MERIDIAN STREET FOUNDATION

News & Views

FALL 1994 VOLUME 7, NUMBER 1

MSF WANTS YOU!!!

Greetings and Salutations from Larry Dorfman, President-Elect 1994-95

Hello Neighbors! Did you know that the Meridian Street Foundation is about to begin a new year with the ANNUAL ELECTION of new BOARD MEMBERS and the inauguration of new officers? Don't let this annual rite of autumn pass without the renewal of your membership in this association. I say to you area residents who do not currently enjoy the status of dues-paying members, JOIN NOW! Many of you belong to the Butler-Tarkington Neighborhood Association or the Meridian-Kessler Neighborhood Association; and so do I. Membership in the Meridian Street Foundation is very important to the successful operations of both MKNA and BTNA. MSF is the zipper that connects these two historic and prominent associations together. Your paid membership in each of these groups will ultimately insure the quality of all our neighborhoods. With that in mind, I submit for your review these TEN REASONS to be a dues-paying member of the Meridian Street Foundation:

#10 To share "quality time" with your neighbors and get to know them in a positive and enthusiastic setting.

#9 To insure that your voice and opinions are heard by your close neighbors, friends, and everyone around you.

#8 To provide a forum for communication between the three great neighborhood associations, area merchants, and all our diverse and wonderful residents.

#7 To uphold the highest quality of life in our small but highly travelled portion of the city.

#6 To maintain an avenue into the often perplexing political processes of our city.

#5 To protect the streets, the yards, the houses, and most importantly, the residents from unwanted incursions and undesirable developments.

#4 To secure the ability to network with the distant and various households up and down the street and within the three associations.

#3 To give credibility and legitimacy to the decisions made by the leadership of the Foundation on your behalf and to strengthen its voice.

#2 To establish a base for future projects and events which will further improve the quality of our residential lives and our own well being.

and finally, reason #1

To preserve, to preserve, to preserve and to preserve what we currently enjoy.

Let's close ranks, and join your concerned friends and neighbors and get your dues paid to the Merry Meridian Street Marching Society OOPS!, I mean the Meridian Street Foundation.

Your invitation to the Meridian Street Foundation Annual Meeting is enclosed. This yearly gathering of residents and guests will recognize not only the present leadership and board members but will also welcome the new board members to their positions. Make plans to attend. Through functions like these we can meet our neighbors and weave the fabric of the network that is so important to the well being of our neighborhood. Nuff Said!!

Calling all MSF board members, dues-paying members, area residents and all ships at sea!!! The MSF will be forming several standing committees in order to address some of the challenges of life along the most important street in our city. Please give the concept of working on one of these committees some thought and then volunteer your valuable time. Watch this newsletter for a complete list of committees and for further information about how to get involved.

Speaking of committees, one of the most important committees will be the newsletter. It would be exciting to have residents contributing information, articles, announcements, and items of all kinds to this publication. Our goal is to make this newsletter a best seller.

Did you notice: The August issue of "Indianapolis Monthly" taking note of the installation or our historic street lights? Your MSF dues at work for you!

Did you notice part Deux: NUVO NEWSWEEKLY - May 25 - June 1 across the top of page 3 in quotes "I can't imagine Indianapolis without North Meridian Street". Also on page 3:

"If you've got a car, drive up Meridian Street as slowly as the traffic will allow. Meridian Street between 40th and Westfield is one of the most famous neighborhoods in America. There are streets and neighborhoods in other towns where the houses are grander and the wealth is greater, but there are no streets that show the American Dream better than you'll see it on Meridian Street. Back when America believed in its future--back when the sons and daughters of poor people believed they could make it with a little bit of talent, a little bit of luck, and a lot of hard work--it was a place like Meridian Street they wanted to find at the end of their rainbows. Drive up Meridian Street, slowly, and maybe you'll leave Indianapolis thinking it's time we gave ourselves an American Dream as good as the one they used to have."

So guys and gals, Until It Don't Rain In Indianapolis In The Summertime, MAKE MINE MERIDIAN STREET!!

"TIME STANDS STILL ON NORTH MERIDIAN?"

By Peggy Sabens, Editor

You dear readers, may think when you read several of the articles in this long delayed MSF News & Views that time has stood still on North Meridian----but this is not the case. Also you will be pleased to read how the MSF is not standing still either. Due to various reasons, our spring, then summer, now fall issue didn't get distributed in a timely fashion. We promise this will not happen in the future. So bear with us as we regale you with "late-breaking" news about the tornado, tree replacement, and the fabulous new street lights (yes, we are still taking contributions for the lights).

The President-Elect of the Meridian Street Foundation, Larry Dorfman, together with his officers and board of directors, is planning a most active and positive 1994-95 year for our neighbors. PLEASE NOTE THE ANNUAL MSF MEETING INFO IN THIS NEWSLETTER AND ATTEND!!!

Also we would most enthusiastically accept any appropriate contributions to future newsletters.

