MERIDIAN STREET FOUNDATION

News & Views

Late Summer 1995 *Volume 8, Number 3*

Celebrate!

SEPTEMBER SOCIAL SET

by Frank Owings

Have you ever wondered what's behind those massive limestone walls and impressive bronze gates at 5323 North Meridian Street? If so, here's your chance to see for yourself! On Sunday afternoon, September 17, 1995, from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m., Bruce and Denise Cordingley have graciously offered the use of their beautiful yard for the Meridian Street Foundation's SEPTEMBER SOCIAL.

This proves to be an excellent fun time for MSF* residents and friends to gather on the grounds of the 1924 Renaissance Revival Style home and sample the festive food from Casual Catering, listen to the harmonic sounds of the Sweet Adeline quartet, while the children are entertained by a friendly clown, balloon animals and face painting.

Parking for the SOCIAL will be on 52nd and 54th Streets as well as in the Meridian Street Methodist Church (5500 N. Meridian) parking lot. Should rain dampen the event, the SOCIAL will be held inside that church.

The cost to attend the SOCIAL is $15.00 per adult, with children under 12 free as long as they are accompanied by a paying adult. *While we welcome new members, you don't have to join to join the fun!

Name(s) _____ Phone # _____

Address _____ # children under 12 ____ (free)

____ adults $15/each Amount enclosed $ _____

Return this form and your check made payable to The Meridian Street Foundation by September 10, 1995, to:

Alice Berger (283-2453)
4833 N. Meridian Street
Indianapolis, IN 46208

THE MERIDIAN STREET FOUNDATION ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday, October 11, 1995

7:30 PM

AT

The Meridian Street Methodist Church
5500 N. Meridian Street

JOIN YOUR NEIGHBORS
IN ENTHUSIASTICALLY
SUPPORTING LIFE ALONG
"ONE OF AMERICA'S GREAT STREETS"

ELECT THE NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS
AND NEW OFFICERS

If you have any questions
call
283-8123 or 257-3741

(L to R) Larry Dorfman & Kipp Normand

MERIDIAN STREET FOUNDATION RECOGNIZED

by Frank Owings

During Preservation Week this year, Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana awarded individuals and companies with the 1995 Indianapolis Preservation Awards. The awards ceremony, which was held at the historic Union Station, recognized outstanding restorations, continued uses of historic places, and new construction in historic areas in Indianapolis. Recipient of the "neighborhood award" was the Meridian Street Foundation for its historic street light project. Accepting the award for Meridian Street was Foundation President, LARRY DORFMAN.

At the same ceremony, awards were also presented to state photographers who had submitted their black and white work to the Preservation Week's "Real People Real Place Real History" photography competition and exhibition. Meridian Street's own PATTE OWINGS won Honorable Mention for her "Get A Charge Out Of Christ" - an urban photo of a derelict electrical box on South Street beneath the railroad viaduct between Pennsylvania and Delaware Streets "graffitied" with "Trust Jesus" on two sides.

Congratulations to all preservation winners!

SIGN! SIGN! EVERYWHERE A SIGN!

by Larry Dorfman

The lifestyle of living on Meridian Street is affected everyday by signs. Both the lack of some signs and the abundance of other signs impacts the quality of our environs and the manner of our daily lives. I present for your perusal the following list of the signs of Meridian Street:

- too many construction, remodeling, painting, cleaning, company yard signs
- yard signs advertising homes for sale
- the little white signs identifying a home, as a former Decorator's Show Home
- the political placards and posters which plaster our neighborhood during the election season
- notices of yard and garage sales, many of which come from well outside the boundaries of our neighborhood
- signs asking us to attend various home tours, antique shows, trade shows, fund raisers, etc
- the two (2) most excellent signs signifying our street's heritage by announcing our inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places
- street signs which tell us where we are
- signs mounted in order to direct us to places we want to go, like the messages directing traffic to the Butler Campus
- and finally the LACK of traffic speed limit signs and no truck signs which, when enforced bring safety to our neighborhood.

Your Meridian Street Foundation through our Public Safety Committee chaired by **Marvelous Mary Grein** who is most ably assisted by **Fabulous Fred Shorter** and **Terrific Tony Metz**, is working hard to increase the visibility of traffic control signs and also to increase their enforcement. They need your support and we welcome your input.

As for the other signs, well gang just think about it, maybe take note of the number and type of signs you find on your next excursion through the neighborhood. I would like to know what my fellow Meridian Street Residents think about these SIGNS. Nuff said!!!

August is upon us and Autumn is fast approaching, and I am reminded that August is the month when a lot of people are back at work ready to rest up from their vacations. While Albert Camus wrote that Autumn "is a second spring, when every leaf's a flower." Of course old Al never had to rake my yard.

So until the lawn sprinklers no longer bring the sound of summer to my ear's in July Make Mine Meridian!!

