, there will be some special displays. At the Wilnette Spring site, well known Racine artist Don Ricchio will exhibit and offer for sale his drawings of the North Shore train depot and the Frank K. Bull barn. You will also learn about the Wilnette Springs Bottled Water Company. The company's "spring house" was located on the land where the Geyer House now sits. Thank you to Nancy Wheeler and Gerald Karwowski who helped research the Wilnette Springs Bottled Water Company. These sites were once significant parts of the West Racine landscape.

At 3606 Waterbury Lane you will see and learn about the Camperdown Elm tree located on this property.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

In my last message I discussed several challenges that organizations face in an effort to remain solvent and, I may add, *vibrant*. To grow its membership and expand its programs, members of Preservation Racine need to know and understand what activities the board is engaged in, what projects are being financially supported, what projects are being proposed for consideration, and what direction the group is heading.

A review of the past few years reveals that the organization has been very busy in preservation efforts and in recognizing Racine's architectural heritage. As Preservation Racine reviews its recent history, its members can proudly point to a number of significant acquisitions and successful projects that have promoted conservation efforts and informed the public about historic buildings in the Racine region.

- In 1976 Preservation Racine was part of a coalition that saved the Blake House at 936 S. Main Street from demolition and began restoration of the Italian Villa style house. Our organization was able to purchase the house in 2005, and the Blake House Committee now serves as the steward for its restoration and maintenance. The building houses our office and a sizeable archive on Racine's architectural history.

- For twenty-four years Preservation Racine has hosted its annual Century Buildings event, which recognizes buildings in Racine County that are at least one hundred years old and have been well maintained. To date, nearly three hundred private residences, churches, and commercial buildings have been honored.

- In 2009 our organization donated five hundred dollars to the Racine Heritage Museum's archive. The money was used to purchase archival storage containers and a video player.

- That same year we gave ten thousand dollars to the Caledonia Historical Society to help relocate the Sturtevant train depot to Linwood Park and begin restoration of the building. The monies were helpful in warding off the building's certain demise.

- In 2010 Preservation Racine successfully lobbied for passage of a City of Racine ordinance to protect the city's historic artifacts.

- This year a gift of ten thousand dollars purchased seven cast bronze markers that have been installed in the quadrangle of The DeKoven Center. They are mounted on Bedford limestone and tell the history of the buildings. Application has been made to the State Historical Society for the erection of a state historical marker commemorating Racine College and the Reverend James DeKoven (1831-1879). PR members and friends had an opportunity to celebrate these markers at a membership meeting that took place at The DeKoven Center on August 29.

- This year's Tour of Historic Places celebrates its thirty-sixth year by adopting the theme, *Modern History*. Several houses were designed by mid-twentieth-century architects. The tour is the main source of fundraising for our organization and has proven to be so successful that it draws tour-goers from other states. Other preservation agencies and organizations have recognized the quality of our annual tour and incorporated some of its features in their own tours.

Very often organizations do not feel comfortable *boasting* about their accomplishments. Yet it is vital that members who financially support Preservation Racine be made aware of what their money is being used for and how it is preserving Racine's past for future generations of citizenry. Whether it is a house, bridge, commercial or public building, barn, or artifact, Preservation Racine continues to demonstrate its commitment to conservation and education.

Mark your calendars for Sunday, September 25, and help make this year's Tour of Historic Places another grand event!

There is no shortage of volunteer opportunities in our organization. If you would like to volunteer or serve on a committee, please call me at 637-7549 or write me at stevenrogstad@yahoo.com.

Steven K. Rogstad

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT BUS TOUR

Preservation Racine has been invited to come to Glen Ellyn, Illinois, to take a personal tour of the William Heald residence. This one-of-a-kind Frank Lloyd Wright residence was one of the first commissions he took on in 1911/12 after returning to Chicago from Europe. This design was the precursor to Fallingwater and is beautifully sited on a hill above Lake Ellyn. The landscape has been identified as a work by Jens Jensen. PR members will travel to this site by bus on Sunday, October 16, on a first-come-first-served basis. Cost for the bus is $30 per person. Contact Steven Rogstad for reservations.

STARVING ARTIST FAIR

Preservation Racine once again had a booth at the Starving Artist Fair in East Park on Sunday, August 7. This is the event where the sites for PR's annual Tour of Historic Places are announced. Tony Merlo and Tom Yagelsky set up and took down the booth. Tom Yagelsky, George Mangold, Jim and Lynn Mercier, Edgar and Joyce Hoffman, and Tony and Vivian Merlo were greeters and tended the booth. George designed and produced the tour poster, incorporating Charles Vallone's photographs of the seven tour sites. This handsome poster is now in the Mathis Gallery window. The tour depends on the enthusiastic support of many people. On that Sunday, it was a lot of fun promoting the tour and meeting the people who came by the booth. Thank you to all of the volunteers.