Treasurer's Report on: HISTORIC LIGHT FUND

The Meridian Street Foundation Historic Light Fund was opened in January 1993. Since that time we have collected over $48,000. We promised the city $50,000. At this time, there are five people who have pledged but have not contributed. Their contributions would add a total of $2,500.00.

At this time, a total of 86 individuals and/or institutions have contributed to the fund. At least 20 of these people do not live on Meridian Street. A few have moved to other parts of town or other cities, but continue to show their support for the community by a commitment to their pledge. The largest contribution by one individual was $3,100.00 and the smallest was $25.00. The average contribution was $558.00. The median contribution was $775.00. I think that we can consider this project a great success. We will make our goal one way or the other. After the lights are installed, we will begin work on placing the commemorative plaques and an official switch-on party.

Congratulations go to Karen and Larry Dorfman for all their work to make this project a successful one.

John Pless

LIGHTS, ACTION, CAMERA?

The groundbreaking and the ceremonial installation of the first Historic Street Light took place at Alice Carter Place on April 14, less than 24 hours before "our" tornado. Many dignitaries from the City, DOT, IPALCO, MSF, Historic Landmarks, the Meridian Street Preservation Committee, and other organizations. At this time (early September), the work is proceeding and not only people in our neighborhood but visitors and residents of other areas are most impressed with our ability to effect such a significant investment in our already beautiful Historic District. Great work, Larry and Karen Dorfman and all friends who contributed to this project.

MERIDIAN STREET PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Following are some recent petitions to the Commission:

1. Shell Oil Company Property at 4601 N. Illinois Street. Shell requested approval for variance of use from its current gas sales and service operation to a convenience food mart. The impact of such a change would result in increased client traffic, late hour patrons and other factors detrimental to the Historic Preservation character of the area. All neighborhood organizations, concerned with the potential change in the neighborhoods also objected to the change in use. The Commission considered the request and rejected it. Shell can continue to operate the property as a gas and service facility.

2. Property at 4408 N. Meridian Street. The owner requested approval to replace existing casement windows with double pane wood casement windows with aluminum casings on the exterior. The owner also wished to replace the deteriorating wooden fence around his swimming pool. The Commission felt that the new fence would be appropriate to the house and location and so approved the petition under a certificate of appropriateness.

3. Property at 5330 N. Meridian Street. The owner proposed to replace existing chain link fence, located in the rear and side, with a wrought iron fence. He also wanted to pave an area in the rear of the house in order to widen the garage parking ramp. The Commission approved the requests under a certificate of appropriateness.

4. Property at 5125 N. Pennsylvania Street. The owner requested a variance of development standards to allow him to erect a six foot high privacy fence along Beverly Drive. After he agreed to reduce the height of the fence to maintain a clear sight triangle for alley traffic, the variance was approved by the Commission.

Anyone interested in the procedures for filing a petition with the Commission or details about its jurisdiction and the authority, can all Dave Kingen, Chairman of the Commission, at 327-4139. The Commission holds public meetings the 3rd Tuesday of each month at the North Methodist Church, 3808 N. Meridian Street. A set of guidelines for property owners to review before they plan any changes to or uses of their property can be obtained from Dave Kingen or the Meridian Street Foundation, Rebecca Marcus, President.

Preservation Commission Neighborhood Representatives are:

Stan Markuson - Meridian Street Foundation Representative
Gene Scott - Meridian Kessler Neighborhood Assn. Rep.
G.B. Landrigan - Butler Tarkington Neighborhood Assn. Rep.

WINDSWEPT

By John Pless

It was about 8:30 a.m. on April 15th when the rains came down on the north side of Indianapolis. The roof gutters on the garage at the side door of our house were running over. My wife leaned over to pick up the cat who seemed concerned with the unusual and rather unexpected noise. My son, as chance would have it, was "sleeping in". He said that the slate on our roof sounded like the shuffle of a deck of cards. Lois looked out toward the street to see a "white out" and then the sudden levitation of our 80 foot oak tree which literally came out of the ground. Her description included the phrase "I could see light under it!"

We know that the funnel twisted down across 52nd Street from the west since there was very little damage to the south. As it traveled north it caught the roof of Joan and John Schick's house on the north west corner of that intersection and dropped the bricks from their chimney into their family room. From there it continued parallel to the street taking portions of roofs and windows on the west side. The really good news is that no one was injured. Apparently, the devastation was limited because the funnel didn't come completely to ground. It was still a major event that caused considerable property damage for many of our neighbors. It must have made the news in many communities around the country since friends of ours on vacation in New Zealand heard about it.

Most of us mourn the loss of the many pine trees that distinguished our section of the street. It was good that there were few leaves on the deciduous trees at the time because we lost only those that are shallow rooted - oaks and pines. There must have been at least 30 trees uprooted to the north. The Cordingley's at 5323 lost most of their pines - 11 in all. The top of one of their conifers fell completely across Meridian and blocked traffic for some time. We have all heard about the woman sitting motionless in her automobile in front of O'Guinn's at 5230 with a slate protruding through her shattered windshield.

The response by volunteers was extraordinary. Several tree trimming and landscape companies were in the area and joined in to clear the street. The city had crews out to clean up the debris and by noon they had one lane open.