MSF BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION

by Bob Pinkley, Chair, MSF Nominating Committee 283-8123

The MSF Nominating Committee is working on the slate of officers and nominees for the Board of Directors for the coming 1995-96 year. Election of Board Members will be held at the Annual Meridian Street Foundation Membership Meeting which will be held Wednesday, October 11, 1995 at 7:30 p.m. All members of the Foundation in good standing are eligible to vote for Board members, so be sure your dues are up to date.

Please note the article announcing the Annual MSF Annual Meeting on the front page of this newsletter!

We urge all MSF members and residents to attend the Annual Meeting, and also the monthly Board meetings held at 7:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month at the Meridian Street United Methodist Church. SEE YOU THERE!

"CLOUDS OF WITNESS"[i]

The MSF neighborhood has lost two good friends and neighbors since our last newsletter—

Mrs. John R. (Vesle) Fenstermaker, who with her husband were forty year MSF residents, passed away in March of this year. Her husband, a retired engineer, who survives, now resides at Marquette Manor. Mrs. Fenstermaker, a 1940 graduate of DePauw with an AB in English Literature, was a published member of the Indianapolis Women's Club, with a novel, "Santa Baby" (1975), a 3 volume anthology, "Words On The Page, The World In Your Hands" (1990), and several smaller volumes of poetry. In addition to her husband, Vesle is survived by her son, John R, Jr., who is organist at Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, CA, and two daughters, Betsy Olsen, of Seattle, WA, and Sarah Fenstermaker, of Santa Barbara, CA, and five grandchildren. She was a member of the Trinity Episcopal Church and its Altar Guild.

Mr. Lloyd G. Rossebo, another longtime MSF neighbor, passed away in April of this year. He was chairman of the board of Superior Distributing Company. A Purdue graduate, he was involved in the cabinet and furniture industry for more than 40 years. He was awarded the Purple Heart during his service in the Navy during World War II. He was a former "500" Festival director and Eagle Scout. He is survived by his wife, Dorothy Jansen Rossebo, daughter Susan Gardiner, Son Christian Rossebo, and three grandchildren.

[i] *Hebrews 12:1*

WELCOME MSF GUEST

by Fred Shorter

The Meridian Street Foundation was pleased to have Bob Faudree as our guest at the July 12 meeting. Bob is the Township Coordinator of the Department of Public Works for the City of Indianapolis. Bob stressed his department's interest in being "customer friendly." With his twenty plus years of Indianapolis experience, he welcomes person to person contact and is very willing to walk you through the solution to your problem.

Bob indicated that the department can usually address an issue within one day and always within three days. Bob's office receives an average of 25 calls per day. The department is reachable 24 hours a day and will call you back within 24 hours.

Bob has helped us recently by insuring that the new speed limit signs were installed on our street. He encourages you to call him at 327-1672 if you have a specific problem such as sewers, etc.

MERIDIAN STREET PRESERVATION COMMISSION HAS NEW MEMBERS!

CHANGE IN MEETING SITE

by Peggy Sabens

The MSF neighborhood will be pleased to learn that there have been four new appointments to the MSPC: **Mr. Kipp Normand**, representing the Meridian-Kessler Neighborhood Association, **Mr. Jim Conley**, representing interest in historic preservation, **Mr. Larry Dorfman**, Meridian Street property owner, and **Mrs. Rebecca Marcus**, MSF representative. This fills the 9-member board. Mr. David Kingen, Chairman of the MSPC wishes to announce a change in the meeting location. **As of the January, 1996 meeting**, the MSPC will meet the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 4 p.m. at **Meridian Street Methodist Church, 5500 N. Meridian Street.** Prior to that date, the meetings will continue to be held at North United Methodist Church, 3900 N. Meridian, at 4 p.m. on the 3rd Tuesday of each month. He urges all interested neighbors and friends of the neighborhoods to attend these meetings. Also, if you have concerns or questions, call Mr. Kingen at 327-4139 or your representative on the board, as they appreciate your input.

I *SURVIVED* THE DECORATOR'S SHOWHOUSE

by Raul Burciaga, Chair, Beautification 923-1381

Now that the furniture is back in place, most of the boxes have been unpacked and their contents put back in the closets and drawers, I can look back over the past year and feel assured that I have survived as an owner of a Decorator Showhouse. I thought that my experience might be of interest to other neighbors (some of whom might be future Decorator Showhouse owners) so here are a few of my thoughts.

Let me first begin by saying that I am not trying to disparage the St. Margaret's Guild and their fund raising work. I feel they do an admirable job in supporting Wishard Hospital by sponsoring an event that involves a tremendous amount of work. I am happy that I could be a part of it. But giving up your home for nearly four months in order that St. Margaret's Guild and its interior designers can transform your house into a show house is not without considerable inconvenience. The process can become a logistical headache for the homeowner who doesn't know how the process works.