Only two blocks of Meridian was transformed into tornado alley for a few minutes that day. Mother Nature accomplished in a few minutes what many of us have wanted to do for years - slow the traffic down on Meridian. We are only now getting back to normal. The stumps are gone, the grass is growing, there are still roofs to repair and sidewalks to replace. I can still see the tire marks of heavy equipment on our lawn. It will be along time before we forget that wind that swept down our street.

TREES AND TWISTERS

by Jim and Peggy Sabens

"Sometimes it seems you don't know what you got 'til it's gone—take Paradise and put it in a parking lot"

A few years ago, the Department of Parks offered to our Meridian Street Foundation neighborhood the opportunity to have trees and shrubs planted along our corridors. The only requirement was that a majority of the residents express an interest and sign to participate.

Buoyed by the vision of a time when "a squirrel could travel from the city limits of Indy to Monument Circle by tree and never have to touch ground", and the old pictures of Maple Road (now 38th Street) being a verdant arbor, and the elms on Washington Blvd. touching in midstreet, the Meridian Street Foundation spearheaded by former neighbor Marianne Fletcher, started this "Arbor Day Project".

Mr. Rick Barker of the Department of Park and Mr. Gleaves, horticulturist at the IMA, contributed articles and scholarly advice both through meetings and by articles in the MSF News & Views. In addition, Ms. Fletcher attempted to get some neighborhood interest in the project by personal contact, meetings, MSF News & Views articles and the like. The results were zilch, zed, zero, zappo—so nothing came of this.

However, with the April 15 Tornado* and the installation ceremony for our new historic street lights the day before**, perhaps there may be some heightened awareness of the importance of trees and shrubs. So we are asking again if any residents are interested in this project.

Unfortunately, due to fund cuts and general cutback in government spending, the Park Department nurseries are not operational at this time. However, Mr. Barker has indicated he may be able to make available at a reasonable price some planting material, and help in directing us to such people who could effect the delivery and installation (of course at some charge.)

. . . Again, there is the caveat that a majority of residents must express an interest.

We will not discuss here the types of plant material which would be available; we do know that it is not considered horticulturally correct to plant twenty blocks of the same tree due to the devastation wrought by a disease like the Dutch Elm disease of a few decades ago.

So, it's up to you, neighbors! If you are interested please call us at 257-3741, fax 475-0224 or write us at 5354 N. Meridian, Indianapolis, IN 46208. There will be no obligation, but we have to have some input from the MSF area about whether this is a feasible course to pursue.

* See John Pless's article elsewhere in this issue
** Please see article elsewhere in this issue

PROPOSED NEW TERMS FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

TERM ENDING 1995:

1. Laurie Boyd
2. Alice Ross
3. Dickie Hardee
4. Robert Pinkley
5. Becky Marcus
6. Virginia Handley
7. Roberta Lamberson
8. Gene Scott
9. Jane Nolan

TERM ENDING 1996:

1. Christopher Stack
2. Patricia Grow
3. Evans Woollen
4. Ruth Vignati
5. JoAnn (Jodi) McLane
6. Gregory Padgett
7. Thor Miller
8. Dr. Dan Stout
9. George Maley

TERM ENDING 1997:

1. Raul Burciaga
2. Frank Owings, Jr.
3. Karen Rhodes
4. Larry Dorfman
5. Alice Berger
6. Peggy Sabens
7. Steve Smith
8. David Lesh
9. Greg Dedinsky

Members resigning: Abby Kuzma; Ellen Aufderheide; John Pless; Penny Stillwell; G.B. Landrigan; George Dury; Karen Dorfman

REAL ESTATE ROUNDUP

By G.B. Landrigan, Realtor

Now that the last of the tornado-whipped trees, slates, and tiles have been collected, it is time to review our neighborhood's real estate market. While those properties priced higher than $300,000 are taking a bit more time to sell, those priced less are selling briskly.

Currently on the Market

	Meridian	Illinois	Pennsylvania	East/West St.
#	8	5	5	1
Avg.	$516,700	208,240	197,634	217,000

Those Properties Sold Since January 1994

#	1	1	5	4
Avg.	$240,000	111,000	155,380	132,100

Additionally, one home on North Meridian is currently pending. Its listing price was $399,900. All figures were provided by the Metropolitan Indianapolis Board of Realtors and may not include homes not sold through the multiple listing service.

FOUNDATION MEMBERSHIP FORM

Renewal _____ New _____

Patron Member - $100+
Sustaining Member - $50
Contributing Member - $25
Family Membership - $15
Single Membership - $10

(If you are unsure if your membership is up to date, call Gene at 924-5222)

All contributions are appreciated. All members will be acknowledged in the News & Views. All contributions are tax deductible to the extent provided by law.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Children and ages: _____

Occupation: _____

Would you care to participate on a committee?

If so, what area? _____

Please return to Gene Scott, with check payable to the Meridian Street Foundation, 4030 N. Pennsylvania St., Indianapolis, IN 46205

(An updated list of members will appear in the next newsletter.)

Meridian Street Foundation
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