Keep in mind that there are three separate agendas at work here and they can come into some conflict. For St. Margaret's Guild, its agenda is aimed towards fund raising. It needs to secure a house to be transformed by designers into a spectacular setting in order to draw the public and hopefully raise a sizable contribution for Wishard Hospital. For the interior designers, their agenda is exposure and marketing of their creativity and services and hopefully gaining new clients. The homeowner's agenda calls for having his house decorated by top designers in the city and securing products and services at a substantial savings in exchange for "lending" the house. This doesn't sound like such a bad deal, but it helps to know how the process works in order to make it work for you.

The process begins with the Guild presenting a contract to the homeowner. Basically it outlines such things as who pays for what with regard to utilities, structural improvements, etc., details on possession of the house and the grounds, insurance and liabilities and stipulations for designers. The Guild will include the owner's design preferences but this is subject to interpretation by the designers. I guess for reasons of "creative freedom" the Guild does not allow the homeowner to approve or even see the design plans before they are executed. However, the homeowner may choose to commission a particular design but generally he has very little input into the design of the rooms. There is even a clause requiring the homeowner to obtain an appointment to visit "his" house during the transformation process. And while the Guild says that this will not cost you anything, what this ends up costing you depends on your willpower to stick to your budget and your negotiating skills.

Next are the designers. They have use of your house to market and promote their talents, products and services. The house is divided up and each room is awarded to a different designer as his/her space to decorate as he/she desires under the guidelines of the Design Board (the Guild's design approval body) and the negotiated contract. While I like to think of myself as someone who supports creativity in interior design, I will have to live with the end results after the show. Just because the designer is using the latest wall finishes, window treatments and furnishings, doesn't mean it will suit your taste or coordinate with your existing furnishings. This can also result in rooms "competing" with one another rather than having a harmonious flow. Granted, a few designers did ask how I wanted the room afterwards and chose paint colors accordingly. While paint colors may seem like a minor detail, after all the work and inconvenience who wants to re-paint later (at owner's expense)?

Now, for the homeowner. He must contend with several things at the same time. The first major task involves moving everything out of the house and into storage. Secondly, the homeowner must move into an apartment during the four month decorating and show. It's necessary for the homeowner to be sure the Guild has a contract with the apartment complex providing the living space. One homeowner found his family stranded when facing a deadline to move out - the apartment complex backed out at the last moment leaving them without a suitable place to live. Next, talk with your banker. The "carrot" on this stick is the expectation of having your home decorated by top designers in the city and obtaining product and services at a substantial savings. You will find that the discounts are not as substantial as you think. IRS rulings have done away with most of the "freebies". Products may be discounted or donated but installation costs generally are not. Most appliances and fixtures were at "cost" or at "contractor's prices" (whatever that means). Generally prices were about 30 to 40% below retail. While most of the new decorating is cosmetic, if any structural or utility improvements such as electrical, plumbing, carpentry, plastering or masonry work are required - the homeowner pays. This sends the homeowner scrambling to find the best deals from different tradespeople he may not be familiar with. Also, all the furnishings, light fixtures and window treatments are for sale can you can find yourself negotiating with as many designers as there are rooms. With so many enticements and the attitude of "let's go for the extras as long as we've gone this far," the costs mount and it's easy to spend more, much more, than you originally planned. Generally, homeowners go for the big ticket items such as kitchen and bathroom remodeling and landscaping which can add to the overall value of your home after the showhouse.

So in closing, what I would do differently if I had to do it again. Knowing what I know now, I would negotiate a contract more nearly in may favor. After all, I feel I am making the biggest contribution to the St. Margaret's Guild by allowing the use of my home and I should be able to specify what I will be left with in return. Keep in mind that the "Maggies" (as the Guild members are affectionately called) have been sponsoring showhouses for nearly thirty years and have dealt with as many homeowners. Don't let them fool you — this is business and the homeowners need to be "savvy" if they are going to make this project work for them as well.

SPEEDING CARS AND 18-WHEELERS ON NORTH MERIDIAN STREET

by Mary Grein, Public Safety Chair (phone 465-9934)

Of concern to all residents of Meridian Street are vehicles exceeding the speed limit to 35 mph in most of the Historic District and the continuing violation of the ban on trucks over 5 tons. This problem was exacerbated after the installation of the historic lighting, because traffic control signs were removed and due to a number of issues between the State Department of Transportation (DOT) and the utility companies, there was a long delay in reinstallation.

According to Cheryl Hedge, the DOT engineer responsible for the project, by the time you receive this newsletter, new signs should be at every major intersection (those with traffic lights) in the Historic District.

In addition, Deputy Chief Bobby Allen of the IPD Traffic Branch has agreed to step up enforcement. (Although Meridian Street is a State Highway, the state police do not want to handle enforcement of its traffic regulations.) With your assistance, we'll keep on top of this problem. If you are willing to let IPD patrol cars monitor traffic from your driveway, please let me know.

Editor's Note

Mary Grein, Chair of Public Safety, (**465-9934**) has prepared an excellent overview of the local law enforcement organization, but was unable to proof the article in time for this newsletter. It will be included in the next News & Views. However, please keep these phone #'s for future use:

911 - life threatening situations
327-3811 - non life threatening situations
327-DOPE - to report suspicious activity, possibly drug related
327-6100 - IPD North District to register complaint about ? improperly handled call
327-6116 - Sergeant John Conley, our Community Policing Coordinator

SERGEANT JOHN M. CONLEY TO ADDRESS MERIDIAN STREET FOUNDATION MEMBERS

Sergeant John M. Conley, North District Community Policing Coordinator and Day Tact Officers Supervisor will provide information and address citizens' concerns at the September 13, 1995, meeting of the MSF at the Meridian Street Methodist Church, 5500 N. Meridian, at 7:30 p.m. All are encouraged to attend.

PUBLIC SAFETY CONCERNS

by Fred Shorter

On Monday, July 24, Mayor Goldsmith and Police Chief Holman met with representatives of the Meridian Street Foundation, the Meridian-Kessler Neighborhood Association, and the Butler-Tarkington Neighborhood Association to discuss proactive measures to maintain low incidence of crime in our neighborhood. The Mayor and the Police Chief stressed the importance of our participation along with the measures that will be taken by the city.

Recently, the neighborhood associations have been quite vocal with complaints that police coverage has been reduced. In response to our deep concern, 8-10 additional police will be assigned to our district immediately. The Mayor claimed that we will see more officer time on the street than in the last 7 years. He asked for our patience with car registration checks and other measures that will need to be taken in the short term.

Additionally, it will be important for neighborhood citizens to call the Mayor's office (327-4622) if there is any 911/police/or judicial issue that is not handled promptly and satisfactorily. We need to continue to be vocal until we are satisfied. Both the Mayor and the Police Chief asked that we get names and specific information when reporting any dissatisfaction with service.

ALL MSF NEIGHBORS PLEASE PAY YOUR 1995-96 DUES BY 9-1-95!!!!

MERIDIAN STREET FOUNDATION MEMBERSHIP FORM

The Meridian Street Foundation is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.
Our Membership Year is September 1 through August 31.

Annual Dues

Renewal ____ New ____

Single	____	$25	Patron Member	____	$100
Household	____	$50	LIFE Member	____	$1,000
Merchant	____	$300, or $500 (which includes 1/16 page ad in each Newsletter)			

Our chief purposes are to:

- preserve the architectural, historic, and aesthetic significance of residential North Meridian Street and the neighborhood in which it lies
- maintain and improve existing health, safety and ecological standards
- serve the residents

Your membership dues help fund:

- the NEWSLETTER published 4 times each year to inform residents of pertinent issues and to reinforce the purposes of the FOUNDATION
- social events to welcome new residents and to facilitate meeting neighbors
- professional advice when needed to carry out our purposes

Please let us know about you and your family . . .

Name _____ Name _____

Address _____ Home Phone _____

Children and Ages _____ _____

_____ _____

Occupation _____ Occupation _____

Work Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Please return this form and your check by August 31, 1995 to R. Marcus, 5321 N. Illinois Street, Indianapolis, IN 46208.
MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO: Meridian Street Foundation.

REAL ESTATE ROUNDUP

by G.B. Landrigan, Realtor

As the Meridian Street Foundation neighborhood prepares for the annual picnic (this year at Bruce & Denise Cordingley's "Coca-Cola House"), it is time to provide the reader with cocktail conversation. While politics and religion are regarded as impolite topics, property values seem to be of everyone's unregulated interest. This seems especially so in our area—perhaps because it is one with a happy ending.

Although the region-wide sluggishness in the above $250,000 range continues to some extent, our area is holding its own, especially when compared with certain areas of Geist and Carmel.

Following is the activity in the MSF area since January 1, 1995:

Street	#active	#pending	#sold	Avg.List Price of active/pending	Avg.Sale Price of solds
Meridian	13	1	5	$350,935.71	$403,940.00
Illinois	1	2	9	$168,633.33	$143,125.00*
Penn.	5	2	10	$281,200.00	$193,790.00
Northern Side Streets	4	0	2	$219,300.00	$122,450.00
Southern Side Streets	6	0	1	$221,066.66	$165,600.00

* = does not include one confidential sale.

All information is gleaned from the Metropolitan Indianapolis Board of Realtors' multiple listing system and will not include privately conducted sales.

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News & Views
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Indianapolis, IN 46208

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